Is It or Isn't It

Unit: Learning About Local Habitat & Wildlife

Grades
2nd Grade

Author
Laurel Herendeen and Julie Cash, Sohpie Finn Elementary School

Summary

Students work as a group or in pairs to sort pictures of animals, plants, etc., found in a pond according to attribute. Students will decide on an attribute by which to sort a selection of nature cards, and then sort the cards into these categories. Students will use a Venn diagram format as appropriate to represent overlapping categories. This lesson is a continuation of the Make a Category lesson (see other unit lessons), in which students placed cards depicting pond and forest specimens into mutually exclusive categories. During this lesson students use a different set of specimen cards that strictly depict things found in ponds. They have learned about many of the small pond organisms during the "What's in that Pond?" lesson (see the unit page). This lesson will reinforce the science concepts learned earlier, and allow students to practice the math concept of categorizing by using a Venn Diagram.

Suggested Time Frame(s)

45 minutes

Professional Development/In-Service

N/A

Narrative

Introduction: Remind students of the categorizing activity they did previously in the Make a Category lesson. Note how well they did at noticing attributes of the things from the pond and forest. Introduce the "Needs More Research" category. Introduce the new set of pond cards students will work with by laying them out one by one. Ask students to place cards in the hula-hoop categories using an attribute such as "does it breathe air?" Demonstrate the concept of the Venn Diagram by overlapping hoops and placing a card with attributes of both categories. Ask for ideas of categories to sort these by and write these ideas on the overhead. Explain the activity that will follow by demonstrating putting cards into category circles and Venn circles. Ask students to share some of the things they can do to work well with a partner - One person writes each slip - Take turns placing cards (model pulling alternate cards off the stack. Independent Partner Work: Students pick a partner and work with their partner to create category labels and place cards in categories. Float to help students who need it. Stop the activity when most students have finished and ask students to read out their category labels. Write these category labels on the overhead. Re-distribute labels to other students and direct them to try placing the cards using someone else's categories. OR (depending on time,
motivation, etc): Ask students to leave their best categories on the table, and allow students to roam around tables viewing each other's work "because scientists share ideas." Closure/Summary: Students clean up and gather. Ask questions to conclude the lesson such as:

- Who would like to share an attribute they used that worked really well for sorting into two categories (show two-circle paper)? What worked so well about it?
- Who would like to share an attribute that worked well for three categories? Why?
- After doing this activity, who can tell me one reason why scientists also have to know how to do math?

Supplies Used

- Nature cards (1 set per pair)
- Butcher paper with 2 separate categories circles
- Butcher paper with 2-category Venn Diagram circles
- Tag board strips
- Markers
- Hula Hoops
- Overhead, transparency and markers
- Camera

How do you assess student learning?

During this lesson monitor student comprehension and adjust the pace of the lesson as necessary. Student comprehension should be apparent from the group discussion, by observation of student placement of their cards and responses to questions. During paired work, monitor comprehension by observing whether students are choosing appropriate categories and placing their cards in the correct category, and observe whether they are correctly using a Venn template or a two-circle template.