

Connection Selection

Summary: Students will work in teams to discover connections within their school yard ecosystem.

Age: 5th grade. Can be adapted easily for older and younger groups.

Time: Approximately 15-20 minutes.

Materials: "Role" cards (large): producer, consumer, decomposer, non-living.
"Answer" cards (small): different parts of the ecosystem. Question Sheet.

Area of Play: Flat, non-rocky area large enough for a circle or classroom with desks cleared away to the edge of the room.

Goals: To become more familiar with the terms and roles of producers, consumers, decomposers and non-living parts of an ecosystem. To learn about connections within an ecosystem.

New Mexico State Standards for Excellence

Science 9: Students will know and understand the concepts of energy and transformation of energy.

Science 10: Students will know and understand the characteristics that are the basis for classifying organisms.

Science 11: Students will know and understand the synergy among organisms and the environment of organisms.

Procedure

1. Arrange students in teams of 4. Allocate each team member one "role" card (producer, consumer, decomposer or non-living).
2. Arrange all students in one large circle, (sitting or standing) so that they are able to see all the other players, but can also communicate with their teammates.
3. Spread out the "answer" cards (face up) in the center of the circle on the floor or ground so all the students can see them.

4. Read aloud one question that relates to one of the roles.
e.g. " Non-living: find something the sun gives it's energy to."
5. Allow the students twenty seconds to talk with each other to discuss a suitable answer.
6. Remind students that it is the turn of the student whose role is 'non-living'.
Countdown "3-2-1 GO." These students then pick one card from the center of the circle, and return to their team.
7. Go around the circle and ask each team to share the answer they picked with the rest of the class. If an answer is incorrect give the students an opportunity to select another answer.
8. Continue with other questions for a different 'role' until all questions are answered. Have the teams hold on to their answer cards after each round.

Variations and Extensions

1. At the end of the questions, have the students lay out all the cards they have collected and allow them to discover connections between those cards.
2. Have the students put the answer cards back into the pile after each turn in order to keep a large pool of answers.
3. Have the students go out in to their school yard and locate parts and connections.