



**HUONVILLE
PRIMARY SCHOOL
SPECIES HOTEL
TERM 1, 2019
Year 5/6**

Context

A YEAR 5/6 CLASS OF 21 STUDENTS (16M/5F) – DIVERSE RANGE OF BEHAVIOURS AND ABILITY LEVELS

Prior to the activity, student had been exploring the concept of animal adaptations for some time and had developed a sound understanding of how animals have evolved over time in order to help them survive.

Living things have structural features and adaptations that help them to survive in their environment (ACSSU043, Science Curriculum, Year 5)

Following a look at adaptations, student began to explore the concept of a biome, which resulted in discussions and activities centred around habitats. There was a basic level of prior knowledge – All students understood habitat to be an animal's "home." Interestingly enough, many students recognised the term "biome" from Minecraft.

The growth and survival of living things are affected by physical conditions of their environment (ACSSU094, Science Curriculum, Year 6)

The streamlined sequence

I DEvised A 3 LESSON LEARNING SEQUENCE, WITH THE 3RD LESSON BEING THE CULMINATING, "SPECIES HOTEL" CHALLENGE.

I re-branded the activity, "Animal Hotel." I am happy to debate my rationale for this but ultimately the decision was based around consistency of approach. Animal (rather than species of organism) was the word at the heart of our inquiry and so I was comfortable enough with this alteration.

The most damning limitation of the streamlined sequence was that although everyone was involved in the brainstorming and planning phases, not every student was given an opportunity to complete the "create" phase of the Design Thinking Cycle.

Further, students only completed 80 percent of the cycle. There was no reflection, nor any time to re-assess and improve on their design.

I was unable to then carry the momentum of this sequence into further areas of natural exploration. If I had more time I would have had students complete the sculptural species hotel and imaginarium tasks.

Lesson 1

LESSON 1 WENT FOR 60 MINUTES. IT WAS BROKEN UP INTO THREE PARTS.

PART 1 – ask

We all began together on the mat for a mini lesson. I had written 3 questions on the whiteboard. This was an engaging 10 minute activity to activate prior knowledge and provided me with an opportunity to formatively assess understanding.

Q1: What does an animal need in its habitat to stay healthy? (responses below)

Water, plants, an ecosystem, oxygen, food, community, bushes for protection, sleep, warmth, sun, shelter*

**we had looked briefly at ecosystems in prior lessons about biomes.*

Q2: what does a human need to stay healthy in a hotel? (responses below)

Food, sleep, water, money, oxygen, room service, a key, warm, shelter

Q3: What would be similar about a human hotel and an animal hotel? (responses below)

Water, food, sleep, shelter

Part 2 – ask → imagine

The class was divided into 4 groups. Each group would be in charge of creating a hotel for a specific animal. The chosen animals were the wedge-tailed eagle, the wombat, the Tasmanian devil and the brushtail possum. Groups were given 15 minutes to read a reading passage and complete a guiding questions sheet.

Part 3 – imagine

The final part of the lesson saw each group given a chance to experiment with the kit materials, and to also collect relevant natural materials. Groups were encouraged to share ideas with each other.

Lesson 2

This 30 minute lesson saw students transition from the “imagine” phase to the “plan” phase of the cycle.

Students reconvened on the mat to tune back in to the activity. We had a quick discussion about what we had achieved in the previous lesson and what was to happen next.

Students returned their groups and had 2 minutes to read over their passage and completed questions sheet. The final tuning in activity saw them complete a brainstorm web, listing their required materials.

Then they were instructed to each take a scrap piece of paper and to draw a rough plan of their vision for the animal hotel. Once again, students were encouraged to communicate their ideas with each other in this process.

The lesson concluded with a 10 minute collaboration activity. Each group was given the task to combine their drafts and produce a sketch of their “final” draft. Some Students found this task highly challenging.

Lesson 3

This final, 60 minute lesson saw students focus on the “create” phase of the cycle.

Each group had approximately 5 students. I chose 2 students from each group to participate in this lesson. The students were chosen on a few criteria, including their ability to cooperate, and their enthusiasm and performance in the prior tasks.

Students were given 45 minutes to complete their hotel. They were provided with their original reading passage, guided questions and planning pages. All groups shared the kit and collected natural materials. No further instructions were given, the scope of my teaching in this task was to simply coordinate their creations and support through answering questions and making the odd suggestion.

After the 45 minutes, students completed a small writing task which involved them describing their hotel, discussing their favourite features and also explaining how it would provide a healthy habitat for their chosen animal.

Finally, students filmed a short video describing their hotel.

Final Comments

The student appeared to be engaged in all parts of the streamlined sequences.

I really enjoyed observing the actions and conversations some of the students had. A notable highlight was a tiny comment I heard from one student “_____Let me copy their idea!” A great illustration of how this activity fostered a “Learning Community.”