

Lower Elementary Inquiry

Beginning a Wonder Wall

Discuss "wondering"

Many of us have questions about our world. What makes a day happen? What are the stars? How do birds fly? Why is the sky blue? Do you all wonder about things often?

Discuss the Wonder Wall

Your class will be learning so many new things this year. First graders study things like families, weather, plants, animals, water, etc... But, it would help Mrs. Benedetti plan exciting investigations if you told her what kinds of things you wonder about. Today we're going to record some questions about _____ and continue adding questions to our wonder wall throughout our investigation of this topic. Let's think of some questions we'd like to have answered with regard to this topic. What do you wonder about it? Is there anything that seems odd to you? What if it had never happened? Or scientists had never discovered it? Or nobody had ever investigated it? What do you notice? How do _____ and _____ fit together? What questions do you have about the way it works? Can you find a way to _____?

While students are sharing their wonderings/questions, record them on the Wonder Wall (chart paper or a poster board).

Plan for "finding answers"—An investigation Approach

Discuss how we find answers to our questions and how we "find out" about (investigate) things we wonder about.

Where do we usually go for answers? Many students will say parents.

Where do parents get their answers? Many will say t.v., books, computer.

Where do TV, books and websites get their answers? Keep going until kids realize that someone, somewhere discovered those answers because he or she had the same questions.

If someone had the same questions as us, doesn't it make sense that if he/she found the answers so can we? All we would have to do is put together a Plan for Finding the Answer-An Investigation.

Observe Think Question

O-T-Q encourages students to observe and gather information, then analyze and relate the information to what they know, and finally generate questions.

Refer to the Plan for Finding Answers-An Investigation poster. Use the following introduce each part:

Discussion of---What does it mean to OBSERVE?

What do you do when you observe something? Kids will probably say they "look at it."

Can you all tell me what the sky looked like today? Some may be able to tell you, many will not.

Why can't everyone tell me? Did everyone go outside in order to get to school today?

They'll tell you they didn't really look carefully enough, they weren't paying attention. Another questions that would give similar results is, "What was your teacher wearing yesterday? or What was your mom wearing this morning?"

It's important to really look carefully and gather information using our all of our senses. This is called observing.

Discussion of ---What does it mean to THINK?

When you think, you relate what you observe to what you already know. So, you make comparisons with things you know, things you've seen, things you're done. You think, "Humm, how is this like.....?"

Thinking is driven by questions.

Discussion of ---What does it mean to QUESTION?

You can ask experts questions.

Your investigation may make you curious about MORE things, so you may think of NEW questions.

You need to decide what questions you will RESEARCH to find answers.

THERE MAY NOT ALWAYS BE ONE CORRECT "ANSWER" TO YOUR QUESTION.

O Observe objectively

What do you notice, specifically?

Make close observations, not inferences.



T Think reflectively

Relate what you observe to what you know.



Q Question frequently

What curiosities arise from your investigation?

