Michigan Ecosystems

Submitted by: Tony Shopinski

Teacher’s Email: weeshop@sbcglobal.net

Teacher’s School: Davison

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Target Grade/Subject: 7th grade art

Duration: 2-3+ classes @45 minutes each

Lesson Overview
- 1st day
  • discuss ecosystems (living & non-living)
  • list living parts of various Michigan ecosystems (Jack Pine Forest, wetlands, etc.)
  • view powerpoint
  • find appropriate habitat for card selections
  • discuss selections
- 2nd day
  • review
  • compare w/various artworks
  • draw card selections w/appropriate habitat
- 3rd day
  • review
  • outside sketching & picture taking in school garden/outside classroom

Sources Consulted
• MEECS Ecosystems & Diversity lesson plans
• DEQ ecosystem powerpoint presentation
• various art reproductions/slides (Rousseau,VanGogh, Matisse, e.g.)

Student Learning Objectives
• discuss differences and similarities found in works of art, nature and the environment
• explain basic ecosystem concepts and processes

Grade Level Content Expectations addressed
• participate and contribute to discussion
• demonstrate understanding of habitat and ecosystem

Materials Needed (list, include quantities per student)
• MEECS ecosystem posters
• picture cards
• drawing paper, pencils, colored pencils, tempera paint & brushes
• cameras

New Vocabulary
• ecosystem
• habitat
Focus Question(s)
- Is that really an ecosystem?
- Is it living or non-living?
- Are the trees & plants in that painting the kind you would find in that kind of environment?

Classroom or Field Trip Activities (describe; use numbered steps; write so that another teacher could implement)
1. Compare the various plants in the garden (which are weeds, which are plants, flowers, vegetables?)
2. Sketch different leaf patterns
3. Photograph contrasting plant shapes & colors (this would be done either late spring or in the fall)
4. On a field trip we would list/chart type of ecosystem w/the types of plants & animals we find – photos would be included

Assessment
- Test students to see if they can identify what is living & non-living in an ecosystem and what really is an ecosystem
- List types of ecosystems found in Michigan and compare/contrast to other parts of the world
- Show an understanding of how artists respond to their environments

Special Comments or Tips
In an art class we look at other art works all the time. We compare various genres, subject, styles and techniques. It should be noted that artists, even when abstracting, begin with a deeper understanding and examining of the world around them. Their work is a response to the natural world. Our own expressions in an art class should do the same.