

## ***The Great Kapok Tree***

**Description of Community:** Small community consisting of a 9,000 person population, mostly Caucasian middle class families.

**Description of School:** Readiness - 6<sup>th</sup> grade school with a population of 600 students total.

**Description of Classroom:** Group of twenty-four 4<sup>th</sup> grade students mostly coming from middle class backgrounds. Most have reasonable experiential backgrounds and most have been read to by their parents or someone at home.

**Objective:** To develop an interest in reading as well as to educate the students on the rain forest and what they can possibly do to help save it.

### **Integration of PDE Standards:**

#### ***1.6. Speaking and Listening*** ***1.6.5. GRADE 5***

- A. Listen to others.
  - Ask pertinent questions.
  - Distinguish relevant information, ideas and opinions from those that are irrelevant.
  - Take notes when prompted.
  
- B. Listen to a selection of literature (fiction and/or nonfiction).
  - Relate it to what is known.
  - Predict the result of the story actions.
  - Retell actions of the story in sequence, explain the theme and describe the characters and setting.
  - Identify and define new words and concepts.
  - Summarize the selection.
  
- C. Speak using skills appropriate to formal speech situations.
  - Use complete sentences.
  - Pronounce words correctly.
  - Use appropriate volume.
  - Pace speech so that it is understandable.
  - Adjust content for different audiences (e.g., fellow classmates, parents).
  - Speak with a purpose in mind.
  
- D. Contribute to discussions.
  - Ask relevant questions.
  - Respond with relevant information or opinions to questions asked.
  - Listen to and acknowledge the contributions of others.

- Adjust involvement to encourage equitable participation.
  - Give reasons for opinions.
  - Summarize, when prompted.
- E. Participate in small and large group discussions and presentations.
- Participate in everyday conversation.
  - Deliver research reports.
- F. Use media for learning purposes.
- Access information on Internet.
  - Discuss the reliability of information received on Internet sources.
  - Use a variety of images and sounds to create an effective presentation on a topic.

**1.8. Research**  
**1.8.5. GRADE 5**

- A. Select and refine a topic for research.
- B. Locate information using appropriate sources and strategies.
- Evaluate the usefulness and qualities of the sources.
  - Select appropriate sources (e.g., dictionaries, encyclopedias, other reference materials, interviews, observations, computer databases).
  - Use traditional and electronic search tools.
- C. Organize and present the main ideas from research.
- Take notes from sources using a structured format.
  - Present the topic using relevant information.

**Duration of Lesson:** 45 minutes for 2 days and then 1 hour on the third day.

**Materials Used:** The book The Great Kapok Tree by Lynne Cherry and also a computer lab with a computer for each student to do their research on.

**Procedure:**

1. Have all the students sit together and show them the book The Great Kapok Tree. Then have them look at the illustrations and ask them what they think it will be about. After listening to their predictions ask them what they know about the rainforest. Lead them with questions as to what animals live in the rainforest? Where is the rainforest? Is there more than one rainforest in the world? And last of all how does the rainforest help us? As the class makes predictions and answers the questions write the answers down on the board and leave the answers there so the class can go over them after the story has been read.

2. After the discussion has created a great interest in the book sit down and read The Great Kapok Tree to the students and show them the illustrations as you go. Make sure everyone in the class sees them all.
3. After reading the story ask the students what they thought about the story and ask if their predictions from before were correct. Have them give additional information that they had learned from the listening to the story and add these ideas to the board as well as well as correcting any incorrect information that may have been given by the students before the story was read. Copy the board after and make copies for each student in the class to have while they do their research project.
4. Finally have each student pick an animal from the book and explain that they will be presenting a short report on that animal and why it is important. Give them the attached handout so they know what are the most important things to learn about the animal, but also tell them it is okay to find more information than what is on the handout. Go over the handout and what each question means so they know what is expected of them.
5. The second day bring the students to the computer lab and give them 45 minutes to research their animals. Allow them to use the Internet, CD-ROM encyclopedias, and other electronic technology that may be useful to them. Before allowing them to begin their research answer any final questions and make sure they understand the handout. Have them fill out their handouts as they research and print out pictures if they find any that will help them present their animal. Also have a section on the handout where they cite the sources used while doing their research. Only have them write down the sites or program used. Explain that it is important to give credit to those who helped them with the project and that is why they must record where they got their information.
6. Finally, on the last day have each student present their animal for 2-3 minutes and tell the class what information they found, why the rainforest is important for the survival of this animal, and how the rainforest helps us.
7. After all the presentations are done have the students come up with ideas of how to help save the rainforest. Use these ideas to create follow up lesson plans that can go on for the remainder of the year possibly.

**Evaluation:** The students will be evaluated on their research projects and their presentations. The project grade will be based on 30 points. 20 points will be given for completed handouts with extra credit given for any extra information found that is helpful to the project. 5 points of the handout grade will go towards the reference section. 10 points will be given for the presentation in which the students tell the class all their information and explain how the rainforest is important to this particular animal and how the rainforest is important to us (people) as well.

**Rationale:** This lesson plan is set up with the goal of creating an interest in reading as well as showing the students how books can teach them something about the real world and that they may be able to make a difference in this world. This lesson plan would be classified as belonging to the Reconstructionism educational philosophy. The students learn to take responsibility for social issues that they have the power to change. It not only teaches the students that reading can be fun and interesting, but also they can learn something about the social world around them by reading books. Students learn not only to read for fun, but also to read to learn. The students come out with a better understanding of the world around them as well as a further developed interest in reading. This book not only gives a wonderful lesson about the rainforest and how important it is, but it also has beautiful illustrations that help to keep the students interested and show them that reading is more than just the words on the page. Although the grade level is higher in this lesson plan than in Gunning's explanation (88-93) of fostering literacy the concepts are the same with reading to students and making personal connections. These concepts can be used at any level are they are utilized in this lesson throughout its entirety.

**References:**

Cherry, L. (1990). *The great kapok tree: A tale of the amazon rain forest*. New York: Voyager Books Harcourt.

Gunning, T. G. (2000) *Creating literacy instruction for all children* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). Allyn and Bacon, Needham Heights, MA.

Pennsylvania Department of Education Standards (2003). Retrieved October 25, 2003 from the World Wide Web:  
<http://www.pde.state.pa.us/k12/lib/k12/RWSLStan.doc>

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## *The Great Kapok Tree Animal Project*

**Animal Chosen:** \_\_\_\_\_

What does your animal look like?	
What does your animal eat?	
What is the population of your animal?	
Where does your animal live in the rainforest?	
What part of the world does your animal live in?	
Why is your animal important to the rainforest?	
Why is the rainforest important to people?	
Any extra information found that you feel is important:	

**Sources Used to find the information:**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.