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Looking Through the Lens

Jay Jeffers Elementary School

This issue of *Looking Through the Lens* highlights Jay Jeffers Elementary School. As you walk through the hallways, pass through the learning pods, or visit classrooms you are enveloped with evidence of the science that is taking place at Jeffers Elementary School. From the science notebook pages bulletin board to students engaged in science investigations to the crayfish crawling in aquariums... everywhere you turn you are immersed in science!!!



Inquiry

By Christina Guasto

At Jay Jeffers Elementary School we believe that inquiry is key to learning science in a meaningful way. Through collaborative exploration our students are able to make meaning of science content in an engaging way. The students of Jeffers ES engage in both guided and open inquiry, use the FOSS kits as well as a variety of supplemental materials.

As a culmination each year, the intermediate students participate in the *Kids Inquiry Conference (KIC)*. To prepare for the conference students pose an investigable question, plan their investigation, collect and organize data, and form a reasonable conclusion with evidence. Then, just as scientists do, students present their findings to an audience of their peers and the community in a conference-like setting.

Our students are learning to become lifelong questioners, problem solvers, and thinkers.

Airplanes

This article was written by a Jeffers Elementary School student as part of his KIC project.

I will tell you about my project. I was wondering how to make an airplane fly straight. I used three propellers, one had a straw, square cut paper, tape, and a paper airplane I folded. I made five airplanes. I tested them all and wrote about them. Plane Number 5 was the best. I made a copy of the plane. First, I put a propeller in front and on top of the plane.

Then I flew the plane. At first it looped, and then it fell. I took the top propeller off and tested it again. After I took the top of the propeller off, this time it flew straight, and fast, but not for long. It landed badly because it landed on the propeller, and the propeller fell off. Then I put wings on the paper airplane by taping the squares to the propellers. It flew straight and glided to a smooth landing. Now I am wondering if an airplane could fly with another one inside. So I'm going to make another paper airplane and put the plane I made inside it.



What a Way to

Spend a Saturday!!!

Science Saturdays at Jeffers Elementary School are the perfect match for showing our community how inquiry - based learning and literacy are intertwined. We meet three times a year to work with different big science ideas that are expandable throughout all grade levels. This enables everyone, including all of our children, their siblings, and their parents to actively engage with the materials and their notions about the big idea.

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Some of the questions we've posed have been—What items will sink or float? How does gravity affect the motion of items? Which items will slide or roll? How can you build a structure that sustains weight? and Which bubble wand will create the best bubbles?

Every **Science Saturday** begins with a whole group preview of the topic, materials, and agenda. Then, the fun begins! As the large group is divided into four smaller groups and sent to different learning areas, families begin interacting with the materials and each other. They are brought back to the small group to discuss what they're noticing and how they're recording in their notebooks; another question or two is posed and the flurry of activity and learning begins all over again! Finally, the learning area groups return to the multipurpose room to eat lunch and hope for their name to be called in the raffle of science materials to continue their learning at home. Each event has been very successful with an attendance of about 150 to 200 participants of all ages.

The sessions are bilingual with pairs of staff members as facilitators of each small group. We incorporate every learning style into our **Science Saturday** events, enabling everyone to learn, experience, and grow comfortably at their own pace. Everyone is actively involved and sometimes it's hard to get participants to stop and discuss their discoveries! But we always regroup and have each family share with the rest of the group what they've learned or are still wondering about because that's the best part of all...sharing our discoveries with others.

Science in GATE



Science topics enhance the richness of educational projects in the GATE program at Jay Jeffers Elementary School.

The third grade universal concept is Structures and their projects for the year are inventions. This lends itself to inquiry and building of higher level thinking skills for the students.

One area the fourth grade studies is Paleontology. The unit is set up to follow and develop a Bloom Study, using Systems as the universal concept.



The universal concepts for the fifth grade GATE students are both Structures and Systems which they start the year out by studying Astronomy. The students organize a Star Day and Night for all the students and parents of Jay Jeffers to share their knowledge learned during the unit. The Star Night has been quite successful, which includes the Star dome and telescopes and astronomers from the Las Vegas Astronomy Society.

Regional Trainers

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