



Looking Through the Lens

A newsletter focusing on science content, pedagogy,
and topics for elementary teachers



Southern Nevada Regional Professional Development Program

Science Fair Categories

Think about your own memories of science fairs. What comes to mind? Probably the models of volcanoes that spewed red food color tinged lava or spray-painted Styro-foam balls that represented the planets of the solar system strung in a line. These projects were proudly displayed in the library or hallways for all to admire. They were judged and ribboned by their construction quality not for what the students concluded, investigated, or found out.

The Southern Nevada Regional Science and Engineering Fair revised its formats for the elementary portion of the science fair. The four formats are *Scientific Collections*, *Scientific Observation History*, *Scientific Experiment*, and *Tech Design/Inventions*. These formats were revised to reflect what elementary students do in their science classrooms.

Scientific Collections

Scientific collections are examples of materials that are collected and organized by characteristics of the materials in the collection. These projects involve sorting and classifying objects according to their size, color, shape, texture, etc. Seeds, shells, fabric, and rocks are some examples of materials that can be part of a scientific collection. Primary students especially implement collections in their science learning.

Scientific Observation History

An observation history is a record of an observation of objects, organisms, or phenomena. The history can be re-

corded in science notebooks to include drawings, photos, descriptions, and questions of changes that have been observed over time. Observing an animal, the moon, or a plant over time and presenting a record of the evidence, conclusions, and what was learned is what a student would do for a Scientific Observation History project.

Scientific Experiment

In an experiment, students identify questions, test them out, use tools, collect, organize, and interpret data, and then communicate their findings/ conclusions based on the data they collected. Questions that arise during science time can be posted to a class Question Board. Students can choose one of the questions to investigate for their science fair project.

Technological Design/Inventions

Necessity is the mother of invention. Technological design is the result of applying the best of what we know to the modification of natural materials to meet both our needs and wants. Sharing modifications of a common item such as a fork with students and explaining that different shaped and sized forks serve different purposes is one way to model tech design to students. Many times students naturally come up with their own modifications of an object because they have a need for it.

The Southern Nevada Regional Science and Engineering Fair will be held on March 28, 29, and 30, 2007. Projects from students in grades K—4 can be submitted but will not be judged. Fifth grade projects will be judged. For more information visit the Southern Nevada Regional Science website— <http://www.unlv.edu/centers/cos-advising/Sci&Eng/Main/index.htm>

RPDP Elementary Science Team