

A Fish in Water

Summary

A classroom goldfish teaches responsible pet care and helps students understand how animals need clean water to live.

Materials

For the Teacher:

- Copy of *Fish Out of Water*, P. D. Eastman
- Bowl or aquarium with live goldfish
- DeChlor
- Small net

Background for Teachers

All living things need water. Students have experimental background with fish and most recognize that fish cannot live without water. It would be cruel, and not necessary, to take fish out of the water to prove they need water. Students can learn vicariously through videos and fish tales. Fish must have a continuous supply of clean water either through a filter, changing water in a bowl, or unpolluted stream water in the natural environment.

Intended Learning Outcomes

1. Make observations.
2. Identify variables. Describe relationships.
4. Accept responsibility for ecological problems.

Instructional Procedures

1. Show the class the fishbowl or aquarium with the live goldfish. Have students discuss what the fish will need to live (food, DeChlor, clean water, net to catch them and a jar to put them in when changing water). Tell why each item is needed and identify safety factors concerning fish.
2. Explain that the fish will be in the classroom and students will take turns feeding the fish. Show students how much to feed fish (a pinch) and explain that more or less food would not be good for the fish.
3. Read *Fish Out of Water* by P. D. Eastman. Discuss factors which made the fish in the story sick; i.e., too much food, not enough water, no water. Have students discern fact from fiction by comparing the fish in the story with the real fish in the classroom. Ask, "What would happen if someone dumped all the fish food in our fishbowl?" Let students respond. Make sure they understand that the whole container dumped in would not make the fish grow faster, but would make the water polluted. The fish could get sick and even die. Explain that food is not the only thing that helps fish grow. Good, clean, healthy water is needed for oxygen.
4. Assign and rotate two students, weekly, to be responsible for feeding the fish and observing special needs like water changes, food adjustments, moving out of the sun, etc. Be emphatic when you tell students the fish water can only be changed with teacher/adult supervision to assure fish safety.
5. Compare water pollution in the fishbowl (cloudy, smelly water with food and waste products floating in it) to possible environmental pollution in streams and lakes. Ask, "How do our lakes and streams become polluted?" Give students situations, such as picnickers on a beach or fisherman drinking pop or other beverages while fishing. Ask, "What would happen if they do not dispose of trash properly?"

Authors

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