

Title of Session: BirdSleuth - Scientific Questions in Your Classroom

Moderator: Jennifer Fee

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Room: BirdSleuth Inquiry Group

JenniferMF: Hi Anita, thanks for stopping in!

AnitaN: Hi Jennifer!

AnitaN: I am really interested in Bird Sleuth

AnitaN: I've been checking out the website for the past couple of days

JenniferMF: Wonderful! Thanks!

JenniferMF: Anita-- Did you discover BirdSleuth on Tapped In, or discover Tapped in on the BirdSleuth site?

ToniM joined the room.

AnitaN: I discovered Birdsleuth on Tapped In

JenniferMF: (which came first, the chicken or the egg...)

JenniferMF: Excellent.

BJB2 grins...typical comment for a birder!

AnitaN: Lol

RebeccaRi: Funny!

ToniM: I am obviously not the most technically savvy person in the world

JenniferMF . o O (like killing two birds with one stone)

AnitaN: Toni, it took me a couple of times to get used to the chat

AnitaN: So don't feel bad :)

ToniM: Is everyone here a teacher?

MariaCos: yep

AnitaN: I'm a preservice

JenniferMF: I am still getting used to it. And I forgot how to emote again (with the / and th) =(

RebeccaRi: Pre-service as well.

BJB2: Jen, to Think type /th first

BJB2: to emote type : followed by the action

JenniferMF: . o O (why do I always forget that.)

JenniferMF: fears her memory is going bad.

BJB2: you don't use it often enough!

JenniferMF: true!

BJB2: Welcome, everyone, to today's BirdSleuth discussion!

ToniM: what's the difference between /th and : ?

BJB2: We usually start all Tapped In events with brief introductions

JenniferMF: . o O (makes the thought bubble)

BJB2: please tell Jennifer where you are located and what you teach

AnitaN: Hi everyone, I'm Anita, and I am currently student teaching in Houston, TX

BJB2: . o O (the /th command creates thought bubbles like in a cartoon)

RebeccaRi: I am currently a preservice teacher completing my degree student teaching kindergarten from University of Houston

MariaCos: Hi Jennifer. I am from NY and I teach in a 1st grade CTT class-my discipline is special education

BJB2: types a colon first to show that the : is how you emote or show an action

JenniferMF: So, two from TX and two from NY so far (I'm also in NY-- Ithaca)

ToniM: I'm working on MEd in Fairfax, VA. Can't afford to student teach at the moment. Subbing at the moment.

JenniferMF: Welcome everyone! Thanks for joining! I am the Project Leader for BirdSleuth =>

JenniferMF: Anita mentioned a little earlier that she had been checking BirdSleuth out. Anyone else familiar with it at all?

BJB2: I'm in Pennsylvania and am a big cheerleader for Jen ;-)

MariaCos: Jennifer I am not familiar with it

MariaCos: but am interested in learning!

ToniM: not me

ToniM: and I love birds

JenniferMF: Ok... let me start you off checking a birdsleuth site. Just a second... BJ maybe you could remind them how to click a link?

RebeccaRi: I was looking at the notes and read the whiteboard and welcome info. Seems very interesting and I love the inquiry based teaching method

BJB2: ahhhh...good idea, Jen....when Jen shows you a url, make sure you hold down the ctrl key on your keyboard to override pop up blockers

BJB2: . o O (or turn off your pop up blockers!)

JenniferMF: Ok... BirdSleuth is one of the best ways (in my opinion) to get kids doing real inquiry!

JenniferMF: Watching birds seems to naturally lead to questions!

JenniferMF: Has anyone ever watched birds with students?

RebeccaRi: Click the Inquiry Resources at Birdsleuth link?

AnitaN: No, haven't but I can imagine that it naturally leads to questions!

JenniferMF: Actually, check this out: <http://www.birds.cornell.edu/birdsleuth/student-research/birdsleuth-reports>

RebeccaRi: Thank you

JenniferMF: We publish kids' research reports. Check out BirdSleuth Reports

JenniferMF: (spring 2009)

JenniferMF: Let me know if you have the PDF open (or if you are having trouble...)

AnitaN: I've got it

MariaCos: I have it open

ToniM: got it

RebeccaRi: Slowly but surely, it's coming along

JenniferMF: Great... so in this issue, we published the work of 4 students, who each did a scientific report based on their own questions and data they collected.

AnitaN: Interesting

MariaCos: Jennifer what was the age group range?

JenniferMF: Some background... BirdSleuth involves kids in the Lab's Citizen Science programs... anyone ever heard of (or done) citizen science?

MariaCos: I haven't

RebeccaRi: Recognizing and publishing student work seems to be such a great accomplishment for them

MariaCos: I agree with you Rebecca

AnitaN: I haven't heard of it

RebeccaRi: No I have not. But it seems very interesting!

JenniferMF: It looks like these kids are 6th and 7th grade... that's fairly typical, many of our teachers are middle school. But we've had kindergarten through college use it!

JenniferMF: Citizen science is when "ordinary people" help scientists by collecting useful data.

JenniferMF: In our case, people count birds and send us data about their observations over the internet.

JenniferMF: Our scientists can use the data to see what's going on with bird populations all across the country!

ToniM: How is BirdSleuth and Citizen Science connected?

JenniferMF: So long as your kids can identify a few kinds of birds (and count them) they can participate.

JenniferMF: Great question, Toni.

JenniferMF: Most cit sci projects are free and easy to use... but educators found them and wanted to use them with students...

RebeccaRi: That's a great way to incorporate students with learning about the birds and knowing they contribute to real scientists' ideas and data collection.

JenniferMF: they asked for journal pages, advice, handouts written for kids, etc.

JenniferMF: So we created BirdSleuth!

AnitaN: Cool, I bet the students love that they're helping real scientists

JenniferMF: It basically is teacher scaffolding for a growing number of cit sci projects, like eBird, NestWatch, Project FeederWatch...

JenniferMF: We have a number of projects to choose from.

JenniferMF: Yes, kids love that their data helps scientists and has real world meaning and importance!

RebeccaRi: Variety is always a plus!

JenniferMF: One thing that we then found was that it turned out that observing birds was a great gateway into authentic inquiry!

ToniM: Are you Cornell Lab of Ornithology?

JenniferMF: Kids wanted to know whether a certain kind of seed attracted birds better, or the effects of temperature, etc.

JenniferMF: Yes, I'm at the Lab of O

RebeccaRi: The students are able to choose a bird that caught their eye and change variables/ observe environmental factors

ToniM: cool. And students send you this info and you publish it in BirdSleuth? How do you determine what you publish?

JenniferMF: Well, we try to select diverse reports which show a good deal of creative scientific thinking.

JenniferMF: We have a free online module that helps teachers scaffold the inquiry... from question to publishing results in BirdSleuth Reports.

JenniferMF: <http://www.birds.cornell.edu/birdsleuth/inquiry-resources>

MariaCos: By looking at the report, I love how the data is shown in different ways

JenniferMF: This helps teachers with some of the challenges of this kind of thing-- like graphing help!

RebeccaRi: Wow! I really like the scientific exploration they are able to do.

AnitaN: Cool, and lesson plans too!

JenniferMF: I love the data, too... but most kids struggle with how to graph (especially what kind of graph to make)

JenniferMF: There is a lesson in that free inquiry module (I believe lesson 3) that is all about kinds of graphs and when to use them

RebeccaRi: Collecting and processing data. They are doing and learning so much on their own with the teacher's guidance.

JenniferMF: Exactly. And teachers can choose how/when to offer guidance.,

MariaCos: I know my students would love the hands on component!

AnitaN: Yes, these projects are definitely student led

MariaCos: that's great

JenniferMF: for example, some teachers let the kids pretty much choose their own question, but guide them in how to collect the data and write the report.

MariaCos: I like that style

JenniferMF: others are more structured... giving the class a topic and question, creating the data sheets for them to fill out, etc.

RebeccaRi: It's absolutely the kind of learning students need and I think they enjoy more when they can do and learn!!

AnitaN: I agree Rebecca

RebeccaRi smiles

JenniferMF: Do any of you have experience with inquiry?

AnitaN: I've been trying to involve inquiry into my lessons

AnitaN: Because my school really focuses on inquiry-based lessons

JenniferMF: It was hard for me at first to distinguish between simply "hands on" and "inquiry"...

JenniferMF: We spent a lot of time trying to make the lessons both.

ToniM: My undergrad degree was in Biology. Two summers ago I taught at the George Mason Univ science summer camp.

RebeccaRi: In my science methods course last semester, my professor made it a point for us to consider inquiry based learning and include it in the lesson plans we created.

MariaCos: There is an inquiry team at my workplace

JenniferMF: Great, Toni. My undergrad was also in biology. But it was surprising how little we actually did inquiry like this even in college!!!

JenniferMF: Mostly cookbook labs!

RebeccaRi: I haven't had too much experience with it, however in the lessons I am creating for my future lesson plans, I do intend to include inquiry based learning.

MariaCos: I myself have not been directly involved in it but have been exposed to those who are

JenniferMF: To be honest, the Investigating Evidence module (the link to the free curriculum I gave you) could probably be useful in many science topics (not just birds) and you might even find it useful in other subjects.

ToniM: In spite of my science background, I have to keep reminding myself not to give students all the answers.

ElizabetTT joined the room.

RebeccaRi: Thanks for the info Jennifer.

AnitaN: Yes, this can definitely be used in other science topics

AnitaN: and other subjects possibly

JenniferMF: I think lesson 1 mentions the "I wonder" board, Toni, you might find it useful. I struggled with "giving the answers" until I started the I wonder board.

JenniferMF: I saw one teacher give each kid a stack of post it notes. If they had a question, they'd write it down, and post it to a big board.

ToniM: Yes, cookbook labs. That's what I did in college too.

JenniferMF: Within a few weeks, they had tons of birdy questions to explore.

RebeccaRi: That is a great idea!

AnitaN: They do that at my school

AnitaN: in 2nd and 4th grade

MariaCos: yes I do that with my students

MariaCos: "What do you want to know"

AnitaN: I like that idea

JenniferMF: Then, separate the questions: which are experimental? Which could you look up the answer?

JenniferMF: Talk about the various ways to answer scientific questions!

JenniferMF: Some you could look at citizen science data. Some you could do an observation,

JenniferMF: The question types are outlined in that lesson.

JenniferMF: Elizabeth, welcome... we're chatting about a free online inquiry module: <http://www.birds.cornell.edu/birdsleuth/inquiry-resources>

RebeccaRi: It seems like it would create more of an interest for the students on any subject for that matter. A great interactive engaging activity.

ElizabethTT: Thank you. I'm sorry I'm late.

JenniferMF: Yep. And again, to stress the excitement of contributing data to science!

JenniferMF: And then getting to potentially be published!

AnitaN: There's a lot of motivation there

RebeccaRi: I'm excited about it already and I don't have my own classroom yet! I will certainly use this info!!

JenniferMF: Besides the PDF of BirdSleuth Reports, we also have a print version <http://www.birds.cornell.edu/birdsleuth/student-research> see Classroom BirdScope

JenniferMF: You can order classroom sets on the site. A good way to kick off the inquiry unit.

JenniferMF: We printing over 50,000 this year-- sent them to all the Cornell Lab of Ornithology members!

RebeccaRi: Wow!

JenniferMF: Can you imagine a student's work being read by 50,000 conservation-minded people?!?

MariaCos: wow, thank you for exposing us to this great resource! :)

JenniferMF: I think it is so cool. I wish I could have done this =)

AnitaN: I bet they love that and really look forward to it?

JenniferMF: This is the first year we have printed so many and shared them beyond teachers. The response was great!

JenniferMF: People are happy to see the kids doing this kind of work =)

AnitaN: Yeah, I'm impressed

JenniferMF: So, those of you who teach "little guys," K-2... do you think your kids could do similar projects?

RebeccaRi: I think parents are pleased to know how active and involved their children are.

JenniferMF: Collect citizen science data?

JenniferMF: Do their own research?

AnitaN: definitely

ToniM: sure they could.

MariaCos: yes Jennifer definitely. Parents would greatly appreciate it as well

MariaCos: to see how involved and connected their child is with the subject

AnitaN: and it would make science much more fun for them as well

JenniferMF: We had some 2nd graders investigate the effect of snow depth on the number of birds. I have a photo of all of them out there with their rulers =)

RebeccaRi: I think they would be okay with observations (with parent/teacher help) and we could certainly create a class graph! They ALWAYS have questions about everything anyway! :)

BJB2 looks at the clock on the wall....15 minutes to go, Jen

JenniferMF: One easy-to-use citizen science project is eBird... www.eBird.org

JenniferMF: The BirdSleuth module that scaffolds that project is called "Most Wanted Birds"

ToniM: do you know if any other science fields do anything like this?

JenniferMF: It might be a good place to start if you want to do citizen science.

JenniferMF: Toni, YES-- there is BudBurst, StarWatch, etc.

RebeccaRi: Good to know!

ToniM: can they all be found at Cit. Sci.

JenniferMF: All collect data (trees budding, tulips blooming, night sky stuff) from citizen scientists.

JenniferMF: You might find this useful: <http://www.birds.cornell.edu/citscitoolkit/>

RebeccaRi: I am totally on board with these ideas!! Real world scientific inquiries that the students can observe and collect data from in their own backyard! WONDERFUL!!!

JenniferMF: Also, this BirdSleuth site with info about the projects we support with curricula: <http://www.birds.cornell.edu/birdsleuth/about/resources/birdsleuth-modules>

JenniferMF: I encourage you all to join the Tapped In BirdSleuth group... I'll be hosting a series of workshops on a variety of topics. Would love to see you again and get your input on other aspects, too.

RebeccaRi: Will do!

ToniM: Thank you Jennifer. there's a gold mine of info here.

JenniferMF: We recently got a little funding to look at ways to make BirdSleuth inquiry easier for teachers. So I want to understand what the barriers are as well as share the resources =>

BJB2: The next BirdSleuth discussion is on Wednesday...check your calendars!

ToniM: I'll try to make it

JenniferMF: If not.... there are workshops throughout the month. A couple on graphing =>

AnitaN: I'm interested in the graphing

RebeccaRi: Thank you Jennifer!!! I will definitely encourage my other preservice friends to visit as well!

BJB2: I've also started twittering about Tapped In events...look for tappedinorg on Twitter

JenniferMF: Thanks, Rebecca! We were just chatting today in my workgroup about how to reach preservice teachers. Any advice? Listservs, blogs, etc.??

MariaCos: Jennifer I will definitely discuss what you've shown us here with my colleagues

AnitaN: Jennifer, do you only teach science?

RebeccaRi: I think word of mouth has been our main communication and emailing also. I believe several of my pre-service friends have created their own office here on Tapped In our Tech instructor introduced it to us.

JenniferMF: Also, Rebecca or anyone, I'd be happy to send you enough BirdSleuth brochures and flyers about the free module for you to hand out to colleagues, if you want.

ToniM: I just figured out facebook; what's Twitter?

BJB2: www.twitter.com

BJB2: it's a micro blog

BJB2: limit is 140 characters per post

AnitaN: I'm interested in the brochures Jennifer

AnitaN: Yeah, I think a lot of the preservice teachers are planning on creating their

online classrooms on Tapped in

ToniM: thanks for the warning.

JenniferMF: Anita, how many? And I'll need your mailing address (can sent it in a private message if you like)

RebeccaRi: Several of us do have facebook as well. I can post the link(s) and let them know about BirdSleuth!

AnitaN: most of the people that I talk to

BJB2 is amazed at the power of the Web

AnitaN: I'll email it to you on here

ToniM: I would like the BirdSleuth brochures for my fellow students at GMU.

JenniferMF: COOL!!!! I think BirdSleuth has a Facebook page that my assistant created??? But I haven't looked for it =)

RebeccaRi: Jennifer if you could, I'd like to post the brochure or flyer on facebook and/or email to my pre-serv friends

JenniferMF: Maybe this will be the push I need to make a Myspace and Facebook page for BirdSleuth. Ugh... more things to monitor =)

JenniferMF: Yes, I'll just get in touch with the group via email with a summary of the links we discussed tonight and a PDF of the flyer.

AnitaN: sounds good

JenniferMF: If you need any more help or need anything, please do not hesitate to contact me.

ToniM: Thank you a bunch.

ToniM: what's the best way to contact you?

JenniferMF: Thank you all a bunch... great to "meet" you =)

AnitaN: Thanks for the valuable information!

JenniferMF: via Tapped In would work or email jms327@cornell.edu or call [607.254.2403](tel:607.254.2403)

MariaCos: Thank you Jennifer for being so helpful!

RebeccaRi: Yes thank you for such great resources!!!

JenniferMF: Fantastic. What a great group and a nice discussion. I appreciate it.

AnitaN: Good to meet you too

BJB2 waves goodnight. See you Wednesday, Jen

ToniM: See you next chat

JenniferMF: Happy birding everyone!!!!!! Get out there and notice a bird tomorrow =)

JenniferMF: good night!

AnitaN: See ya at the graphing chat

AnitaN: Good night!

RebeccaRi waves bye!

MariaCos: bye Jennifer..We'll talk soon:)