

Owl Eyes

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

EVERY SEASON



WHAT'S THE
Big Idea?
Change over
Time

Enduring Understandings

- Observation skills help us detect change over time.
- Good observation skills can be perfected through practice.
- Everything changes.
- By comparing the past to the present we can detect change.

Materials

- photo, puppet, or image of owl posted somewhere visible in the room



Objectives

- Children demonstrate the ability to notice small physical changes.
- Children experiment with making small changes in their appearance and/or surroundings to help others perfect their observation skills.
- Children show interest and curiosity in how the natural and built worlds change.

Directions

1. Gather the children on your rug or meeting area. Explain that throughout the year they will be exploring their schoolyard and neighborhood. To explore, they will need to be good observers. Ask, “What is a good observer?” and “What does a good observer need to do?” After discussing the skills of looking carefully and slowly, ask if they know of an animal or bird that is a good observer. Tell them of all the animals they have mentioned, you would like them to develop “owl eyes.” Place your fingers around your eyes to make large owl eyes. Look slowly and carefully around the room; ask the students to do the same. Have an owl puppet or picture somewhere in the room and ask them to find the owl with their “owl eyes.” Once they have spotted it, ask them to hoot softly like an owl.

Extensions

- ***Can You Find Me? A Book About Animal Camouflage*** by Jennifer Dewey
- ***I See Animals Hiding*** by Jim Arnosky
- ***Sky Tree*** by Candace Christiansen and Thomas Locker
- Place five to ten objects relating to a topic (such as, rubber or plastic frogs, salamanders and dragonflies if you are exploring a pond habitat; or spiders, millipedes, and snakes if you are exploring the forest floor) on a tray or table, have children observe the objects, children close their eyes as you remove one of the objects. At the count of three, children open their eyes, raise their hand if they can identify the missing object.
- When outdoors in a familiar place, have children observe their surroundings, then walk away as two of their classmates make a subtle change in the area. The class walks back and tries to identify the change.
- On weekly walks, take photos of a tree, building, garden, etc. Compile the photos into a book where the children can identify the changes, if any, throughout the year.
- Look for animal tracks, tame and wild, around the schoolyard. Have children use their awesome observation skills to identify which animal left the tracks.

2. Explain that they will test their “owl eyes” again in the “Owl Eyes” game. They will be using their “owl eyes” to detect changes. Have a child stand in front of you and use their “owl eyes” to take a picture of you with their mind’s camera. Then have the child turn away from you while you change one small part of your physical appearance (e.g. take off your sweater, roll up a pant leg, put on a hat, or change your hairstyle).
3. Ask the child to turn around, look closely and make up to five “educated guesses” to deduce what has changed. Most people, children included, want to name the change right away. In an effort to put the focus on observation skills, encourage the observer to ask more general questions first. For example, “Did you change something from your waist up?” Have the observers keep track of the guesses by raising a finger for each guess. Encourage the use of all five guesses to build the practice of asking good questions that move from general to specific. This will help children focus more on learning to ask good questions rather than focusing on getting the “right” answer.
4. Once you have modeled the process, pair up the children to play “Owl Eyes” with their partner. The children can take turns being the “observed” and the “owl.” After the owl has guessed correctly or used up five guesses, they switch roles.
5. Process and reflect on the experience with the children by engaging in a conversation guided by the discussion questions.

Discussion Questions

- What do you see?
- What, if anything, has changed?
- How do you notice changes? (Help children think about strategies and process: do you scan from top to bottom, looking at specific areas, etc.)
- How do you keep in your mind what you saw and how it changed?
- What are some good questions you can ask to help you determine what has been changed?