

Scavenger Hunt: Collecting New Perspective

Using the book The Pocket Scavenger this lesson seeks to strengthen students' capacity to find and see the story in everyday items.

"The process of collecting tunes us into our environment and makes use of our increasingly underused senses. You may begin to see that everything is interesting." (Smith, *XVI*)

"In our current culture of immediacy, we have lost the experience of "the quest," the search for that elusive item and the stories we create in our attempt to find it. These stories, the process (vs. the object itself), are often what make life interesting." (Smith, *XVI*)

Imaginative Education: The scavenger activity hones the Romantic Understanding cognitive tools of 'Collections' and 'Change of Context'. The act of collecting items allows children to document a set of materials that all have a story. Through the contemplation of the item's story, the way children perceive the item changes and ultimately leads to the students seeing new possibilities.

Lesson 1

The first activity tries to create a sense of wonder and awe in the often disregarded details of our environment. We begin a narrative of unexpected interest in everyday items by acknowledging the story, truth or fictional, in everything.

I begin by reading the story "Sunlight on Leaves" from Stuart McLean's Time Now for the Vinyl Café Story Time (2013). This true story follows the short friendship between two girls that understand value in different ways. I try to use this story as a platform to allow my students to see the world through a different lens.

Next I randomly select an item off the floor and weave a story about its origin. I personify the object, giving it an emotional connection to the events that led to its current predicament (being on the floor).

Lastly, I send students outside (10 minutes) to find an item they can use in their first story. I encourage them to pay attention to the details that surround the location where the object is found. Upon return, students are asked to write down their item's story, with as many details as they can remember.

Resources:

Smith, K. (2013). *The Pocket Scavenger*. New York, New York: Penguin Group.

Smith, K. (2013). *Pocket Scavenger classroom packet*. Retrieved October 10, 2015, from

http://www.penguin.com/static/pdf/teachersguides/the_pocket_scavenger_teachers_guide.pdf

Vallis, E. (2013). *Sunlight on Leaves*. In S. McLean (Ed.), *Time Now for the Vinyl Cafe Story Exchange* (pp. 5-7). Toronto, Ontario: Penguin Group.

Once the story is complete, the object is secured into the scavenger notebook and an alteration is randomly selected by the teacher, The alteration is a final act of personalization. A chance for the students to imprint on the next chapter of the item's story.

After students have finished the collection and story of the item, secured it to the book and further added an alteration (it helps to have them write the alteration in their books), we share our items and stories. This is an excellent opportunity for students to celebrate their unique discoveries and creative change.

I further assign an item for the following week (usually to be brought in on a Friday) and we spend some time making interesting discoveries, contemplating stories and reinventing often forgotten trinkets.

Over a number of years I have found that the process of discovery and reimagined utility that is practiced during this activity, intensifies interest in other classroom activities and assignments done at home. Students begin to more easily take interest in discovery and are less likely to return to school empty handed or without effort.

In the references at the bottom of the page, is the website where you can download a PDF file from Penguin Group publishers that has some of the search items and the page formats. (or simply search for 'Pocket Scavenger Teachers Guide')

Resources

1. The Pocket Scavenger by Kerri Smith
2. Time Now for the Vinyl Cafe Story Exchange by Stuart McLean (2013)
3. The Pocket Scavenger PDF Teacher's Guide
http://www.penguin.com/static/pdf/teachersguides/the_pocket_scavenger_teachers_guide.pdf

Resources:

Smith, K. (2013). The Pocket Scavenger. New York, New York: Penguin Group.
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