

Feature Story

Teach Science by Celebrating a Science Day!

As teachers, we are always looking for ways to build interest and excitement in our science students. In this era of testing, it becomes even more important for us to remember that the motivation to learn science and to pursue science as a career does not come from choosing among answers A, B, C, or D! Students love celebrations so let's make science exciting by celebrating special science days...

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Feature Story

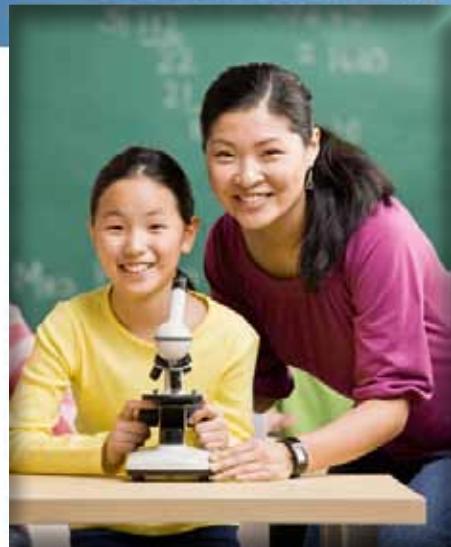
Teach Science by Celebrating a Science day!

By: Veteran Teacher, Judy Jones

Article courtesy of www.TeachersNetwork.Org. Check out their website for many excellent teaching ideas and lesson plans by clicking above.

As teachers, we are always looking for ways to build interest and excitement with our science students. In this era of testing, it becomes even more important for us to remember that the motivation to learn science and to pursue science as a career does not come from choosing among answers A, B, C, or D! Students love celebrations so let's make science fun and exciting by celebrating special science days.

Some ideas for celebration that I have used:



Invite a speaker: DNA Day is a perfect example of a day that has many opportunities for inviting speakers. You might focus on genetic counseling or you might choose to focus on agricultural biotechnology and the related DNA research. There are so many opportunities here. The national DNA Day group will help to organize a speaker for your classroom. For National Blood Donor Month, you could invite a nurse or other medical person to explain how different blood donations work. (I always use Valentine's Day to have the school nurse come speak about blood donations!) For any of the special environmental days, you could find many different speakers – from folks who work in recycling, to scientists that are researching various aspects of environmental change, to engineers who are trying to develop energy saving technologies. You and your students might even organize a debate on global climate change.

Plan a Service Project: Students love to feel useful and there are many opportunities to make them feel so. In January you could plan a blood drive at your high school; call the Red Cross and they will work with you. You could do a campus clean-up for World Environment Day. You could create health brochures for your school for National Nutrition Month. You could help students volunteer at the Animal Shelter or collect pet food and other supplies for National Pet Week. You could have a fundraiser where you show a "pet" movie such as "Home-ward Bound" or something similar. Your students could start a school recycling program or a home recycling program for "America Recycles Day." For "World No Tobacco Day," your students could have an awareness campaign where they research tobacco related diseases and create posters to hang around the community. You and your students could build birdfeeders for National Birdfeeding Month. You could sell the feeders and use the money to buy bird food! The possibilities are endless!

Have a Party: All children love a party. How about a Birthday Party for Darwin as part of your lessons on the Theory of Evolution. Students could dress up and bring food. There could be a cake in the shape of a finch or an iguana or one of the Galapagos Islands. Students could read part of Origin of Species aloud. Students could sponsor a party for a scientist that is born on their birthday. What fun for them to find a scientist born on their own birthday, research that scientist and plan a party!

Incorporate the Day into Your Curriculum: Don't forget to include these special days in your curriculum. One of our main responsibilities as science teachers is to help our students learn important science concepts. These special "science days" can be used as a vehicle to help students learn the curriculum. When I taught chemistry, I used "National Mole Day" to teach the concept of the mole and its application in Stoichiometry. As a biology teacher, I use DNA day as a wonderful time to have my students learn about the history of the discovery of DNA and the incredible progress in understanding DNA function. The opportunities for learning are abundant for your students. Capturing their interest with special science celebrations will motivate your students and make science meaningful for them.



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Author: Judy Jones

Source: www.teachersnetwork.org

Doing Science

Superintendent Receives National Award!

Article provided by *The Daily Ardmoreite*
Ardmore City Schools
April 8, 2009
www.ardmoreite.com

Ardmore, OK — Ardmore City Schools Superintendent, Dr. Ruth Ann Carr, has been awarded the 2009 Kendall Hunt/National Science Education Leadership Association Outstanding Administrator Support Award.

The NSELA, formed in 1959 to meet a need to develop science education leadership for school systems, presents the OASA annually to an administrator who shows exemplary support of science education.

Carr was chosen due to her many outstanding efforts in contributing and sustaining a standards-based science program at Ardmore City Schools.

Carr has instigated many district-wide advancements in science curriculum, including the acquisition of the process/research-based science program for grades Pre-K through 12, the implementation of the Oklahoma Scholars Program which includes a rigorous course study requiring 4 science credits for College Preparatory Curriculum (versus the state required 3 credits) for graduation, the enhancement of the high school and middle school science labs, the conveyance of the importance of science through support and professional development for faculty and the facilitation of training for school principals enabling them to continue to become “science leaders” in their school building.

“This is great. Dr. Carr certainly deserves this national recognition. It reflects her continuing efforts to introduce innovative curricular improvements to ACS. Our kids have no greater champion than Dr. Carr. She constantly encourages our students to reach for and realize their full academic potential. I’m very proud of her,” school board president, Brent Bahner, said.



Charley Cook, K-12 Vice President of Kendall Hunt Publishing Company, presents Ardmore Superintendent Dr. Ruth Ann Carr, with the 2009 Kendall Hunt/NSELA Outstanding Administrator Support Award.

Photo courtesy of Ardmore City Schools

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Preparing for the End of the School Year

By: Heather Skipworth Craven



The article below has been provided by www.InspiringTeachers.com. Click above for the direct link to this article and visit their website for more classroom tips, stories and teaching resources.

It's hard to fathom that the close of the school year is almost here. For beginning teachers, this first year may have been like being swept up in a powerful tidal wave of information, methodology, and testing, often turbulent waters. For veteran teachers it's perhaps comparable to running a marathon. Just when one thinks the last ounce of energy and motivation are exhausted and spent, we manage to summon a burst of creativity that gives us a boost to power on to the end of our course.

Although each school year is similar in routine and procedure, they are also as unique and individual as fingerprints. In one aspect or another teachers powerfully impact the lives of each one of our students. Each classroom is an extended family and community who live, play, work and coexist together for nine months. The end of the school years closes the door on many months of establishing relationships with our students. It has been a joy for me when my former students have given me an impromptu hug in the hall or come back and visit years later. Yes, teachers keep many relationships with their students years after they move on, but it's very different from the daily classroom contact and interaction.

With the closing of the school year our students face another transition. Ending or beginning a school year for a child, be it a student just beginning his primary years or a high school student, would be comparable to an adult starting a new job every year. Students will be placed in a new environment, given new expectations, and surrounded by a new peer group. Children by their very nature are amazingly adaptable and resilient, but ending one school year and preparing to transition to another one remains a huge transition. For many children it's a very emotional time of saying goodbyes to teachers, friends and preparing for the next academic step.

So how can we as educators help our students with these transitions? What kinds of activities can we do with our students to bring a positive closure to the school year? The following are some hopefully beneficial suggestions for activities:

- Use a theme such as "See How We've Grown", "Finishing The Race!", "Where We've Been, Where We're Going!!", as starting places for activities which will reinforce goals and progress students have made throughout the year.
- Give students an opportunity to stay in touch with each other. Provide postcards for students to pre-address and give out to classmates to send to each other over the summer.
- Making a class memory book is a good way for students to record positive events and milestones of the school year.
- Have an "autograph" party. Students can make simple autograph books out of construction paper and plain white or notebook paper. Covers can be decorated and then laminated. It's often very difficult for students to verbally express their feelings towards one another. An autograph book is a wonderful vehicle for expressing these feelings.
- Provide opportunities for discussion, role-play, field trips, and guest speakers for students transitioning to a new school, or higher level of schooling such as moving from elementary to middle school, or middle school to high school.

Each school year remains a journey for both teachers and students. Both learn from each other, and will ultimately carry with them memories, knowledge and experiences that will last a lifetime.

*Author: Heather Skipworth Craven
Source: www.inspiringteachers.com*



May Teacher Inspiration Story: Miss H. Thinks You Are a Star!

*Provided by: Molly, Beginner Teacher
Courtesy of www.lessonplanspage.com*

I student-taught a couple years ago in second grade, and I was lucky enough to be with the same class for an entire school year. In May, when I was finished, I decided to buy star shaped pieces of paper for each kid. I wrote on each piece, "Miss H. thinks you're a star because..." and then wrote a little fact about each child. I was dubious about doing this, since the kids were so young, but one of my friends suggested that if the star meant something to one kid then it was worth my time.

One of the little girls, Megan, was diagnosed with ADHD during that year and was going through more tests to see if she had another learning disability on top of that one.

The thing about her was, though, that she was so clever. She was smart in her own way.

On her star I wrote, "Miss H. thinks you're a star because you never forget people in your life. I also think you're smart, and I really believe you could do anything if you try hard enough. I'll always remember that."

After I gave out the stars, I was standing in front of the class guiding the children with packing up for the end of the day. She approached me, holding her star in her hand.

"Hey, do you need me to read that for you, Megan?" I asked her.

"No," she replied, looking at me with sparkling eyes. "I already read it." Then she blinked hard, and her chin quivered and she said, "You think I'm SMART?" It was like I was the first person to ever tell her that. It was like the thought had never even crossed her mind until she read that star.

It was by far the single greatest moment in my teacher career.

I don't think Megan will ever forget me.

Whenever I feel discouraged in the classroom, I think of that moment.

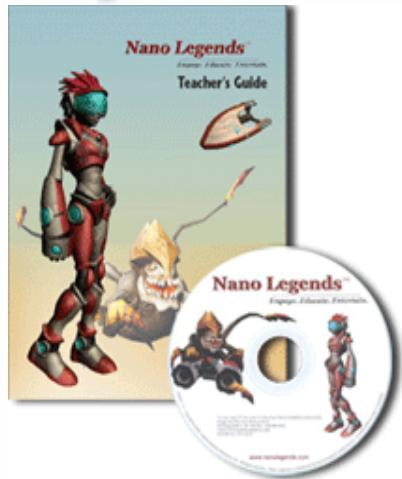
Let's just say the stars were definitely worth my time!

*Source: Hot Chalk's Lesson Plan Page
<http://www.lessonplanspage.com/Inspiration.htm>*

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Doing Science

New!! Nano Legends



Nano Legends is an innovative new video game about the science of cells and cancer. Funded by the National Institutes of Health, Nano Legends breaks down the barriers in producing educational gaming for middle school and high school students. Classroom testing shows that players double their comprehension of National Science Education Standard content after playing **Nano Legends** just one time for entertainment only.

As the game begins, Aerin, the nano-sized adventurer, and her shipmates are attacked by a white blood cell while they are patrolling in the lungs. Soon, Aerin finds herself alone on the surface of a lung cell that is becoming cancerous. The next nine levels of the game find Aerin running, jumping, driving, fighting, and scheming her way through the organelles of the cell in order to stop the cancer. Passive and active transport, cell structure, cell division, the functions of organelles, cell respiration, DNA, mRNA, protein synthesis, and cause/effect of cancer are integral concepts the player learns and uses to win the game.

Engage. **Nano Legends** takes place in a 3-D cellular world where a nano-sized adventurer experiences sub-cellular phenomena. The student becomes part of the storyline and actively participates in the fascinating cellular adventure. Students learn science concepts while overcoming video game challenges, and then apply and build on those concepts to win the game. It is engaging for both ethnic and gender diverse audiences.

Educate. Based on *National Science Education Standards*, educational approach and content development were guided by nationally recognized secondary science professionals, classroom science teachers, and cancer research physicians. Storyline and setting create a clear model for understanding cell and cancer science.

Entertain. Developed with the same animation and gaming tools used to create popular video game titles, the compelling storyline and characters were created with likeable and engaging personalities. The cinematic quality of original music score, graphics, and animation provide a real video gaming experience. Four difficulty levels challenge both novice and experienced gamers to effectively reinforce science concepts.

Visit our website to view video samples and for more information: www.kendallhunt.com/nanolegends



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Science Resources for Your Classroom!



For more tips, ideas and lesson plans, check out these websites listed below:

www.science-teachers.com: Worksheets, lesson plans and activities for teaching K-12 science classes.

www.helium.com: A community of everyday people sharing their thoughts, ideas and experiences in many areas including education. Excellent articles by teachers include teaching tips and strategies for classroom management.

www.songsforteaching.com: Using music to teach content across the curriculum--to students of all ages.

www.inspiringteachers.com: A community of educators networking to support each other with tips, ideas and teaching strategies.

www.teachersnetwork.org: A non-profit organization--for teachers, by teachers--working together sharing creative ideas, resources and lessons together.

www.ilovethatteachingidea.com: Inspiring teachers with many practical ideas created for teachers, by teachers, to enhance classroom instruction.

<http://octopus.gma.org/turtles/index.html>: Brief information all about turtles. Hear from the snapping turtle about his own adventures in a Tale of Two Turtles.

<http://www.mbgnet.net/>: Learn about the animals which live in the ocean, coral reefs, and estuaries. You can find fish, sea turtles, and seals, as well as invertebrates like sponges and mollusks.

<http://www.miamisci.org/avocado/tadpoles/default.html>: See a research experiment conducted on tadpoles by second graders at Avacdo Elementary School.

May Bulletin Board Classroom Idea: The Constellations

Students can really share their creative side with this activity. With your class, learn about the various stories that surround the formation of the various constellations in our solar system. After you have read a variety of stories, allow students to write their own! Following the completion of the writing portion, students can create the constellation that accompanies their story using black construction paper, chalk, and star stickers. After students have shared their work, mount the two on your bulletin board. Your students will be so proud of their creations!



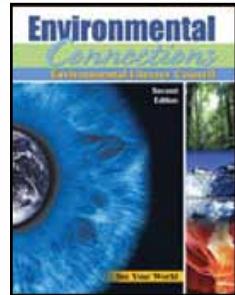
Source: www.theteacherscorner.net

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Environmental Connections, 2nd Edition

Check out this NEW resource textbook! It is packed full of beneficial information for your classroom, and can be applied to all ages. Topics include: water, soil, minerals, energy, transportation, and much more. There are dozens of informational websites within the 17 chapters – even websites specific for classroom use and hands-on activities!



Visit <http://www.borealforest.org> to review a sample website pulled from chapter 11, *Air Quality*. While there, make sure you check out the classroom activity and project tools.

Capturing the interest of children isn't the easiest, so why not get a resource book that makes it easier for you? The second edition of ***Environmental Connections***, does just that. This text is full of fun, real life applications and information that would make anyone eager to learn. It will definitely help you engage your students!

Call Kate Swift for more information at 563-589-1009 or www.kendallhunt.com/elc.



As the leading publisher of inquiry-based learning curricula for the PreK-12 market, Kendall Hunt is pleased to offer online resources for our science programs. Visit **www.mykhscience.com** and choose a curriculum that works best for your classroom. Check back often as we will continue to expand our online offerings!

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