

CHOICES FOR ENCOURAGING STUDENT OBSERVATIONS

Where do you fall on the spectrum during different instructional situations?

How might each instructional decision enhance or interfere with students' capacity to make observations?

Anthropomorphism

(For example: "That lizard likes that rock" or "Those bugs are mad and fighting.")

I don't correct students' anthropomorphic statements. They are identifying with the organism, and making a connection to something they already know. Anthropomorphism is a natural and easy entry point for making observations.



I correct students' anthropomorphic statements. We need to help students move beyond having a human-centered perspective. This can help them understand organisms more deeply, and avoid the inaccurate notions we sometimes project onto the natural world by assuming everything experiences the world in the same way humans do.

Naming/Identifying Organisms

Names are an important aspect of science. If I know the name of something in nature, I tell it to students. Knowing the names of things in nature is fun; it helps students remember what they saw, and it's a part of developing environmental literacy.



I don't tell students the names of organisms we encounter. When you tell students the names of organisms it cuts off their interest and they move on without making observations.