

CHOICES FOR ENCOURAGING LEARNER OBSERVATIONS

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

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

Anthropomorphism

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

I don't correct learners' 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 learners' anthropomorphic statements. We need to help learners 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 that humans do.

Naming and Identifying Organisms

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



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