

THE BENEFITS OF *I NOTICE, I WONDER, IT REMINDS ME OF*

Learner-centered and nature-centered, not instructor-centered:

- Invites learners to slow down and make detailed observations of common objects in nature they are likely to continue to encounter.
- Balances providing structure and increasing autonomy. First, learners choose which leaf to observe, and the instructor offers structure and guidance through the three specific prompts. Then, learners choose what to observe, applying the prompts to their explorations.
- Offers a mindset for approaching nature with curiosity and humility that can be used anywhere, anytime.
- Engages learners with nature through science practices.
- Provides a routine that teachers and learners can use in future lessons/activities, in nature, science, and in other disciplines.

Promotes inclusion and agency:

- Can be done in a broad range of settings wherever learners find nature—schoolyards, neighborhoods, urban areas, in the wilderness, in a virtual learning session, or inside.
- Centering learning on observations that learners make in the moment helps create inclusive learning by focusing on experiences shared by the entire group. Participation does not require prior knowledge about science ideas or prior experience outdoors, which levels the playing field among learners who have had varying exposure to science and nature.

Promotes cultural relevance:

- While the activity does not require prior experience outdoors or knowledge about science ideas, the “It reminds me of…” prompt encourages learners to relate what they are observing to their own lived experiences, to share these experiences with the group, and to imbue the learning experience with their own cultural relevance.
- Offers opportunities for learners to hear and value one another’s different perspectives and for the instructor to learn about the lives of learners.
- Sets up a collaborative learning context in which learners’ ideas and observations drive the learning experience, and learners recognize themselves and one another as sources of expertise.

Supports engagement and equitable participation:

- The prompts “I notice...,” “I wonder...,” and “It reminds me of...” invite a wide range of divergent responses, with no wrong answers.
- Ensures that learners get time to explore and observe with a partner so everyone can share their ideas in a low-stakes setting. Thinking through ideas in a low-stakes setting benefits all learners, especially emerging multilingual learners and learners who need more processing time.
- Learners build social connections through discussion and exploration that help them be more successful in learning experiences. This is especially true for learners who have experienced trauma.

Supports language acquisition:

- Authentic discussions about engaging topics promote language development.
- Emerging multilingual learners benefit from developing discipline-specific vocabulary and literacy in all the languages they speak.
- Learners can use their preferred language in partner discussions.

Scaffolds transferable learning behaviors:

- Learners develop critical thinking skills and learning strategies they can apply in many contexts.
- Supports learners to become more independent with skills and thinking tools they can use, regardless of the support available from a teacher or instructor.

References

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