

Schoolyard Sky Trees



During the course of the school year, students will observe a tree go through the different seasons and weather. They will document this with drawings, words, and/or pictures.

Explore

Supplemental Reading

Cloud Dance

By Thomas Locker

Grade Levels:

K, 1, 2

Curriculum Correlation:

NCSCS – Science

K.E.1.1, K.E.1.3, 1.L.1.1, 2.E.1.3

NCSCS – Language Arts

K.W.3, 1.W.3, 2.W.3

Materials:

Composition notebooks and/or cameras, pencils, various art supplies, *Sky Tree: Seeing Science Through Art* by Thomas Locker

Duration:

30 minutes continued throughout the year

Location:

School grounds

Procedure:

1. Turn and Talk: What do you think of when you hear the word change?
2. Using photos of trees or animals that change their appearance seasonally, promote small group discussions about how plants and animals change in appearance or behavior depending on the time of the year. Why do you think this change happens?
3. Read the book “Sky Tree: Seeing Science Through Art” by Thomas Locker.
4. As a class or individually, have the students choose a tree (or shrub) within the school grounds to “adopt.” Spend the first day having the students become acquainted with the tree. Some options include doing a leaf rubbing, measuring its circumference, identifying it by species, giving the tree a name, or writing a poem about the tree. Make sure to make observations about the sky and weather conditions as well. As the school year progresses, choose days of varying seasons and weather for the students to revisit their tree and make similar observations. How does the tree look different? How does the sky look different? Have them note the time of the day/year and weather conditions to tie together seasons and change.
5. For the final day, take a tour of the class trees, allowing all or some of the students to introduce their tree to the group. Have them share the changes they witnessed the tree going through and how they think this related to the weather.

Variation:

1. Combine with “A Tree Like Me” with plant life cycle images and human life cycle images
2. Create a graphic organizer with four sections labeled “picture, words, details, sample” to focus their thinking.

Learning Targets:

1. Illustrate the ways tree change according to the changing of the seasons.
2. Carry out a procedure that continues for an extended period of time.