

Home on the Range?

An Environmental Lesson

By Patty Williams

About the Authors: Theresa Monaco

- Theresa Monaco is Professor of Curriculum and Instruction and Director for Center for Gifted and Talented Education at the University of Houston. She has authored:
- Monaco, T. (Ed.) 2nd Edition (2002) Biographical Directory of Leaders in Gifted Education. Royal Fireworks Press, Unionville, N.Y.
- Monaco, T, Brandi Allen, Azhar Zafar (2011) <http://www.nyu.edu/classes/keefer/waoe/monacostory.pdf>, Hyperlinked for public viewing . World Association for Online Education: The WWW Journal of Online Education. Updated by Publisher.
- Teachers Identify and Support At-Risk Gifted Students. Volume 8 Issue 3 -Jun 3, 2010 -11:27:53 AM. By Theresa Monaco, Danna Eichenold, Victoria Casper, Claudia V. Gonzales, Susan Jackson, Maria Earle, Eva Marie Bisailon



About the Authors: Patty Williams

- Patty is a very energetic person who connects all things with education in trying to engage her students with the tasks at hand.
- Captivating her students is very important to her because she feels that they have greater benefit of learning if they are more interested in the work.

Entering the Classroom

- As students enter the classroom, they discover that yellow “Caution: Do Not Cross” tape has been strung across the room, blocking off 80% of the space.
- The students are directed to crowd into the available space and to only use the tables and chairs that are not blocked off.

What Happened?

- What has happened to our classroom?

What If?

- Instead of our classroom, what if this was a forest?
- What kind of affect could this have on wildlife?

Oh, Deer!

A ProjectWILD
activity.



Oh, Deer! Game Directions

- *The students will play this game outside, weather permitting. If not, this game can be played indoors in the gymnasium or in a hallway.*
- Mark two parallel lines on the ground 10 to 20 yards apart. Ask students to count off in fours.
- The ones become the “deer” and line up behind one line with their backs to the other students. The other students become habitat components necessary to survive (food, water, and shelter) and line up behind the other line with their backs to the “deer”.
- Explain that the deer need to find food, water, and shelter in order to survive in their environment. If they do not then they will die.
- In this activity when the “deer” is looking for food, it should clamp its hands over its stomach. When a “deer” is looking for water, it should put its hand over its mouth. When a “deer” is looking for shelter, it holds its hands together over its head.

Oh, Deer! Game Directions

- A “deer” can choose to look for any one of its needs during each round of the activity. *Emphasize that the “deer” cannot change what it is looking for during a round. It can only change what is looking for at the beginning of each round.*
- The other students are the food, water, and shelter. Students get to choose what they want to be at the beginning of the round. They show their choice in the same way as the “deer” have. *Emphasize to these students that they cannot change what component they are during a round. They can only change at the beginning of each round.*
- The teacher should begin the first round by asking all students to make their signs—hand over stomach, mouth, or head. *Emphasize that students should choose one of these symbols before turning around to face the other group.*

Oh, Deer! Game Directions

- When the students are ready tell them to “GO!”. At this time each “deer” and each “habitat component” turns to face the opposite group continuing to hold their sign clearly.
- When the “deer” see the “habitat component” that matches what they need, they are to run to it. Once the “deer” find their correct component they should take it back to their line, and that student becomes a “deer”. Any “deer” who fails to find its needed habitat component dies becomes a habitat component on the other side and becomes available as food, water, or shelter to the “deer” who are still alive.
- Habitat components not taken by a “deer” continue to be habitat components.
- The game should consist of 10-12 rounds. The teacher records the number of “deer” at the beginning of the game and at the end of each round so that students can graph the results in the classroom.

Oh, Deer! Game Results

- Draw a graph to represent the number of deer and the available resources.
- What were the results of the game?
- How was the deer population affected by the number of available resources?
- What happened when the resources suddenly disappeared?

Oh, Deer!

This forest
is being
clearcut.



Oh, Dear!

The forest was
cut down to
make space for
a new
subdivision.



Oh, Dear!

- But what about the humans who live near the forest?
- Most often, forests are clearcut to make way for homes and shopping areas designed to fulfill the resource needs of the increasing human population.
- Do humans have the right to a comfortable habitat, too?

Oh, Dear!

- Can we find a way to create both human and animal habitats?
- Is it possible for us to coexist?

Differentiation for Special-Ed Students, and for Those Who May Need Extra Help with the Lesson

- Working in pre-assigned groups, the students will discuss the game and the results.
- Using the computer lab, they will then research deer population changes in Texas over the last 50 years.
- Working as a group, they will write paragraphs describing these changes and listing their possible causes.

Differentiation for Academic Students

- Working in their pre-assigned groups, the students will discuss the game and the results.
- Using the computer lab, they will then research deer population changes in Texas over the last 50 years.
- Working individually, they will write a story from the deer's point of view that describes these changes and how it has affected the deer's family.

Differentiation for Advanced Students

- Working either individually or in pairs, the students will use the computer lab to research deer population changes in Texas over the last 50 years.
- Using this information, they will write an editorial-style article for the local newspaper describing the deer's habitat changes and habitat loss causes. The articles must also include ideas and suggestions for preserving wild habitats and protecting them from human encroachment.

TEKS and Sources

- TEKS: Science 8.14. Science concepts. The student knows that natural events and human activities can alter Earth systems. The student is expected to:
- (B) analyze how natural or human events may have contributed to the extinction of some species
- Oh, Deer! Is a ProjectWILD activity.
- <http://www.projectwild.org/ProjectWILDK-12CurriculumandActivityGuide.htm>