

Know and Show Sombreros

Purpose

Children create wearable pieces of art by decorating newspaper hats, as a way to their knowledge of a question of interest.

Objective:

The objective of this activity is to make wearable works of art that show children's understanding of a question of interest, such as the benefits of plants to people. This activity is both a creative arts project as well as an effective evaluation tool. If you make the hats as a pre- and post-test, you can note the difference between what the children included before, and after, the program.

Time:

- 1 hour during the program pre-session
- 1 hour during the program post-session

Materials

- 2-inch clear tape
- Newspaper
- Miscellaneous art supplies (markers, yarn, glitter, pipe cleaner, tissue – whatever you can think of!)

Instructions:

This activity needs to be done twice – once during the program pre-session and once during the program post-session. The rationale behind this is that through comparing these activities, you will be able to identify a change in a group of children's knowledge or understanding of your program's subject of interest.

Make the Hat

- Place the middle of two large, square sheets of newspaper on the top of a student's head.
- Lay the rest of the paper flat against the student's head.
- Tape around the newspaper starting right over the ear, and continue wrapping until the tape goes all the way around the student's head.
- Curl up the edges of the newspaper to form the brim of the hat.

Decorate the Hat

- During the pre-session, simply ask, without prompting, a question of interest related to your project goals, such as: what are the benefits that plants provide us? Or, what do plants need to grow? Encourage them to be creative, but do not offer suggestions or prompting.
- Encourage children to decorate their hats, with different art supplies, to show what they know.

Describe the Hat

- When everyone's finished their hats, encourage them to show their creation and talk about what each decoration or item means.
- As they do this, jot down the numbers and range of responses.
- For example, when asked what plants need, children may show water drops, and a sun. Note those as examples of two different needs. Note, too, any misinformation you see presented.

Post-Session:

- Repeat this activity again at the end of your program's session. Again, jot down the numbers and range of responses.
- Is there a difference? At the end of the session, are children able to identify more, or present a broader/deeper understanding of the plant world?
- For example, they may now note that plants need sun, water, nutrition, time to grow, a good location, and care.

You've just completed another evaluation method and most likely had some fun while doing it!

This activity was used with permission from the Junior Master Gardener Program. For more information, visit <http://www.jmgkids.us>