

Tree Cookie Combat

This activity helps students understand what trees need to live and grow in the environment. They will also realize that trees sometimes interact or compete with other organisms as well as each other.

Instructional Procedures

1. Give each student a round circle of paper approximately ten inches in diameter (e.g., paper plates). Have each student imagine that this is a cross section of his/her life as a tree. On this circle, draw rings to represent his/her own life's years. The rings should vary in size: the years of much growth should have wider rings than years of less growth.
2. Students should position themselves around the room. Placing their cross section on the floor, they need to stand with one foot on their "tree of life."
3. Distribute the colored squares randomly on the floor around the students so the squares are about one or two feet apart. Each colored square represents the requirements of a tree for survival: blue is water, yellow is sunlight, and green is nutrients.
4. Play *Tree Cookie Combat*. The game is played by having each "tree" gather as many squares as they can when the signal is given. On the signal, trees must reach with their roots and branches (arms and legs) to gather their requirements. One foot, (the tap root!), must remain planted on their cross section at all times and there is NO SLIDING!!
5. Questions to ask:
 - Were you successful in gathering your needs?
 - Did any tree fail to get its requirements?
 - What would happen if you were really a tree without these requirements?
 - Is there such a thing as too much water? sun? nutrients?

Materials

- Paper plates
- Two squares of blue, yellow and green paper for each student. These are mixed together.
- Colored markers or pens

Possible Extensions/Adaptations/Integration

- The size of growth rings on a tree is based on the kinds of years that tree experiences. Look at the size of your growth rings. Based on the rings drawn, create a fraction of the good years in your life. Do the same for difficult years. Are they tied to nutrition? sunlight? water? Are there other things that affect a tree? What conclusions can you draw?
- Graph the information from the classroom experiences.
- Extend this to family trees. Have students create their own family trees to represent their family. This is another “tree of life.”

Resources

Project Learning Tree, Activity Book, Activity 27 “Every Tree For Itself.”

Educational Insights Discover and Activity Kit: Tree Rings (Hands On Nature Kit) 1991.