



Lesson Plan - Week of May 31, 2004

Design an animal!

This activity will tap into students' imaginations, and get them talking about which personality characteristics they like to see in another person. This time, though, they will be attributing the characteristics to animals.

Materials: Students will need, at minimum, pencil and paper. They may also use colored paper, and markers or crayons to color the animals.

Procedure:

1. Ask the students if they think of animals as having personalities. Discuss that we may think of dogs as loyal, cats as independent, cows as calm, birds as good to their babies, etc. Students may also share physical abilities that animals have that they admire. For example, a snake is quick moving, an elephant is strong, and a giraffe can reach very far. You may want to list some of these on the board so students can refer to them.
2. Ask the students, "Wouldn't it be fun to have a single animal that had several of these characteristics at once?" Tell the students they will have a chance today to make up their own animal. They can take parts from different animals and put them together, or design something new. They will draw their new animal large enough to be seen several desks away. As they draw, they should think about what qualities or personality their animal will have that would make people like it. For example, an animal with rabbit ears, an elephant trunk, and a horse body might hear cries of "Fire!" then run quickly to the scene, and put out the fire by squirting water on it with its trunk.

Students may work in pairs if desired. You may want to show them pictures of imaginary animals from the past, like a sphinx or a griffin, to give them ideas.

3. Share the creations. Remind students that the ideas are what are important, not whether or not they can draw well. Have each student describe his or her animal and how it would help people or other animals. What personal qualities does it have in addition to its special abilities? Keep a list on the board of the characteristics mentioned. After students have all shared, refer to the list of characteristics, and ask when in their lives the students themselves have an opportunity to exhibit these qualities. Elicit feedback about specific times during the day when they can be kind or helpful or determined or clever. Help them to see that you do not have to be magical or have special abilities to be the kind of person who is well liked by others.

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