Learning Standards… No Matter What You Teach

From the simplest kindergarten benchmarks to the most sophisticated secondary science benchmarks, Minnesota Academic Standards ask students to use observations in the classroom and in the field to describe natural phenomena, compare data and communicate ideas. These activities integrate all learning disciplines.

Rationale

In this booklet the initial activities are designed to isolate and focus on a specific sense while the last activities focus on multisensory experiences. We know that more can be better. When it comes to observations, the more senses that can be used the more meaningful and accurate the observation. And for students with limited visual, auditory or tactile abilities it is important to provide these multisensory experiences.

Learning in the outdoors provides students with an element of freedom and empowerment – a sense of taking charge of their learning. Students with behavioral issues and fidgeting in the classroom may function better in the less restrictive outdoors.

Some activities are designed as work alone situations while others are wonderful opportunities for cooperative learning. Students with special needs can benefit as they work alone for some activities and partner with a classmate for others. Class members can share their discoveries with a child of limited mobility and both students benefit during the process of sharing information. Putting discoveries into words is an important aspect of language development.

Students with visual or auditory impairments learn to compensate. A blind student may have more acute hearing and more tactile skills. A deaf student may be a better visual observer than peers. Thus, a give and take exists as students learn from each other.

Look in the Management Strategies section of the following lessons to find some suggestions for adapting lessons to meet individual student needs.