



Everyday Detective

Curiosity can be cultivated. We can practice looking and listening with increased alertness. We can ask questions of others and ourselves to further illuminate what we see and hear. We can be Everyday Detectives, looking for mysteries, oddities, and beauty in our world. We can practice asking questions as they occur to us.

Time: 5-10 minutes each day for 7 days

Materials: pencil and paper (sticky notes work best)

Group Structure: whole class, homework

Directions

Over the next day (and each day for a week), ask students to hunt for one thing that makes them curious. They can take a photo, record it, or write about it and compose a corresponding question about it. Ask each student to write down one curiosity on a sticky note and stick on the *Evidence Board. As the week goes along, the number of curiosities will grow and fill the space.

Possibilities for detective work:

1. Notice the soundscapes you move through. Make a short recording and listen later. What are the different sounds you hear?
2. Look for symbols, logos and images in the built world that have meanings that are complex, confusing, and/or non-literal. How might they be interpreted?
3. We live in a designed world. Examine design choices that seem unusual. Architecture, clothing, mechanical devices, kitchen tools, furniture... How and why were these items designed the way they were?
4. Look at people! See Humanity in all its curious wonder.
5. Observe phenomena in Nature. Notice how often they are a prototype for items in our designed world.

*Evidence Board: Create a designated space to gather curiosities (cork board, white board, space on wall, etc.) Think of the Detectives in film who use tacks and yarn or sharpies and photos to link together ideas to solve a mystery.

Tips and Variations

- Repeat this routine regularly. Does this opportunity for practicing curiosity manifest changes in your students?
- Have students keep individual notebooks throughout the term.
- What more could develop out of these collections of everyday curiosities?



WHICH CREATIVE RESOURCES ARE WE GROWING?

Curiosity, observation, tolerance for ambiguity

WHAT KINDS OF THINKING DOES THIS ROUTINE ENCOURAGE?

Critical thinking, perspective taking, evaluative

WHEN AND WHERE CAN IT BE USED?

Bringing real life experiences into our classrooms, building classroom culture

How else could this activity be integrated into content areas?