

Alex and Dusky Lessons



These lessons are to supplement the book, Alex and Dusky.
You are very welcome to contact me with questions, suggestions or comments.

Lesson I

Sit Spots, Geo Awareness through Reflection

Lesson II

What is a Dusky Canada Goose?

Lesson III

Mapping: Where is the *Ridgefield Wildlife Refuge?

Lesson IV

Field Notebook

Sincerely, Laura DeVito

ldevito@pnca.edu

503.890.9960

Lesson I

Sit Spots, Geo Awareness through Reflection

Inspiration from: Awakening inquiry: observing and recording nature: lesson plans for grades K-8.

Adapted by: Laura DeVito

Ages: 2nd grade students may sit in a circle with backs to each other. For 10 minutes, they draw and write what they see.

3rd grade students may use choose areas for observations (determined by you) and visit these spots once per season to experience the changes.

Pre-Lesson Preparation

Depending on the age and ability of the students, it may take a lot of practice to make Sit Spots worthwhile. They level of expectation you set and the behavior you model during these experiences will determine your students' success in the field when you are not there to supervise.

Once you have identified a suitable area, inform students that they will be going out to find a Sit Spot on the school grounds.

Next, discuss with students this generic list of hazards and the precautions everyone should take. Know your school regulations for taking students on field trips.

- Bees, yellow jackets, and wasps: Walk lightly around ground nests and keep you ear turned for a “bzzz” sound.
- Venomous snakes and spiders: Carry a stick; go out early in the day. Be careful where you put your feet and hands – especially in dark places.
- Ticks: Check each other. Where on your body will they likely be?
- Poison ivy and poison oak: Look at plants before touching.
- Dead-falls from limbs: Look up; don't sit under a dead tree branch.

Game I: Dusky-Eye, Close your eyes and pretend to be a Dusky Canada Goose soaring over this area. This Dusky Canada Goose needs a place to land that is its own special place. Go find a place to land.

Game II: Dusky Canada Goose-Walking

Walk as if you were a Dusky Canada Goose. Walk slowly and keep to the edges of the tree-line or along tall grass. Keep in small groups of 3-5 without talking. Turn your head slowly to check-out the surroundings. Move your head and long neck down to the ground to look for food and then prop your head up to listen for other wildlife. Move on each leg back and forth until you find a place that has a mix of shade and sunlight from the trees and grass edges meeting.

Note: Dusky Canada Goose may be replaced with other types of bird species that may be viewed in your school neighborhood such as the Scrub Jay.



Alex and Dusky Lessons

Lesson II

What is a Dusky Canada Goose?

Laura DeVito



(Replace with other species around your neighborhood if suitable)

Ages: 2+ and 3+ a grades can both use this game. Adapt as needed.

Interactive Game: Dusky, Westerners and Cacklers

- Object of the Game: To be the last Dusky, and to further understand the differences and similarities between three sub-species of goose.
- Setting: Outside / lots of room to run.

Children will act out each type of goose sub-species to find out who is what type of goose. One child will be appointment Westerner and one Cackler, while the rest of the children are Dusky. All children will act how the goose sub-species may act by movement and sound. Examples below:

- Dusky: Quiet (no sound), medium size, sticks to tree-line and in medium groups (min. 3). Children can act out these characteristics by being silent, walking quietly and standing a regular stance in medium groups.
- Westerner: Bigger, some sound, in medium groups (min. 3). Children can act out these characteristics by putting their hands up in the air to symbolize the neck and head of the larger goose, making some trumpet sounds and being in groups of 3 or less. Once a Westerner tags a Dusky, then the Dusky becomes a Westerner.
- Cackler: Small, loud and in large groups (min. 5). Children can act out these characteristics by being loud, hunching down to a smaller size and being in larger groups of 5 or more. Once a Cackler tags a Westerner, then the Westerner becomes a Cackler.

The game ends once the last Dusky is left.

After the game ends, discuss with children what they noticed about the game and reflect on the different goose species in how they are similar and different.

This game can be played also with species such as Scrub Jay, Stellar Jay and Blue Jay.

Alex and Dusky Lessons
Lesson III

Mapping: Where is the *Ridgefield Wildlife Refuge?

Laura DeVito

Ages: 2+ and 3+ a grades can both use this game. Adapt as needed.

Mapping: A skill that increases a child's geo awareness and spatial consciousness with the world.

Purpose: To instill connectedness with the child and his/her immediate environment (school, home, etc.), *Ridgefield Wildlife Refuge and beyond. This sense of connectedness (sense of place) may lead to responsible and caring actions with these environments.

Objectives: To have a child learn mapping skills, develop awareness of his/her own perception and how that perception may change through time, experience and learning.

Instructions:

Part I:

1. Before you start the exercise, begin a discussion with the children about the Alex and Dusky book. Potential questions for discussion:
 - a. "Where was Dusky's home?"
 - b. "Where do you think Alex lives?" "Is this similar or different to your home?"
 - c. "Where do you think Alex goes to school?" "What does it look like?"
 - d. "What do your home look like?" "What does your school look like?"
 - e. "What connects Alex to home, to school, to the *Ridgefield Wildlife Refuge?"

(These can be roads, trails, or anything the children dream up.
While these questions are happening, you or a child can illustrate on the front board what children are describing. Then, take some time to reflect on the different sizes of the homes, schools and the *Ridgefield Wildlife Refuge, while also reflecting on how the different paths are made to each place.

2. After doing the discussion, ask the children to draw their home, school and the *Ridgefield Wildlife Refuge. Remind them that each map may look uniquely different because it is how the child sees the world. The similarities and differences in the maps are the interesting part! Ask the children to save these drawings (or you may put them in a safe place in the classroom) until Part II of the lesson.

Part II:

After going to the *Ridgefield Wildlife Refuge, repeat the above exercise. After the children are finished with their amazing map drawings. Ask the children to take out their previous drawings and compare potential similarities and differences between the two.

***Note:** This exercise can be done by using the Ridgefield Wildlife Refuge, taking a walk around the school neighborhood or giving it as a take-home project. The main point is to have the child be aware of his/her own perception and how it may change through visiting an area and mapping it.

Field Notebook: A field notebook is used to observe things like weather, the time and using senses like smell, sight and touch to understand a person's surroundings.






Purpose: Be more aware of surroundings and instill practice of recording those surroundings to better understand the environment and connection with the environment.

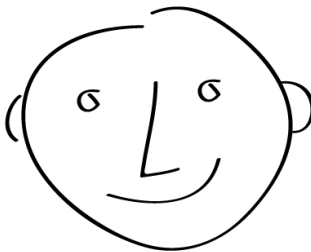
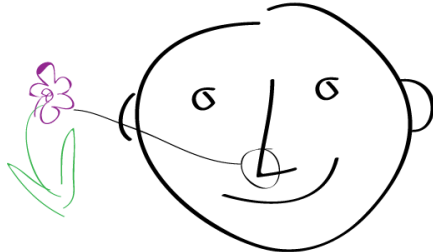
Objectives:

- Ability to record time / weather in field notebook
- Ability to record senses in field notebook
 - sight, sound, smell, feeling of outside temperature
 - Touch and taste may be explored later, but should only be introduced if you are an expert in your field for safety reasons.

Instructions:

1. Begin a discussion about what a field notebook is and how Alex used it in the Alex and Dusky book:
 - a. "What do you think a field notebook is?"
 - b. "How do you think the field notebook was useful to Alex?"
 - c. "What do you think people use it for?"
2. After discussion, glean from the suggestions in the students and begin defining a field notebook and talk about time and using your ears, nose, eyes and how your skin feels with the outside temperature.
3. You can draw on the board these tools children can use in their field notebook:

Tool I, time and weather				
Draw the weather you see. Is it sunny, rainy, cloudy or something else? Draw a clock and make hands to show the time.				
				

Tool II, senses	
Draw a face:	Circle features on face that you are using:
	

Examples of How to Draw Senses:

Smell:
Smelling a flower.



Sight:
Seeing a Dusky
Canada Goose



Sound:
Listening to
raindrops on water

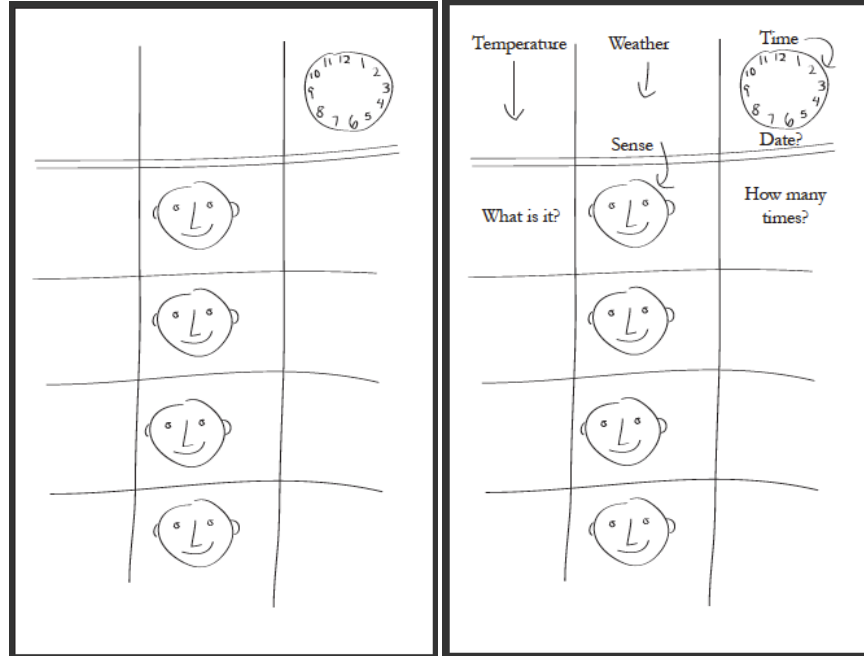


Temperature:
Feeling the sun's
rays on your cheek.

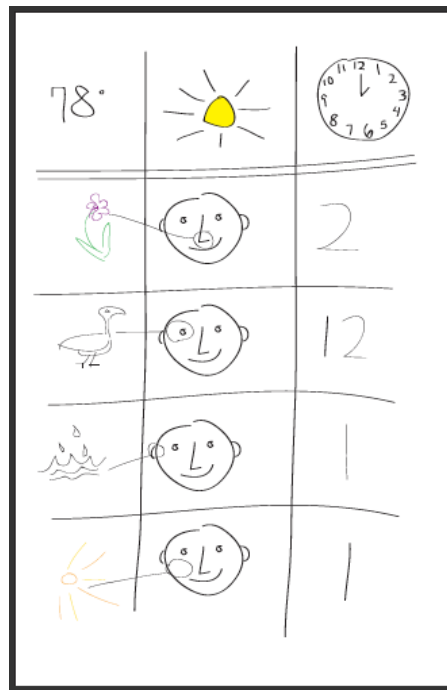


After discussing different ways of observing nature, you can show an example of how to begin a field notebook.

Set-up field notebook:



Filled-out field notebook:



Once the examples have been shown, you can present each child with the Alex and Dusky field notebook emblem that they may paste on whichever type of notebook you or the children choose. Field notebooks can also be made by stapling pieces of paper together and folding them in half.