Post-trip Lesson for Survival of the Fittest

Invent an Animal

Advanced Prep

Designate two different habitats with different coloration patterns; this might be the playground area and then an area in shade. You will want the spaces to be at least 15 feet by 15 feet.

Engagement

Have students list the different types of adaptations that they learned about in the Discovery lab. Answer: structural, protective coloring, mimicry, migration, hibernation, behavioral adaptations.

What You Will Need:

- Various craft materials
- Various recycled materials
- Outdoor space
- Optional: Camera

Exploration

1. Walk students out to the designated areas and explain to them that they are going to design one animal each to see how well it can survive. They get 10 points for each habitat they survive in. They can design their animal to survive particularly well in one or they can take the riskier option and try to design their animal to survive in both. The one requirement is that the body of their animal must be at least four inches long.

2. Allow students time to build their animals. When complete head out to the habitats.

3. Assign one predator for each habitat (or the teacher can play this role). Turn them away while the other students hide their animals. Give the predator one minute to find as many animals as they can. Repeat with the second habitat. Have students make note of their results or take a picture of the animals that survived and those that did not for later comparison by the group.

Explanation

Questions for final discussion (refer to pictures if you took them):

- Why were the hard to find animals so hard to find?
- Why were some animals easy to spot?
- Which animals would have survived to reproduce (have babies)?
- Look at the animals that survived in each site, how are they different? Why might that be?
- Are there animals that survived in both? Why might that be?

Other Resources

National Geographic Charles Darwin Survival Game (online)
http://www.sciencechannel.com/games-and-interactives/charles-darwin-game/

Nevada Academic Content Standards in Science
(NGSS): MS-LS4-4, MS-LS4-6.

Common Core: SL.5.1