

THE IMPORTANCE OF WORKING WITH RELEVANT MATERIALS

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During the 1969-70 school year, the Boston Resource Team of the Pilot Communities Program of Education Development Center was doing a science unit called Pond Water with children from the inner-city. We were experimenting with plant and animal life and the children were really turned on - but it soon became either difficult to obtain transportation for a whole class or else the team members were scattering their energies elsewhere in the school, and we had to come up with something else. In the area where I work there is very little grass, no flowers, lots of trash, brick project houses with plenty of rats and roaches. We decided to suggest that the kids experiment with roaches. Of course, we had lost our minds, but we decided to go ahead with it anyway. First, we had the children consult with the experts - books and exterminators. The books revealed that there are over 5,000 species and the exterminators told us that roaches eat about once a month. The rest of the time they just hang around being pests. The kids thought they would tell their parents this tidbit of information which immediately set the parents into action with sprays - every day for 31 days and the roaches began to disappear. (Of course, they probably went across the street, but who cares?)

Note: Roaches vary in color, size, shape - and some even fly or appear to fly because they can jump so far. They have a keen sense of smell also.