

The Quirkles-Exploring Phonics through Science

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Publication

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Curriculum/Activity Guide

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Classroom Teachers

Target Age:

Youth (Elementary)

Funders

Funders:

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Evaluation
Strategy:

Currently, the Quirkles have been on the market approximately two years. Thus far, they are being used in regular classrooms, afterschool programs, enrichment/gifted programs, and other educational programs--ie., science center programming, mentor programs, etc. Feedback is being provided by the organizations that are using the materials. Informal assessment tools are also provided in the Quirkles Teacher Guide. Of course we tested throughout the development stage as well.

Evaluation

This project actually first began as curriculum as a private afterschool

Results: program "test" and then formalized when students/parents started demanding it. We found the integration of literacy and science woefully missing as well as robust science for the youngest learner. We have worked and learned from curriculum developers large to small in the development of the Quirkles. We did not set out to develop this; we simply could not find something to meet our needs that was currently on the market.

Publication Descriptions

Summary: With increasing attention to the need for innovative science for young elementary students but with increased demands for literacy development, The Quirkles offer a fresh way to integrate literacy and science. Vocabulary builders, two related science experiments and a character education lesson are included in each of the 26 alphabet series books. Created by teachers, the Quirkles stories teach or reinforce phonetic sounds that serve as the building blocks for reading, while also making science--earth, life, and physical--fun to learn. It creates enthusiasm in both students and the educational provider by offering robust science, aligned to National Science Standards, whimsical illustrations, phonemic alliteration of the specified letter, and hands-on science. Furthermore, the Quirkles offer a variety of differentiated learning opportunities for students ranging from pre-K to upper elementary.

Impact: We are fortunate to get feedback almost daily! The recall of the science concepts has been quite surprising and educators tell us they have renewed enthusiasm for teaching science. Furthermore given the emphasis on literacy in the early years of education, about the only way students get science is to integrate it. There is much literature to support that premise. We are not trying to be the science end-all. We are trying to "turn kids on to science" in a variety of educational settings so they continue to stay positive rather than turning off by third to fourth grade. We can simply not afford that. We are trying to give traditional science concepts an updated look and feel. Given the growth and feedback we have received, we think this is resonating with others--the same way we have seen with students we have worked with.

Lessons: Science needs to be integrated with literacy. Science needs to be given a "fresh face." Educators must overcome their own fears of science in order to effectively teach it. The Quirkles is very educator friendly to the non-science person. Robust concepts will be absorbed--even by the youngest learners--if taught in a fresh, compelling way. Science, at the youngest levels, should not all be about mastery, but the concepts repeated.

Notes: For a listing of organizations using the Quirkles in a variety of educational settings, or a factsheet with testimonials, we can be contacted at info@quirkles.com. One can also see an introductory video of the Quirkles in use in an afterschool/summer enrichment setting on

www.teachertube.com--search word quirks.