**Georgia Teachers of the Year Association**

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**“Promising Practices Classroom Activity”**

Title of Activity: Dissection – Do You See What I See?   
  
Recommended to use with this number of students: 5-6 small group station

Content Area: Science Grade Level(s): First Grade

Match to Georgia Standard(s): S1L1. Obtain, evaluate, and communicate information about the basic needs of plants and animals, a. Develop models to identify the parts of a plant—root, stem, leaf, and flower

**Note**: Use the remainder of this page and up to one additional page for describing the activity.

“Dissection – Do You See What I See? - is one of my favorite activities. My students and I complete this task each year as part of our plant unit. This activity is embedded in a 2-3 week project based learning unit. Students take on the role of a botanist and work through stations daily to become experts in plants. My junior botanists are engaged in a hands-on experience to dissect and explore the parts of a plant.

To begin the unit I present students with the driving question: As botanists how would you inform others about plants (parts and needs). This unit is completed through 5 station rotations that meet daily. Station rotations are: guided reading (with me), independent reading, word work and leveled listening station, 21st century skills table, and the research station. We also have a controlled science experiment that students observe daily – we create 5 environments for plants to see how they respond to different situations, i.e., having all needs met, some needs met, or none of their needs met.

Allowing students to dissect a real plant provides them with an experience they may not ever have outside of the classroom. I provide each student with a marigold for this task. I also provide students with gloves, goggles, forceps, magnifying glasses, and soft bristle brushes to complete the task, real science tools for my real junior botanists. Students are to remove the dirt from the root using the tools provided. This allows students to see the roots as well as the stem, leaves, and flower. Students are encouraged to discuss among their group what they notice about their plants and engage in dialogue of what they know and want to know about plants to continue throughout their research opportunities. Once they are finished with their observation, students create a diagram and label the parts of the plants they observed. Students create as much detail in their diagram as possible so that it can be used in the final product of the unit. Students are generally very excited to share their work at home so each student takes a picture of the dissected plant and diagram on his or her iPad to be used at a later time. Once the task is complete, the students pack the plant into a cup with the soil and take it home to care for it.

Best practice activities should be relevant to the world around students. What students are expected to learn should have a bearing within the world around them and serve a purpose for study. Providing students with equitable resources is essential in the success of children. Knowing that not all children learn the same, resources should be plentiful and tasks should be authentic allowing students to take ownership of their learning promoting agency. Most importantly learning should be enjoyable and students should feel comfortable taking risks in their learning environment to experience success.