Title: Informal Teaching Activities Used to Bridge the Gap Between Theory and the Real World.

Presenter: Amanda Tang Nian Aimée K. Thomas, Ph.D.

Introduction

- Informal teaching engages students with hands-on learning outside of the classroom¹.
- ✤ Informal environments can offer different learning styles and allow each student to learn at their own pace².
- ✤ "Informal science learning refers to activities that occur outside the school setting, are not developed primarily for school use, are not developed to be part of an ongoing school curriculum, and are characterised as voluntary as opposed to mandatory participation as part of a credited school experience"³.
- At New Orleans City Park we designed multiple outdoor activities for informally teaching about the natural sciences.

Developing Activities



he scavenger hur



out at Couturie Forest, New Orleans City P

- Making links between pedagogy in the classroom and real world experiences.
- Activities: Scavenger Hunt, Bat Walk, Blacklight Bug Activity, and Tour of the Forest.
- The scavenger hunt was developed to teach participants about the natural history of organisms in Couturie Forest.



gure 3: Amanda Tang Nian nelping a student use a bat detector provided by Dr. Craig Hood.



Figure 4: Amanda Snyder and Amanda Ta helping students use bat detectors provided b Craig Hood.

Hands-on pedagogy is an effective teaching method for environmental educators.



activity developed by Amand nyder and Amanda Tang Nian.





LaBorde Lookout

Couturie Forest

The Scavenger Hunt

- ✤ The Scavenger Hunt was developed in conjunction with a tour of Couturie Forest.
- Participants were tasked with finding/ spotting organisms on their list.

The activity sheet was categorized: plants, animals, and invasive species to NOLA.

✤ When we were on the walk and participants identified organisms, tour guides gave natural history facts, implementing pedagogy outside of the classroom.



Snyder and Amanda Tang Nian.



- The Scavenger Hunt is a prime example of implementing informal teaching as a beneficial pedagogical method.
- Hands on pedagogical methods such as this scavenger hunt can be used universally.

Snyder and Amanda Tang Nian.

Citations

1. Soh, T., & Meerah, T. (2013). Outdoor Education: An Alternative Approach in Teaching and Learning Science. October 03, 2020, 2. Melber, L. H., & Abraham, L. M. (1999). Beyond the classroom: Linking with informal education. Science Activities, 36, 3-4.

3. Crane, V., Nicholson, H., Chen, M., & Bitgood, S. (1994). Informal science learning: What Research about television, science museum, and community-based projects. Dedham, MA: Research Communications Ltd., and Ephrata, PA: Science Press.

Acknowledgements

Thanks to Dr. Craig Hood for lending his bat detecting equipment for the bat walk activity. Special thanks to Meg Adams and Lindsay Kirsch for being amazing internship mentors at New Orleans City Park. Thanks to my amazing co-intern Amanda Snyder without whom I wouldn't have been able to do this internship. Last but not least, I would also like to give a special thanks to Dr. Aimée Thomas for being my advisor for this project and internship.



