

Title of Session: Nuts About Nature: Gween Fwogs

Moderator: Bill Hilton Jr.

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Room: Tree House Conference Room

BJ: Welcome to Nuts About Nature

BJ: Bill is our discussion leader and I'm dying to learn how he's going to work in the nightmare to his discussion

ShirleyHe: Sounds frightful

BJ: we usually start all discussions in Tapped In with introductions

BJ: I'm an art teacher in Pennsylvania

ShirleyHe: I'm a reading specialist in Texas

SuzannePT: I'm a high school biology teacher in Houston Texas

ClintonA: I'm a middle school science teacher from Chicago

AnneMarieE: I'm a third grade teacher in San Antonio, Tx.

SusanR: K to 8 Occasional teacher from Ottawa, Ontario

BJ: Bill always has some wonderful things to share, but he's having thunderstorms and may lose us for a second or two

ShirleyHe: It is storming in my neck of the woods also

ClintonA: where is he operating from?

BillHi: I'm Bill Hilton Jr., executive director of Hilton Pond Center for Piedmont Natural History in York SC, where we're having major thunderstorms today that may knock me off during the session. If that happens, don't wander away.

JeffC: I'm an education technology specialist from Oregon.

BillHi: FYI, I also taught high school and college biology for about 25 years and consider myself an educator-naturalist.

CharlesPM joined the room.

BJ . o O (Bill started teaching when he was 10 years old)

BillHi: I was 12. Let me explain our plan for this evening.

BJ: Welcome, Charles. We're just finishing up introductions.

CharlesPM: I'm Charles and I teach junior high math and may be teaching science next year.

BillHi: "Nuts About Nature" is a free-wheeling discussion about natural history and how to use nature study to excite students about learning--in science and any other discipline.

CharlesPM: This is my first time in a room at tapped in.

BillHi: I hate to disappoint BJ, but I'm going to postpone tonite's scheduled topic "A Midsummer's NightMARE" until next month.

SuzannePT frowns

BillHi: Sorry, Suzanne, but you'll like the new topic, which is "Gween Fwogs."

SuzannePT: I guess we're not quite into midsummer yet...

BJ chuckles...not to worry, Suzanne...Bill always has something special to share

BillHi: What I usually like to do is start with a lead-off question, so here it comes.

BillHi: Based upon what you know about frogs, what SINGLE fact about them do you think would be of most interest to your students?

JeffC: do they really taste just like chicken?
ShirleyHe: Do they really give you warts
ClintonA: their jumping ability
SuzannePT: tadpoles
ClintonA: frog races!
AnneMarieE: Are all frogs slimy?
BillHi: I didn't ask for a question, I asked for a fact.
ShirleyHe: oops
CharlesPM: They eat bugs
CharlesPM: They are amphibians
SuzannePT: frogs change body shape over time
BillHi: Thanks, Charles, but that was two facts.
SusanR: their life cycle
CharlesPM: sorry
BillHi: Susan, their life cycle is not a fact.
BJ . o O (Charles is an overachiever?)
ShirleyHe: Some frogs can live in the water and on land
AnneMarieE: Frogs eat insects.
BillHi: Good, Shirley.
BillHi: And Anne.
ClintonA: frogs must keep their skin moist
BillHi: Thanks, Clinton.
BillHi: Others?
ShirleyHe: Some people eat frogs
ShirleyHe: rather their legs
BillHi: That's your second fact, Shirley.
ShirleyHe: It was a thought that flew by - had to grab it.
BillHi: (-:
BJ chuckles...Bill is tough!
ShirleyHe: ouch
BillHi: And I can count!
BillHi: Some folks haven't replied.
BJ: some animals eat frogs
AnneMarieE: Frogs are cold blooded
ShirleyHe: I think they are scared of you.
BillHi: Shirley, that's three!
ShirleyHe: That wasn't a frog - they (everyone) are scared of Bill.
SusanR: Most frogs can change their color somewhat to match their surroundings.
SusanR: -Poison dart frogs are usually brightly colored to show predators they are deadly.
SusanR: -The red-eyed tree frog lays its eggs on branches over water so the tadpoles can drop right in.
SusanR: -There are over 60 species of poison dart frogs.
SusanR: -Some frogs can jump 20 times their own body length.
SusanR: -Female frogs are usually larger than the males.
SusanR: -Tadpoles survive mainly on algae.

SusanR: -Tadpoles breathe through gills while adult frogs breathe through crude lungs and also absorb oxygen through their skin.

SusanR: -The paradoxical frog of South America has tadpoles up to 10 in. long while the mature adults seldom get over 3in. They get smaller as they age!

SusanR: -In most species of frogs only the male croaks. Attracting a female during mating season and letting other males know there's a new frog in town.

SusanR: -The Bull Frog is the largest frog native to North America. It can grow to 18 in. and weigh 1.2 lbs. Wow!

SusanR: -After you have read all these frog facts you could be considered a herpetologist. One who studies frogs!

BJ hugs Bill....now see what you've done!

CharlesPM: They have long sticky tongues.

SusanR: delete those

SusanR: oops sorry

BillHi: Susan, what ARE you trying to prove?

ShirleyHe: <claps for Susan>

BillHi: Okay, everybody stop and breathe deeply for a second.

BillHi: While you're at it, breathe like a frog breathes.

ClintonA: through our skin?

SuzannePT: I'm old...my skin is too thick....

SusanR: . o O (takes a big breath)

BillHi: Good, Clinton. That IS one way they breathe. (That's my fact.)

BillHi: So let's think about what everybody presented as facts.

BillHi: You have a choice of how to teach these facts to your students. You can either stand up and tell them the facts, or you can help them deduce those facts.

BillHi: So my next question, is--using the fact that you offered--how would you lead your students into discovering this fact for themselves?

AnneMarieE: Team them up and allow them to do some research.

SusanR: I can recall my grade 2 students bringing in a pail of tadpoles at this time of year

BillHi: AnneMarie. Please be more specific for YOUR fact.

ClintonA: I could show them a picture of a shriveled up frog

SuzannePT: I guess I'd start with frog sex in my classroom and have them journal about the changes they see

SusanR: and we would track their changes

BillHi: Frog sex? in your CLASSROOM! My word!

CharlesPM: Maybe have them do research on the internet for frogs.

AnneMarieE: I could bring in the food chain and then how environments affect frogs.

SuzannePT: okay, okay...amplexus...

ShirleyHe: Bring in frog legs and fry them up in a pan.

BillHi: Amplexus. there's a word everybody probably doesn't know.

BJ gives Shirley a time out

SuzannePT: frog sex

BillHi: No, not correct.

SuzannePT: your definition?

BillHi: Amplexus is when the male mounts the female and hangs on for long periods. the actual sex doesn't occur until she expels eggs and he fertilizes them externally with a cloud of milt.

ClintonA: froggy style?

BillHi: Another time out!

ClintonA: sorry

BillHi: It's okay. I'll steal that line and use it sometime.

ShirleyHe: BJ can I come out of time out now?:-} They're talking about frog sex.

BillHi: Yes, Shirley. Let's get back to the task at hand.

BillHi: Let's look at your responses.

BillHi: What most of you described was some form of "discovery learning."

ShirleyHe: In that case - should be bring some frogs into our classroom to observe them?

BJ . o O (or tadpoles?)

BillHi: Now there's an idea that teachers often forget about.

BillHi: Or intentionally avoid.

SuzannePT: Some of the best discussions in my classroom revolve around the animals I have in class

BillHi: Good, Suzanne. Why might some teachers NOT want to bring frogs into a classroom.

AnneMarieE: I try to bring in different types of animals and have students create an environment to help the animal survive.

ShirleyHe: They can jump out and then you have to catch them.

SuzannePT: Don't know enough about them to keep them alive...

AnneMarieE: Animals are smelly and usually other teachers frown.

CharlesPM: What do you feed them?

SusanR: germs

ClintonA: might be afraid that students will harm them?

SuzannePT: fear of the unknown...

AnneMarieE: Teachers have to pay for the animals and the supplies out of pocket

ShirleyHe: too many kids have allergies in this day and time.

CharlesPM: Do they ever bite

BillHi: Okay, those are all accurate answers, but are they legitimate reasons?

SuzannePT: mine never have

SuzannePT: no

AnneMarieE: If we try hard enough we can all create a valid excuse.

BJ: what about salmonella?

BillHi: Don't lick your fingers after handling frogs.

SuzannePT: No one leaves my class without a good handwashing...

AnneMarieE: Bottom line the students enjoy seeing things out of the ordinary in the classroom.

BJ laughs...good suggestion, Bill!

ShirleyHe: and worried parents?

SuzannePT: They prefer live over dead and pickled

CharlesPM: I agree

ClintonA: formaldehyde

ClintonA: there's a nice smell

BillHi: So do I understand that all of you would be willing to have frogs in your classrooms?

BillHi: Any dissenters?

SuzannePT: If you bring in tadpoles it provides a great opportunity to do some studies on rates of growth/change under different conditions...

SuzannePT: yes absolutely!

ShirleyHe: I did have a frog once and it died over a weekend - not a pleasant smell for a Monday morning.

ClintonA: I would be willing

CharlesPM: I would

AnneMarieE: I plan to have frogs when schools begins.

SuzannePT: My African Clawed Frogs escaped one weekend...we found them downstairs in the cafe....

BillHi: Okay, someone made an important point about having students help create a viable classroom habitat for the frogs.

ShirleyHe: The educational service center in San Antonio will provide frogs for you.

BillHi: A viable habitat should be one from which the frogs can't escape and in which they're unlikely to die.

ShirleyHe: I get the message Bill.

SuzannePT: You'd be surprised at how resourceful frogs can be at escaping...regular Houdinis...

BillHi: Would designing and building a Fwog Habitat in advance be a good way to help students learn facts about frogs?

ShirleyHe: Yes!

CharlesPM: Absolutely

SuzannePT: terrific idea

ClintonA: what guidelines would you give them beforehand?

SusanR likes the idea of the students creating the habitat

AnneMarieE: Sound like a great project for students to do at home and present to the class.

BillHi: Thanks, all! (-:

AnneMarieE: Then vote on the best habitat and why and try to create it for the classroom

SusanR . o O (create a habitat as close to their natural environment as possible)

BillHi: Let me ask a question fist. Is creating Fwog Habitat "discovery learning" as we mentioned it earlier?

ClintonA: yes

CharlesPM: Yes

ShirleyHe: They have to discover how a frog lives in his natural setting.

SuzannePT: I think the true discovery is finding out if it works...

ShirleyHe: in order to keep it alive

BillHi: Ahah, Suzane and Shirley have it.

SuzannePT: Designing it is one thing...trying it out is another...

CharlesPM: It could get elaborate

BillHi: Doing library or Internet research (which someone mentioned earlier) are NOT discovery learning

BillHi: That's a literature search.

BillHi: The discovery comes when you don't know for sure that it will work.

JeffC: trusting the internet to provide you with an answer is also not knowing for sure that it will work.

ShirleyHe: So what would be your suggestion in order to set this up in a classroom?

BillHi: And then, you can use the frog in the habitat to let the students discover all sorts of Fwog Facts.

ClintonA: with 30 students

BillHi: I think some folks have hinted at how this could work. Set up teams, have them do the literature search, then have each create a habitat.

SuzannePT: I think there has to be some cost containment, some size containment and perhaps some materials guidelines, but I think the kids can be pretty creative - and successful - in their designs

BillHi: A ten-gallon aquarium is pretty cheap.

ClintonA: a frog for each group?

BillHi: Instead of having one habitat per group, you might--as someone mentioned--have the students vote on the best design.

ShirleyHe: Grading - if your frog dies, you fail?

BillHi: Or top two designs.

SuzannePT: When I do things like this I have my kids bring in common household items to make their creations...

BillHi: keep in mind this might end up being a long-term project that would go on all semester--to take metamorphosis into account.

CharlesPM: Then the habitat might change?

ClintonA: so they all wouldn't necessarily need an aquarium?

SuzannePT: Offer up the creations for peer review and come up with "The Classroom Habitat"

BillHi: I wouldn't fail someone if a frog dies.

BillHi: Okay. Everyone stop for a minute.

ShirleyHe: Actually Bill, I would use a rubric for the grading. That was my idea of a bad joke.

BillHi: Sorry, Shirley. It was dark humor. (-:

BillHi: Again. Everybody stop.

BillHi: Okay, I think we've all concluded this Classroom Fwog Habitat might be a great teaching/learning tool.

BillHi: But don't forget that you also need to get the kids outside the classroom to see frogs in more natural habitats.

BillHi: So coupling the field trip with the design phase might be a good idea, too.

BillHi: We're about to run out of time, so I want to direct you to some Gween Frog info.

BillHi: Everybody please go to the Web site for Hilton Pond Center for Piedmont Natural History and stop at the main page: <http://www.hiltonpond.org>

BillHi: Just click on the link above.

BillHi: Everybody there?

CharlesPM: yes

RosanaP: let's go there

ClintonA: yes

ShirleyHe: yes

AnneMarieE: yes

SuzannePT: yes

BillHi: On this main page, there is a link each week to a new photo essay called "This Week at Hilton Pond." This week it's about pickerelweed, but last week it was about Green frogs.

BillHi: Click on the link to green Frogs.

BillHi: Everybody got it?

ClintonA: yes

CharlesPM: yes

ShirleyHe: yes

AnneMarieE: yup

AnneMarieE: yup

RosanaP: yes

BillHi: Okay, just scroll down and take a look at it. (You may even see the word "amplexus"!)

SuzannePT: tomAto...tomAHto...

SuzannePT: Great photos Bill, are they yours?

RosanaP: terrific

BillHi: Yes, all the text and photos are mine.

BJ: Before we run out of time, I'd like to mention that next month (July) Bill will be doing a Nuts About Nature session for the Tapped In Festival

BillHi: Thanks, BJ.

BJ: watch your Tapped In newsletter for more festival information

BillHi: Okay, I guess you know what comes next.

BillHi: Please bookmark the Web site for Hilton Pond Center for Piedmont Natural History at <http://www.hiltonpond.org> !

ShirleyHe: The test?

AnneMarieE: thanks for the lively discussion

AnneMarieE: good night to all

BJ: Bill's newsletter is wonderful...

ClintonA: thanks Bill

BillHi: No test, Shirley. You already failed the humor quiz. (-:

SusanR: Thanks, Bill. You challenge the notion about how we should teach Science.

CharlesPM: Thank you Bill for the great discussing on gween fwogs

BJ: I recommend that you subscribe

BJ: . o O (and you get all those great photos!)

BillHi: Again, I do on-line newsletter every week. You can get a free reminder of when I post a new installment by sending a blank e-mail as instructed at the end of the frog essay.

BillHi: Any questions as well close up?

BillHi: Or comments?

BillHi: "as we close up."

BJ: Thanks, Bill. My brain is humming...er...croaking

ClintonA: your session was very thought provoking, thanks

ShirleyHe: Now that's not funny. BJ :-}

BJ chuckles. Sorry, Shirley

SuzannePT: Thanks Bill

BillHi: Thanks to everyone for participating. "See" you next month.

BJ waves goodnight

CharlesPM: This was very enlightening for my first time in a tapped in room. Bye all.