
Note to Educators

Science education is increasingly in the spotlight as society recognizes the importance of scientific literacy to the Nation's future. As teachers of science, you are being asked to prepare your students by providing both breadth and depth in science topics and process. The *Investi-gator* is a resource to help you teach both scientific content and process to your students. The *Investi-gator* integrates science with a number of disciplines, including language arts, geography, math, and social studies. Therefore, the *Investi-gator* can be used for team teaching or simply to reinforce the interdependent nature of learning and knowledge to your students.

You understand the importance of hands-on learning. While hands-on experience is a critical component of student scientific learning, science education standards have increasingly also highlighted the role of minds-on learning. True scientific literacy occurs when students can critically think about scientific questions, processes, and findings, as well as participate in data collection, observation, and analysis. You can use the *Investi-gator* to introduce science as a process that integrates minds-on learning with hands-on learning. At the end of each article, an easy-to-do activity, called a FACTivity, is provided to highlight a topic or process concept from the article. A reference to appropriate Project Learning Tree (PLT) activities are also provided for those educators certified in PLT. For more information about PLT, visit <http://www.plt.org>.

How To Use This Journal In Your Classroom

The *Investi-gator* is written at the fifth grade level. Each article is written from an actual published scientific paper presenting contemporary environmental research. At the back of this journal, you will find two resources to help you use the journal more effectively. A matrix is given which indicates which national science education standards can be addressed by each article. A lesson plan is also provided that can be used with all four of the

articles. The lesson plan helps you apply a reading strategy that will increase student comprehension. Along with the FACTivity, the lesson plan will help you integrate minds-on and hands-on scientific learning.

Help Us Improve the *Investi-gator*

On pages 52 and 53 of this journal and on <http://www.naturalinquirer.org>, you will find student and teacher evaluation forms. These forms give you an opportunity to provide feedback that will help us improve the journal. Please take a moment to complete the evaluation form and if possible, invite your students to evaluate the journal as well. By completing the evaluation form, your students can learn the importance of providing assessment, much as you do when you assess their achievement. For more information, to ask questions, or to provide comment, contact:

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In subject line, please put: Educator feedback

Visit these web sites for other useful information:

U.S. Forest Conservation Education
<http://fs.usda.gov/conservationeducation>

Cradle of Forestry
<http://www.cradleofforestry.com>

The *Investi-gator* is a member of the *Natural Inquirer* family. The *Natural Inquirer* is a science education journal for middle school students. To explore more resources for using these journals, visit the *Natural Inquirer* Web site at <http://www.naturalinquirer.org>

Visit the *Investi-gator* Web site at <http://www.scienceinvestigator.org>