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| Name of Activity | Winter Fun Month (December) |
| What grade level did you do it with? | 6 |
| What materials did you need to provide? | You will need to create slips of paper with different winter activities on them all folded and ready in a grab bag. You can have your class make suggestions about things that they like to do outside in the snow for fun. I also added some different activity ideas that would connect curriculum and expand the students' experiences when outdoors. |
| What materials did your students need to provide? | Students recorded our activities in their field journals with a brief description of what we did and what the outcome of the activity was. We did this when we were back in the classroom so they had their pen/pencil, work space and field journal at hand as well as our large whiteboard where I could write down notes to support their records. |
| What materials did you use from the natural outdoor environment? | Snow, pine cones and pieces of branches, large log slices, sticks, rocks, ice chunks, icicles, any natural objects that happened to be laying around in our playground area |
| Describe your activity with as much detail as possible. This is a good place to put in the different steps or progressions that other teachers could use. The more detail and explanation about your activity including sample ideas, the better. | December was designated as Winter Fun month. We planned to take the students outdoors for one whole additional class period each day throughout the month. I started by writing down as many winter activities as I could on individual slips of paper. Most days, we selected a random slip of paper from the grab bag so that the activity would be a surprise for students. I sent an email home explaining that students would need to come with appropriate outdoor clothing every school day so that they would be prepared to spend more extended time outdoors regardless of the weather. Some of the outdoor activities such as ice cream making, snow shoeing, snow painting, and sliding down the hill were scheduled so that we could be prepared in advance with the supplies/equipment needed to do the activity. We put those activities on our large class calendar so that students could see when they would take place and look forward to them. Here is a list of the activities that we placed on individual slips of paper inside the grab bag: math in the snow, building repeating patterns with natural materials, snow yoga, snow obstacle course, building snow forts, snow carving, snow sculpture, adopt a tree, micro hike, take a walk around the neighborhood, explore Sherbrooke yard in the winter, and snow Pac Man game. Each morning when we did not have a scheduled outdoor activity on our calendar, we would select a slip from the grab bag and designate a period to go outside and carry out the activity. I had gathered and purchased the following items before the month began so that I had things ready to go. -Key to the outdoor shed for access to outdoor Phys Ed equipment -popsicle sticks and tongue depressor sticks for snow carving -spray bottles and food colouring for snow painting (we used green, blue, red and yellow) -access to yoga mats for the class -all the ingredients for making ice cream -snowshoes set rented from the school division (our whole school shared these for a week in December) The teaching for each selected slip was done outdoors and we spent whatever time we had remaining in that class period carrying out the activity. Students wore their masks outdoors and we usually chose a class period that ended or began with a recess break so that the students would not have to get dressed in their winter gear an additional time. We reviewed Math concepts that had previously been taught, connected the micro hike to health (Mindfulness), and relied on student leadership as part of their Phys Ed assessment. We took photos of the activities to share on our Remind App with parents but also to use as assessment tools. The snow sculpture, carving and painting were visual art activities and the photos that we took aided our assessment of the students' work. |
| Describe how the activity went with the students and how you would adjust it the next time you do it. | This month of outdoor activities was very successful and the students were extremely engaged. The weather was beautiful and this added to each students' enjoyment of activities. Some students did not enjoy the element of surprise when choosing a slip out of the grab bag each morning. Next time, we would still choose the slips but we would do this at the beginning of the month and I would write the activities on the large class calendar all at one time rather than picking each day. Also, I would give students a chance to brainstorm their ideas and add them to the selection of slips. Also, we were not successful in recording every single activity that we did in our field journals. There wasn't sufficient time in the school day for us to be 100% consistent. We won't be using their field journal notes as an assessment this time. We had a lot of students away from school during this month. Next time, I would prepare written activities for each day and add them to our Google Classroom so that the students who are away could do the activities at home if they were able to go outdoors. |
| Describe the location that you did the activity in including proximity to the school. | All of these activities were done on the school grounds/playground area or in our community field which is connected to our playground. Also, we used some residential routes in our neighbourhood during our walking tours. Every space was accessible to us and within minutes of our classroom. |
| Describe any challenges that you or your students experienced in planning or doing the activity and how they were dealt with. | I described many of the challenges above. We have a couple of students in our classroom who move slowly and walk quite far behind the rest of the group. When one teacher took the whole group out alone, this was often a challenge. I found that I had to be at the very back of the group encouraging these students along and keeping a pace for them to follow. This caused the rest of the group to have to stop and wait for me and the others to catch up before receiving instruction. One thing that I did try was having those students set out ahead of the group about 5 minutes before the rest of the class. This worked well if supervision was possible and they could be within my view (ie. walking across the playground or field where I could see them). It also helped to give the students a walking buddy from the class to walk beside (this also mixed up naturally forming groups/pairs and gave students a chance to spend time with a classmate they didn't know as well). Sharing equipment and sanitizing equipment was also a challenge. I would take the time to think this process through more so that designated students could help with this. |