

LESSON 4 Sorting Objects: Classification Techniques

Grade Level: 7-8

1. Grades 7- 8

2. Overview When we observe things, we take note of essential details. One skill which scientists practise when there is a collection of things is to group them. This skill at times is called classification. When we classify things, we try to put in the same groups, the things which are similar. Classification is also known as grouping.

3. Purpose The purpose of this lesson is to develop in children, the skill of classification. When things are classified, it becomes easy to identify detailed characteristics which are common to members of the group. They will then understand why things in a store are grouped.

4. Objectives Students will be able to:

- i. Classify things according to shape, colour or size
- ii. Group things into two big groups-living and non-living.
- iii. Suggest how children in a class can be grouped.
- iv. Describe how letters in the local Post office are sorted.

5. Resources/materials A collection of common things available in the students' environment.

- Plants, flowers, fruits
- Insects
- Non-living materials of different shapes, colours and sizes.

6. Activities and Procedures It is recommended that this lesson comes up immediately after Lesson 3. The teacher will be saved the trouble of collecting another set of materials. Grouping or classification should be presented as a common phenomenon in every day living. In stores, market and in Post offices, classification of things is done.

It is important that the teacher should allow the students to appreciate the need to classify things. Efficient classification is done by first establishing the criteria for the classification. The normal criteria commonly used are colour, shape, and size. However other criteria can similarly be used. This is where the teacher should allow the students to work out their criteria. What should be stressed is the need to establish criteria that can be applied by everybody.

With the collection of the materials stated above, it is then possible for the teacher to introduce criteria for classification such as living and non-living. The students have knowledge about living and non-living things. Here the teacher should challenge the students with the problem-how to classify members of the class including the teacher. This aspect of the lesson could be fun as the students may come up with unorthodox criteria.

The application of this technique of classification finds great use in the activities of members of the community. The teacher should challenge the students to identify such instances. The girls in particular may draw attention to what their mothers or older sisters do in classifying their wares and commodities. A trip to a market place or to a large department store could be arranged . Finally, a visit to the local Post Office to see how letters are sorted and classified for easy delivery will be useful. Here the point that what is learnt in science finds useful application in every day living.

7. Tying it all together The import of this lesson is to emphasise that the practice of science is a normal human activity. Even those who have not had the benefit of formal schooling do also practise science. Classification of things more than anything else, helps in organising many things. Things are easier to find if they have been classified using known criteria.

8. Assessment This lesson involves the whole class in various activities. The teacher should be able to assess the success of the lesson from the enthusiastic participation of the students.

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