

ESL and FL Department

Hialeah Campus

EAP 1620- Reading Level 6

Semester: Spring 2009



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On March 8, 2009, 30 EAP1620 students, from two classes and family members, participated in a Seagrass Immersion at the Biscayne Nature Center in Key Biscayne. Under the supervision of a naturalist, they ventured into the bay to explore the plants and animals living in this ecosystem. The importance of the dunes, the plants' adaptations to survive the harsh environment and the formation of sand were also covered. We returned to land to revel in the sea creatures: seahorses, shrimps, crabs

and parrot and toad fish, that we had found in our nets. These animals were later gingerly returned to the water. By focusing totally on the experience with all our senses, we forgot the trials and tribulations of our daily lives and soaked in the wonderful water, sand and animals like small children searching for shells and sea glass.

Prior to our visit the students were given parts of the Earth Charter to read and discuss, to prepare them for reconnecting to nature on a personal level. We read this section out loud in class:

Earth, Our Home

Humanity is part of a vast evolving universe. Earth, our home, is alive with a unique community of life. The forces of nature make existence a demanding and uncertain adventure, but Earth has provided the conditions essential to life's evolution. The resilience of the community of life and the well-being of humanity depend upon preserving a healthy biosphere with all its ecological systems, a rich variety of plants and animals, fertile soils, pure waters, and clean air. The global environment with its finite resources is a common concern of all peoples. The protection of Earth's vitality, diversity, and beauty is a sacred trust.



After the immersion, students were required to prepare PowerPoint presentations to share their photos, discuss what they had learned, as well as, what touched them on a personal level. They were encouraged to include memories from other experiences with nature, and to annotate their slides with music, poetry or quotations. A common theme was flashing back to a time as a child, when they had been closer to the natural environment; many were in awe of the beauty and majesty of Crandon Park, Key Biscayne, which was only 25 minutes from their homes in Hialeah or Miami Lakes. Students recounted that by learning about their bioregion and being able to immerse themselves in the sights, sounds and smells of the beach, they had obtained a sense of peace. Some also recounted that in their own countries, their culture and traditions, included a respect and fear of nature and the supernatural; they had lost that. they had experienced a sense of peace. Now they would be able to share this knowledge with their children and impress on them, a new found love and appreciation for our Earth.

Some also recounted that in their own countries, their culture and traditions, included a respect and fear of nature and the supernatural; they had lost that. I told them about Native Americans' connection to the Earth and wanting to preserve it for future generations.

Learning Outcomes covered in this activity:

1. Communicate effectively using listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills;
2. Not covered
3. Solve problems using critical and creative thinking and scientific reasoning;
4. Formulate strategies to locate, evaluate, and apply information;
5. Demonstrate knowledge of diverse cultures, including global and historical perspectives;
6. Create strategies that can be used to fulfill personal, civic, and social responsibilities;
7. Demonstrate knowledge of ethical thinking and its application to issues in society;
8. Use computer and emerging technologies effectively;
9. Demonstrate an appreciation for aesthetics and creative activities;
10. Describe how natural systems function and recognize the impact of humans on the environment.

