

Seaquaria in Schools:

A Novel Cornerstone to Integrated Learning

www.worldfish.org/seaquaria.htm



"I have reached the students more deeply and successfully than ever before." - Lori Burley, Vic West Elementary



Description:

The Seaquaria in Schools program places aquaria in schools and brings captivating, ever-changing marine ecosystems into the students' everyday lives. These help focus, deliver and integrate a variety of cross-curricular and outreach materials. As students care for their ecosystems and participate in hands-on activities, they build an understanding and respect for the organisms and develop integrated stewardship skills. In the process, the aquaria are very effective in fostering a passion for learning and critical thinking in many other areas of endeavour.



"having the aquarium at our school allowed students to SEE what they were hearing about in other programs...ask questions, look for more information and to want to learn..." - teacher, Vic West Elementary

Overview:

"Seaquaria in Schools" is a non-profit program whose goal is to stimulate integrated marine and ecosystem education in our schools and communities. Age specific programs are developed through partnerships and collaboration. They target students of all ages, address many learning styles, extend learning to the real world and provide increased leadership opportunities. A variety of programs specific to elementary, middle and secondary schools have been developed.



Results:

Elementary & Middle School

- 80-90% of Prescribed Learning Outcomes (all subject areas)
- Engage vulnerable students in learning
- Calming effect for students with challenging behaviours

High School

- up to 90% PLOs in select subject areas

Field Activities

- Improved effectiveness

Communities

- increased public awareness



Seaquaria foster:

- Passion for learning
- Capacity to make informed decisions
- Respect for the environment and its inhabitants

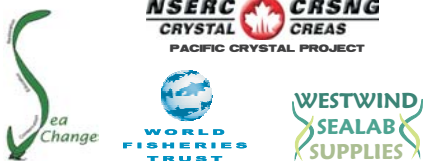


Seaquaria Key Processes:

- Participative learning: students and teachers learning together
- Teachers modeling learning processes
- Peer-teaching
- Research & enquiry vs. Rote learning
- Interdisciplinary and integrated learning
- Fostering positive school-wide learning atmosphere
- Building linkages to local field, environmental and community programs

Seaquaria create "emotional hooks" for learning:

- Sense of "home" - Local context
- Personal connection - interactive, living, touchable
- Possibility of unknown - Novelty and Complexity
- Self-esteem - Possibility of having special knowledge
- Manageable - not too big and scary



Funding from:



Other Development Partners

Teachers, students, and Parent Advisory Councils,
BC School Districts 28, 36, 45, 61, 62, 63, 64, 68, 79
Stream Team
Watership Foundation

Fisheries and Oceans Canada
University of Victoria
Archipelago Marine Research

Photo captions (clockwise from top left):
Vic West Elementary School Seaquarium, Pacific Salmon Foundation dinner, University of Victoria, 2004; Landsdowne Middle School beach study poster; Vic West Fest, Vic West Y, 2006; California sea cucumber in Seaquarium, Oceans Day, Royal Roads University College; Vic West Fest, Vic West Y, 2005; Pleasant Valley Elementary school Seaquarium (photo W. Carolsfeld); Water in City Conference, Victoria, 2006; Landsdowne Middle School beach study at Cattle Point, Victoria; Water in City Conference, Victoria, 2006; Esquimalt High School at Gorge Restoration Site, Victoria, BC (all photos C. Carolsfeld unless otherwise indicated).

Authors:
Cathy Carolsfeld, WestWind SeaLab Supplies, 434 Russell St., Victoria, BC www.sealab.ca; Joachim Carolsfeld World Fisheries Trust, Victoria, BC;
Mary Holmes, Pacific Heights Elementary School, Surrey, BC; Lori Burley, Tillicum Elementary School, Victoria, BC;
Nikki Wright, SeaChange Marine Conservation Society, Victoria, BC