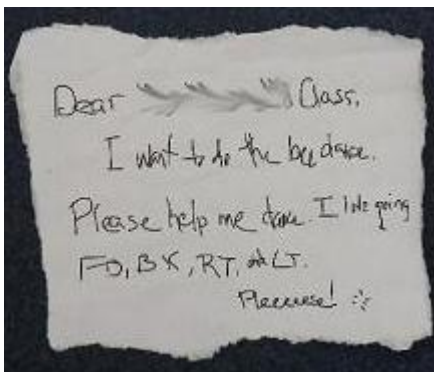


Discoveries of the Bees

by Valerie Belt

After doing some research and reading, I and the classroom teacher decided to use a "discovery" approach with second-grade students. After school, the day before "Back to School Night," I placed the "bee" (Bee-Bot) in the students' classroom, on top of the TV. The students came in and "discovered" the bee. The teacher asked groups of students where the bee came from and how it got there. The students were excited and came up with LOTS of "scenarios" as to how the bee ended up in their room. The classroom teacher let small groups of students "play" with the bee. Then the students went to recess before coming to the computer lab.



During recess, I removed the bee from the classroom and placed it on the rug in the computer lab. When the students returned to their classroom, they were concerned about the bee, but it was time to go to the computer lab. When they were ready to come into the lab, I stopped them, telling them that they couldn't come in because there was a problem. I said that there was this strange insect in my lab. Immediately they all began asking and shouting, "Is it a bee? Is it a bee? It's OUR bee!"

I allowed them in 5 at a time and found it difficult to get them to sit "around" the bee. I had also rolled up a "scrawled" note and tucked it in the back of the bee. The note asked them to help the bee go FD, LT, RT or even BK. It took them about 10 minutes to figure out what these abbreviations meant - coming up with all sorts of possibilities (find, return, etc.) before realizing they meant Forward, Backward, Left and Right.

They then went to their computers to type a few sentences describing the bee. (One student came in the next morning having handwritten 2 pages: "Today at school my class found a bee on top of the T.V. When we went to the computer lab, we found the bee on the middle of the rug...My thoughts about the bee: I am guessing that the bee has 33 brothers and sisters..." Some left the lab and said they wanted to be sure the bee was safe so they planned to return at lunchtime.





A couple of students did return during lunch when I was not in the lab. They asked the IT Director where the bee was and he told them he thought the bee flew away! They ran out, probably to tell the other students. So, before the end of the school day, I had the principal make an announcement over the P.A. system that if anyone had found a bee, to return it to that classroom. I had another teacher and her class in my lab at the time, so that teacher "returned" the bee (which had been in my desk) and the students were cheering, even as she left their room!

That evening, at Back to School Night, the teacher informed the parents about the Bee-Bot program we had started and the parents came through with funding for 6 more Bee-Bots!

Our second meeting with students involved putting students in newly-assigned groups of 3 and write a "Bee dance." Of course the bee had left another note saying he wanted to do the "bee dance!" The groups rated each others' dances (1 for fun, 3 for more fun, or 5 for super fun). Two groups tied for the highest score to make it into the "Bee Dance Hall of Fame." The students left that day with a sheet with 10 lines for writing a program for a bee dance. The plan is to randomly pull one every week and allow that student to showcase his/her bee dance in order to add his/her name to the Bee Dance Hall of Fame!



The next week there was a substitute teacher, so while the students were out for their school photos, I placed 4 Bee-Bots in their room (I did advise the sub!). When they returned, the students went wild and the sub sent 2 students to the lab to "tell me." I was in the middle of teaching a first grade class when the two students (boy and girl) came in. At first I wasn't even thinking about the bees, and asked what they needed. The boy began flailing his arms saying, "There are more bees in our room - more bees!" I asked him if he was "kidding," and he just kept saying there were more bees! I said I would stop by as soon as I could - the first grade students were very curious, thinking that these students had "real" bees in their classroom. I did go to their room and brought the "original" bee and its "home" to the class to be with the other 4.



The following morning, I had 2 more bees to "introduce," so first thing in the morning I went to the class to ask if all their bees were there because I had 2 bees in my classroom. Many of the students were surprised/excited, but unfortunately, some of the parents must have told the students the night before that they had "bought" the bees as some of the students were saying that yes, they knew we were getting more bees. In any case, the students were VERY excited in the lab as each group had their own bee which we'll eventually decorate with stick-on sparkles. Their first real challenge was VERY tough as they had to make their bee travel around the world - from North America to South America to Africa, Europe, Asia, Australia, Antarctica and back to North America. (They had been studying the continents.) They all tried, but couldn't quite do it because some don't have a good grasp of left or right.

It was a great learning experience for them and we plan to continue working on it. We did "left/right" turn practice at the

end of the session, but it is tough for students at this age, and therefore this is going to be SO good for them!

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Tags:

Bee-Bot, California

Age:

2nd Grade