

Hogan Skandamis

Project FOCUS

Professor Knauft

Best Lesson

**Title of Lesson:** Beaks of all kinds!

**Theme:** Birds

**Unit Number:** 4

**Unit Title:** Life Science: Birds

**Performance Standards covered:** SLK1 and SLK2

**Content:** This experiment was designed to get the students to observe differences and similarities of the characteristics of birds, mainly their beaks. It is a hands on activity set up for the students to explore these characteristics with the help of the FOCUS student. This will set a foundation of the many different types of birds and how their beaks are different or similar to each other.

**Learning Activity (description in steps):** All of the food sources were laid out in front of the students, and you start with one food source. You can ask the students, “What tool would be the best at eating (or drinking) this food source. For example, the nectar is a liquid, and most of the students know that the straw would be the best “beak type” for that. Then, you describe a bird with a long and narrow beak type like a straw (hummingbird), and describe to them why it might be shaped this way. Repeat this process for each of the food sources and the tools.

**Abstract:** This lesson is a great way to keep the students engaged in learning because it uses real food and everyday tools. It is easy for the students to understand how beaks work by demonstrating with different types of common foods.

**Details:** Ask the teacher of the class for permission to give each student a sample of the food. Do this at the end of the experiment because it might be hard for the students to focus while eating and playing with the food.

**Materials for different foods:**

- 7-8 matching containers
- water
- sunflower seeds
- craft styrofoam block – cut to be slightly smaller than the container
- rice – painted or dyed a bright color
- grass
- marshmallows
- dirt or sand
- gummy worms

- Swedish fish or Juju fish candy

**Materials needed for the types of beaks:**

- tweezers
- straw
- scissors
- cheater chopsticks – you can purchase one like these dino cheater chopsticks or you can use a pair of chopsticks with paper secured with a rubberband.
- slotted spoon
- hand strainer
- pliers

**Notes and Tips:** I would not change anything about this lesson! Everything worked out exactly as was planned! If you cannot acquire all of the tools and foods, just make sure that you have enough to put together a lesson. Also, be cautious when the students are using the tools to eat their foods. Safety is always the most important thing.

**References:**

- 1) <http://www.montessoritidbits.com/2013/03/types-of-birds-beaks-experiment.html>
- 2) <https://www.georgiastandards.org/standards/Pages/BrowseStandards/BrowseGPS.aspx>