A TEN WEEK TEACHING/LEARNING SEQUENCE ON WEEDS FOR TEACHERS OF UPPER PRIMARY AND LOWER SECONDARY SCHOOL CHILDREN: ‘WEEDS ARE A MENACE’

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INTRODUCTION

Pest plants and feral animals have been a popular subject matter for many teachers in the Northern Territory. Requests for the DPIF Extension/Education Officer, and other staff throughout the NT to provide information and visit schools to discuss Weed Management issues led to the development of a ten week Teaching/Learning sequence. A Teaching/Learning sequence is different from a School based activity kit in that it fulfills the Northern Territory Department of Education curriculum guidelines. It is a more in depth study of the topic than a School based activity kit. The ‘Weeds are a Menace’ sequence fits into the NT Profiles strands, Life and Living, and Working Scientifically. Teachers will have a ‘ready to go’ topic of work while fulfilling the NT Education Departments teaching requirements.

The Teaching/Learning sequence is based on the Social Literacy model developed by the Northern Territory Department of Education. The Teaching/Learning sequence is designed to promote conceptual development through language and thinking skills. The sequence consists of a series of focus questions constructed around a main idea. Interpretive illustrations are designed to assist the Teaching/Learning sequence.

METHODOLOGY

To develop the sequence, several teachers, both working in the classroom and as education programmers were invited to attend 3 workshop sessions over a period of 3 months. The final product has attempted to focus children and attention on the problems weeds cause to both the human and biological environment, and what they can do to help reduce the impact of weeds in the Northern Territory. The sequence consists of a series of focus questions, The process is outline below:

FOCUS QUESTION To start the learning sequence by focusing on a concept.
CONSIDER For teachers to present input (visual, oral, written, audio visual, guest; speakers).
MAIN IDEA To generalise about a concept. To answer the focus question. To state a learning outcome.
INQUIRY / INVESTIGATION For students to individually investigate the validity of the main idea by applying the concepts in social research or action. Students may work in small groups to create new, unfamiliar texts.
REFLECTION For students to evaluate their own understandings. Informal discussions.

The Teaching/Learning sequence also provides teachers with resource lists such as books, newspaper clippings, videos and contacts to assist with the sequence.

It also encourages teachers to join in National Weedbuster Week.