Objective/Purpose:
The purpose of this lesson was to teach the students how to measure weather characteristics. This specific exercise had the students make a wind vane and use it to determine wind direction and strength. Each student made their own wind vane and then the entire class went outside to observe the wind. After observations were made, the students went back to the classroom to engage in a group discussion.

Time Required: 35-40 minutes

Background Information:
The students had been taught about various types of weather. They had also learned that wind can have varying degrees of strength. The students enjoyed this activity because each student had his/her own wind vane to observe and they had the opportunity to discuss their observations with their classmates.

Preparation:
Each student will need a piece of paper, a straw, a toothpick, and tape. Make sure you have all of these materials before going into the classroom. I would also suggest making a wind vane at home so that you have a product to show your students and one that will help them to make their own.

Materials:
- paper
- toothpicks
- straws
- tape

Safety:
Make sure the students are careful with the toothpicks so they do not pock themselves or their classmates.

Procedure:
I began by telling the students that we were going to build a wind vane and bring it outside in order to observe the wind’s direction and strength. Then I gave each student the appropriate materials needed to make a wind vane: a piece of paper, a straw, a toothpick, and a piece of tape. Then I told each student to draw a big triangle in the middle of their piece of paper and to cut it out. Then I told them to tape a straw to the
bottom of the triangle. I showed them exactly where using my model. Then I told them to carefully poke the toothpick through the straw. I walked around the room to help anyone who was having trouble with this step. Once everyone had their wind vane correctly built, I took the class outside to observe the wind. We stayed outside for about 15 minutes. I told the students to hold the toothpick and stay still so they could observe which way the triangle was pointing. They were also told to observe how rapidly their triangle was moving. I then took the students back inside where we discussed everyone’s observations and thoughts.

Possible Questions:
1. In the classroom ask the students why the triangle moved in a certain direction.
2. Ask the students why the triangle might have moved rapidly at some times while at other times the triangle barely moved.

Assessment/Evaluation:
My assessment was based on the students’ ability to be able to explain to me why their triangle moved a certain way and why the triangle moved at various speeds. Correct responses include that the triangle moved in the direction the wind was blowing and that the triangle’s speed depended on the strength of the wind. If the student did not see their triangle moving, then there was no wind at that time. If the student saw rapid movement in the triangle, then the wind was blowing hard.

I got this activity out of the Teacher’s Edition of the Harcourt Science Book.