Tina Reynolds
Life Science
Grade 2
Model Magic Habitats

Objective/Purpose:
The students have been studying the characteristics of four different habitats including deserts, woodlands, ponds, and oceans. This is a hands-on activity that provides the students an opportunity to apply what they have learned by making a habitat. Students will organize different species of plants and animals according to various characteristics. This activity helps summarize the unit on plant and animal habitats.

QCCs:
Language Arts
LA2.3 Follows three part directions
LA2.4 Recalls and interprets information presented orally

Science
S2.2 Uses books and other media to obtain information related to science concepts
S2.15 Identifies and describes habitats
S2.16 Matches various animals and plants to habitats

Fine Arts: Visual Arts
FAVA2.2 Uses a variety of materials to construct original artwork

Materials/Time Required:

1. 1 empty shoebox for each student
2. Construction paper
3. Pipe Cleaners – to make plants or animals
4. Colored Markers
5. Glue
6. Hot glue gun
7. Tape
8. Scissors
9. Toothpicks
10. Sand (for Desert or Ocean)
11. Crayola Model Magic to make plants or animals
13. 2-3 class periods

Background Information:

This activity is my version of a similar activity someone told me about. The main difference is the Crayola Model Magic. It is rather expensive compared to basic modeling clay, but it is worth every penny when you see how much the children love it! It was such a hit in my class. Model Magic is a lightweight, air-drying modeling material. It is clean,
safe and non-toxic. It will not flake or crumble and is soft and pliable for easy use. Pieces are easily joined together and it air dries within 24 hours. Because it dries so quickly you should not open it until you are ready to use it and it should be used in one sitting. It does not store. Dried pieces can be decorated with markers, acrylacs, watercolor and tempera paints. Decorative pieces may be glued onto dried product or inserted into soft product. It is available in many bright colors. The best part is that the cleanup is a breeze. It is available in packs ranging in size from 0.5 oz to 2 lbs (Four 8 oz packs). Make sure to get the craft book! It is a wonderful tool. It has step-by-step instructions to make 52 animals with wonderful pictures. Some of the children made their own creations without the book but it is great for those who may not be as artistically inclined. This is a great way to wrap up the unit on plant and animal habitats.

Preparation:

Divide the students up into four groups. Assign each group a habitat so that every habitat is represented. I allowed them to switch with each other if they wanted to. Have each student choose a shoebox. Have them sit with their group so that everyone at the table is working on the same habitat. This makes things a little more organized because they will be using similar colors (warm for desert, cool for ocean). They will begin constructing the background with the various art supplies. Do not open the Model Magic until all of the students have finished their backgrounds. My students worked on their backgrounds for the first and second class periods.

Activity Outline/Teacher Procedures:

Distribute the Model Magic as they need it to prevent them from wasting it and to keep it from drying out. Show them how to mix colors together to get different shades. Make sure that what they are making is characteristic of the habitat they are assigned.

Possible Questions:

1. What are some other animals that are characteristic of your habitat?
2. Why do different animals have different habitats?
3. Can a cactus grow in the woodlands?
4. How are these environments alike? How are they different?
5. Why do forest trees loose their leaves in fall?
6. Why do forest birds fly to warmer places in the winter?
7. How do plants and animals help each other?

Assessment/Evaluation:

Were the students creative? Did the student include plants and animals characteristic of the habitat they were assigned? This activity was a huge success. I highly recommend it.