Bodily Systems Project: The Skeletal System

Objective/Purpose: The Bodily Systems Project is basically a series of lessons to introduce the students to the various bodily systems. In these lessons, the students apply what they learn in a creative and fun way. Specifically, in the skeletal system lesson allows the students to first learn about bones, ligaments, tendons, and joints and then to draw these main features.

Materials/Time Required:
- Bulletin board paper cut into about 4-5 foot sections for each child.
- Three or four black markers (for making outlines).
- A variety of crayon colors per 2 students
- “Mr. Bones” — full sized skeleton which can be checked out from Barnett Shoals.

Background Information:
My assigned teacher, Keri Valentine, performed this lesson series with her students last year. I liked the idea so much that I just had to steal it. This is a fun and creative way to get the kids involved in what they’re learning. In the first lesson I basically talked about the body in general. I emphasized that this exercise would aid them in their knowledge of their bodies and how to keep each system healthy. We then traced each student’s outline onto the bulletin board paper. Be sure that they write their names in the corner of their outline! For the skeletal system, introduce the students to various features of bones such as marrow and calcium phosphate. Also, distinguish between ligaments and tendons.

There are over 200 bones in the human body, but point out a couple of the well known ones such as patella, humerus, sternum, and femur. Afterwards, play a little game of “Simon Says” to help them learn where these bones are located. Finally, allow the students ample time to draw out what they have learned on their personal outlines.

Suggestion: While it would take a really long time to draw all of the bones, I suggest that you ask the kids only to draw the bones in one arm and one leg. Therefore, you save room on the other arm and leg to do the muscular system.

Preparation:
The only preparation required is for the first lesson: cutting the strips of bulletin board paper and collecting crayons. Your school will most likely provide these materials for you upon asking.

Safety Issues:
Use your best discretion in the first lesson! You may find that it would be best if you have the students pair up with a friend to draw their individual outlines.

Activity Outline/Teacher Procedures:
Be sure that the students incorporate all that they learned into their drawings. For example, be sure they draw the ligaments connecting the bones.

Possible Questions:
- So, if bones are made mostly of calcium, what would be good things to eat or drink to help keep them strong? (Broccoli!)
- How is the human skeleton different than other skeletons? (Exoskeletons?)