

MERAMEC VALLEY MIDDLE SCHOOL
PACIFIC, MISSOURI
SIXTH GRADE
SQUARE OF LIFE PROJECT SUMMARY



The Meramec Valley Middle School 6th grade students want to share our Ecological Field Study we did for the Square of Life Project with you!

Meramec Valley Middle School is located in Pacific, Missouri, approximately 30 miles west of St. Louis.

We are located:

Latitude 38°28' 55" Longitude -90°44' 29"

For this project the two six grade teams worked together for a total of approximately 260 sixth grade "scientists" participating in our weekly Ecological Field Study. We divided the students into groups of 3-4 students per 1 square meter of ground. Each member of the square was assigned one fourth of the square to draw and gather information about.

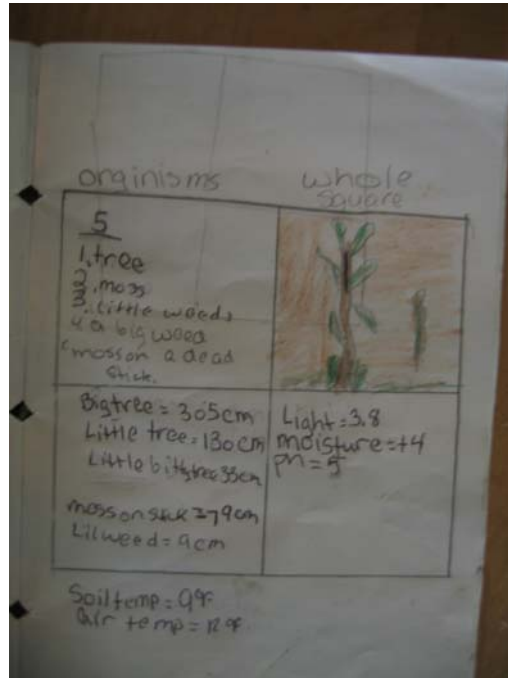
First we decided on an investigative question and then brainstormed on what information would need to be gathered to help us answer our question. The students were quick to realize that we would be following the scientific process during this project.

Our field study was often hampered by weather and unfortunately we often had to cancel due to rain. Of the total 8 weeks we had scheduled to go out we only made 4 of them.

The students could choose their one square meter site from several different areas: an open field, wild flower patches, decomposing tree trunks, heavily wooded areas of deciduous and coniferous trees, an abandoned section of railroad track, and a year-round creek.



Prior to going outside, the students made ecology journals that they could take with them outside to draw and record the information that they gathered. Each week the students focused on gathering quantitative and qualitative information about their section of square. They counted the number of organisms in their square and also measured the pH, moisture, amount of light, soil and air temperature and the height of the organisms found in their section.



Our investigative question:
What abiotic factors effect plant growth?

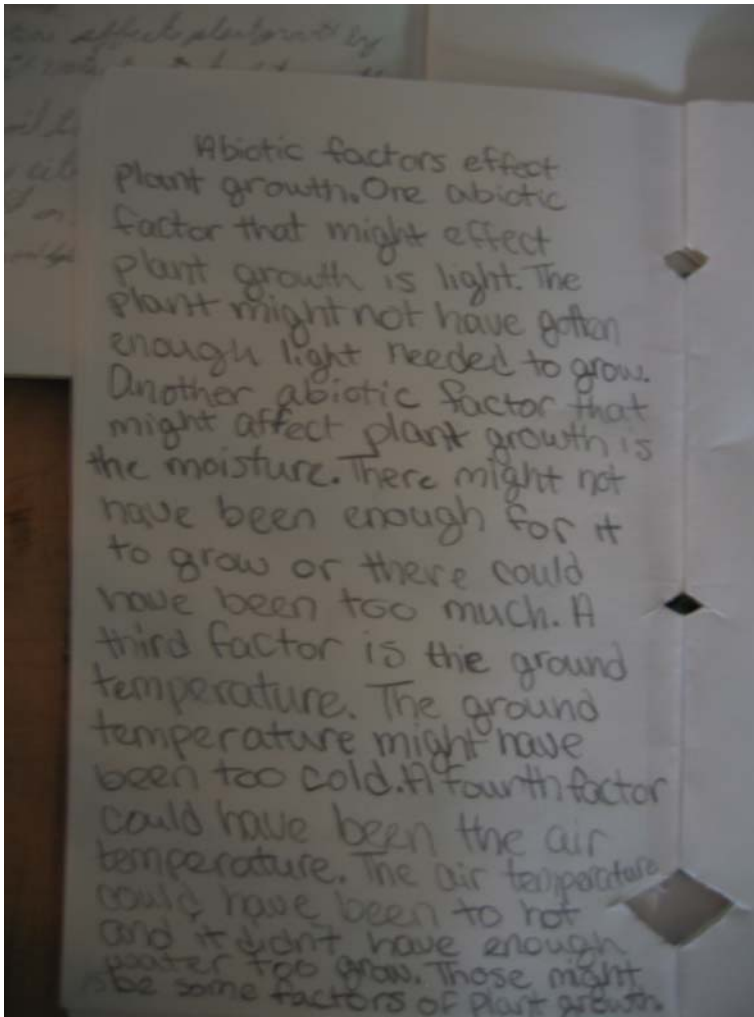


April 13th was our first time out. Each group had 30 minutes to: decide on an area, measure one square meter of ground, mark the boundary with yarn, and make a name tag to identify their square and they also had to draw their section. They did a wonderful job accomplishing this goal!

The students worked through the scientific process to find an answer to the question. They enjoyed the opportunity to experience gathering information, recording and organizing data, and formulating a conclusion to our question in a real hands on situation.

After we had finished our ecological field study and gathered all our information the students were asked to look at their drawings and information they had

collected and to use that information to answer our investigative question. Here is an example of one of the journal responses:



I think our students did a wonderful job during our field study and did a great job using the information they gathered to formulate an accurate conclusion to our question. We had a lot of fun and learned much more than an answer to our proposed question. We will be looking forward in participating in this program again next year.

Meramec Valley Middle School
Ms. Nancy Nuernberger - Purple Knight team
Ms. Janelle Vondera - White Wolves team

