



Taking Inquiry Outdoors: Reading, Writing, and Science Beyond the Classroom

Barbara Bourne

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As national attention is focused on students' abilities to read and write effectively, instructional time allotted for science and other content-area disciplines is often decreased. Many teachers have discovered, however, that involving students in meaningful scientific inquiry provides them with authentic and motivating reasons to read, research, and write.

Taking Inquiry Outdoors is written by a group of educators who have used the natural world as a setting for purposeful student learning and critical teacher reflection. Their stories are about more than just stepping out the door, more than offering students a breath of fresh air. For these teachers, the outdoors provides an authentic laboratory that promotes questions, investigations, reading, writing, listening, and sharing. Notes are kept, data collected, questions recorded, and observations documented. Children critically review their own experiences, place these experiences within the larger context of group findings, evaluate and compare data, generalize concepts, and, best of all, come up with new questions to explore.

Contributors to *Taking Inquiry Outdoors* reflect on children and learning, on teaching, on science made understandable through reading, hands-on investigations, and writing. Their work will appeal to all elementary and middle school teachers who want to integrate reading, writing, and research across the elementary and middle school curriculum.

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