

Teach it to Children: Placemat Posters

Jennifer Klenz and Brett Couch

University of British Columbia, Botany and Zoology, 4200 - 6270 University Blvd,
Vancouver, BC Canada V6T 1Z4

(jklenz@mail.ubc.ca; bcouch@mail.ubc.ca)

Imagine a child eating breakfast learning about dinosaurs on a placemat in front of them. Now imagine instead of dinosaurs they are learning about your topic. This is what we have told our students to preface their major project. They create a child-friendly treatment of their topic. Explaining how small a microorganism is in a way that a child can understand is not trivial. Nor is explaining pH, signal transduction or photosynthesis. And yet our students have done it while also making it engaging through use of cartoons, colorful graphics and humor. Plagiarism is not an issue when students have to translate complicated ideas down to the level that children can understand. We have used this assignment successfully for a number of years for both individuals and groups of students. Most recently groups of students have used online tools available for group work to cartoon various scientific concepts for children.

Keywords: alternative assessment, concept application

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