

Learning Laguna Field Activity: Aquatic Center

Goal: To investigate the tiny animals of the Laguna waters that support animal life and learn about the food web. Discover the adaptations that make it possible for these small animals to thrive in an aquatic environment.

Set up: This is done before students arrive, allow 20 minutes. Using the dipper, collect water from the pond/creek/main channel and place it in 2 white tubs. If water is muddy, let it settle, look for life and transfer critters to clearer water, in another tub, using bottled water if necessary. Magnifiers are placed on the lid of the box. Towels, basters and aquatic insect guides should be made accessible.

Activity:

Before approaching the aquatic area, explain this activity,

- **“Here we will be looking at and examining what lives in this water. Some of the life is so small, it needs magnification to be viewed.**
- Explain that everyone will get a chance to use the magnifiers.

Upon arriving,

- Allow students to look in the white tubs for life.
- Allow students to look around the area.
- Use the basters to catch and put critters onto the magnifiers. **USE ONLY 1 OR 2 magnifiers per group so there will be clear units for each group.** (After use they usually fog up.)
- If you think it is appropriate for your students, let one or two use the baster to refill the magnifier.

Discussion:

- What kinds of animals live under water?
(Fish, Insect larvae and their relatives, flat worms, some snails)
- How do they get oxygen?
(Gills on legs, Flat surface of flatworms)
- What makes gills different from lungs?
(they are external, water moves across them)
- Can you think of any animal adaptations that are special for water animals?
(Gills, Tough skin (water proof), swimming paddles).
- How do they move?
(Paddles, tiny hair-like things that you can't see (flatworms)
- If we came here and found no life in the water what effect would it have on the greater food web? Who eats these animals?

Clean up: Empty each magnifier back into the white tubs. Wipe each magnifier with paper towel so that it does not fog up for the next group. **Leave magnifiers on lid of box**, not on the ground. For final clean and pack up, rinse all equipment with fresh bottled water and dry with towels before placing in box. Put wet/dirty towels in plastic bag.