Academic Note

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Lesson:  Lunar Phases

Learning Objective/Target:  Students will be able to:  Describe the phases of the moon and tell what causes them.

Introduction:  The moon has been up there a long time; did you ever wonder why sometimes you could see it and other times not?  And why is it crescent-shaped on certain nights and bigger on others?

The bellringer activity consists of summarizing interpretations of a planet model as viewed on the overhead.  This not only raise awareness of the lesson’s focus, but it also leads the student into bigger thinking in a condensed form.  The student response is then immediately assessed by the teacher at the student’s seat.  This represents positive, immediate feedback which is documented to be a best practice.

Students are then placed into groups and instruction is given to begin a constructed response activity that describes and sequences the phases of the moon.  This activity is completed with students incorporating math and predicting the correct moon phases for the month of June, 2010 (current) on a graphic organizer that is a simple calendar grid.  The correct moon phases are then put on the overhead and students are able to self-assess their completed calendar predictions.  Best practices galore

Students are then redirected to complete another graphic organizer that has them group brainstorm a simulated lunar survival activity that helps them understand more about the nature of the moon.  When this is completed the whole class is lead to a consensus on the logical correct choices.  Students are then assigned to write a short story from their graphic organizer describing their adventure as an exit slip.

Conclusion:  Students are taught this lesson using several research-based and proven techniques.  At the beginning of the lesson they are presented with a clear learning target on the student’s level and are lead through several activities which make this concept clear.  Feed back and assessment is immediate.