

Project Plan

Rabbits in the Library

Summary

Having a real live rabbit living in the school library enables a myriad of learning opportunities. Connections can be made to literature, science, health and wellness, numeracy, literacy, arts and culture.



Implementation

Physical needs of the rabbit

- House with appropriate design and accessories
- Food & water
- Care

Procedure

- a. Habitat - house/hutch provides ample room for moving, lying down and stretching (vertical and horizontal). Rabbit mesh walls for visibility (interaction). Privacy box. Solid floor and lower edging to keep matter inside. Doors for easy entrance/exit for rabbit and for ease in cleaning. Bedding: pine shavings/straw. Accessories: litter pan, hay rack, bowls for water and food.
- b. Food & water: Daily ration of pellets ($\frac{1}{4}$ cup), continuous access to timothy hay, continuous access to fresh water, variety of fresh vegetables/green (ex. parsley, radish/beet/carrot tops, romaine lettuce)
- c. Care: nail clipping (approx. every 6-8 weeks) being very careful not to cut the quick

Costs

Initial costs

- house/hutch: \$100.00 - \$400.00
- Accessories (water bottle, food/water dishes, hay rack, litter pan: \$50.00
- Care items: nail clippers, litter scoop: \$20.00

Ongoing costs

- Hay: \$5.00-\$8.00 bale
- Bedding: pine shavings, straw - \$5.00 - \$10.00
- Pellets: \$20.00 for 25 kg bag.
- Fresh greens: minimal (kitchen scraps, picked dandelion leaves from pesticide free field or yard)

Learning Opportunities

Science & Technology:

- Taking care of living things (growth, life-cycle)
- Habitat (wild and domestic)
- Canadian wildlife (predator and prey animals)
- Agriculture (farming, animal husbandry)
- Ecology (how rabbits help people)

Numeracy:

- Measurement (food)
- Accounting/currency (project expenses and revenue)
- Fund-raising

Literacy:

- Research print material and online information
- Literary connections (stories about rabbits)
- Rabbit myths and folklore

Physical Education (Health & Wellness):

- Hand-washing/Cleanliness
- Mindfulness/Mental well-being (pet-therapy)
- Empathy (taking care of and understanding others)

Art & Culture:

- Creativity (drawing, painting, illustrating, photography)
- Writing (stories, journals, articles)
- Crafts
- Indigenous connections
- Rabbit symbolism

Ideas

Have different classes take up a responsibility or have groups of students across grades work together as teams to organize and take on the challenge of each of these “problems”.

Fund-raising

- The Library Rabbit will need food, bedding, even possible vet bills. Solicit donations in creative ways for example, “cuddle for a quarter”. Easter/Spring photo shoot which can be as simple as a dollar for a jpg sent via email or as elaborate as \$5.00 for a glossy print-out.

Trades & Technology

- Enlist the help of a local high school shop class to create a permanent home for the rabbit. Consider repurposing an old audio-visual cart for a mobile hutch.

Agriculture

- Research rabbit food stuffs. Create a garden where students can plant seeds and grow romaine lettuce, parsley, radishes, beets and other rabbit favorites. Students can enjoy eating carrot sticks that they grew themselves, while feeding the green tops to the rabbit.



Materials & Resources

Conduct a subject search in your library database to find information and story books on rabbits.

Use a collection of books to inspire learning and creating.

- a. Print Material: any number of classic tales, non-fiction, folktales, picture books, etc.
- b. Online resources:

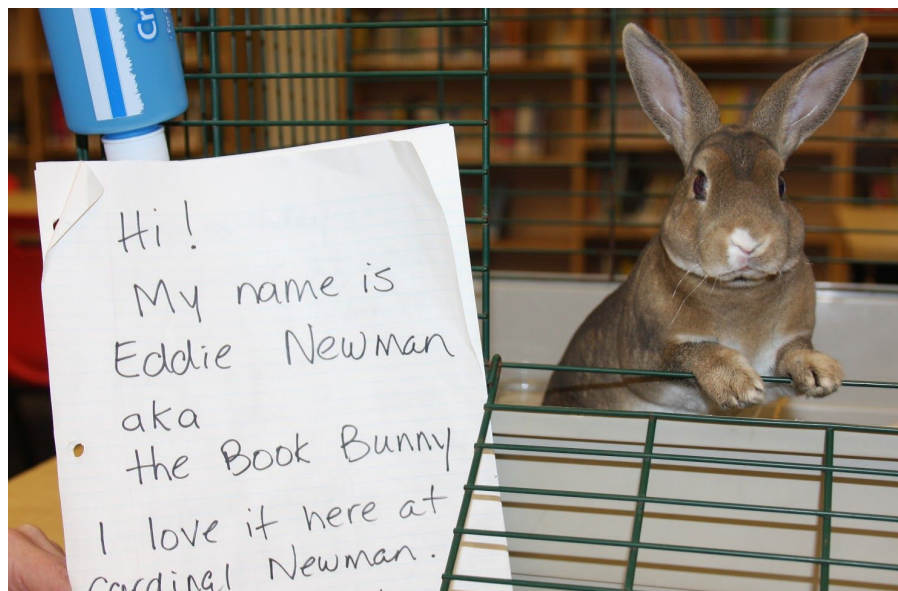
<https://ingeniumcanada.org/agriculture/doc/education-programs/cafm/eak-buddy-rabbit.pdf>

Project based learning explained (youtube):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LMCZvGesRz8>

Fifteen activities tied to Peter Rabbit (can be adapted for rabbits in general)

<https://www.weareteachers.com/peter-rabbit-activities/>



<https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/lesson-plans/teaching-content/make-way-ducklings-art-lesson/>

This lesson is adapted from *Using Caldecotts Across the Curriculum*.

With foxes in the words and turtles in the water, a duck can't raise a family just anywhere. So Mr. and Mrs. Mallard fly on and on until they come to the Charles River in Boston and declare it "just the right place." Have a duck call and police whistle handy for sound effects when you read this story aloud!

Students who wonder "could this really happen?" will be interested to hear the story behind the classic. "I first noticed the ducks when walking through the Public Garden every morning on the way to school," he writes. "...I noticed the traffic problem of the ducks and heard a few stories about them. Then the book just sort of developed from there." (*From the book's back-flap*)

To get the ducks in his drawings just right, McCloskey brought a few live mallards home. In *Meet the Authors and Illustrators: Volume One*, McCloskey Says "No effort is too great to find out as much as possible about the things you are drawing. It's a good feeling to be able to put down a line and know that it's right."

Like Robert McCloskey, children will discover that observing something up close can help them get the details just right in their own drawings. Though you may not be able to invite ducks into your classroom, bring in stuffed animals! (If you have a class fish or hamster, use it instead).

MATERIALS

- Class pet or stuffed animal
- Drawing paper
- Colored pencils or pastels

DIRECTIONS

1. Have children observe their animals from all sides. Ask questions to guide their observations:

- How many legs (wings, paws, claws and so on) does the animal have?
- What is the texture of the animal? Is it soft? Prickly? Furry? Slimy?
- What shades of light and dark do you see in this animal?
- How big is the animal? What object is about the same size?
- What shapes and patterns do you see?

2. Before students begin drawing, have them experiment with various drawing techniques. Look at the book for inspiration, noticing the following:

- The color of the illustrations (all done in shades of brown — children can use brown pencils to achieve a similar effect)
- Shading (try smudging colored pencil or pastels with a finger or a tissue)
- Shadows (notice where real shadows fall)

3. Let the children draw their animal(s) several times — like Robert McCloskey — until they "know that it is right."

Tip: To guide students in their drawings, introduce the concept of gesture drawings. Explain that a gesture drawing is like a quick scribble that shows the shape of what you're drawing. Let students make several gesture drawings of their animals and then select one each to work into a drawing — darkening lines and adding details.

If students are drawing stuffed animals, suggest that they turn them upside down to encourage that they draw what they see and not what animals are supposed to look like.

21st Century Skills...

Learning Skills

- Critical Thinking
- Creative Thinking
- Collaborating
- Communicating

Literacy Skills

- Information Literacy
- Media Literacy
- Technology Literacy

Life Skills

- Flexibility
- Initiative
- Social Skills
- Productivity
- Leadership

21st Century skills are 12 abilities that today's students need to succeed in their careers during the Information Age. These skills are intended to help students keep up with the lightning-pace of today's modern markets. Each skill is unique in how it helps students, but they all have one quality in common.

1. Critical thinking -

Example: In researching food/nutritional needs of a rabbit. Some information on the Internet will suggest that potato peels is not a good food choice, where other sites will recommend that potato peels are. Gather as much information as you can, do a trial with your rabbit, make notes of any reaction or consequence, then determine what is appropriate for your pet.

2. Creativity -

Example: Immediate connections can be made with a real live rabbit to literature and art. All grade levels can write stories and poems based on their library rabbit and all grade levels can be inspired to conduct arts and craft activities.

3. Collaboration -

Example: Groups can be established to look after each of the responsibilities such as fund-raising to cover costs.

4. Communication -

Example: Monthly article in school news, could be Book Bunny reading recommendations or Book Bunny announces new titles in the library collection.

5. Information literacy -

https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=simple+explanation+of+information+literacy

6. Media literacy -

https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=simple+explanation+of+media+literacy

7. Technology literacy -

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9JsTyhC9a58>

8. Flexibility - (and Adaptability)

Two characteristics that go hand-in-hand with one another. Flexibility is the idea that your plans can change very quickly, sometimes with notice and sometimes without. Receiving criticism (good and bad) from your advisers is extremely

important in terms of flexibility because it will force you to change up what you are used to doing. Being flexible means incorporating this feedback into your work. On-the-spot changes may also need to be made based on certain situations, often without prior realization. Adaptability is the ability to adapt to change. In general, it is being able to acclimate yourself to changing roles, job responsibilities, material, and schedules. If you cannot accommodate for these different aspects of working, it will be difficult to navigate our quickly changing work and learning environments.

9. Social skills - soft skills - empathy - well-being

Example: use your Rabbit in the Library for mental health and wellness awareness

10. Initiative -

Example:

11. Productivity - the ability to create something by: setting and meeting goals, prioritizing needs, managing time, working ethically, collaborating and cooperating with others. Accountability and productivity are interconnected. An example of accountability is taking a role in the creation of a product and taking responsibility for the performance of the product.

12. Leadership -

Example: Any student can lead a group to take on any one of the responsibilities necessary for having a rabbit in the library: feeding, cleaning, accounting, ecology/productivity, communications, fund-raising activities.