Optional Assignment #2:

Book Resource Review

Living Sunlight: How Plants Bring the Earth to Life

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Living Sunlight: How Plants Bring the Earth to Life
by Molly Bang and Penny Chisholm

Grade Level: 4th grade

Overview:

 Living Sunlight: How Plants Bring the EArth to Life by Molly Bang and Penny Chisholm describes how the light from the sun becomes energy for all life on Earth. The book includes a wonderful description of photosynthesis. One of the things I like most about the book is that it talks about the chemical forms of water (HO2) and carbon dioxide (CO2). It also relates how the energy that is produced by plants is then shared to other living things on Earth like animals and people. It then goes on to show how animals are also connected to this cycle. The sugars and energy we get from plants are broken down in our bodies forming water and carbon dioxide, and how plants use the carbon dioxide we breathe out in the photosynthesis process. Showing that all living things are connected. Another aspect that I like about this book is that it does go into greater detail about the science in the last few pages of the book.

STEM Connections:

 I see this book as a jumping off point for a STEM investigation. After listening to this book, students can make observations about living things around them everyday. They can begin to write down questions they have about photosynthesis and the connections that plants have to each other. Some of the science topics found in this book include: photosynthesis, energy chains, food webs. Students can begin to investigate the elements necessary for photosynthesis and how environmental and human factors can affect their growth.

Implementation:

 There are many areas of literature instruction that this book could be used to model, for example: onomatopoeia, voice and tone, main idea and details, sequence of events, and cause and effect. The area I would focus on is cause and effect.
 I would begin as a read aloud focusing on two areas of literacy instruction: visualizing and cause and effect. I would review cause and effect relationships before reading to the students and then ask them to listen carefully for any cause and effect relationships they find in the book. While reading I would model visualizing some of the things the book describes, like the energy from the sun flowing into plants. When I was done reading students would talk with their table groups about the different cause and effect relationships the found in the book before we shared with the class. We would then make an anchor chart together and I would link the cause and effect relationships to either the photosynthesis process or an energy chain.

From there, I we could begin to explore the plants and animals in our own environment by walking around the school or as a homework assignment to look at the plants and animals they see in their neighborhoods. This way, students can begin to make observations about nature around them. They can see the connections between the animals and plants within their own community.

Limitations:

I don't think there are many limitations to this book. However, some things I would have liked to see included were the chemical compound for the sugar that is produced. They included both water and carbon dioxide, so I feel they could have also included this. For older students or students that could do extension activities would benefit from this. I also think they could have talked a little more about energy chains.

It also states in the back of the book that the authors wanted to use this book to show how all life shares the same atoms, and how these atoms cycle on our planet. I feel that this would be a focus for students in older grades, and I don't think that they necessarily showed that clearly. It would take a lot more inferencing for students to put that together, which again could be a focus of students in higher grades.