



Rebecca Cummings

Rebecca Cummings teaches 5th grade in an inclusionary classroom, where all four subjects are taught every day. Having worked on a 3-year grant with teachers throughout New Hampshire to infuse Inquiry into science education, Rebecca has helped to develop lessons, training, and mentorships in which children discover the weight of their own wonderings, and their ideas become essential to the learning process.

Rebecca's love of science has inspired her students to make connections that can be utilized in all subject areas throughout their education. When they are exploring, questioning, predicting, observing, researching, collecting data, and making sense of their findings, students' ideas blossom. To help students understand the components of the Nitrogen Cycle Rebecca developed lessons using red composting worms and decomposition tanks made from recycled 2-liter bottles. Students were asked to explore their ideas about whether “dead” material has energy. They designed, observed, and recorded their data. Through the three phases of Inquiry: Exploration, Investigation, Sense Making, the students discovered that as compost levels decreased, nutrient rich soil increased, thanks to the busy decomposers. The students used science journals throughout the project, engaging their own ideas through questions and predictions, collaborating with their peers for lasting learning experiences. Those journals became a valuable summative assessment tool not only for Science Processing Skills but also for Language Arts and Math, as the students include a reflective paper and graph.

She is currently the Elementary Inquiry Facilitator for the Pelham School District and believes that all children learn best when they are provided an opportunity for their individual ideas to be showcased and proven. Rebecca likes to call this a “minds-on” approach where teachers do their best work when they observe and facilitate, allowing students the space and materials to discover, explore, and grow as scientists. Every year new ideas fuel her own excitement, such as augmenting her lessons with the latest technology.

Rebecca has a B.A., cum laude, in English and child study from Tufts University, and a M.Ed., cum laude, from Rivier College. She is certified in kindergarten through sixth grade elementary education and is the Elementary Inquiry Facilitator for the Pelham School District.

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