Natural Selection Island Simulation Activity: Evolution in Action

High School (NGSS Aligned) Teacher Guide

Overview

This guide supports implementation of the Natural Selection Island Simulation Activity: Evolution in Action using the 5E instructional model.

Learning Objectives

- Students will model how natural selection works in different environments
- Students will explain how populations change over time
- Students will identify factors that affect evolution speed

Standards Alignment

- **HS-LS4-2:** Construct an explanation based on evidence that the process of evolution primarily results from four factors
- **SEP:** Constructing Explanations
- **DCI:** LS4.C: Adaptation
- **CCC:** Cause and Effect

Prerequisites

- Basic understanding of natural selection
- Knowledge of adaptation

Time Estimate

20 minutes

Materials Needed

- Computer with internet access
- Student Activity Sheet

Teaching Tips by Phase

Phase 1: ENGAGE (5-10 minutes)

- Start with the phenomenon or problem presented
- Elicit student predictions and prior knowledge
- Create cognitive dissonance if possible
- Build excitement for investigation

Phase 2: EXPLORE (15-20 minutes)

- Allow students to investigate with minimal guidance
- Circulate and ask probing questions
- Encourage systematic data collection
- Note common discoveries and difficulties

Phase 3: EXPLAIN (10-15 minutes)

- Have students share their findings first
- Build on their observations to introduce concepts
- Address misconceptions directly
- Connect to broader biological principles

Phase 4: ELABORATE (10 minutes)

- Apply knowledge to new scenarios
- Make real-world connections
- Encourage deeper investigation
- Support transfer of learning

Phase 5: EVALUATE (5-10 minutes)

- Use varied assessment strategies
- Focus on conceptual understanding
- Provide immediate feedback
- Plan follow-up based on results

NGSS Three-Dimensional Learning

- **Science Practices:** Developing and using models, analyzing data, constructing explanations
- **Crosscutting Concepts:** Patterns, cause and effect, systems thinking
- **Disciplinary Core Ideas:** See standards alignment above

> ### Remember:
>
> The goal is student discovery through guided inquiry. Resist the urge to explain concepts before students have explored them!
