

Question-generating Project

Field Biology

The purpose of this activity is: 1) To allow you to practice your skills of observation in a field setting, and 2) to give you practice in creating and refining a scientific question. We will use this process throughout the year to generate scientific questions that we will address in this class. Please work individually on this project.

1. Make a detailed drawing of an interesting setting on campus. Give a brief description of the plants, animals, and environment you are observing. Your drawing does not need to be artistic – feel free to use a schematic diagram instead. Be sure to find a spot that's interesting to you!
2. Pick one element of this setting that you are particularly interested in. Be as specific as possible – if you are interested in a single tree, or a single animal burrow, be sure to make that known. Draw a picture or diagram and add clarifying details in writing.
3. List some potential factors that might interact with or influence the element you described in question 2. Include interactions with plants, animals, and **abiotic factors** (non-living portions of the environment). Don't forget interactions with humans. List at least 5 possibilities. You do not have to necessarily think about cause and effect relationships; in this class, our studies will focus on correlations rather than cause/effect.
4. For all the interacting factors you are looking at, come up with “measuring words” that indicate what you will measure when you are collecting data. Measuring words are phrases that make clear **WHAT** you will measure and **HOW** (in a general sense) you could measure it.
5. Using the factors you are interested and the measuring words you listed in question number 4, write 3-5 questions using the following format “What is the relationship between _____ of _____ and _____ of _____?”