

## Middle School Science

As I sip my morning coffee, my husband asks “so, what’s up for today?” My response is the following:

- Well I’m going sledding with the 5<sup>th</sup> graders. We are going to measure the distance down the back driveway and time how long it takes to go down. We will then be able to find out the speed. The kids are really excited and plan to bring in their sleds all waxed up. They understand how friction comes in to play. They also want to find out if they put more kids on a sled will it go further or faster. I plan to serve hot chocolate afterward and talk about heat transfer.



- Then in 7<sup>th</sup> grade we are going to start building a life size Orca Whale. I have the directions from the Shedd Aquarium. I plan to give these to the kids along with a 25"X20" piece of black garden plastic and some white garbage bags. They are going to have to figure out how to lay it out. Mr. Fleuter and I have been talking about the process but they will ultimately have to decide how to do it. We won't let them cut it wrong but it will be interesting to see how well they cooperate and what their ideas are. If Susie needs the gym we are going to finish making our ocean bottom models out of play dough.







- In 6<sup>th</sup> grade we are making hot air balloons out of dry cleaner bags and various materials I have provided. I am acting as a warehouse foreman and they have to make a detailed plan and a list of supplies they need. Then they have to write an actual check for the items needed and stay within a budget. We are going to use a hot air popcorn popper to blow them up.

This goes along with what we are studying about the behavior of matter and Charles' Law.



- The 8<sup>th</sup> graders are in the middle of shooting a video. One group is doing "I'm Joe's Heart" and the other is doing "I'm Joe's Stomach" Both groups are being really creative with the plot line but they need to beef up the dialogue with some actual facts.
- Next I have to figure out how I am going to set up my murder for forensics class in the teachers lounge.

My husband's response is "You call that a job?" I laugh and realize that there is a lot of play involved but it all has a purpose. I have learned, and research supports that adolescents are most engaged on an emotional level.

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