

ACTIVITIES

Children learn about rock, snowflake crystals

Alesha Bailey
Campus Editor

A lesson about crystals taught students about snowflake structures and studying microscopic particles.

Paula Pogue, instructor of the class, said she has taught at Jefferson Elementary School. She worked with her colleague Tim McCollum in 2004 on a project called “Frosted Flakes: The Science of Snowflakes.”

“My kids (students) would photograph snowflakes, and his kids also photographed snowflakes, but they got into details of the weather conditions, and then we would post all that on the Internet on a month-to-month basis,” Pogue said.

In the Crystals are Cool class, the eight third-through-fifth-grade students were first shown a powerpoint that explained Pogue’s project and how she and her former students collected snowflakes to study.

The students were able to look at different shapes of snowflakes, such as the common shape called the Stellar Dendrite, as well as flower shapes and star shapes.

The students also saw a chart of how different shapes of snow form at different temperatures.

Pogue then showed the students a small experiment to explain how crystallization works. Pogue dropped Cheerio pieces in a bowl of water, then squirted dish-washing liquid in the bowl, and the Cheerios began to stick together.

“The Cheerios form in a symmetrical pattern, and that’s how crystals form; their molecules line up in a symmetrical pattern. In snowflakes, the molecules bond in a symmetrical pattern,” Pogue said.

The students were given magnifying glasses to look at rock crystals, which included calcite, granite and calcium sulfate (chalk). She also passed books around to show examples of more rock crystals.

Pogue also showed the students how to use a digital microscope and the Motic Play program for the microscope. She showed microscopic views of items such as salt, sugar and strands of hair from students who volunteered to give a strand of their hair.

The students then learned about Wilson “Snowflake” Bentley as Pogue read a children’s book about him.

“He discovered how to take photo-



AUDREY SAWYER | THE DAILY EASTERN NEWS

Colby Filipiak, 9, draws different types of snow flakes with glitter glue during the Crystals are Cool class Monday morning in the Doudna Fine Arts Center. Participants learned the chemical makeup of a snow crystal.

graphs of snowflakes, and this was in the 1800s,” Pogue said.

For their arts and crafts projects, the students used glitter glue and chalk to draw six types of snowflakes on black pieces of construction paper.

After that, the students played a game of Bingo, where the word “snow” was used in place of “bingo” on the board and the different types of snowflake names were used in the empty spaces of the board.

The students were then given a snowflake poster and two projects to take home to try, which showed how to make a crystal garden and a borax crystal snowflake.

Sarah Filipiak, of Mattoon, sat in on the class and watched her son Colby and his friend Jay Dawson, com-

plete the projects.

“My favorite part of the class was probably seeing the pictures she took with her microscope of the snowflakes,” she said.

Colby Filipiak,9, said he learned a lot from the class, but his favorite part was learning about the different types of snowflakes.

“I didn’t know that there were many kinds of snowflakes, and I like to know about snowflakes a lot,” he said.

The Crystals are Cool class took place Monday in Doudna Fine Arts Center in Room 2980.

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FIELD TRIP

Alternative media course gives students new perspective

By Jennifer Brown
Administration Editor

David Gracon, professor of communication studies, took his students to visit Independent Media Center, Polyvinyl Records and WEFT radio in order to study how media may differentiate from mainstream media.

Alternative Media, a class which instructs students on alternative forms of the media industry, had the opportunity June 6 to visit these locations in the Champaign-Urbana area.

“This means producing media that is significantly different than the mainstream corporate media in terms of both content and style,” Gracon said. “I believe this is a very powerful and inspiring message for the students.”

Throughout Gracon’s class, students had the opportunity to learn about community radio and independent media.

After some phone tag and other arrangements, an itinerary was put into place, Gracon said.

“I think the merging of theory and practice is very significant to them (the students),” Gracon said. “If this is happening in Champaign-Urbana, why can’t it be happening in Charleston as well?”

Each location brought a new learning experience for the students. For instance, at WEFT the class learned the dynamics of a non-community radio station.

Students learned about citizen journalism at the Independent Media Center, Gracon said.

“Anytime you get them out of the traditional classroom, I feel this creates an exciting energy amongst the students,” Gracon said.

Matthew Devall, a senior communication studies major, enrolled in the Alternative Media course because he enjoys independent films.

“Because I produce my own films, it was exciting to go to places where media was actually being produced,” Devall said.

Before he arrived at each location, Devall was certain he knew the types of people who worked in media.

“I had stereotyped, to an extent, the kinds of people who I thought must work at these places,” Devall said. “I suppose I thought they must

“I think the merging of theory and practice is very significant to them (the students). If this is happening in Champaign-Urbana, why can’t it be happening in Charleston, as well?”

David Gracon, professor of communication studies

be political radicals or something of that nature.”

During the field trip, Devall was expecting those who worked in media to be more political.

“Most of the people were simply passionate about providing alternatives to what we usually see and hear,” Devall said.

Sara Sanderson, a senior communications studies major, was excited to go on the field trip.

“I enrolled in Alternative Media because I love learning about media,” Sanderson said.

Sanderson said she learned how people are able to create their own media by adding culture.

“I applied to this class because we learn that mainstream media really controls the music and news we hear,” Sanderson said.

Sanderson said alternative media is a different way of portraying media.

“The most unexpected thing I learned was at WEFT radio; that it was run by volunteers,” Sanderson said. “It was even more unexpected that it was really hard to get people to volunteer.”

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