

Wonder Wall

by Meaghan Reilly

I started this simply as a way to keep my students from asking random questions that they had during a lesson that had absolutely nothing to do with the lesson I was teaching at the time. To eliminate the distraction, I told them they could ask whatever question they wanted so long as they wrote it on a post-it and posted it instead of interrupting me. I also give them 10 minutes every Monday morning and leave a post-it on their desk to think of any questions they have. It turned out to be a terrific way to teach question asking as they often were using the wrong WH word and were leaving out question marks. They started out asking very concrete questions such as "Why do we have homework?" but quickly evolved into much higher level thinking such as "Why can't we breathe in space?" which a week later was followed up by "If we put trees in space, then could we breathe?" At the end of the week, I allot about a half hour to address the questions on Friday afternoon. Either students in the class answer them, I answer them, or we find other ways to try to get them answered, e.g., emailing a friend of mine, calling a family member, asking a teacher next door, looking it up in a book or on the internet. It is now helping them to learn how to seek and get information as well as leading to some questions that can not always be answered, and some that lead to inquiry based science projects. It's really amazing, and the kids LOVE it.