

Bennett's Millpond Project
The Science House
North Carolina State University
September 4, 2009

Colleen Karl, teacher with the Bennett's Millpond Project: We've been doing the millpond project for about six years and the kids, as they come on board with the project, at first they're very inexperienced with the outdoor environment but as they start to work on their projects and learn about things like oxygen levels and ph, they become more acclimated to working and thinking about the outdoor environment. And it propagates lots of natural questions, so in other words it sets the stage for them asking their own questions, and that's a role they grown into and the more they're down here the easier it becomes to understand the natural environment.

Karl: We don't tell them what to do. We help them develop their ideas, provide the equipment that they need and supply the research support, and the mentoring support but we actually allow them to grow out their own ideas. That's something they don't usually experience in the classroom.

Kelsey Lichtenwalner, student: Bryozoans are really ancient creatures. They're very tiny and really simple. They have a U-shaped gut so what they eat goes into their gastric system where it's digested and comes out of their mouths as poop. Why I wanted to study them is that when I put my hands next to a colony which range from this size to this size, I could feel a little current around them. I wanted to find out why there was a current.

Dr. Sharon Schulze, director of The Science House at NC State University: The work of scientists is a work of continuation. One scientist learns from another. You read professional journals, you study the work that other people have done and then you continue it. In the case of the millpond that's exactly what we have going on. Each year we have one senior and one junior, so there's always one student who's been through the project for a year and a new student coming on. And so that way they can share what they've learned and build on each other. If you look at the history of the projects, you'll see a thread of connectedness going through. The millpond kids are actually experts on Bennett's millpond in a way that nobody else in the world is an expert.

This video was produced by News Services at North Carolina State University, Campus Box 7504, Raleigh, NC 27695. E-mail: newstips@ncsu.edu. Phone: 919-515-3470.