Australian Museum Eureka Prizes

People's Choice Award

Suggested Lesson Plan (ACT)

DURATION:
30 - 40 minutes

BRIEF DESCRIPTION:
Students are introduced to the Australian Museum Eureka Prizes, Australia's premier science awards. Judging criteria for the Eureka Prizes People's Choice Award are negotiated in a class discussion. The achievements of the finalists are examined in small groups and presented to the rest of the class before the class selects one winner. The teacher casts this online vote on behalf of the class. After the announcement of the winner of the People's Choice Award on 17 August, the class revisits the exercise to compare their winner with the official winner.

Voting opens 22 July and closes midnight 15 August 2010.

In addition, each student should be encouraged to cast an individual on-line vote for whichever finalist they prefer (this voting could be done in the class or at home). Each student who votes on-line will go in the draw to win a prize.

OBJECTIVES/OUTCOMES:
Participation in the People's Choice Award addresses the following specific ACT science syllabus objectives:

All levels
Working Scientifically
In 'working scientifically' the student demonstrates:
- an ability to work in cooperative and collaborative ways

- awareness that scientific issues and attitudes may be influenced by individual, social and cultural background
- awareness of the diversity of science career options
- the ability to debate issues concerning scientific values and knowledge

PREPARATION (5 minutes):
Print copies of the details of the finalists in the Eureka Prizes People's Choice Award from the Australian Museum Eureka Prizes website
http://www.australianmuseum.net.au/eureka/go/vote (available from 22 July)

PROCEDURE

STEP 1.

Whole Class – Introduce the Australian Museum Eureka Prizes (5-10 minutes)

1.1 Introduce the concept of class members voting in the Eureka Prizes People's Choice Award by asking students to indicate if they have taken part in other popular voting programs like *So You Think You Can Dance* or *Australian Idol*. Explain that today students will get the chance to vote in the online Eureka Prizes People's Choice Award for science – and have a chance to win significant prizes.

Lead a class discussion about public perceptions and understandings of science and Australian scientists. You can stimulate the discussion by asking questions such as:

> "Do you know the names of any Australian scientists? If not, why? Should we?"
> "Do you think it is important to recognise the achievements of our scientists? Why?"
> "Do you know of any awards that recognise scientists' achievements?"
> "What type of awards do you know and hear about, and how do you feel about them?" (eg Oscars, Logies, sporting awards)
> "Is science important to Australia? Why, or why not?"

1.2 Introduce the Australian Museum Eureka Prizes and the Eureka Prizes People's Choice Awards.
Information about the history and development of the Australian Museum Eureka Prizes can be found at **http://www.australianmuseum.net.au/eureka/go/about**

1.3 Discuss the prizes for participating in the Eureka Prizes People's Choice Awards
Each student who casts an on-line vote will go in the draw to win a Prize. The winners will be randomly selected once the voting has closed.

One winner will have part of their genes sequenced by scientists at the Australian Museum with the results mounted and framed. For further information on gene sequencing techniques and its applications, go to http://www.australianmuseum.net.au/Wildlife-Forensics/

For a full list of other Prizes, including book vouchers, magazine subscriptions and computer software, go to: **http://www.australianmuseum.net.au/eureka/go/vote**

1.4 Discuss and negotiate a set of criteria for judging the finalists and record them on the whiteboard. You could stimulate the discussion by asking questions such as:

> How should we select a winner?"
> "Should we consider the benefits of the research, such as a cure for cancer?"
> "What if the research could be used to develop new weapons?"
> "Should we consider how much the research cost or who paid for it?"
> "Should we consider the appearance of the scientist?"

STEP 2.

Small Group Activity - Assess the finalists (15-20 minutes)

2.1 Break the class into six groups of five students.

2.2 Each group will read about, discuss and use the criteria (established earlier) to assess the finalists. To help them make their decision, students can ask the finalist's questions and watch a video of the finalist describing their work at **http://www.australianmuseum.net.au/eureka/go/vote.** Each group chooses a winner from the finalists in the Eureka Prizes People's Choice Award.

2.3 Each member of the group should take careful notes and be prepared to present a brief summary of the rationale for the group's final decision.

STEP 3.

Choose the winning scientist – Whole Class (5-10 minutes)

3.1 Ask one member of each group to briefly summarise the rationale for the group's decision. Record the group's choice on the whiteboard. Note any differences between the groups' summaries and decisions.

3.2 If different winners have been chosen by different groups, discuss why, before taking a class vote on the basis of the arguments presented by each group to decide which finalist is chosen by the class as the winner.

3.3 Teacher to cast an online vote for the class's choice of winner by logging on to **http://www.australianmuseum.net.au/eureka/go/vote** and following the on-line directions.

3.4 Ask students to also cast an on-line vote in the Eureka Prizes People's Choice Award, from school or at home. To do this each student must log on to: **http://www.australianmuseum.net.au/eureka/go/vote** and choose their preferred scientists from the list of Finalists. Each student must cast a vote for a chance to win a Prize.

3.5 After the announcement by the Australian Museum of the winner of the Eureka Prizes People's Choice Award on 17 August the class revisits the exercise to compare the official winner with the class choice for a winner. The official result in the Eureka Prizes People's Choice Award will be available at: **http://www.australianmuseum.net.au/eureka** on 18 August 2010.

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