

# Learning<sup>®</sup>



**2016 Teachers' Evaluation Comments**

**Learning® Magazine**  
**2016 Teachers' Choice<sup>SM</sup> Award for the Classroom**  
**Evaluation Form**

Below you will find the comments for your product. As you read the comments, please note that this is the literal text from the evaluation forms. We have not differentiated comments between the teachers on each team. Although we encourage teachers to provide comments, it is not a requirement. Therefore, you may notice if you had multiple entries, the responses may be more or less in depth depending on the team of teachers. **We do not use comments in the scoring process.** They are provided as insight into the panel's thoughts on your product.

We hope you find the responses helpful and continue to participate in the Teachers' Choice Awards in the future. Applications will be available in January 2016 for the 2017 Teachers' Choice<sup>SM</sup> Awards programs.

**Product:** Hands-On Science and Math  
**Company:** Gryphon House

**What aspects of this product did you like most?**

The experiments and activities in this book are absolutely amazing! I liked the fact that the chapters are divided into clearly labeled categories which makes it easy to find a specific activity related to what I am teaching. I also liked the format of each experiment: concepts, discussion, materials needed, the activity itself, and the math and literacy connections. The directions for each activity are very specific and easy to follow. Another plus is that all the experiments use materials that are easy for a general studies teacher to get his/her hands on.

I liked everything about this book! When first looking through the book, I thought, "Finally, a science supplement that I will actually use!" I like that the book is written with simple, easy to follow directions and that every activity has pictures. Many of the activities already align with my science, math, and literacy curriculum. Many of the activities require spending very little money, or even no money, because they use basic supplies (water, items from around the classroom/house, basic food ingredients, etc.). Also, ALL of the activities are age-appropriate for kindergarten.

I liked it was hands on science and math not just lecture. I also was fortunate enough to catch a webinar on this book which helped me see the activities. It reminded me when we do science not to be just doing science.

**How would this product need to improve to better support your curriculum?**

This is now one of my most valuable resources. All of my science objectives are easily met through the activities/experiments in this text. Not only are the standards met, the book includes math concepts which help my students learn/revisit/enhance topics we have studied during our math lessons. There is no way this book could improve. I sincerely hope that a "volume two" is soon in the making!

I honestly cannot think of any way that this book could be improved. For the sake of offering suggestions, it could include even more activities. I also wouldn't mind a list of "must have" science exploring tools, such as the kaleidoscopes (p. 134) and co

Refer to a webinar or a video to book so we can see activities? That really helped me make sense of some them. Some of the activities are well used favorites I already knew and although simple, I was hoping for new ideas. Volcanoes and homemade ice cream tend to be in every book.

**How did you make use of this product or integrate it into your lesson plans?**

I used this book to obtain experiments to conduct on the science concepts we were learning. There was more than one experiment for each of my topics so either the children or myself could choose which experiment we wanted to conduct or we would do several. (Needless to say, the decision was most often that we did several because the experiments were awesome!) One of our favorite experiments was the one entitled "Buoyancy and Salt Water." Although I teach kindergarten and this experiment was geared toward older children, we were learning about the Dead Sea in Israel and why people float when they enter this body of water. My students were so excited to figure this concept out since the eighth grade students in our school had just returned from Israel and brought back pictures of themselves floating in the Dead Sea. The math

connections of measuring, counting, and capacity made the lessons even more comprehensive and challenging.

Because I got this book near the end of the year, I only performed a few of the activities. However, I would like to utilize MANY of the activities. My class always does a "class collection" of lids for a math lesson in our curriculum. We always count them, sort them, and graph their colors. This year, I used "Lots of Lids" to extend the lesson even further. We took the lids outside and measured ourselves with each color (p. 44). This was mostly done whole group, but some of the sorting was done in small group math centers. I also added log slices to my science center (A Slice of Life: Tree Trunk Explorations). The center already contained magnifying glasses, and I added tape measures from our math center so that students could also measure the diameter of the logs and measure the height of their stacks. This activity was free choice exploring at "Choice Centers." Lastly, I used the "Find the Long Lost Animals" in my sensory table for "Choice Center" exploration during our zoo animals unit.

I picked and chose some of the simplest activities to do with my students. Sensory stuff was a favorite and we used a Mr Potato head to introduce the senses. I brought a bit more math into my prepared lessons due to reading this book. Inclined plane ideas were fun.

**Would you recommend this book to a teacher at the appropriate grade/age level?**

**Why or why not?**

I would absolutely recommend and insist that any teacher of preschool, kindergarten, or elementary school students have a copy of this book. The lessons are thorough and easy to execute. The materials list and math/literacy connections make it very teacher friendly. It is always beneficial when you can tie key concepts across the curriculum so your students can make connections!

I would recommend this book to any teacher looking to supplement their science or math curriculum. I am a huge fan and user of Pinterest. The activities in this book, and even the layout, reminded me of using Pinterest. It was easy to use, and the activities are truly engaging, age-appropriate, and realistic for a teacher to add into an already busy schedule. I LOVED using this book and am excited to have it for an entire year next year!

I am undecided as it wasn't really anything special or different than already on the market. I liked the way it was organized, I just wish there had been some different ideas from books I've purchased in the past.

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**Product:** Getting to the Heart of Learning  
**Company:** Gryphon House

**What aspects of this product did you like most?**

My students and I enjoyed the activities and games! I enjoyed reading this book as well. My students were engaged with each learning activity. All of the activities were things that can realistically be done with a small group and a large group. The activities use materials that are found in all classrooms! I did not have to purchase or search for materials.  
I like that this book takes in an often forgotten part of the child the social emotional. It ties it into study already being done in the classroom. I like that each area of curriculum is covered in a different part of the book. It makes something easier to find.  
I liked the sections called building communities. Those are areas we all need more of in the classroom. I also like the explore together ideas. Those are some new ways to look at things

**How would this product need to improve to better support your curriculum?**

To better support my busy schedule I would like to see the book color coded. If each section (Math, Motor, etc.) were a different color and tabbed on the outside I would be able to get the needed section quickly. Also if there was a list of each activity at the beginning of each section this would help with planning as well.  
I would like to see book recommendations included in this book. There many fitting books that could be paired with the activities and it would be a great resource for teachers rather than having to find something to go with the activities. A fiction and n  
The only thing I can really think of is to break things into ages a bit more. What to expect from children 2-3 exploring- vs 4-6, etc. Or better ideas to do with older vs younger. Some things I did not like: Grey background- hard to read; repetitive pictures on different page s- I thought I found what I was looking for as I remembered the picture in margin then it wasn't the right page; some things, like setting a timer for turns, just seemed like obvious.

**How did you make use of this product or integrate it into your lesson plans?**

I read the book during a long weekend and was able to implement the activities the following Tuesday during my circle and group times. They quickly became a favorite of my students during group times! The activities supported all of the standards I was working on and added to my students understanding of each topic.  
I can easily see these activities tying into our curriculum. I see some of them more at the beginning of the year, but the ones I tried did work with the kids and they enjoyed them. I like the learning extension and building community. Some of the activities could even be a home school connection.  
I read the book end to end then chose some things I really thought we needed to work on. I tried some of the ideas such as I'm Sorry cards and the class care center. I took the idea of me in five lines and did it with our most advanced group on the blackboard. It wasn't exactly what you planned in the book but it worked.

**Would you recommend this book to a teacher at the appropriate grade/age level?**

**Why or why not?**

I would recommend this book to other teachers because it is full of ideas and activities that can be easily implemented with a big impact on student learning.

I would recommend this product to other teachers in the primary grades. I think it is easily adaptable in primary classrooms.

It would depend on the teacher. I felt a lot of the ideas were old or commonplace and not new. If a new teacher was looking for some ideas, this might be a good resource for them.