

Interview with Galileo Galilei

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Background/Context:

Students are in the middle of a unit of inquiry on Space and the Solar System. They have done research activities on the lives of Copernicus and Galileo. They have investigated the heliocentric and geocentric theories of our Solar System, the Earth, and the Sun. They have read the book *Starry Messenger* by Peter Sis which depicts the life of the famous scientist Galileo Galilei.

Lesson Description

- Students role-play an interview with Galileo Galilei asking questions about his ideas against the Church's belief that the Earth stood still and the Sun and the planets moved around it.

Academic Objectives

- Students will describe the nature of scientific inquiry.
- Students will know that a scientist uses observations and collects data.
- Students will know that different people may interpret the same set of observations differently.

Holistic Objectives

Conation/Volition

Self-reactiveness:

- Students will describe specific attitudes (e.g., courage) and give examples of people who displayed that attitude.

Self-reflection:

- Students will provide examples of the use of volition and determination to overcome obstacles and challenges.

Cognitive/Thinking

Negation:

- Students will be able to deny the existence or validity of a specific thing or concept that is apparently real or correct.

Activating Strategy

- In pairs or small groups students brainstorm and formulate questions and answers based on what they have read and researched about Galileo's theory of our Solar System, the Earth, and the Sun.

Learning Activity

- Galileo is suddenly time-warped into the classroom (Perhaps even Copernicus could be time-warped in as a special guest!)
- The class performs a mock interview of Galileo (and Copernicus)
- Afterwards, the interview questions, Galileo's answers, and his evidence can be displayed around the classroom.

Extension activities:

- Class discussion: What would you have done if you were in Galileo's shoes?
- The interview could be filmed and made part of a school TV news documentary (using costumes, props, etc)
- In 1633 Galileo signed a declaration: "I, Galileo Galilei, altogether abandon my false opinion that the Sun is the centre of the world and immovable and that the Earth is not the centre of the world and moves..." Have a class discussion on why Galileo signed the declaration, and why the Pope apologized. Students act out the meeting between Galileo and the Pope.

Resources

- *The Starry Messenger* by Peter Sis