

花名墙

周五的科学课，我带着孩子们走出教室，去校门口对面的大花坛。我备了教案，打算讲花的组成部分：萼片、花瓣、雄蕊、雌蕊。可到花坛跟前，教案就被孩子们放到一边去了。

他们围住花坛角上那一片紫色的花，问题一个接一个：老师，这花叫什么？老师，它为什么上面紫下面白？老师，蜜蜂会不会嫌花香？最后一个严一凡提的，全班哄笑，我没笑。我说：这是个问题，咱们把它们都查了。

我其实留了一手：找学校花工老周借来一本卷了边的华北常见花草手册，还让孩子们用班级平板给花拍照。我们坐在槐树荫下，一页一页翻书。紫色的花找到了：鲁冰花，也叫羽扇豆，从国外来的，种在路边做观赏。念到从国外来的时候，孩子们发出一阵惊叹，好像那朵花忽然成了转学生。蜜蜂嫌不嫌气味，书里没有，我们把它记在问题单上，标成没解决。

回教室，孩子们坐不住，提议做一面墙。我给他们一张牛皮纸，他们自己分工：有的抄花名，有的画花，有的把我口述的外来名字拼上去。花名墙贴在教室后墙，上面有十一种花，三个没解决的问题，还有严一凡在角上写的一行字：蜜蜂，你真的不喜欢花的味道吗？

第二周，有孩子从家里带来一本书，把那个问题的答案找到了：蜜蜂不怕花的味道，倒是怕人身上香水的气味。我让严一凡把这行用红笔补到墙上，底下画了一只歪歪扭扭的蜜蜂。

后来我常想，那天的教案其实没讲完，花的组成部分是隔周才补上的，可孩子们记住了十一种花的名字，记住了书也有答不出的事，还记住了提问不会被笑话。好奇心不是教出来的，是孩子蹲在花坛边自己冒出来的。大人能做的，是当场接住它，认真地跟孩子一起把它查明白。

The Flower Name Wall

On Friday, the science class left the classroom with me, heading to the big flower bed across from the school gate. I had prepared a lesson plan about the parts of a flower: sepals, petals, stamens, and pistils. But the moment we reached the flower bed, the children set the plan aside.

They gathered around the purple flowers in the corner, and question followed question: Teacher, what is this flower called? Teacher, why is it purple on top and white below? Teacher, do bees mind the smell of flowers? The last one came from Yan Yifan. The whole class laughed, but I did not. I said: that is a good question. Let us look them all up together.

I had made one preparation in advance: I borrowed from Old Zhou, the school gardener, a dog-eared handbook of common flowers and plants of northern China, and the children photographed the flowers with the class tablet. We sat in the shade of a locust tree and turned the pages one by one. The purple flower was found: lupine, also called fan flower, brought from abroad and planted along roads for viewing. When I read the words brought from abroad, the children burst into sounds of wonder, as if

the flower had suddenly become a transfer student. Whether bees mind the smell was not in the book, so we wrote it on the question sheet and marked it unsolved.

Back in the classroom, the children could not sit still and proposed making a wall. I gave them a sheet of kraft paper, and they divided the work themselves: some copied the flower names, some drew the flowers, some spelled out the foreign names I dictated. The flower name wall went up on the back wall, holding eleven kinds of flowers, three unsolved questions, and one line written by Yan Yifan in the corner: Bees, do you really dislike the smell of flowers?

The next week a child brought a book from home and found the answer: bees do not mind the smell of flowers; what they mind is the smell of perfume on people. I had Yan Yifan add that line to the wall in red pen, with a crooked little bee drawn under it.

I often think about that day afterward: we never finished the lesson plan; the parts of a flower had to wait until the next week. Yet the children remembered eleven flower names, remembered that books cannot answer everything, and remembered that a question will not be laughed at. Curiosity is not taught into children; it rises by itself when they crouch beside a flower bed. What grown-ups can do is catch it on the spot and take it seriously, looking it up all the way through together with them.