Enduring Understanding:
Experience in giving presentations in order to teach others; gaining confidence in giving presentations. Learning effective public speaking skills. Learning how to working with others to create a successful group project, including compromise and listening to others’ ideas. A preliminary understanding of waste and recycling and how composting is a part of this. This includes an understanding of how composting is actually part of the natural cycle; that composting is basic decomposition in your backyard.

Lesson Focus:
Effective presentation and teaching techniques; practice teaching as a step towards teaching the 1st graders. Experience in giving presentations to teach the rest of the class information pertinent to what we are studying and working with. Small group work to learn about the topic, make a visual aid, and present to the class. Four topics: Worms and other decomposers, taking care of a worm box, waste and recycling, composting. Introduction of an actual worm-box; reviewing and reinforcing the information given by the groups in their presentations and connecting this to the actual worm box.

Maine State Learning Result:
- Write pieces and deliver oral presentations that use structures appropriate to audience and purpose. (this includes creative ways to involve the class in the presentation)
- Deliver oral presentations that use a variety of strategies of address (e.g., eye contact, hand gestures, voice modulation, changes of rhythm).
- Describe various mechanisms found in the natural world for transporting living and non-living matter and the results of such movements. (for this lesson, decomposition)
- Identify and perform roles necessary to accomplish group tasks.

Question:
What did you learn from the other groups’ presentations? How is the actual worm box different than you expected? What did you learn from giving your presentation? Tell me a little bit about composting and worm boxes.

Evaluation:
The presentations will serve as part of the assessment, in part using the rubric. We will ask them to fill out the rubric/self-assessment themselves, and will return the self-evaluations to them with our written comments. In addition, when we introduce the worm box, we will ask them questions about what they learned from other groups presentations as well as their own.
Method:

Independent Practice: Two of the groups that have not yet presented (waste & recycling and composting) will present. Then, the groups that have presented will be given time to fill out the self-evaluation forms while the fourth group (worms and decomposers) has a little time to finish its poster (5 or so minutes). The fourth group will then present.

Teacher Input & Guided Practice: The group will be divided into two sections. One group will go out in the hall with one of us to read the worm book. The other group will stay in the room and we’ll look at the worm box (we’re bringing in a reduced version of the worm box because of the fruit fly problem – a Tupperware container, dirt, some worms from the big worm box, new food scraps, and cheesecloth). Then the groups will switch (Lauren – should we each stay with one group and do both activities with the same group?). For the group in the room with the worm box, they’ll have a chance to look at the worm box, pick up worms if they want, hopefully get excited about it! While we’re looking at the box, Lauren or I will ask questions about the different groups’ topics, to see what they learned from the presentations. We’ll review the things they don’t know or don’t remember.

Teacher Input: Reminder that the presentations are practice to teach the first graders and that next week we’re going to start reviewing what we learned and did when planting the plants to prepare for teaching the first graders.

Materials: Tupperware container, dirt, some worms from the big worm box, new food scraps, cheesecloth.

A stick or something so kids who don’t want to touch the dirt or the worms can at least pick up the worms or stir the dirt (carefully!) with a stick?

Words to define: Some of these will be defined in the presentations – worm anatomy, for example.

Engagement & Sustained Inquiry: They finally get to see a worm box and get a more concrete and real idea of what they have been learning about!