Dee's Script

ELINOR WONDERS WHY

EWW121A The Zig Zag Plant

By: Jorge Cham and Daniel Whiteson

Elinor's Question: Which way do plants grow?

Logline: Elinor and friends find a plant that grew in a zig zag, which teaches them that plants grow upwards.

Curriculum Goals:

LS1b: Record observations about an animal's or plant's physical appearance [they record the shape of the plants]

LS3. Understand that all animals need food in order to live and grow, that they get their food from plants or from other animals, and that plants need water and light to live and grow:

a. Observe ways that animals and plants get what they need to live and grow [Most plants grow up (against gravity) and some also grow towards the sun.]

c. Help care for living things at home or in the classroom [they take care of plants in their classroom]

SEP1. Asking questions (science) and defining problems (engineering)

b. Ask more complex questions about observable phenomena

c. Ask and/or identify cause and effect questions that can be answered by an investigation (The kids ask questions as they try to figure out what happened to the zig-zag plant).

SEP3. Planning and carrying out investigations

d. plan and conduct simple investigations using simple tools (Using the magnifying glass and the notebook, the kids plan their investigation of the zig-zag plant).

SEP4. Analyzing and interpreting data

d. Talk about and reflect on what happened during an investigation or when solving a problem, and why it might have happened (The kids consider the evidence and reflect on what might have happened to the zig-zag plant).

SEP5. Using mathematics and computational thinking

d. Use measurement tools to measure and quantify properties of observable phenomena and objects (Olive measure the seedlings using books as unit of measure).

SEP6. Constructing explanations (science) and Designing Solutions (engineering)

a. Use background knowledge experiences, and data to construct reasonable explanations and theories of natural phenomena (science)

b. Look for and describe patterns and relationships in natural phenomena (science)

c. Use and apply productive science discourse to support an explanation

d. Use evidence to support a theory (science) or solution to a problem (engineering) (The kids use their knowledge of the ways plants grow (always up) and the evidence they gather to try and understand why the zig-zag plant has grown so differently than the other seedlings)

SEP7. Engaging in argument from evidence
a. Engage in discussions before, during, and after investigations
b. Support thinking and argue ideas with evidence (After engaging in discussion of the evidence, the kids come up with a reasonable idea of what happened to the zig-zag plant).

MAINS: Elinor, Olive, Ari, Mz. Mole
SECONDARY: Camilla, Sally, Koa
LOCATIONS: EXT. School, Animal Town
PROPS: seedlings, zig-zag seedling, books, crayon, magnifying glass

FIRST DRAFT: 31-July-2019
SECOND DRAFT: 03-Sept-19
POLISH DRAFT: 25-Sept-2019
RECORD DRAFT: 07-Oct-19

1. EXT ELINOR'S SCHOOL -- DAY

It's another bright sunny day in Animal Town. ELINOR and OLIVE are looking at a low table set outside their classroom, on the playground side. Other classmates are playing in the yard. On the table are rows of tiny seedling plants in small pots.

1 ELINOR
Olive, look how much our little baby plants have grown.

2 OLIVE
Wow, Elinor! They've grown so much since we planted them as seeds!

3 ELINOR
And it's only been a few days. I wonder how tall they're going to get?

4 OLIVE
I hope they grow as tall as me.

5 ELINOR
I hope they grow as tall as ME, too... and my ears.

They giggle. With her ears, Elinor is taller than Olive. Behind them, their friend ARI is practicing some acrobatics.

6 ARI
Ok, this time I'm SURE I'm going to do it. 1,2,... backflip.

He does a flip, flapping wildly with his wings, but landing flat on his stomach <SFX: OOF!>.

7 OLIVE
Ari, are you ok?

8 ARI
I'm OK. Maybe I should have counted to three.

The girls <SFX: GIGGLE> and help him up. Their teacher MZ. MOLE comes over, holding a BOOK.

9 MZ. MOLE
Whoops, be careful there, Ari. Alright, how are our little class plants doing today, kids?

They gather around the seedling table. Elinor points to the plants.

10 ELINOR 10
They are doing so well, Mz. Mole! Look how tall they've grown.

Olive points to her pot.

11 OLIVE 11
Yeah! I love how they're all growing straight up out of the ground.

The girls pose as the plants and stand straight up and tall -- Elinor on her toes with her ears together and Olive using her trunk to stretch.

12 MZ. MOLE 12
That's right! Plants grow up towards the sky, no matter where you plant them. Here, let me show you.

She opens up her book and flips through a few pages.

13 MZ. MOLE (CONT'D) 13
They grow up if you plant them in a field... Or on a hill... Or on a steep mountain... Or even on the side of a cliff.

The Kids <SFX: WALLA "GASP!/WHOA!/OHHH">.

14 ARI 14
Wow! That's so cool.

Elinor turns to the class plants.

15 ELINOR 15
C'mon, little plants. You can do it! Grow up, up, up!

Olive takes a crayon out of her bag.

16 OLIVE 16
Let's measure how tall they are. This one is... about ONE crayon high.

17 ARI 17
Hey! That's fun. Usually we DRAW our observations with crayons.
(MORE)

ARI (CONT'D)
But we can use crayons to MEASURE observations too.

18 MZ. MOLE 18
I love it! Ok, school is almost over, so let's water the little plants. Make sure you give them a little extra today.

The kids go get the watering can.

19 ELINOR 19
Why do they need extra water, Mz. Mole? Are they extra thirsty?

They work together and start to water the plants.

20 MZ. MOLE 20
Well, Elinor, tomorrow is the weekend, and there's no school for two days. So there won't be anybody here to water them!

21 ARI 21
~~Wow,~~ two days without school will give me lots of time to practice my backflips.

The kids finish watering the plants and set down the watering can.

22 MZ. MOLE 22
Oh, I'm sure you'll find lots of ways to have fun.

23 ELINOR 23
I can't wait to see how much the plants have grown by then.

24 OLIVE 24
Me too.

The kids in the playground file into the classroom, followed by Mz. Mole, Elinor, Olive and Ari. As they walk in, Ari stays behind.

25 ARI 25
One more backflip before the weekend... Oof! Awww...

Ari tries again, but doesn't quite land it, this time bumping into the table a little. He picks himself up and runs inside. The camera lingers on one of the seedlings, which has been knocked over.

2. EXT ANIMAL TOWN

We see the sun set, the night pass, and the sun rise over Animal Town. Over music, we see a montage of scenes of the kids having fun on the weekend:

- Elinor and Olive reading a huge stack of books

- Ari practicing a backflip

We see the sun set, the night pass, and the sun rise over Animal Town. We see a montage of scenes of the kids having more fun:

- Elinor and Olive looking at plants in Elinor's backyard

- Ari practicing a backflip

We see the sun set, the night pass, and the sun rise over Animal Town.

3. EXT ELINOR'S SCHOOL -- TWO DAYS LATER

It's the start of a new school day. Elinor and Olive run towards the school and catch Mz. Mole as she is opening the door to the school.

26 ELINOR 26
Good morning, Mz. Mole.

27 MZ. MOLE 27
Well well, you're both here bright and early!

28 ELINOR (PANTING) 28
We just... couldn't... wait...

29 OLIVE (PANTING) 29
To... see... how much...

30 ELINOR (NOW RECOVERED) 30
The plants grew!

31 OLIVE 31
They've been growing the whole weekend! I wonder how tall they got?

Mz. Mole opens the door and Elinor and Olive run in.

32 MZ. MOLE 32
Oh my!

The kids rush in, hurriedly drop their things in the cubbies (except for Olive, who keeps her satchel) and head for the door to the playground. Mz. Mole <SFX: CHUCKLES> to herself as more kids start coming in.

4. EXT SCHOOL -- DAY

Elinor and Olive rush out and run over to go check on the seedlings, which are now taller. Other kids also start to filter out into the playground.

33 ELINOR 33
Wow, look how much they grew.

34 OLIVE 34
They are so much taller, I hardly recognize them.

Olive takes out some crayons.

35 OLIVE (CONT'D) 35
Let's measure them. This one is... One... TWO crayons high.

36 ELINOR 36
Good job little plant. I knew you would grow taller.

Ari blows in. He sets down his lunch box and spots Elinor and Olive.

37 ARI 37
Hi, Elinor and Olive! Guess what? I spent the WHOLE weekend practicing my backflip. Ready to check it out?

38 ELINOR 38
Sure, Ari.

39 ARI 39
Prepare to be impressed. 1,2,3... hup!

Ari tries a backflip, with a bit more effort, but still can't quite land it. He flaps his wings more wildly and ends up on his stomach again.

40 ARI (CONT'D) 40
Oof! Maybe I should've counted to four.

Olive helps him up.

41 ARI (CONT'D) 41
I don't get it. I practiced for two whole days.

He dusts himself off.

42 ARI (CONT'D) 42
Wait, it's been two days since we checked our plants. How are they doing?



43 ELINOR 43
Olive and I just measured one of them and it's TWO CRAYONS high.

44 ARI 44
Wow, it grew a lot.

Ari inspects the plants, using the two crayons to look at each one. As we pan on them, the kids notice something odd: all the plants are pointing up, but one plant looks like a zig-zag!

45 ARI (CONT'D) 45
Woah! This one isn't as tall as the others.

46 OLIVE 46
It looks like... a zig-zag?

47 ELINOR 47
<GASP!> It does look like a zig-zag! That's amazing.

48 ARI 48
Hey, it's just like me. When I'm not zigging, I'm zagging!

Ari does some zig-zags, and the kids <SFX: GIGGLE>. Elinor goes back to the plant.

49 ELINOR 49
That is SO INTERESTING. I wonder why this plant looks like that and the others don't?

50 OLIVE 50
Yeah, all the other plants look like they grew straight up.

51 ARI 51
Hmmm, maybe it's a different *kind* of plant?

52 ELINOR 52
But... the leaves look like they're the same shape. I think it's the same kind of plant.

53 OLIVE 53
But why would *this* plant grow in a different shape?

54 ELINOR 54
Maybe it has a different kind of dirt in the pot. (thinks about it, then) We need MORE observations!

Olive takes out the magnifying glass from her satchel and hands it to Elinor. The kids give the plant a careful look. The POV pans between the bases of the zig-zag plant and a few other plants.

55 ELINOR (CONT'D) 55
The dirt looks the same... but wait, what's this?

The POV spots a little mound of dirt near the zig zag plant.

56 ELINOR (CONT'D) 56
There's a little pile of dirt there. I don't remember seeing that before, do you?

Olive shakes her head <SFX: UH-UH>.

57 ARI (MYSTERIOUSLY) 57
Oooh... Maybe it's a clue to our mystery!

58 OLIVE 58
But what does it mean?

59 ELINOR 59
Hmm, I don't know...

60 ARI 60
We need a clue about our clue.

The kids think for a beat, then Elinor has an idea.

61 ELINOR 61
Let's look for more clues!

The kids march in a line, following Elinor who is stooping low and looking at everything through the magnifying glass. They do a quick loop around the immediate area.

62 OLIVE 62
Did you find anything?

Elinor shakes her head <SFX: UH-UH>.

63 OLIVE (CONT'D) 63
What else can we try?

Elinor examines the little pile of dirt again.

64 ELINOR 64
Hmmm, *something* must have happened to make the plant grow in a zig-zag. (looks at the playground) I know! Let's ask the other kids if they have any ideas.

65 OLIVE 65
Oooh, yes. I'll write what they say in my notebook.

Olive takes out her NOTEBOOK and the kids head out to the playground, where there are other kids playing.

5. EXT PLAYGROUND -- SERIES OF CUTS

Like in a detective story, we see a series of short cuts of our three main kids interviewing potential witnesses.

66 OLIVE 66
Camilla, do you know why one of the plants grew like a zig-zag?

67 CAMILLA 67
I'm so glad you said plants. I was just thinking about the beautiful petunias that my mom planted in our garden. I love plants with flowers. I love roses and poppies and... Oh, roses smell SO nice, and...

The kids look at each other.

68 ELINOR 68
Um, Camilla, what does this have to do with the class plants?

69 CAMILLA 69
Oh. I don't know. Do the class plants have flowers?

70 OLIVE 70
Uh, we'll come back later.

Cut to Koa:

71 ELINOR
Koa, do you know why one of the class plants grew in a zig-zag?

72 KOA
Mmmm nope.

73 OLIVE
Did you see anything happen to it?

74 KOA
Mmmm nope.

75 ELINOR
Have you ever seen a plant grow in a zig-zag before?

76 KOA
Mmmm nope.

77 ARI
Do you ever say anything besides "nope"?

78 KOA
Mmmm (thinks about it)... Yup.

Cut to Sally:

79 ARI
Sally, do you know why one of the plants grew in a zig-zag?

80 SALLY (NERVOUSLY)
It wasn't me. Oh no. Not me. I wasn't even there. Nope. Is the plant ok? Oh my. Should we call the plant doctor? I was over here playing the whole time. (after a beat) Wait, did you say the plant grew in a zig-zag??

Elinor, Olive and Ari look at each other and <SFX: SIGH>.

6. EXT SCHOOL -- PLANT TABLE

The kids return to the table with the plants, having made no progress.

81 ELINOR 81
Hmm, no one knows what happened to make the plant grow like a zig-zag.

82 OLIVE 82
Well, we WERE the last ones to leave school that day. And I don't remember seeing anything strange happen to the plants.

Elinor has an idea.

83 ELINOR 83
I have an idea. Let's think about what happened that day.

Elinor reinacts the events of Friday, starting from the table and walking off a few steps.

84 ELINOR (CONT'D) 84
Ok, we were right here talking to Mz. Mole just before we went home.

85 OLIVE 85
I remember that. She said plants grow up towards the sky, no matter where you plant them. We also watered the plants.

86 ELINOR 86
Yeah, and then I think we went home.

Ari realizes something.

87 ARI 87
Wait! I just remembered: I practiced my backflip just as we were leaving. I was standing right here like this and then... hup!

He tries a flip again and fails, but as he flips his wing knocks over the zig-zag plant, spilling a SECOND PILE of dirt. Elinor notices.

88 ELINOR 88.
Look. Ari knocked over the plant and spilled a little bit of dirt, just like the other little pile.

89 ARI 89
Oops, sorry.

90 OLIVE 90
Ari. Maybe you knocked over the plant when we left before the weekend, like you did just now. That's how the first pile of dirt got there.

91 ELINOR 91
That means the plant was on its SIDE when we went home. Hmmm...

Science CU: Plant is still on its side. Elinor examines the first bend in the zig zag. She follows the plant out of the dirt and then up as it turns towards the sky.

92 ELINOR (CONT'D) 92
Now THIS part of the plant is going up. I think that's a clue.

93 ARI 93
What do you mean? I'm still clueless.

A thought bubble illustrates Elinor's hypothesizing.

94 ELINOR 94
First, the plant grew straight up from the pot, just like all the other plants. But then it got knocked over, so it was on its side all weekend. But plants always grow UP, so it must have changed which way it was growing.

In the thought bubble, we see a recreation of the events: The little plant grows up, gets knocked over by Ari, then we see a close up of the plant as it changes direction of growth.

95 OLIVE 95
That's just like in Mz. Mole's book. Plants grow up towards the sky, no matter which way the ground is.

96 ELINOR 96
That's right.

97 ARI 97
Yes! I think we figured it out. <beat> But wait. That explains the first zig, but what about the zag?

As he says, "zig" and "zag" Ari bends his body and head to mimic the plant.

98 OLIVE 98
(looking at the plant)
Yeah, why did it bend one way and then bend back the other way?

The kids look puzzled again <SFX: HMM>. At that moment, Mz. Mole walks by.

99 MZ. MOLE 99
Hello, kids. Oh, did that plant get knocked over again?

Mz. Mole stops and puts the plant right-side up again. Elinor reacts <SFX: GASP!> to this.

100 ELINOR 100
Mz. Mole, why did you say this plant got knocked over AGAIN?

101 MZ. MOLE 101
Well, because it was knocked over before. I came into school yesterday to prepare some things for today, and I found that little plant on its side. So I picked it up and set it straight again.

The kids look momentarily puzzled, but then understanding breaks through.

102 ELINOR 102
<GASP!> I think I know what happened.

103 OLIVE 103
Me too!

104 ARI 104
And me!

As they talk, we see the full story in a thought bubble with their narration.

105 ELINOR 105
This plant started growing UP, just like all the others...

106 ARI 106
But then I knocked it over and put it on its side.

On the thought bubble, we see the plant tipped over with the little pile of dirt.

107 OLIVE 107
So the plant changed the way it was growing to go up. That made the first zig.

108 ELINOR 108
Then Mz. Mole picked up the pot and set it straight.

109 ARI 109
So the plant turned AGAIN to keep growing *up*. Zig and then zag!

110 ELINOR 110
That's it! We solved the mystery. If you put a plant sideways and then right side up, it will grow like a zig-zag.

111 OLIVE 111
Because plants always grow UP.

On their positive energy, we segue into a ditty:

112 ELINOR/OLIVE/ARI 112
Up, up, up!
Plants grow up
Even if the ground
Tilts a lot

Up on a mountain
Or on a hillside
Plants will grow
Up to the sky!

This little plant
Zigged and zagged
What could have made
It grow like that?

Up, up, up!
Plants grow up
Even if the ground
Tilts a lot.

We end the song montage on a shot of the zig-zag plant.

113 ELINOR 113
Mz. Mole, do you think its OK that the plant grew like that?

114 MZ. MOLE 114
Of course! Most plants will find a way to grow upwards, even if it takes a zig and a zag.

115 OLIVE 115
Well, I think it looks pretty cool.

116 ARI 116
I think it looks... awesome!

Ari cheers and in his excitement, jumps and does a backflip. This time, he lands it!

117 ARI (CONT'D) 117
<GASP!> I did it! I did a backflip!

118 ELINOR 118
Wow, Ari, how did you do it?

119 ARI 119
Well, I did just like the plant and went up, up, UP!

He flips again, and on <SFX: LAUGHTER> and merriment, we...

SEGMENT 2.

1. EXT. SCHOOL GARDEN - DAY

Ari and Elinor are surprised to find Mz. Mole laying on the ground and staring closely at the dirt in the school garden bed.

120 MZ. MOLE 120
(earnest and enthusiastic)
Come on. Come on. You can do it!

121 ELINOR 121
(giggling)
Mz. Mole? Who are you talking to?

122 MZ. MOLE 122
The plants! I'm watching them grow.

The children look at the garden bed, but there is nothing there but dirt.

123 ARI 123
You can't watch plants grow, Mz. Mole. They grow too slowly.

124 MZ. MOLE 124
Some plants can grow quicker than you might think. Look here.

Mz. Mole sits up and pulls out her pop up book. She opens the pages, to reveal...

2. INT. BOOK - KIKI'S KITCHEN - DAY

POP-UP BOOK STYLE of animation depicts Kiki's kitchen table near a window. A small potted cactus and a small potted bamboo plant sit on the table. They are the same height, already young plants (not starting as seeds). Sunlight comes through the window at an angle. Kiki enters the scene holding a small watering can and briefly waters both plants. A cereal box and bowl of cereal sit on the table. Then she sits down at the table and eats breakfast. The cactus sits to her left, the bamboo to her right.

125 MZ. MOLE (V.O.) 125
All plants need water and sunlight to grow. Some plants grow slowly, and some plants grow quickly. A cactus like this one...
(she indicates with her finger)
might grow very slowly, while bamboo plants like this one
(again indicating with her finger)
can grow very quickly.

126 ARI (V.O.) 126
They look the same size to me.

127 MZ. MOLE (V.O.) 127
Yes, they are the same size now, but let's see what happens later in the day around lunchtime.

Kiki has finished her breakfast and exits the scene. Page flip. The sun through the window moves, and the sun has shifted in the sky, indicating a change in time. It is now lunchtime, and the light is coming straight through the window. The cactus has not changed size, but the bamboo has grown several inches taller. Kiki re-enters and sits down at the table for lunch. A sandwich on a plate is already there between the plants.

128 ELINOR (V.O.) 128
Look! The bamboo has zoomed up!

129 MZ. MOLE (V.O.) 129
That's right. By lunchtime, the bamboo has grown much taller.

130 ARI (V.O.) 130
Why didn't the cactus grow?

131 MZ. MOLE (V.O.) 131
It did grow, but only a little. Let's check in with them at dinner time.

Kiki has finished her lunch and exits the scene. Page flip. The sunlight through the window changes, indicating a change in time. A plate of salad sits on the table between the plants. It is now dinner time, and the light outside is almost dark. The moon is also up. The cactus still has not changed size, but the bamboo has grown another few inches taller. Kiki re-enters and sits down at the table for dinner. She eats a salad.

132 ELINOR (V.O.) 132
Wow! The bamboo is even taller!

133 MZ. MOLE (V.O.) 133
Yes! The fastest growing plant in the world is a type of bamboo like this one. It can grow 35 inches taller in a single day!

3. EXT. SCHOOL GARDEN - DAY

BACK AT: The school garden. Mz. Mole closes the book.

134 MZ. MOLE 134
35 inches is as tall as you, Ari!

135 ARI 135
Wow! But the cactus is still small.

136 MZ. MOLE 136
It's growing, but so slowly it's hard to see. Some cactus take a year to grow one inch.

Mz Mole indicates one inch with her fingers.

137 ARI 137
That's really slow! If I could be a plant, I'd want to be bamboo. Then I'd be a giant in no time!

They all laugh. Something on the ground catches Elinor's eye. A tiny green sprout is peeking out of the dirt.

138 ELINOR 138
Look Mz. Mole! The garden is growing!

139 MZ. MOLE 139
Ooh! I wonder how big it will get. There's only one way to find out!

The three of them lay down on the ground around the tiny sprout and watch it closely.

140 ARI
If this is going to take a while, I'm going to need a snack.

Everyone <SFX: LAUGHS>.

THE END.

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