Unit: Understanding Science and Engineering Through Solar Power

Lesson 5 Making Observations and Recording Data for Solar Powered Water Pumping

AUTHOR: Mike Hellis

DESCRIPTION: Students use a solar module and water pump to test how quickly one cup of water can be pumped.

GRADE LEVEL(S): 2, 3, 4, 5

SUBJECT AREA(S): Science inquiry, engineering design, electricity, energy

ACTIVITY LENGTH: 90 minutes

LEARNING GOAL(S): Students will be able to make observations and record data about how quickly a solar module will drive a pump to move water

STANDARDS MET:
Common Core:

- W.2.8. Recall information from experiences or gather information from provided sources to answer a question. (K-2-ETS1-1)
- MP.2 Reason abstractly and quantitatively
- MP.5 Use appropriate tools strategically
- 2.MD.10. Draw a picture graph and a bar graph (with single-unit scale) to represent a data set with up to four categories. Solve simple put-together, take-apart and compare problems using information presented in a bar graph.
- W.3.7 Conduct short research projects that build knowledge about a topic.
- 3.MD.A.2 Measure and estimate liquid volumes and masses of objects using standard units of grams (g), kilograms (kg), and liters (l). Add, subtract, multiply, or divide to solve one-step word problems involving masses or volumes that are given in the same units, e.g., by using drawings (such as a beaker with a measurement scale) to represent the problem.
- 3.MD.3. Draw a scaled picture graph and a scaled bar graph to represent a data set with several categories. Solve one- and two-step “how many more” and “how many less” problems using information presented in scaled bar graphs. For example, draw a bar graph in which each square in the bar graph might represent 5 pets.
- W.4.7 Conduct short research projects that build knowledge through investigation of different aspects of a topic

- W.4.9 Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
- MP.4 Model with mathematics
- 4.MD.A.1 Know relative sizes of measurement units within one system of units including km, m, cm; kg, g; lb, oz.; l, ml; hr, min, sec. Within a single system of measurement, express measurements in a larger unit in terms of a smaller unit. Record measurement equivalents in a two-column table.
- 5.MD.A.1 Convert among different-sized standard measurement units within a given measurement system (e.g., convert 5 cm to 0.05 m), and use these conversions in solving multi-step, real-world problems.
- 5.MD.C.3 Recognize volume as an attribute of solid figures and understand concepts of volume measurement

Next Generation Science Standards:

- 4-PS3-2. Make observations to provide evidence that energy can be transferred from place to place by sound, light, heat, and electric currents.
- 4-PS3-4. Apply scientific ideas to design, test and refine a device that converts energy from one form to another.
- 3-5-ETS1-1. Define a simple design problem reflecting a need or a want that includes specified criteria for success and constraints on materials, time, or cost.
- 3-5-ETS1-2. Generate and compare multiple possible solutions to a problem based on how well each is likely to meet the criteria and constraints of the problem.

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Student Background:

- It's helpful if students have already completed the following activities as a part of a larger solar water pumping unit:
    - **Understanding Science and Engineering Through Solar Power: Lesson 1 Setting Expectations for Science and Engineering Projects**
    - **Understanding Science and Engineering Through Solar Power: Lesson 2 Probes of Prior Knowledge**
    - **Understanding Science and Engineering Through Solar Power: Lesson 3 Solar Powered Calculator**
    - **Understanding Science and Engineering Through Solar Power: Lesson 4 A Simple Circuit**

Educator Background:

- **Solar cells** or **modules** are thin wafers of **silicon** that converts sunlight or **light energy** into **electrical energy** using the **photovoltaic effect**.
- A **circuit** is a circular path by which electricity flows from a power source (solar module in this case) to a device that does work (water pump in this case) and then back to the power source. Several power sources can be linked together in a circuit series to produce more energy.
- **Scientific inquiry** is the "diverse ways in which scientists study the natural world and propose explanations based on the evidence derived from their work." *(National Science Education Standards*, p. 23). Scientific inquiry requires students to form testable questions

about the natural world that they have observed. After developing a hypothesis (or educated guess) related to their question, students design and conduct experiments to test whether or not their hypothesis is correct. Conducting an experiment includes gathering data and recording observations. Often time scientists display their data using graphs, which is good practice for students. Students then analyze the data gathered during the experiments and draw conclusions about whether or not their hypothesis was correct.

- **Engineering design** is a process by which students identify or are given a problem to solve. The problem must have given constraints (time, materials, money etc.). Students then design a solution to the problem, create a prototype, and test their design. Data from testing the prototype is collected and the design is evaluated. The prototype is then modified based on the results from the first test and then tested and evaluated again. Finally both designs are evaluated against the criteria of the problem to determine effectiveness. The process can continue iteratively until the design criteria are met.
- These lessons work best outside in full sun. The best time of day is usually in the early afternoon. If full sun is not available, you can use shop lights as an alternative light source (usually overhead lights in a classroom do not work).

Science Kit Materials (per group)

- Individual Solar Module—1.5-Volt, 500 mA

Other Materials List:

For Class:

- Class sets of “Solar Student Worksheet: Part 6: Solar Powered Water Pumping Experiment”
- Class Set of “Solar Student Worksheet: Part 7: Solar Water Pumping Experiment Data Worksheet”
- Class Set of “Solar Student Worksheet, Part 8: Solar Water Pumping Experiment Analysis”
- One electrical water pump
- Electronic Copy of excel data table: “Lesson 5 Class Data Table”

Per Group:

- Two small clear plastic tubs (small sandwich containers work well) with a cup measurement line marked on both (at one-cup and two-cup measurement points). Fill one plastic tub with water and the other one starts empty.
- Small piece of masking tape
- Stop Watch

Vocabulary:

- Hypothesis
- Circuit
- Silicon
- Photovoltaic Effect
- Data
- Graph
- Solar Module

Lesson Details:

1. AHEAD OF TIME NOTE: Prep science materials. Either group materials in like piles or separate supplies out so that each group has complete set (whichever works best in your classroom). Also pour water for each group and pour into one of their two tubs.
2. Begin today's lesson by sharing the content objective. Then explain to students that they will be working in small groups (3-4 students/group) to conduct a science experiment with solar power. Go over some group norms with the students and record some norm ideas on the board. Develop a short list of agreements. This will also be used in the following two lessons. Have student verbally agree, raise hands to agree, or sign their names at the bottom of the agreed upon list—this is a good classroom management practice.
3. Review with students the procedures and equipment used on the worksheet "Part 6: Solar Powered Water Pumping Experiment". Make sure to show students the materials as you describe them referencing the worksheet. In addition, show students how to use the stopwatch properly (when and how to start, stop, etc).
4. Review with student the two other worksheets, "Part 7: Solar Water Pumping Experiment Data Collection" and "Part 8: Solar Water Pumping Experiment Analysis". Be sure to note that the data collection worksheet asks for the time required to pump 2 cups of water and not just 1 cup. Ask students how they would calculate the time it takes to pump 1 cup.
5. Assign jobs within each group for each round of the data collection. Jobs can include managing the stopwatch, entering data on their worksheet, holding the solar module, etc. With older grades have students self select their jobs and rotate so that each student gets a turn at each job.
6. Once jobs are determined and the worksheets have been reviewed, allow one or two students per group to get the required experiment supplies.
7. Next, students conduct the experiment according to the "Part 6: Solar Powered Water Pumping Experiment" and "Part 7: Solar Water Pumping Experiment Data Collection".
8. Once each group has completed all their trials and completed "Part 7: Solar Water Pumping Experiment Data Collection", reconvene the class to discuss and compile results.
9. Use The "Lesson 5 Class Data Table" Excel spreadsheet to collect and display student's data on a single class graph. This will allow the class to discuss the results using many data points rather than just their own group's data. It's best to project it on a white board or drop down screen so that all students can see the data and the eventual graph.
    a. Ask each group to identify their "fastest time." Discuss as a class and come to consensus that the "fastest time" means the smallest number.
    b. Ask groups to report their fastest times. Enter each group's data into the "Lesson 5 Class Data Table" Excel worksheet.
10. Create a graph of student data (or for the older grades allow them to help you create the graph by determining the best type of graph for the data, an appropriate title for the graph, the X and Y units, and/or titles for the X and Y axis).
    a. Highlight just the boxes of the data table.
    b. Choose the green table titled "charts".
    c. Choose the "insert chart" icon.

   d. Select the type of graph you want.
   e. Once the graph is displayed choose the purple chart layout tab.
   f. This tab will allow the teacher to add any missing titles and/or display the values of the bars.
   g. The graph can be resized by dragging one of the corners so that it's easy for students to see.
11. Discuss patterns and observations of the data. Begin to transition student observations into factual statements about the graph.
12. On the worksheet, "Part 8: Solar Water Pumping Experiment Analysis", have students record:
   a. At least one factual statement about the graph,
   b. One additional question that they have
   c. One idea to increase the speed and efficiency of the water pump.
13. Have students share their facts, questions, and idea for improvement with the class
14. Review the content objective.

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Extensions

For older grades (4th-5th), ask students to convert cups into pints, quarts, gallons, and liters. This provides an opportunity for students to grasp conversions (math concept) as well as to better understand how cups, pints, quarts, gallons, and liters compare. Similarly students can convert seconds into minutes and hours as well.

Lastly, for 5th grade define volume and explain the relationship between volume and mass. Explain how volume is related to this experiment.

BONNEVILLE ENVIRONMENTAL FOUNDATION
240 SW 1st Avenue
Portland OR 97204
503-248-1905
www.b-e-f.org