

## GO WILD IN NEW YORK CITY

### **Conflict resolution**

*Behaving Like Bugs* allows teachers to work on conflict resolution in an authentic way. In this inquiry project, students must work collaboratively in small groups and make decisions regarding the way they want to conduct all steps of their experiment, such as who will take the measurements, who will manipulate the bugs, etc. Specially in the lower grades, this usually becomes the source of class conflict, as students have to negotiate their wants and trust in other students' decisions in order to conduct a fair experiment that provides reliable results. For example, if all students manipulate the bugs at the same time, it is possible that the bugs will be too stressed at the beginning of the experiment, and therefore the results obtained will not be due to the external stimuli but influenced by the initial stressful conditions.

The teacher should therefore emphasize the need of a true collaborative work as the only way to conduct a reliable experiment, and provide concrete examples of why the results would not be consistent otherwise. Thus, one of the activity requirements should be that students propose their own strategies to organize their group work in order to maximize everybody's fulfilling their needs, while conducting the experiment in a proper way.

In the project final discussion, students should include the difficulties that arose regarding group work, how they were resolved and which group strategies were the most helpful for that. Along these lines, the teacher should purposefully explain how professional scientists continuously collaborate in their everyday work and how that collaboration contributes to improve their findings, as they discuss results and experimental designs with other colleagues, ask for peer feedback and share the laboratory responsibilities with other team members.