

Roles for the Eelgrass Aquarium Project

Your class does not have to choose roles to have a successful eelgrass study. Perhaps in considering the following roles, your class will be able to focus some attention on each of the aspects of creating successful eelgrass habitats. Your class may want to choose a "chief engineer" if no other roles are assumed, in order to keep things running smoothly.

Data should be entered on a datasheet near the eelgrass system so that everyone can see the progress of the project. (The "data analyst" could be in charge of making sure that if readings were taken or observations were made, they got written down.)

Botanist--The botanist or botanists in the class could keep track of blade growth, blade number, number of new blades etc. The botanist may need to do some research on what plants require to grow.

Zoologist--The zoologist or zoologists in the class will be in charge of the animals in the system and any live food sources that are being supplied to the tank. The zoologist needs to make observations of animal health, interactions, behavior, and color, or the appearance of new organisms that were not detected earlier. The zoologist needs to consult immediately with the teacher if any animal seems to be sick or malnourished.

Water Quality Expert--The wq expert or experts need to "keep an eye" on the temperature, the dissolved oxygen and the turbidity of the system. Twice weekly readings of temperature and dissolved oxygen readings will probably suffice. However, if a change in water quality is noted (a sudden algal bloom occurs, or the water becomes cloudy for some unknown reason) the wq expert should assess all water quality parameters and consult with the teacher. Occasional Biological Oxygen (BOD) readings might prove interesting (described in the water quality manual from LaMotte).

Chief Engineer--The chief engineer may assume responsibility for the general set up and running of the system. Is there enough light? How can you get the dissolved oxygen level up? The chief engineer may need to do some additional research or consult with the teacher if a flaw in the system needs to be corrected.

Data Analyst-- The data analyst may keep track of all data and help members in problem-solving. For example, if the water quality expert records a series of low D.O. readings, the data analyst might make certain that this is having no overt effects on animal behavior or plant growth by consulting the data and observations of the zoologist or the botanist. The data analyst may consult with the chief engineer who discusses options with the water quality expert.

Photo-documenter-- The person who is documenting the progression of the tank is playing a very valuable role. The challenge is to keep downloading those photos in an orderly way.

The **Blogger** may post data, observations, pictures and questions on the Seagrasses in Classes blog to share their progress with MDIBL and participating schools. Dr. Disney checks the blogs often and answers questions that are posted there.