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CONSTRUCTING CONCEPTS: PREPARING STUDENTS TO COMPETE IN A GLOBAL SOCIETY

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According to the TIMSS Report, American children in fourth grade were ranked at the top internationally in math and science. However, American twelfth graders who ranked in the top two to three percent nationally were at the bottom of the distribution internationally. Although it would be next to impossible to identify just one reason for this, it is possible to identify contributing factors. One reason students are unable to compete is that they are "told information" rather than "encouraged to construct knowledge." To prepare students to compete in a global society, we must encourage them to construct concepts through our teaching methods. This lesson plan, designed to be part of a thematic unit on butterflies, guides students to construct the concept of bilateral symmetry through the use of butterflies and other objects and pictures.