

# LEARNING CENTER FOUR: RATS! RATS!

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This learning center will utilize your natural intelligence as it makes use of observation and understanding in the natural environment. In

“Flowers for Algernon,” Algernon was a lab rat (mouse) used for experiments. Lab rats must be observed over time, and their behaviors recorded. Students will observe rats from the websites below, and record their observations. From this, you should be able to infer how the rats may behave, think, and respond. You will also complete a simple maze from a rat’s point of view to aid in your perspective of understanding. (some of these may have to be viewed from the computer vs. the iPad.)



## INSTRUCTION CARD

### ***Rats! Rats!***

#### PART-I

1. Type the following into the address bar on the computer:
  - a. [www.youtube.com/watch?v=c5-MQajCQYQ](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c5-MQajCQYQ)
  - b. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wPx52d9og08&feature=related>
  - c. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?NR=1&feature=endscreen&v=3jkOwYKBJEI>
2. Watch videos about rats and their ability to show empathy based on the Chicago Study.
3. On a sheet of paper you will record your observational notes. Then define empathy. Discuss: what does this study show? How did the rat behave with a contained object, empty container, and the container with a cage-mate? From this, how do you think a rat would respond in a maze? What do you think a rat may be capable of thinking or feeling? Explain.

#### PART-II

4. Yeah! The fun stuff.... Type <http://ratbehavior.org> into the address bar on computer and press enter. (this site will give your more information on rats and behavior.)
  - a. Under the Rat Behavior box go down to Rats and Mazes. Click once. Here you will find information on various types of mazes and studies.
  - b. After reading about the mazes, under the section Fun Projects, click on Rat Maze Simulator. (Computer use needed for this because of Java---You may do this part at home, Can set up time to do in computer lab, set up time on my computer. See me if you need to do this.)
  - c. Select the size maze you want to do.
  - d. Have fun with it. Try at least one maze of each size. (you may do multiple times to see if your time improves.) Record on a piece of paper the number of moves and the amount of time it took for you to find the cheese. (Remember to head your paper correctly.)
  - e. This is to you give you the perspective of the rat as it goes through the maze. They can only see bit by bit whereas Charlie could see the whole maze at once. Which is more challenging? WHY?