

Inside a pre k classroom education essay



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In a Pre-K classroom how and what the children are taught is very important. This is when the foundation for learning in a school setting is experienced. The type of training the teacher has in early childhood education is imperative as well. The above factors work together to help the class have successful learning experiences. In this paper I will discuss the theories and/or philosophies that reflect how I envision my classroom and curriculum for pre-k. The concepts I would teach in each of the academic area, and finally I will include two activities that I would do with the class that coincides with the philosophies of the National Association for the Education of Young Children Standards.

There are a couple goals I would keep in mind as pre-k teacher when setting up my class. I'd be being able to provide a planned educational environment, which means not just teaching as I go. But actually use what I've learned in classes, workshops, and other resources to provide the best learning environment possible. Secondly, make sure learning experiences are plentiful, so that a positive foundation for the future is supported. Some of the motivations behind my goals are coming from the works and studies done by earlier pioneers of education. One of them that definitely come to mind is German educator Friedrich Froebel (1782-1852) who was renowned for his pioneering work in developing a school for early childhood education. He was a philosophical idealist who believed that every child's inner self contained a spiritual essence that stimulated self-active learning in curriculum for kindergarten. (Eliaison & Jenkins, 2012) Play was an appropriate means of learning to Froebel. The time children spend drawing,

using manipulatives, sing songs, and finger plays it was allowing them to learn.

The other pioneer that comes to mind is Jean Piaget (1896-1980) a Swiss psychologist, which made significant contributions to educational psychology and early childhood education. (Eliaison & Jenkins, 2012) He felt the teacher is designer of activities appropriate to child s level of development. Piaget s principle which states its through children s own exploratory processes, they are able to develop the power to generalize, differentiate, and coordinate their concepts of reality, building concepts based on their experiences of the external world. (Berk, 2003, pg. 219) Their understanding of the world changes as they grow. It s these theories and others from earlier educators helped us today and in the past get a better understanding of the children s development.

Pre-K is where the experiences learned can help them develop a positive self-image along with the emotional, social, and intellectual skills necessary to be successful in the classroom. My curriculum would help create a stable foundation in the growth of independent learners. It s here that both teacher-directed and choice-based activities can create these independent learners. (Berk, 2003, pg. 342) The classroom s activities for the curriculum are designed to recognize the growth and development of each child while I m teaching. It will motivate the children to learn while also identifying the needs of the child individually. This way I m able to help them develop positive relationships with peers and adults, and encouraging them to express themselves creatively. They will get to develop language through listening, speaking, and dramatic play activities. The opening for physical

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growth can take place through gross and fine motor activities, also provide experiences to stimulate and develop cognitive skills.

There are some basic concepts such as counting, colors, shapes, patterning, math, rhymes, and sequencing will be learned. Some of the academic areas of my class would include math, literacy, creative arts, science, and technology. Young children develop an everyday mathematics including informal ideas of more and less, taking away, shape, size, location, pattern and position. (Ginsburg, Lee, and Boyd 3-23) In math they will get the chance to learn things like numerals 1-10 and counting objects to 10. The children will learn to identify, describe and compare repeating patterns. This is actually the basis of our number system.

The students get the chance to sort of objects such as color to help them to develop flexibility in thinking and problem solving. They will get introduced to shapes (circle, square, triangle, and rectangle), sizes (small, medium, large), shapes matching and time in reference to day and night. There is even an insight about using measurement. In the area for dramatic play there are pots, pans, and etc. to allow them to act out things they see in the kitchen. Well, when using the items they are able to try and see what fits into what and what doesn't. This is also allowing them to use problem solving skills.

Literacy is what my class is able to read and write. It's at this age I know they can grasp good habits as their reading and writing level is starting to grow. My responsibility is to create a literate environment and then use the best tools available to teach the components of literacy. (Eliaison & Jenkins,

2012) I will teach about each letter s name and sounds of the alphabet. They will work on spelling, writing, and recognizing their own name. Practicing writing will help them learn to hold writing utensils correctly. At this point they can understand and explain what the text in a story is about from its illustrations, repeat nursery rhymes and finger plays, respond to questions about stories, build new vocabulary and listening skills.

The creative arts would defiantly be enjoyable when working with this age. They have such great imaginations that actually get to allow them to share it with each other. I would make sure while they are learning I embraces all of their creativity with positive reinforcement. I d let them try art processes like painting, drawing, sculpture, weaving, and collage. I would encourage them to sing songs that enhance their curriculum. During music time allow them to use scarves, rhythm sticks, and bean bags to practice rhythms. I encourage them to play with children s instruments. As we learn about different animals I d have the class act out the sounds they make. It s so many ways to bring out their artistic side but these are just a few I would do with them.

In the science area they are at a developmentally appropriate age to explore science tools such as magnets, prisms, magnifying glasses, and etc. I can take them on nature walks, gardening, and other explorations. Plan activities where they can measure and mix ingredients in cooking activities. I can allow them to identify basic colors and explore color mixing to see how certain colors are formed. Teaching them about how we use our five senses to explore different things. Then there s sharing different types of animals with the class. But also going even farther by informing them about the types of homes they live in, and the food they eat. It seems that the world is

become more and more dependent on technology as time goes by. Today even pre-k can get a start on using some of the devices. Computers play a huge part in our lives nowadays. My students would learn things like creating picture with computer programs to tell stories. They will be working on improving their fine motor skills by using the keyboard. Also while controlling the mouse to click and drag to different points on the screen. They would be allowed to explore kid friendly websites on the internet that is developmentally appropriate.

The first activity I would do with them is called Autumn Collage The day before we do the activity I would complete an example for them to see. The materials needed are treasure sacks (brown paper bags), flour, oil, salt, and water for collage background, plastic spoons, heavy paper plates, hole puncher, and yarn. The morning before we go outside I would pass the sacks out and tell the children we are going on an autumn nature walk to look for treasure. The items we will be looking to put in our sacks are leaves, nuts, acorns, grass, small flowers, and seeds. The two objectives for my class will be to measure and mix ingredients for collage background, and sort and place items from their treasure sack onto the collage.

Once back inside and we get ready to start the activity the procedure would go in this order select a paper plate and have students write their names on the back of their plate, discuss the word Autumn and that we are going to make a special display for the items they have in their treasure sacks, show how to measure and mix the glop for the collage background and how the mixture changes, then allow them to spread the glop onto the paper plate with a spoon, take items from the treasure sack and place it onto the glop to

make a pretty autumn collage, and finally let the collage dry and explain how the water will evaporate and their collage background will get hard just like mine. I will then take finished collage to a drying rack. When it is dry in a couple of days, I will then punch a hole in the edge of the plate and put a yard through it so it can be hung. The concepts the children learn from this activity are fine motor, language development, measurement.

The second activity I would do with my students is called Name that Sound . This activity is great to do for science to work on our sense of hearing. This can be fun and encourage the children to use their listening skills. It s also designed to make the class aware those different things that have sounds of their own. They are also able to learn we can name different things by recognizing the sounds with their ears. The materials needed for the activity are paper, chalk, pen, zipper, jar with screw lid, bell, book, and other objects that make noise. I would use this activity when we are working on learning about our five senses. Before getting into the activity I would go over some vocabulary words used during this activity. They would include words like loud, quiet, sharp, soft, and sounds. The steps for this lesson are to take turns with a group or with an individual; asking each child to close his eyes, wad up the paper while his eyes are closed and ask the child to identify the sound, and then repeat with a different object. Once completing this activity the children will become more aware of sound.

The National Association for the Education of Young Children Standard (NAEYC) is a 103, 000-member organization of early childhood educators. NAEYC has created a set of standards that specifies what a program s characteristics that meet the developmental and individual needs of young

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children of varying ages, based on current research and the consensus of experts. (Berk, 2003) The two planned activities above encourage the children to be active and engaged. (Berk, 2003)

It is so important to Implement a curriculum that is thoughtfully planned, challenging, engaging, developmentally appropriate, culturally and linguistically responsive, comprehensive, and likely to promote positive outcomes for all young children. (NAEYC, 2003) You are now aware of how I would prepare the appropriate curriculum to teach a pre-k class. I have shared the goals of providing a planned educational environment, and creating rich learning experiences to form a positive foundation for the future. Plus, instructions on how the goals are applied in each academic area and two different lesson plans.