

Engaged Educators... Competent Children



Consolidating Learning - Entering Play

by: Joëlle Rudick, March 6, 2015

	BRANDON	LAILA	DEREK	MAGGIE
BACKGROUND	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enjoys the block centre - reluctant to leave once engaged; - Often chooses the block centre; - Sets goals for his structures out loud and thinks aloud with a friend about what they are building and thinking; - Follows the lead of other children, but sometimes becomes frustrated if things don't go his way; - Had shown limited interest in reading or writing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Leader in the class; - Well-developed oral language; - Builds purposefully, creating patterned structures that fit into her imagined scene; - Often chooses the block centre; - Communicates her plan for construction and directs others; - Enjoys writing notes at the writing centre - reluctant to take risks (i.e., spell inventively) and only uses familiar words; - Thinks aloud with a friend about what they are building and thinking. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Freely enters into play with his own ideas (i.e. bringing car and starting a garage); - English Language Learner; - Speaks quietly with peers when entering play; - Builds in silence and does not initiate or join conversation with the other children; - Emerging from the silent acquisition stage and beginning to use headlines and phrases; - Entering play is new for him. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sits close by, quietly watching the children with some interest; - Autism Spectrum Disorder; - Requires adult support to interact successfully with peers.
FOCUS	Encourage reading and writing in authentic contexts by making thinking visible.	Take risks (i.e. use inventive spelling) to further writing ability.	Build vocabulary and confidence.	Move toward positive, independent social interactions with peers.
REFERENCES THAT GUIDED MY CHOICES	<p><i>The work of Morrow and Roskos shows that when the educator creates an environment rich in print and includes tools for writing, children are likely to use literacy in their play. (...) These situations offer the same potential for mathematics learning, (...) [h]owever, they still need planned experiences with an adult to extend the mathematics learning.</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">- <i>Thinking It Through - Playing Is Learning (2010), p. 18</i></p> <p><i>Some children need different balances of child- and adult-directed activity. For some children, special programming strategies are necessary to support more positive interactions with peers, greater involvement in play opportunities and social skills development.</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">- <i>Early Learning For Every Child Today (2007), p. 13</i></p>			
			<p><i>By watching, listening to, and documents the strategies ELLs use and develop, teachers will know when it is appropriate to interact with and engage children in dialogue.</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">- <i>Supporting ELLs in Kindergarten (2007), p. 50</i></p>	<p><i>[ELK] teams plan programs that recognize diversity and give children tasks and challenges that respect their particular abilities so that all children can derive the greatest possible benefit (...)</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">- <i>FDEL-K Program (2010), p. 39</i></p>

AS THE EDUCATOR, I WOULD...

SAY (IN THE MOMENT)

Maggie, what do you see Derek, Laila and Brandon doing? ... Look what I have here. A mirror, some gems, and some coloured blocks. I WONDER which would be best to add to their creation? What do you think? ... Great suggestion! Let's practice what you could say when you bring it over.^{2,3,4,5,6}

- My goal is to give her a special material that will allow her to enter the group with a valued status. By giving Maggie a choice, I am trying to elicit speech and show her that her opinions are valued. I also want to practice social interactions with her by role-playing how the presentation of the materials might go.

Nice fence, Laila. I think I'm going to make a sign for your fence that says, Welcome Bad Guys. What do you think?^{1,3,5,6}

- My goal is to use humour to provoke Laila into making a sign to counter my own and to model sounding out new words.

Wow, I SEE you made a really tall tower on your castle, Brandon. I wonder why a king would want to have a tall castle? ... How many blocks did you use to make such a tall tower? Hmm. I'm just going to grab this clipboard and draw your tower and write down how many blocks you used. ... I WONDER how many unified cubes you would need to build a tower that tall? What's your estimate? Okay, I am going to make a little chart and in this chart I am going to copy your name from the word wall and write your estimate next to your name. Now you take the clipboard and pencil. I want you to WRITE down the names of your friends here by copying them from the word wall, just like I did. Next, ask them how many cubes they think it will take to build a tower that tall with unified cubes. Once you have everyone's estimates, I want you to lead the group and TEST out how many cubes it will really take to make a tower as tall as your block tower and WRITE that on your paper too.... Hmm... I WONDER what else we could measure / use to measure the tower?^{1,2,3,4,5,6}

- My goal is to encourage Brandon to think about using a pencil and paper in the construction area. By suggesting a more math-based activity, I am hoping to hook him into writing and also reinforce that mixing elements from the math and construction centres is encouraged. By having him go to his friends, I am hoping that other will catch on. When sharing at the end of the day, I would ask other students what they like about Brandon's documentation and for what could be added to make it better. I would hope to elicit suggestions such as TITLE and LABELS, which Brandon could add so that his writing sheet could be added to a class book on structures, alongside a photo of him and the other children building the castle.

DO (IN THE MOMENT AND ALSO TO CONTINUE TO SUPPORT THE STUDENTS' LEARNING)

- Model writing making a stand-up sign for the construction centre by sounding out new words and using index cards, popsicle sticks, masking tape, pencils and crayons. Guide children as they try to do it themselves;^{1,3,6}
- Take pictures of the students playing cooperatively and show it on the screen at the end of the class so as to encourage oral communication, confidence, and a sense of belonging;^{2,3,4,5}
- Blocks scavenger hunt: Hide the blocks around the room and tape words and/or image to each of them. The children must read and possibly write the word or identify the picture to be able to bring the block back to the construction centre. An inventory checklist could be nearby the construction centre so that the children might keep track of what they are finding in their hunt (and also so that the whole class - educators included - can be sure that all of the blocks are recouped!);^{1,5}
- Other than acknowledging his positive contributions, I would not interfere too much with Derek in this scenario, at this time. He is already showing positive risk-taking in this play and I would prefer not to overwhelm him.^{2,3,4,5} I would document this interaction for future reference, noting positive peer interactions for future small group work and listening for sentence structures he is repeating and areas of oral language need.

AS THE EDUCATOR, I WOULD...	
ADD / REMOVE (TO CONTINUE TO SUPPORT THE STUDENTS' LEARNING)	<p>Things to Add to the Construction Centre:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - clipboards, paper and writing materials (i.e., pencils, crayons, erasers)^{1,3} - a class album of structures alongside plans that the students drew, either before or after^{1,2,3,4,5} - 1-3 construction/structures-related books on display, to inspire and promote literacy^{1,2,3,4} - index cards, popsicle sticks and platercine for making stand-up signs^{1,2,3} - For Maggie, PECS for building, sharing, and tidying up (more literacy or speech-related PECS could be added later).^{2,4,5} - For Maggie and Derek, blocks with students' pictures on them to: help identify classmates by name; encourage them to speak aloud using words they know (i.e. classmates names); foster a sense of belonging in the class.^{2,4,5} <p>Things to add to the Writing Centre:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - blocks with words and/or images on them so that children can build sentences and engage in reading sight words while building^{1,2,4}
QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION	
The numbers correspond with the superscript numbers in the section above entitled, AS THE EDUCATOR, I WOULD...	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How can I encourage authentic reading and writing experiences while playing at this centre? 2. How can I extend their conversation to foster their language and vocabulary development? 3. How can I extend their thinking and encourage them to share their theories? 4. How can I foster oral language development? 5. How can I encourage social interaction and encourage children to join in the play? 6. Consider how you would use the gradual release of responsibility model as a framework to enter into their play and support their learning.
THINKING ROUTINES	
I WONDER...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - help the children develop a narrative to go along with their construction and to elicit oral communication; - help the children make connections to, for example, stories that they know; - help Maggie consider how her choice of new material might affect the play.
SEE/WONDER/ WRITE (or PLAN)/TEST	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - encourage STEM-style inquiry models. (Although the example above is quite structured, it forms part of a long-term gradual release of responsibility which would eventually have the children using this thinking routine in more open ended settings.)
PLAN FOR SHARING	
www.joellesjourneys.edublogs.org	