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Learning Environment

What are some classroom must-haves for you?

Some classrooms must-haves that will be in my classroom are (large space, organized space, clean space, windows, a garden, mats, rugs, blocks, puzzles, tables, chairs, printer, projector, whiteboards, word wall, plants, bookshelves, clay, paints, music play, bathroom, sand and water table, ABC decorations, desk, Art Center, Block Center, Dramatic Play Center, Sensory Center, Math Center, and Writing Center, storage, play kitchen, dress up, flexibility, privacy...)

Recall the layout of classrooms that you have observed in person or online. What feeling did they evoke? What did you like? What would you change?

The layout of classrooms that I've seen in person and online consists of material and supplies that students can access safely. What I liked is that although covid-19 had ultimately changed the ways the school board performs I've seen an environment where specific protocols were taken to assure children's health came first. Having hand sanitizers out, masks on, keeping distance, etc.

The feelings that it evoked was determination. Determination towards my goal of assisting children. Things I'd change are mainly aiming toward finding new ideas and methods that can be implemented to assure students can experience effective interactions with their peers.

How will your layout and materials accommodate, reach and teach all of your students?

My layout and materials will accommodate, reach and teach all of my students. It will consist of a beautiful and safe environment. A well-designed classroom setting provides students guidance as they develop all kinds of skills. Anita Rui Olds states, "When children feel comfortable in their physical surroundings, they will venture to explore materials or events around them." I completely agree with Anita because the classroom should be a place where children feel safe and comfortable to the point they can blissfully express themselves. My classroom will have multiple areas designed for specific activities. My classroom will have materials that connect to each of the learning activities we will be completing throughout the school year. Offer students to use and relate to their five senses. According to Montessori's belief, "She also believed that part of sensory experience for children is having tools and utensils that fit their small hands and tables and chairs that match their small bodies." Materials that are accessible for the children, organized so they can reach as well put back, arranging the classroom with low furniture for example the shelves, and provide tools to assure their experience is effective.

How will your classroom reflect your values as a teacher?

My classroom will reflect my values as a teacher following criteria that allow children to learn through many opportunities that lay the foundation for your child's future! Students look up to those who can symbolize a support system and someone they can trust. According to Erikson's stages of Psychosocial Development, "Erikson wrote about trust as having two parts, external-belief that significant adults will be present to meet the baby's needs-and- internal-belief in her own power to effect change and cope with a variety of circumstances." Although Erik Erikson's theory pertained to ages Birth-12 months regarding trust I believe even though it's

something children form at an early point in life it is something that can continuously be supported through later in life. Teachers can lend stability and offer their support. Children reflect their role models. As educators, I think our values and perspectives differ. My values consist of prioritizing each one of my student's success, academic achievement, emotions, and overall how my teaching can implement a positive mindset within each of my students. I believe that teachers must feel passion, patience, and determination and have multiple opportunities available to offer students. I believe in working with children through creativity. Doing so will allow students to explore and express themselves on a whole different level. In the book "Nurturing creativity" it states, "Carson (2010) and Isenberg and Durham (2015) define creativity as having an idea that is unique or original, and also useful or adaptable." I will allow my students to express themselves through a lot of artwork. Each child has the capability to create a masterpiece and surely unique pieces that tell a story. I believe and I highly prioritized that developing relationships with our students and their families will lead to a successful classroom environment. All of which will lead to creating a caring community of learners. I believe in teaching to enhance development and learning. From planning an appropriate curriculum. As well as assessing children's development. Seeing where they're doing good and where there can be room for improvement. I believe in incorporating Funds of knowledge. The particular reason for this is because Funds of Knowledge vary for which they actively demonstrate that such skills will allow our students and staff to grow. It correlates to one's cultural values and it will not only show children the astonishing diversity the world has but open them to respect one another. We as in myself, teachers, community, and our students can incorporate our funds of knowledge to ultimately enhance the children's development. Children learn best through developmentally appropriate practices. We must consider the ages and what is

ideally appropriate based on what we know about development within certain ages. As well as getting to know children individually. Observations are necessary to moving forward and are highly effective in telling how we can help those individual needs. Children are different. Children may share things in common but also have different learning preferences, knowledge, personalities, and interests, etc. Considering the social and cultural community children live in. The particular reason for this is that it will help identify what is considered appropriate and or valuable from the children's perspective. Parents ultimately play a huge role in children's lives. Parents should be able to partake in decisions that revolve around their children. Since the first person a child sees around in this world is their parents it is clear that children do indeed learn from what their parents do and how they deal with certain things. Of course, as parents, they want to see their children successful and set off to accomplish what they desire to do career-wise. Therefore parents must do their part and show unconditional love and support to their children. I believe an ideal teacher should represent a successful role model. A teacher who prioritizes how she gets her students to engage, how to create a curriculum, how to intact a positive classroom environment, how to relate activities to the real world, how they grasp on to knowledge, what they find interesting, how can we enhance their creativity, etc. The list can go on and on. It is what is expected to assure everything is done as a teacher to build a strong foundation for our young learners. Overall should be able to develop a relationship with students and guide them to success.

How will your centers support children's development social emotional and/or physical?

My following centers: Art Center, Block Center, Dramatic Play Center, Sensory Center, Math Center, and Writing Center all of which will assist children's development through social,

emotional, and physical. According to “Basics of developmentally appropriate practices” it states, “We learn through direct teaching from our parents and other important people in our lives and through observing and modeling the behavior of those around us” this goes to show that what makes sense to children has gravitated through social context. As an educator, we must be responsive to the differences in each child. Not to judge nor critique but take the child’s accustoms into account. Becoming familiar with the child’s interpretation of social context as well other key factors. Doing so will allow teachers to provide a developmentally appropriate learning environment. On teachers behalf we can take action to understand our students and part-taking in their *social development* for example: talking with families, incorporating group work activities, provide musical and artistic experiences, having individual activities, promote healthy friendships, encourage sharing ideas, discussing things they can relate to others, providing quiet space, noticing who is feeling neglected and assisting them and acknowledging a sense of welcome, lastly I believe there are many roles students play, for instance, leader and follower. As a teacher, we must use methods that allow every child to take turns.

As for *emotional development*, the centers will give opportunities to feel happy and secure. When they are flattered with a welcoming environment they can explore new ideas and deepen their understanding of what they already know. On teachers behalf we can take action to understand our students’ *emotional development* for example: providing an appropriate classroom environment that has colorful displays, incorporate their home languages, encourage students to talk about their feelings, and describing them to others by modeling companionship, at this age students may be upset when parents leave so as teachers we can respect and comfort them and their feelings, if students get into a disagreement we can explain to them that feelings

were hurt, take children's fears seriously, help children understand that everyone shares similarities and differences, encourage responsibility, etc. I'd like to enforce SEL teaching in my classroom "Social and emotional learning (SEL) commonly refers to a process through which people acquire and effectively apply knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions (Weissberg, Durlak, Domitrovich, & Gullotta, 2015)." Doing so will allow students to feel respect, empathy, self-awareness, collaboration, social engagement, self-motivation, self-identity, etc. It will enhance students' connections to school, positive behavior, and academic achievement.

As for *physical development*, the centers will establish an environment where children can use their muscle skills, bounce, catch balls, balance, use scissors, cut, paste, and glue. On teachers' behalf, we can provide space, offer blocks, offer material, offer outside experience, and be patient. One of Vygotsky theories introduces, "Vygotsky has changed the way educators think about children's interactions with others. His work shows that social and cognitive development work together and build on each other." Children learn best through play. When children interact with their peers it indeed increases and contributes to the knowledge they have obtained. Barbara Biber expresses, "There is pleasure and satisfaction in what one's hands can make of the physical world and the child, in his playful re-making of the world around him, lays the cornerstone of his feeling about himself in relation to that world." This can allow children to develop a sense of imagination and self confidence through physical movement. Children get a sense of fun and joy. They ultimately have total control when it comes to play. Children may develop questions and through play they would be able to find the answers to their questions.

Where in your classroom will children explore and engage in problem-solving?

In different areas of the classroom children will get the opportunity to explore and engage in problem-solving. Through the use of cognitive skills it refers to developing an understanding and a possible solution for a particular problem. Especially at a young age, we can see one's ability to arise an idea of solutions. For instance, making a tower out of blocks/legos. Being that in this scenario it's through creative play in which the students are working together ultimately to achieve a construction of a tall tower. At some point, this tower is going to knock down. This will cause critical thinking, developing questions, becoming curious, and implementing solutions. Another example finding solutions during science-related activities. This will cause them to develop a hypothesis and possible solutions. They'd be able to write down what they think will happen, what they observed, and at the very end can conclude what happened. It's about how children grasp knowledge because surely it may be different.

What resources will you offer to encourage their development as emerging readers and writers?

Resources that I will offer in my classroom to encourage my students' development as emerging readers and writers are through writing and pronunciation. At this age, preschoolers are not fully able to read on their own or recognize letters, words, or sounds. As a teacher, I'd provide activities and lesson plans that will enhance and teach these children slowly. I'd go over the letters of the alphabet and telling them the sounds of each letter. I'd provide workbooks that give them the chance to trace the letters using the skyline, plane line, grass line, and worm line method. I'd create a word wall and create flashcards for each student. All through which can be provided through the writing center. Another method would be offering sensory experiences.

Theories of childhood states, “She thought that the teacher has a responsibility to provide wonderful sights, texture, sounds, and smells for children.” Doing so encourages the development of motor skills, scientific thinking, problem- solving, and language development. I’d ask effective questions to see what the children understand and don’t understand. To see if the child is interested or not. This correlates to scaffolding another useful tool “Wood, Bruner, and Ross (1976) defined scaffolding as just-in-time support provided by a teacher/parent (tutor) that allows students (tutees) to meaningfully participate and gain skill at problem solving.” Providing assistance for our students. Teachers can ask questions and observe to determine where exactly you children may need extra assistance. Questions such as what have you noticed? Have you seen? How many did? Is there a difference when? What could you do? How are these alike/different? What happens if you? How can you make it? What do you think? What do you wonder?

Describe the materials and activities that you will offer for creative expression and arts experiences.

In my classroom, the material and activities that I will offer for creative expression and arts experiences depend on the activities. Activities that relate to the curriculum plan. To assure these standards are met I’d jot down my students' interest and curiosity to see what sort of activity plan best accommodates their engagement. I’d have material accessible. I’d have material that is the ideal size for small hands. I’d have certain amounts of material depending on the class size. According to “Collage and Construction in School” states, “Children explore with their senses the world of simple things.” In my perspective this quote means that as children work through experiences and activities it allows them to explore through their senses: sight, touch, hearing,

smell, and taste. For example it allows children to really engage using touch where they can physically interpret their envisions through art. Along with using materials to incorporate color. Such as: crayons, markers, color pencils, and paper...

How will you create a culturally responsive community in your classroom?

I will create a culturally responsive community in my classroom by incorporating different cultures into my classroom. One idea for example we can have a day where students can bring one of their favorite traditional dishes or have an art gallery where students can draw out what their culture represents, having students' families come into the school building and talk a bit about their culture. Culturally Responsive Teaching Matters states, "In 2000, Professor Geneva Gay wrote, culturally responsive teaching connects students' cultural knowledge, prior experiences, and performance styles to academic knowledge and intellectual tools in ways that legitimize what students already know." Designed to provide children with multiple lenses in life in which they see things from different perspectives. Acknowledging and representing the various cultures. According to Theories of childhood Mary Pipher states, "Raising healthy children is a labor intensive operation. Contrary to the news from the broader culture, most of what children need, money cannot buy. Children need time and space, attention, affection, guidance, and conversation. They need sheltered places where they can be safe as they learn what they need to know to survive." Cultural teaching can educate young children about the real world issues that have been carried out decades ago. Consider how our very own students may feel. The questions they have. The thoughts that roam their minds. They might ask why doesn't my teacher look like me? Are our curriculums culturally relevant and appropriate? An ideal school represents diversity and welcoming sensations. For example some activities that I think

are culturally responsive are a class cookbook, playdough self portrait, family tree, and house sculpture. The cookbook would help incorporate cultural foods. Self portrait so we can challenge students to realize things that they might not have about themselves and see the value in themselves. Also can show beautiful differences appearance wise for instance hair. Family tree to grasp onto family history and relationships in the creators perspective. House sculpture because it deals with one's surroundings and community which plays a major role overall for cultures.

What kinds of materials will encourage divergent learning? Please locate a definition of this term if needed.

In my classroom, the material will offer and encourage divergent learning through individual learning centers. “Divergent thinking (DT) is defined as a thought process or thinking method used towards exploring multiple solutions (Wang, Hao, Ku, Grabner, & Fink, 2017) and is of particular importance for creativity as it enables individuals to think in multiple directions (Charles & Runco, 2001; Kuhn & Holling, 2009)” Divergent thinking is part of divergent learning. I would have multiple plans ahead of time. For example, the Art Center will consist of items such as paint, color, pencils, construction paper, wipes, aprons.... I’d also have storage cubes to organize the supplies and have them accessible for my students. I’d have cleaning supplies so that after the activities the students may wipe down their area. Writing center will consist of items such as tracing books, notebooks, phonics, flashcards, word walls, alphabet books, pencils, good lighting, rug, projector.... The Mathematics center will consist of items such as building blocks, toys, counting objects, math workbooks, pencils, rulers.... Science center will consist of items such as water & sand tables, scientific tools, outdoor activities.... In these centers children will get to thoroughly investigate their surroundings and explore.

In conclusion as an educator, I believe it is beautiful and empowering to devote our support to these children. Currently, I am majoring in Early Childhood Education and taking courses pertaining of my major. Within the period, I've been able to obtain valuable knowledge and enhance my passion. This assignment in particular The Learning Environment Project allowed me to envision and design a classroom layout that will allow children to flourish. In addition to that, it allowed me to challenge myself regarding what values I have as a teacher and how I'd be able to appropriately accommodate my future students' needs. Classrooms must be sanitary and a healthy school environment. A school environment that meets the needs of students and teachers. I believe an ideal school environment should give access to valuable resources. A kid-friendly environment that supports students' mental health, education, and learning, etc. I believe that an ideal school should be extravagant, colorful, and vibrant!

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