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Commentary Paper

ECE 211-091L

The activity I chose for my activity plan is called Shape Me. I will introduce this activity by reading to them the book *We Belong Together* by Todd Parr. The book explores the ways that people can choose to come together to make a family by showing one perspective on the adoption experience. *We Belong Together* is about sharing your home and sharing your heart to make a family that belongs together. To see if they fully grasped the importance of this book, I would introduce the Shape Me activity where they will use different materials to create a portrait of themselves.

I would first introduce this activity by reading to the class the book *We Belong Together* by Todd Parr. I would ask the question: what did you see happening in the book? Or who do you see in this family? Let's describe them. Turn to a partner and talk about what was happening. I would also ask them to compare the story to their own family. Can they spot any differences and similarities in the book to their own family? I would then proceed to tell them the activity we will be doing. I will explain that this activity would be a portrait of their family. I would also provide an example of how I did the project myself. For example, I will draw a picture with my parents and my younger siblings and 2 dogs, that would be my family. I would say "I have created a portrait of my own family. Now it's your turn to create one of your own." I would next introduce the materials such as markers/crayons, construction paper, glue sticks and different textures (soft, rough, bumpy). Next, I would break them into groups of 6 students. Each group would be handed various size shapes from construction paper. I will add other materials like glue, markers, construction paper and texture (rough, soft, bumpy, scratchy) to add to their portrait. In those groups they would talk about their portrait and build on other classmates' ideas if stuck. While the children were creating their portrait, I would circulate around the room to see if any groups/individuals needed help getting started. After about 20 minutes when the class has

had enough time to create their art. I would go around the class and have each student explain to the class the material that they used and why they decided to choose those materials. But mostly importantly have them explain to the class who they have created in their portraits.

These learning experiences connect to the larger themes of my curriculum web because throughout the unit I will introduce a different sense to focus on. Throughout the activities the students will improve their communication, problem solving and critical thinking skills along with other skills. They will get to learn more about themselves, others, and the environment around them. This will be done using various books related to the sense of touch, taste, smell, see, hear, and taste. With the books we will have multiple activities, these activities include the use of creative arts, movement, literature, math, and science that will help the children understand the multiple modes of the theme. We will focus on how we use our five senses to explore, investigate and understand ourselves and the world. Children explore their environment through their senses. I will support their cognitive and language development by encouraging children to observe things in their environment and describe them in detail.

The book *Basics of Developmentally Appropriate Practice* by Carol Copple and Sue Bredekamp; “The child’s repertoire of large muscles skills is expanding, and skills are becoming more refined.” (p. 77) This development could be seen when the students are sitting at the tables in groups or walking and sitting from the tables to the morning rug. It also mentions “small muscles gain coordination. Children can use scissors, glue small beads and paintbrushes with more skills.” (p.77) The students will be using these skills when they are grabbing the glue to paste all their shapes onto the construction paper. Grabbing markers, crayons and using them to create the rest of their features. For their intellectual development it mentions “children are naturally interested in shapes, colors, and textures” (p. 78). This will be reflected in their activity

because the students are going to use other material, I provide for them to create texture to their portraits. “Given sufficient language exploration in their home and school environments” (p.79).

This activity offers opportunities for a range of learning styles and needs because through the activity the kids would show me what they are strong in and where they still have some room to grow. After reading the book and sending them off into groups I will get a sense of where every student is at. For example, some students may understand what the book is trying to portray and would want to describe that through words. Others might want to make the art activity to show they do understand what was being said through the book. I will learn more about the children and who is more of a visual learner and who is more of a hands-on person. Some other students might not know how to cut correctly or distinguish shapes. I will have to create other activities that have shapes involved to make sure the students are developing. Throughout the activity I might notice that students must work on their fine and large motor skills, to help their needs I will have mini activists that require them to use their hands and arms a lot more.

Through the reading and the curriculum unit they are going to be exposed to new words they probably have not been exposed to such as self- portrait, senses, observe, vision, listen which are being supported by example and books being read in class. This will also be shown in the conversation they have with other classmates in their small groups and as a whole class conversation.

This activity is culturally responsive because the students are not going to follow a certain way to make their portraits. They are making their portraits with what they think is what represents them and their families. They will be able to choose the shapes, color and textures that are added to the portraits. Giving the students that choice to do their portraits on their own shows

them you are accepting them even if the portraits look different from one another. The book *We Belong Together* by Todd Parr is a great example to show the students the importance of getting to know not only about us as individuals but also about the people around us like our classmates. At this age in their emotional development the students are “curious about the differences and similarities in people” (p.80). As they start to get older, they are being exposed to different people that come from different backgrounds. They start to ask questions related to race, identity, language, and background and as the teacher I should help children understand how people are alike and different in physical characteristics, families, styles, and culture. That is what makes all of us unique and as a class we should be respectful and inclusive towards others in our community.