

Experience Plan Commentary Paper

***Experience Plan Commentary Paper: Brooklyn Kids Academy(Goldfish 1's)***

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May, 17, 2022

The Goldfish classroom at Brooklyn Kids Academy located in Brooklyn, NY was full of energetic and charismatic one to two year olds who were extremely aware and emotionally expressive. The teachers as well as infant-toddler curriculum provided such a great way for integration of the developmental domains especially in a way that was beneficial to the children. Morning activities as well as morning and afternoon open play offered a time for the toddlers to be able to learn and engage in not only teacher-led but student-led activities too. For my experience plan, I wanted to create an activity that would match the energy and developmental level of the ones I've seen implemented during my observations. Ms. Davanna and Ms. Aniah always created activities that involved all five forms of sensory learning and prioritized the importance of early childhood development. The theme for the month of May was animals and within the school's library I found the book "*Pancakes, Pancakes!*" by Eric Carle. The focus of the activity was to allow the toddlers to be able to create connections between the real world and the story regarding the food they eat.

Morning meeting had ended and I invited Keyori, Naomi and Yasahni over to the table by calling them by their name and assisting them to the table and into their seats. I also had the materials for the activity out for display on the table and once they were settled I introduced the book we would be using for the read-aloud. I found that having the nest of eggs and milk cartons available for the children to see and touch to be effective as it did prompt their interest and curiosity but it would have been better to make the materials visible but not in arms reach. I also would've used a larger version of the book as it would've captivated their attention more easily. Ms. Davanna often used larger books for read-alouds and smaller books for personal reads.

Lastly, ideally, the activity should also be introduced after the read-aloud as the read-aloud can also be used as a way to heighten their curiosity before the activity.

Throughout the activity, Yasahni, Naomi and Keyori had different reactions to different segments and questions regarding the book. Despite this being a group activity, in order to demonstrate individualization, I allowed them to respond to the questions and segments of their choice throughout the reading. Each child communicated their emotions and language differently so I found that acting on their independent feelings would allow each child to gain an understanding in a way they personally understood. Keyori often communicated through nonverbal communication such as pointing and occasional one word responses. Naomi is an avid talker and strongly feeds off the language and communication of others. Yasahani tends to have one word answers or repeat what he hears within a conversation. During the reading, I asked “Do we see the rooster ?” and Naomi replies “yes“ and repeats my “cock-a-doodle-doo”. Keyori silently points to the picture before Yasahni exclaimed , “cock-a-doodle-doo” as well. While continuing the reading, I asked about the cat and donkey and when asked questions such as “ Do we see the cat or donkey ?” and “What sound does a cat make?” Yasahni would often respond “yes” and mimic the sound of the animal after I said it. In this moment, I should’ve encouraged Yasahni’s efforts and exclaimed appreciation for his participation. Naomi continued to respond to my questions as well as her own personal insights throughout the reading but Keyori became distracted with the nest on the table.

The read-aloud presented itself as the best time to deepen children’s engagement and understanding as it provided the most visual material to ask questions but the activity also allowed one to see the cognitive thinking of each child individually as well. During the reading

when the author spoke of Jack needing to get an egg from the chicken. Keyori dug her hands deep into the nest, pulled out the egg and said, “egg!” while putting much emphasis on the beginning and ending annunciation of the word. While in the moment I did tell them to be patient, I later on engaged in their interest and emphasized the different color of the eggs that could be provided by the same chicken. Likewise, the children being able to milk the cow allowed for them to have a deeper visual understanding of what Jack did to get his milk and how they also received their milk. I even took it a step further by allowing the children to taste the milk they squeezed from the glove. While Naomi seemingly enjoyed the milk, Yasahni could hardly swallow a sip and Keyori squirmed at the taste and replied, “I don't like it ” and “Nooooo” when asked if they liked it. Yas also vocalized, “some milkkk” after drinking and Naomi expressed, “Mooooooooo” when asked what sound does a cow make.

This activity allowed for the development of all early childhood developmental domains through play based learning. Physical development was prompted through the cracking and peeling of the eggs as well as the squeezing and pinching of the milk in glove cow utters. Language development was seen through the use of verbs, repetition and verbal responses when asked questions. They were also able to express a different array of emotions as they tasted items they were probably unfamiliar with at home showing socio-emotional development. Cognitive development was seen through cause and effect by explaining we need chickens for eggs and cows for milk. The use of taste also allowed the children to become familiar with the different textures of eggs as most probably only eat scrambled eggs if they eat eggs at all.

This activity could've been implemented in the beginning of my observation as the Goldfish classroom consisted of children who were extremely developmentally progressed but

would've been slightly chaotic due to their need for classroom discipline as they had spent a vast amount of time at home due to holidays and breaks.

The implementation of my activity was not perfect and there is much room for changes. Some changes I would've made was choosing a book with more pictures or providing larger photos of the animals for the children to look at and touch while I read aloud. I believe this would've allowed for them to feel an equalness to me as I read and be more engaged. I also would've written out chronological steps of what I wanted to do in the activity to avoid milk spills, distractions and injuries. In regards to the rest of the children present within the room, it would have been best for them to engage in outdoor play while having the small group for my experience plan activity on the inside. While they did enjoy the experience, I felt that they were still curious about what their classmates were doing at the table on the mat thus causing them to be distracted. Overall, I found that I focused heavily on just getting the activity over and done with rather than actually being in the moment as a future educator. I feared making a mistake or not being interesting enough for the children to focus for the short amount of time I had them for. These changes would have allowed for me to further their understanding of the activity in a way that was fun but educational.

Overall, I do find that agriculturally based experiences provide a more open range of options to create activities for the children to enjoy but also learn from. Materials that they can familiarize due to them being in their homes allows for them to gain a better understanding of the activity and we saw this with eggs as upon distribution, the children knew to crack the egg against the table. It is also extremely important to prepare prior to the activity as you will see that intricate and detailed activities remain in their memory longer than brief and spontaneous

activities. Detailed and well thought out activities can be used to build off of each other for future activities not only providing a connection in classroom activities but a connection to the child's development and academic understanding.