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Nature Adventures  
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## Focused Curriculum Plan

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### STEP 1: CHOOSE A DEVELOPMENTALLY AND CULTURALLY APPROPRIATE CURRICULUM TOPIC

1. Will this topic allow for **active, constructive learner participation and involvement**? Explain.

The theme of my curriculum for pre-k is Nature adventures. The theme explores how learning occurs through play within the context of nature.

2. Will this topic foster **social interaction**? Explain.

The preceding theme is personally interesting to me because it is intentionally designed for use in different educational environments, taking into consideration different educational, cultural, and philosophical approaches to teaching and learning.

3. Will this topic be **meaningful** to your learners? How does it connect to ***their*** real world? Explain.

It is curated without any particular ideological constraints to allow for its adaptation in line with the children's diverse perspectives, preferences, and methodologies.

4. Does the topic allow learners to **connect to prior knowledge**? Explain.

The activities under this theme serve as windows that increase children's awareness of the diversity found in nature. The activities are also sliding doors that allow children to connect with and learn from the natural environment and their exploration of it.

5. Will the topic allow learners to **develop problem-solving strategies** and **be creative**? Explain.

This thematic curriculum is bound to make students curious to discover because it takes advantage of the fact that they are natural explorers who utilize all their senses to analyze their environment.

6. Will the topic allow learners to **engage in self-regulation** and **be reflective**? Explain.

Since the observable opportunities for exploration and investigation are bound to the environment and the physical universe, I presume that the energy with which I expect the children to embrace the thematic activities is bound to foster plenty of opportunities for learning.

7. Will the topic help learners to **build on/change their current understanding**? Explain.

The outcome of some activities under the topic is for the students to improve their effectiveness as communicators. The children would develop their identification and response capabilities through rhyming. They would recognize the initial sounds of their names. They would also further develop their ability to take turns with minimum conflicts.

8. Does the topic allow learners **to gain deeper knowledge of general principals and explanations** of the world? Explain.

The creative arts activities herein are critical to children's growth and development. They provide a context for learning through which the children organize and make sense of their social worlds as they engage actively with people, objects, and representations.

9. Can children use the knowledge gained through this topic in **meaningful real world situations**? Explain.

This curriculum exercise exposes the children to diverse cultural information and offers them opportunities to expand their interests and knowledge about their communities. The children would learn to embrace our diverse cultures, build a strong sense of identity, and develop effective communication skills by learning proper turn-taking behavior and interacting with their peers.

10. Does the topic provide opportunities for children to **practice and gain mastery**? Explain.

The curriculum learning experiences on nature and patterns demonstrate how the learners' understanding of patterns and structures in the natural environment is critical to fostering numeric thinking. Accordingly, the learners are capable of identifying a familiar pattern from the materials that vary in both color and number.

11. Can you present this topic in meaningful ways for diverse children with **developmental and individual differences**? Explain.

This curriculum topic exemplifies the meaning-making concept of quality as it encourages subjectivity in the children. The literature and activities therein foster patterned thinking through an objective and subjective understanding of the natural environment.

12. Will this topic be **interesting and motivating to the learners**? Does it allow for **autonomy/choice**? Explain.

The activities under the curriculum topic allows the young children's creativity to flourish into a maturing form of self-expression without the fear of judgement. For young children, particularly, the preceding can be accomplished through intentionally-crafted play-based learning.

## **STEP 2: LEARN THE CONTENT:**

1. Brainstorm with your colleagues. What information do you (the teachers) already know about this topic? List everything you can think of:

- a) Engagement: Topic actively and confidently engages in play as a means of exploration and learning. Students interact with a variety of materials through play.
- b) Physical Development: Topic involves the use of materials such as pencils, paint brushes, eating utensils and blunt scissors effectively. Students demonstrate eye-hand coordination and dexterity needed to manipulate objects.
- c) Visual Arts: Topic involves experiments with a variety of mediums and methods of using art materials (such as using a big brush to paint broad strokes, combining colors, etc.). Student expresses oneself and represents what he/she knows, thinks, believes and feels through visual arts.

2. Gather information from various sources of research. List at least 3 resources for each of the following:

### **A. Children's literature**

1. *An Egg is Quiet* by Diana Hutts Aston
2. *Nature Spy* by Shelly Rotner & Ken Kreisler
3. *Click, Clack, Moo* by Doreen Cronin

**B. Website Information**

1. <https://pbskids.org/dinosaurtrain/>
2. <http://www.audubonadventures.org/>
3. <https://infohub.nyced.org/working-with-the-doe/early-childhood/early-childhood-educators/supporting-quality-care-and-instruction/instructional-resources>

**C. Materials/Resources**

1. Dramatic center: Cleaning supplies
2. Library & Literacy center: Book shelf with books based on weekly themes
3. Sensory center: Play dough, rocks in assorted sizes, paints and paint brushes or paint pens (nontoxic, acrylic), paint brushes, sealant (optional), old t-shirts, smocks, or aprons

3. What did you **learn** from your research?

The library center should incorporate literature showcasing the health benefits of visual arts therapy, movement-based creative expression, and expressive writing. Other children and nature books also talk about the social and emotional benefits of spending time in nature. We could combine the two literature aspects by engaging in creative activities that encourage self-expression in a natural setting.

4. What **misinformation** did you find in your original ideas?

Firstly, the financial benefits of a creative education should be understood as incorporating all stakeholders. Secondly, creativity needs to be adopted considering the challenge of ensuring sustainability over an infinitely long period. Thirdly, educational practitioners should recognize the intersection of creativity with society to solve the capitalist problem of profits vis-a-vis ethics.

**STEP 3: IDENTIFY KEY CONCEPTS:**

What are the Big Ideas/Overarching Questions to be explored in your topic (one sentence for each idea/question)? The Big Ideas should be connected to deep understandings of the general principles and explanations of the world.

1. How will students' participation in art and language activities in the garden provide opportunities for self-expression?
2. Students will be able to create rock art and reflect on how they think the animals reflect their personalities.
3. Students will be able to contribute to the classroom discussion about shapes and colors by posting their collage to the discussion board.

Identify and list **10** key vocabulary terms connected to this topic:

1. Artform
2. Self-Expression
3. Beautify
4. Wenhua (Culture)
5. Healing
6. Diversity in nature
7. Natural Explorers
8. Wildlife
9. Habitats
10. Play-based learning

#### **STEP 4: CONNECT YOUR TOPIC TO THE CONTENT AREAS.**

##### **WHERE IS THE MATH?**

**1. Choose **2** of the following math content areas, and describe the Big Ideas and Enduring Knowledge that connects your topic to this content area:**

- a. Operations and Algebraic Thinking –.

- b. Geometry
- c. Measurement and Data – The reading and storytelling activities serve as windows that increases children’s awareness of the diversity found in nature. Learners start to organize, describe, arrange, and compare groupings from the pile and the characteristics of objects and materials in their social and natural environments.
- d. Overview – The reading and storytelling activities are also sliding doors that allow children to connect with and learn from the natural environment and their exploration of it.
- e. Mathematical Practices
- f. Counting and Cardinality

**2. Choose 3 and List developmentally appropriate ways children can learn math in each of the following Learning Centers:**

- a. DRAMATIC PLAY (Housekeeping, Dress-up, Role Play)
- b. TABLE ACTIVITIES (Manipulatives, Puzzles) – Students will be Invited on a short excursion around the local environment to identify patterns and collect some uniquely shaped objects. Once back inside the classroom, lay out the collected objects, the photographs taken, and the drawings made by each student. We would openly discuss the identity of each shape or pattern from the documentation and then working together to categorize the identified materials by arranging the objects according to the similarity of groups.
- c. VISUAL ARTS (Drawing, Painting, Sculpting, Writing)
- d. MUSIC/MOVEMENT
- e. SAND AND WATER PLAY

- f. BLOCK BUILDING – Students will work together in the block center to develop and express their understanding of the construction of wildlife habitats in the city. This experience is informed by the fact that the children would get a fun opportunity contribute to the creation of their knowledge about the concrete habitats of wildlife in the city. Moreover, this play-based activity would be used to access the children’s perspective and experiences by observing the children as they interact with each other during their turns with the Lego blocks.
- g. SCIENCE/DISCOVERY – Students will explore the importance of parks to wildlife and people. With the help of the teachers, students will collect information and create charts, markings, and other materials about local or regional parks and nature centers. We would set aside class time for students to present their markings to their classmates before planning a visit to some of the parks students have studied. As an extension, we could invite a park ranger or naturalist to come to the class to discuss his/her job.
- h. LIBRARY/LITERACY
- i. WOODWORKING/CARPENTRY
- j. COMPUTERS/TECHNOLOGY

### **WHERE IS THE SCIENCE?**

**1. Choose 2 of the following science skills/content areas, and describe the Big Ideas and Enduring Knowledge that connects your topic to this skill/content area:**

- a. Scientific Thinking – I presume that the energy with which I expect the children to embrace this activity is bound to foster plenty of opportunities for learning. Encouraging the subjectivity of numeric interpretation eschews the constraints of quality standards that do not recognize the contradictions and conflicts in the learners’ social realms.
- b. Earth and Space – This curriculum experience takes advantage of the fact that children are natural explorers who utilize all their senses to analyze their environment. Since the observable opportunities for exploration and investigation are bound to the environment and the physical universe.

- c. Physical Properties
- d. Living Things

**2. Choose 3 and List developmentally appropriate ways children can learn science in each of the following Learning Centers:**

- a. DRAMATIC PLAY (Housekeeping, Dress-up, Role Play) – This music and movement activity is inspired by the read aloud of Click, Clack, Moo. Students will be encouraged to sing and pretend play in the classroom. For the activity, I would create an accompanying prop called “Cindy the cow,” a small toy figurine for the children to hold when it’s their turn to speak. After reading the book, I will familiarize the children with the figurine of Cindy the cow. We will then discuss associated questions. “Do you think names have sounds? What sound does your name make?” As we pass Cindy the cow around the class we would all rhyme the call and response song “the cow goes moo! The child goes waa!” with every turn. We would structure the model of response in the activity as follows, Cindy the cow wants to know my name, “my name is Sum Yi.” “Cindy is asking what sound my name makes,” then proceed to make that sound. We would then pass Cindy the cow around the class while rhyming the activity song with everyone’s turn.
- b. TABLE ACTIVITIES (Manipulatives, Puzzles)
- c. VISUAL ARTS (Drawing, Painting, Sculpting, Writing)
- d. MUSIC/MOVEMENT
- e. SAND AND WATER PLAY
- f. BLOCK BUILDING
- g. SCIENCE/DISCOVERY – Students will observe seasonal changes as they track changing conditions. With the help of the teacher, students will track changing high and low temperatures and sunrise and sunset times over a period of weeks and correlate them with observable changes in plants and animals. We will make it a class project to figure out how to create a chart(s) to record this data for several weeks. All data should be recorded at the same interval such as once a



week so that any correlations are clear. We will make a schedule for students to be observational managers, responsible for collecting data and adding it to the chart(s).

h. LIBRARY/LITERACY

- i. WOODWORKING/CARPENTRY – Students will get involved in providing a little help for the local habitat. The students will learn about local birds and what they eat. They will then design, build, and place a simple bird feeder in the nearby schoolyard or the local area. This activity is designed to give students an opportunity to engage in the engineering design process, using their observations and creativity to design and then build a bird feeder.

j. COMPUTERS/TECHNOLOGY

### WHERE IS THE SOCIAL STUDIES?

**1. Choose 2 of the following content areas, and describe the Big Ideas and Enduring Knowledge that connects your topic to this content area:**

- a. Individual Development and Cultural Identity – This curriculum is a culturally responsive experience that enables the children to see themselves represented within the classroom setting. I have developed this experience to foster a safe and supportive setting that allows the children to freely engage in activities that give them the confidence to embrace their sense of identity, with particular regard to the diversity of the classroom.
- b. Civic Ideals and Practices – By embracing diversity, this curriculum experience also promotes an anti-bias environment in the classroom. Louise Derman-Sparks (2010, p.1), advances that such a setting is bound to elevate the children’s understanding of “human differences,” bias behavior, and to stand by what is right.
- c. Geography, Humans, and the Environment
- d. Time, Continuity and Change
- e. Economic Systems

**2. Choose 3 and List developmentally appropriate ways children can learn social studies in each of the following Learning Centers:**

- a. DRAMATIC PLAY (Housekeeping, Dress-up, Role Play)
- b. TABLE ACTIVITIES (Manipulatives, Puzzles)
- c. VISUAL ARTS (Drawing, Painting, Sculpting, Writing) – This activity is three-fold depending on the children's preferences in creative application. We would go outside on a mini-excursion in the school's surrounding environment, for example, a garden, forest, or a field. Depending on preference, some children will collect items in nature and create an art piece with the items they have collected, which will be displayed in the classroom. Others will take photographs of things they find beautiful, for instance animals, plants, scenery, or rocks. They will then choose about five of their favorite photos and present a showcase in the classroom. Similarly, some children will find something inspiring and make a drawing of it, which will also be displayed in the classroom.
- d. MUSIC/MOVEMENT – The Dinosaur Train feature show on PBS that is suitable for children in pre-Kindergarten. It sparks children's interest in life science and natural history as they explore and inquire about a variety of animals and the natural environment. I chose the *Garden Song* from one of the Dinosaur Train features as a song I would share with students because it aligns well with my subtheme that uses the garden and natural materials to help the children learn how to express kindness and compassion. What I like about the song is how it simplifies very useful information about the process of nurturing plants. In the video clip, Tiny the dinosaur sings about waiting for the garden she planted to grow. The resource teaches children that plants need the sun, water, and time to grow. In the classroom, I would show the video and then help the children memorize the song therein for us to recite while doing the garden activity. In the gardening program activity, under this subtheme, we would recite the song throughout the program as we plant and nurture our plants to maturity.
- e. SAND AND WATER PLAY – In this activity, we would start a group project to decorate the schoolyard garden with messages for each other and the other living things that make up the garden. To do this, the students will paint rocks and leave them in the garden for all to see and enjoy. Students will paint the rocks using nontoxic acrylic craft paint and various means of mark-making such as traditional brushes, sponges, crumpled paper, cotton swabs, leaves, ferns, among others. When the rocks are ready and dry, we would visit your garden and let the students find special homes for them.

- f. BLOCK BUILDING
- g. SCIENCE/DISCOVERY
- h. LIBRARY/LITERACY
- i. WOODWORKING/CARPENTRY

### **Step 5: Implementing the Curriculum Topic:**

Launch/Introduction (How you begin the curriculum topic):

Describe 1 activity:

1. Exploring our habitats: Children will listen to a beautifully illustrated and informative introduction to the beauty and classification of habitats in the natural environment. The learning prompts in the cycle will be visual, spoken, and written cues. Accordingly, we would organize a few natural materials such as eggs, plants, seeds, sticks, vegetables, and rocks of different shapes and sizes. The teacher would then use her body to perform movements to showcase patterns. For instance, she could motion with her hands and spell out a shape. Then she would invite learners to imitate the patterns with their own bodies. Then ask each learner to come up with a unique body pattern of their own and have the other learners imitate the pattern. This curriculum subtopic exemplifies the meaning-making concept of quality as it encourages subjectivity in the children as they explore their natural habitats.

Meeting Time (How you sustain and expand the topic):

Describe 1 activity:

1. Bird drawings & aiding local habitats: Students will make drawings to communicate their recognition and understanding of the bird population in the local habitat. We will then analyze the drawings to discuss the students' ideas about the birds. As an extension, we can have the students conduct research to try to figure out which populations of certain birds or species of birds in certain areas are increasing or decreasing. Students will then get involved in providing a little help for the local habitat. The students will learn about local birds and what they eat. They will then design, build, and place a simple bird feeder in the nearby schoolyard or the local area. This activity is designed to give students an opportunity to engage in the engineering design process, using their observations and creativity to design and then build a bird feeder.

Creative Arts Activities (Visual Arts, Music, Dance, Drama):

Describe 1 activity:

1. Fancy egg shakers: In this music activity I decided to create simple DIY egg shakers from old Easter eggs to help my students explore rhythm and sound. I think egg shakers are a great exploratory learning tool to have in any preschool or home, and visually interesting shaker eggs are even better! This music activity connects well to this subtheme of my curriculum. The activity is inspired by Diana Hutts Aston's book, *An Egg Is Quiet*, which is beautifully illustrated and informative introduction to the beauty and classification of eggs in the natural environment. The book includes information about the variety of eggs found in nature and illustrates the patterns associated with their different shells. Working off of the book's premise, we would use old Easter Eggs to craft beautifully illustrated musical shakers that we can then use to incorporate sound and rhythm to our songs in the classroom.

Read Aloud: Find 2 picture books: 1 fiction and 1 non-fiction):

Describe a literacy extension activity for each book:

1. Storytelling: The learning prompts in this activity will be visual, spoken, and written cues. Inspired by the read aloud of *An Egg is Quiet*, students will be introduced to the beauty and classification of patterns found in natural materials such as eggs, plants, seeds, sticks, vegetables, and rocks of different shapes and sizes. We would use our bodies to perform movements to showcase the patterns evident in the natural materials. For instance, I could motion with my hands and spell out a shape. Then I would invite learners to imitate the patterns with their own bodies. I could also ask each learner to come up with a unique body pattern of their own and have the other learners imitate it.
2. Song & Socio-dramatic play: This music and movement activity is inspired by the read aloud of *Click, Clack, Moo*. Students will be encouraged to sing and pretend play in the classroom. For the activity, I would create an accompanying prop called "Cindy the cow," a small toy figurine for the children to hold when it's their turn to speak. After reading the book, I will familiarize the children with the figurine of Cindy the cow. We will then discuss associated questions. "Do you think names have sounds? What sound does your name make?" As we pass Cindy the cow around the class we would all rhyme the call and response song "the cow goes moo! The child goes waa!" with every turn. We would structure the model of response in the activity as follows, Cindy the cow wants to know my name, "my name is Sum Yi." "Cindy is asking what sound my name makes," then proceed to make that sound. We would then pass Cindy the cow around the class while rhyming the activity song with everyone's turn.

Shared Reading (Songs and/or Poems) Describe 1 activity using either a poem or songs:

(Include a separate document of the poems or song used)

1. The Garden Song: The Dinosaur Train feature show on PBS that is suitable for children in pre-Kindergarten. It sparks children's interest in life science and natural history as they explore and inquire about a variety of animals and the natural environment. I chose the *Garden Song* from one of the Dinosaur Train features as a song I would share with

students because it aligns well with my subtheme that uses the garden and natural materials to help the children learn how to express kindness and compassion. What I like about the song is how it simplifies very useful information about the process of nurturing plants. In the video clip, Tiny the dinosaur sings about waiting for the garden she planted to grow. The resource teaches children that plants need the sun, water, and time to grow. In the classroom, I would show the video and then help the children memorize the song therein for us to recite while doing the garden activity. In the gardening program activity, under this subtheme, we would recite the song throughout the program as we plant and nature our plants to maturity.

## Math Activity Plan

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### Curriculum Topic: Nature Adventures

| OVERVIEW/FRAMING   |  |
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| <b>TOPIC</b><br><i>Explain how the topic of this activity is developmentally and culturally appropriate for the group of learners for whom you are designing it.</i> | <p>The activity is developmentally and culturally appropriate for a diverse group of pre-k learners. Developmentally appropriate practice refers to techniques that are used to enhance each child's growth in a uniquely favorable manner, which promotes the child's strengths and sense of engagement. For young children, particularly, the preceding can be accomplished through intentionally-crafted play-based learning. In that sense, this math activity offers opportunities for students to develop their numeric thinking. Engaging in activities that allow counting and pattern-recognition in garden spaces can provide a boost to mental and emotional health while connecting children to the natural environment. This activity is also culturally responsive since it serves as a window that increases children's awareness of the diversity found in nature. Learners start to organize, describe, arrange, and compare groupings from the pile and the characteristics of objects and materials in their social and natural environments. The activity is also a sliding door that allows children to connect with and learn from the natural environment and their exploration of it. Learners demonstrate subjectivity and uncertainty in an activity's participatory process of interpreting and judging the shapes and patterns of natural materials.</p> |

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| <b>BIG IDEAS/OVERARCHING QUESTIONS</b><br><i>What kinds of questions will be explored and/or what new connections and ideas will be engaged through this activity?</i> | <p>The learners will practice counting while also identifying shapes and patterns found in nature and natural materials.</p> <p>The learners will begin to use symbols in exploration and play to represent and make meaning.</p> <p>The learners will demonstrate subjectivity and uncertainty in the project's participatory process of interpreting and judging the numbers, shapes, and patterns of the natural materials.</p>  |             |                |                |
| <b>CONTENT FOCUS:</b><br><i>Identify which content area(s) will be addressed in this activity</i>  | Visual Arts   | Music       | Movement/Dance | Drama          |
|  | Emergent Literacy   | Mathematics | Science        | Social Studies |
| <b>LANGUAGE AND CONTENT OBJECTIVES</b>   | <p>The activity also offers opportunities for a range of learning styles and needs. The observable opportunities for exploration and investigation in this activity are bound to the environment and the physical universe. Accordingly, the children should embrace this activity easily as the experience offers plenty of opportunities for learning.</p> <p>The activity's symbolic play will also foster the children's abilities to use symbols in mean-making. Furthermore, to foster symbolism through the associative play between my group of preschoolers, they would be actively involved in coming up with plans, assign roles, and act out sequenced stages of the activity. In that way, the children learn how to symbolically plan their future play activities with their counterparts.</p> |             |                |                |

| KNOWING THE LEARNERS   |   |
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| <b>AGE RANGE:</b>  |   |
| <b>CURRENT DEVELOPMENT:</b><br><i>What do you know about the current growth of learners in this age range for the content focus?</i> | <p>This activity plan involves the instructor and a small group of learners between the ages of 3 and 5.</p> <p>The zone of proximal development for learners in this age range of about 4 years of age is typically a combination of solitary and communal play that is manifested through a vague object or pattern recognition. More importantly, this ZPD is situated in the domain of cognitive development. At this stage of their development, the children's actions seem to be happening deliberately, considering the repetitive process of their play, thus affirming Piaget's idea of the sensorimotor period of development.</p> |

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|  | This math activity fosters the preceding cognitive development of the children by developing their numerical understanding and pattern recognition. The intention of the learning experience is to foster meaningful numeric thinking in the children.  |
| <i>What misunderstandings might children in this age range have about the topic/content and how do you plan to address this?</i>   | The counting activity is great for teaching children the concept of subitizing: the ability to look at a visual representation of a number (like the dots on a die) and instantly tell how many there are, without counting each individual object. However, while the numbers 1, 2, and 3 can be easy to recognize; most preschoolers will know what those are right away. But for numbers 4, 5, and 6 they might have to stop and count the dots or ask for help, to which the teachers assistance will be necessary.   |
| <b>SOCIO-CULTURAL CONTEXT:</b><br><i>What do you know about this group of children in terms of their cultural backgrounds, learning styles, languages spoken, and learning experiences to date?*</i> | The diversity of my intended group of students in Queens is somewhat stable considering the group is generally homogenous within the Asian community. However even that seemingly homogenous group has nuanced diversification based on Asian sub-communities. Accordingly, this activity is socially and culturally appropriate because it lays out ideas for using painted rocks in your garden to allow young gardeners to express themselves, communicate with each other, and contribute to the garden in a personal way.<br>Furthermore, I have developed this experience because I believe it will aid the children through their cognitive development. The nuances of this experience are cognizant of the diversity within the classroom and as such, I am implored as the educator to recognize the full range of diverse interests among the children. Accordingly, what one child finds interesting and relevant to them and what is of cultural importance within their background is bound to impact my interaction with that child while he/she is under my care during the activity. |

| MATERIALS & LEARNING ENVIRONMENT PREPARATION                |   |  |
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| MATERIALS   | LEARNING ENVIRONMENT  | EVENTS/RESOURCES   |
| <i>What materials will you need to teach this activity?</i> | <i>What modifications will you need to make to the classroom to support this activity? (e.g., centers, bulletin boards, meeting spaces)</i> | <i>What events or resources, including people, might you need to arrange in advance?</i> |

\* Note: You are designing this activity for the three children observed for your Student Profiles assignment.

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| <i>List <b>all books and materials</b>, including any used during the launch/reflection and during set up and cleanup</i>   |   |   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nature and natural materials</li> <li>• Whiteboard</li> <li>• Cardboard</li> </ul> | <p>Table Activity: Students will be Invited on a short excursion around the local environment to identify patterns and collect some uniquely shaped objects. Once back inside the classroom, lay out the collected objects, the photographs taken, and the drawings made by each student. We would openly discuss the identity of each shape or pattern from the documentation and then working together to categorize the identified materials by arranging the objects according to the similarity of groups.</p> | <p>The activity can be done at any time of the day during class so long as there's a conducive opportunity to include out-of-class activities. The learning prompts in the activity will be visual, spoken, and written cues.</p> |



| THE LEARNING EXPERIENCE  |   |
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| <p><b>The launch</b></p> <p><i>How will you engage the children in this learning experience? How will you introduce the concepts and vocabulary of the topic? How will you describe the procedures of the learning activity? What will you say and do?</i></p> | <p>I would launch the activity through a gardening project involving various plant varieties such as shrubs and vegetables.</p> <p>I would subsequently prompt the children with suggestions and questions. “These pieces belong together. They are big and green. These other ones also belong together. They are small and white.” “What about this one? It’s big and green.” “Does it looks like a leaf?” “Does this one resemble a white piece of paper?”</p> <p>Once the learners appear to comprehend the concept of similarity and the relationship between natural materials and familiar shapes, colors, and objects in the natural environment, we can start the activity.</p>  |
| <p><b>The activity</b></p> <p><i>List the step-by-step procedures. What will the children be doing? What will you say or do to facilitate and scaffold their learning? Be specific and detailed in your description.</i></p>                                   | <p>I would organize a few natural materials such as plants, seeds, sticks, vegetables, and rocks of different shapes and sizes. The learners’ knowledge of shapes and patterns can be enhanced in early learning environments via activities and exercises that persuade them to understand patterns and to identify and categorize patterns in their everyday contexts. Similarly, an outdoor excursion provides an ample opportunity to encourage the learners to familiarize with typical shapes and patterns they encounter in their environment.</p> <p>As the teacher, I would use my body to perform movements to showcase patterns. For instance, I could motion with my hands and spell out a shape. Invite the children one-by-one to imitate the patterns with their own bodies. Then ask each learner to come up with a unique body pattern of their own and have the other learners imitate the pattern. This activity exemplifies the meaning-making concept of quality as it encourages subjectivity.</p> <p>Once the children are engaged with the body patterns activity, I would invite them to look at the natural materials (plants, vegetables, rocks, seeds, etc.) I brought to the learning exercise. Ask the children what they notice about the natural materials and discuss their interpretations. As the learners use descriptive terms during the discussion, note them down on a large board and arrange the relevant materials according to the terminologies. In this way, I am helping the children to develop their categorization skills. It might also be useful to invite the children to draw a symbol next to the terminologies to represent the trait they describe. We could also create unique patterns using different materials and textures.</p> <p>If the learners are still engaged and enthused, I would invite them to go out for a little excursion around the local environment and have them identify patterns and collect some uniquely shaped</p> |

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|   | <p>objects. These patterns might be present in the pavements, garden plants, and fences, among other areas. We would document the patterns identified by the learners using photographs or videos. Similarly, the children would identify different shapes in the natural environment outside the class. We would document the most stand-out shapes using photographs and videos. It might also be useful to have the children draw the unique shapes they identify on another large and communal board.</p> <p>Once back inside the classroom, we would lay out the collected objects, the photographs taken, and the drawings made by each student. Openly discuss the identity of each shape or pattern from the documentation. Work with the learners to categorize the identified materials by arranging the objects according to the similarity of groups.</p> |
| <p><b>Reflection</b><br/> <i>As the activity wraps up, what opportunities will you offer the children to respond to and reflect on this activity?</i></p> | <p>For the sake of establishing rigorous subjectivity, I would ask the learners open-ended questions such as, “What should we do if an object belongs to more than one category?” or “What might be the reasons for one category having more objects than another?”</p> <p>In this way, the learning exercise is made visible and subjected to reflection, dialogue, and argumentation. The preceding provides a democratic evaluation process of the children’s subjective interpretation of the patterns and shapes evident in the natural materials.</p>   |
| <p><b>Possible Extensions</b><br/> <i>What could you do on another day to build on this activity?</i></p>   | <p>To connect a nature adventures pre-k curriculum theme to math, we could add a counting game called bugs in a jar. The game is perfect for a table activity in the learning center. The counting game is a simple printable that should help students practice using a die while counting insects for the bug jar.</p> <p>First, print and laminate the jar. Then print the bugs and laminate them, if possible, and cut them apart. Attached a small piece of sticky tack or stick glue to each one. Let the children roll the die, count the dots, and put that many bugs in his jar. They should keep rolling the die and adding to the jar.</p>   |

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| <p><b>Multimodal Engagement</b><br/> <i>Identify and explain the ways in which this activity offers opportunities to use at least three different learning modalities (kinesthetic, tactile, linguistic, visual/spatial, auditory, musical)</i></p> | <p>Linguistic &amp; Auditory: Learners respond verbally and non-verbally to the things they see, hear, touch, feel, and taste.<br/> Tactile: Learners start to organize, describe, arrange, and compare groupings from the pile and the characteristics of objects and materials in their social and natural environments.<br/> Visual/Spatial: Arrange the materials according to shape, pattern, or other characteristics they identify.</p>  |
| <p><b>Differentiation</b><br/> <i>How will you modify this activity for learners with different learning styles and/or special needs (SLLs, physically active, etc.)?</i></p>   | <p>This activity can be easily modified for learners with different styles and needs. It can be curated as a three-fold process depending on the children's preferences in creative application.<br/> Those who can, will go outside on a mini-excursion in the school's surrounding environment to record patterns and collect natural materials for the subsequent learning center activity.<br/> Depending on their preferences, some children will collect items which will be displayed in the classroom.<br/> Others will take photographs of patterns they notice during the excursion. They will then choose about five of their favorite photos and present a showcase in the classroom.<br/> Similarly, some children will make drawings of patterns they notice, which will also be displayed in the classroom.<br/> Those who cannot go on excursion due to special needs, will engage in the counting game activity and read aloud related to patterns found in nature before reconvening with the rest of the children to discuss the collected and documented materials and patterns during the excursion.</p> |

| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>GROWTH AND LEARNING</b><br/> <i>How will this learning experience support the children's growth and learning in the following domains? Use your knowledge of child development.</i></p> |   |
|---|---|
| <p><b>Cognitive/thinking</b></p>  | <p>The children's free use of tools to record and draw supports their creative and intellectual development at both the preoperational and concrete preoperational stage.</p> |

|                          |  |
|--------------------------|--|
| <b>Physical</b>          | The children's use of tools, such as recording equipment in addition to drawing and painting apparatus fosters their fine motor skills.                                      |
| <b>Social/emotional</b>  | Sharing their creations and discussion their conclusion with peers supports the children's socio-emotional development as they learn to appreciate each other's differences. |
| <b>Language/literacy</b> | Having a communal activity area for the children to play en-masse supports their pragmatic capacity to communicate verbally and non-verbally in social situations.           |
|                          | List 10-15 target vocabulary words:<br>Bumpy, spot, curvy, corner, edge, line, small, big, stripe, rough, smooth, long, short, circle, side                                  |
| <b>Content Area(s)</b>   | Emergent Literacy, Mathematics   |

| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>STANDARDS/GOALS</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>What Pre-K Common Core Learning Standards are addressed in this activity?</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Use the PKFCC to respond.</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Be specific—choose those standards that are <b>actually targeted</b> by this learning activity (e.g., can development in regard to the standard be measured by the evidence gathered (authentic assessment) during this learning activity?)</i></p> |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Domain 1:<br/>Approaches to Learning</b>   | Engagement: 1. Actively and confidently engages in play as a means of exploration and learning.<br>a) Interacts with a variety of materials through play   |
| <b>Domain 2:<br/>Physical Development and Health</b>  | Physical Development: 5. Demonstrates eye-hand coordination and dexterity needed to manipulate objects.<br>c) Uses materials such as pencils, paint brushes, eating utensils and blunt scissors effectively. |

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Domain 3:<br/>Social and Emotional<br/>Development</b>     | Self-Concept and Self Awareness: 1. Recognizes himself/herself as a unique individual having his/her own abilities, characteristics, feelings, and interests.<br>c) Demonstrates knowledge of his/her own uniqueness (talent, interests, preferences, gender, culture, etc.). |
| <b>Domain 4: Communication,<br/>Language, and Literacy</b>    | Representing: 4. Demonstrates his/her ability to express ideas using a variety of methods.<br>d) Reviews and reflects on his/her own representations  |
| <b>Domain 5:<br/>Cognition and Knowledge<br/>of the World</b> | Visual Arts: 1. Expresses oneself and represents what he/she knows, thinks, believes and feels through visual arts.<br>a) Experiments with a variety of mediums and methods of using art materials (such as using counting devices and drawing materials).                    |

| AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENT  |   |
|---|---|
| <p><i>What will you do to gather evidence to assess each child's developmental progress?</i></p> <p><i>How will you determine whether or not individual children are getting the Big Ideas and/or exploring the Overarching Questions?</i></p> <p><i>Evidence may include responses recorded during a group discussion, a visual arts project, a performance, etc.</i></p> <p><i>Your assessment activity MUST be connected to the Big Ideas and Overarching Questions.</i></p> | <p>Students would be assessed through two different measures:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Performance Based: Prior to collecting and recording the patterns in nature, I will work together with the students to create a list of guidelines for the activity to ensure that it is a positive experience for everyone. If some children have trouble understanding the guidelines, each child will be guided through individual conversation to support unique self-expression. (It is critical that all students are on-boarded at this juncture). During the activity, I will observe how the children are engaging with the environment to notice evident patterns. I will take notes about how the patterns they notice are given meaning. Some children may choose to use symbolism.</li> <li>2. Reflective Assessment: The preceding math activity demonstrates how the learners' understanding of patterns and structures is critical to fostering numeric thinking. Accordingly, the learners should be capable of identifying a familiar pattern from the materials that vary in both color and number. Some will identify the pattern for a couple of repetitions, and create an entirely new pattern using the colored materials. Nonetheless, the process of identifying patterns should be somewhat easy compared to that of creating new ones. It is expected that not all learners will be able to create patterns that vary only in color. The learners should also demonstrate some development in their spatial and geometric thinking through the learning experience. Ideally, all learners will be capable of describing familiar shapes such as circles and squares. The learners will also be capable of easily recognizing different examples of the shapes they have identified during the excursion. Furthermore, using the natural materials I brought into the classroom before the activity and those collected from the excursion, all the learners should capably identify the shapes pointed out by their peers and I, while also recognizing other examples of the same shape.</li> </ol> <p>In connection to the Big Ideas and Overarching Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learners utilize pedagogical forms of documentation such as photographs, drawings, and oral descriptions to record what they see and interact with.</li> <li>• Learners use the documentation of the materials to identity and characterize the patterns and shapes they noticed through the learning exercise.</li> </ul> |

# Social Studies Activity Plan

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## Curriculum Topic: Nature Adventures

| OVERVIEW/FRAMING  |   |
|---|---|
| <p><b>TOPIC</b><br/> <i>Explain how the topic of this activity is developmentally and culturally appropriate for the group of learners for whom you are designing it.</i></p>   | <p>Developmentally appropriate practice refers to techniques that are used to enhance each child's growth in a uniquely favorable manner, which promotes the child's strengths and sense of engagement. For young children, particularly, the preceding can be accomplished through intentionally-crafted play-based learning. In that sense, this garden activity offers opportunities for students to express their feelings, thoughts, and ideas. Engaging in activities that allow self-expression in garden spaces can provide a boost to mental and emotional health while connecting children to the garden and to each other.</p> <p>This activity is also culturally responsive since it serves as a window that increases children's awareness of the diversity found in nature. Learners start to organize, describe, arrange, and compare groupings from the pile and the characteristics of objects and materials in their social and natural environments.</p> <p>The activity is also a sliding door that allows children to connect with and learn from the natural environment and their exploration of it. Learners demonstrate subjectivity and uncertainty in an activity's participatory process of interpreting and judging the shapes and patterns of natural materials.</p> |
| <p><b>BIG IDEAS/OVERARCHING QUESTIONS</b><br/> <i>What kinds of questions will be explored and/or what new connections and ideas will be engaged through this activity?</i></p> | <p>How will students' participation in art and language activities in the garden provide opportunities for self-expression?</p> <p>Students will be able to create rock art and reflect on how they think the animals reflect their personalities.</p> <p>Students will be able to contribute to the classroom discussion about shapes and colors by posting their collage to the discussion board.</p>   |

|   |   |             |                |                |
|---|---|-------------|----------------|----------------|
| <b>CONTENT FOCUS:</b><br><i>Identify which content area(s) will be addressed in this activity</i> | Visual Arts   | Music       | Movement/Dance | Drama          |
|   | Emergent Literacy   | Mathematics | Science        | Social Studies |
| <b>LANGUAGE AND CONTENT OBJECTIVES</b>  | <p>The activity also offers opportunities for a range of learning styles and needs. The observable opportunities for exploration and investigation in this activity are bound to the environment and the physical universe. Accordingly, the children should embrace this activity easily as the experience offers plenty of opportunities for learning. The activity's symbolic play will also foster the children's abilities to use symbols in mean-making.</p> <p>Furthermore, to foster symbolism through the associative play between my group of preschoolers, they would be actively involved in coming up with plans, assign roles, and act out sequenced stages of the activity. In that way, the children learn how to symbolically plan their future play activities with their counterparts.</p> |             |                |                |

| KNOWING THE LEARNERS   |  |
|--|--|
| <b>AGE RANGE:</b>  | Pre-K  |
| <b>CURRENT DEVELOPMENT:</b><br><i>What do you know about the current growth of learners in this age range for the content focus?</i> | <p>The zone of proximal development for learners in this age range is typically a combination of solitary and communal play that is manifested through vague object or pattern recognition. More importantly, this ZPD is situated in the domain of cognitive development. At this stage of their development, the children's actions seem to be happening deliberately, considering the repetitive process of their play, thus affirming Piaget's idea of sensorimotor period of development.</p> <p>This mark-making garden activity fosters the preceding cognitive development of the children by developing their sense of self-concept. Through self-expression, they are learning what makes them unique and how to value and connect to others through their similarities and differences.</p> |
| <i>What misunderstandings might children in this age range have about the topic/content and how do you plan to address this?</i>     | <p>Young children may assume that their classmates have the same likes, dislikes, and personality characteristics. Therefore, they can have free reign in their rock art representations. To address such a challenge, we would work together to create a list of guidelines for the activity to ensure that it is a positive experience for all.</p>  |
| <b>SOCIO-CULTURAL CONTEXT:</b>   | <p>The diversity of my intended group of students in Queens is somewhat stable considering the group is generally homogenous within the Asian community. However</p>   |



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| <p><i>What do you know about this group of children in terms of their cultural backgrounds, learning styles, languages spoken, and learning experiences to date?*</i></p> | <p>even that seemingly homogenous group has nuanced diversification based on Asian sub-communities.</p> <p>Accordingly, this activity is social-culturally appropriate because it lays out ideas for using painted rocks in your garden to allow young gardeners to express themselves, to communicate with each other, and to contribute to the garden in a personal way.</p> <p>Furthermore, I have developed this experience because I believe it will aid the children through their cognitive development. The nuances of this experience is cognizant of the diversity within the classroom and as such, I am implored as the educator to recognize the full range diverse interests among the children. Accordingly, what one child finds interesting and relevant to them and what is of cultural importance within their background is bound to impact my interaction with that child while he/she is under my care during the excursion.</p> |
|---|--|

| MATERIALS & LEARNING ENVIRONMENT PREPARATION  |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| MATERIALS   | LEARNING ENVIRONMENT   | EVENTS/RESOURCES   |
| <p><i>What materials will you need to teach this activity?</i></p> <p>List <b>all books and materials</b>, including any used during the launch/reflection and during set up and cleanup</p>  | <p><i>What modifications will you need to make to the classroom to support this activity? (e.g., centers, bulletin boards, meeting spaces)</i></p>   | <p><i>What events or resources, including people, might you need to arrange in advance?</i></p>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>rocks in assorted sizes</li> <li>paints and paint brushes or paint pens (nontoxic, acrylic)</li> <li>paint brushes</li> <li>sealant (optional)</li> <li>old t-shirts, smocks, or aprons</li> </ul> | <p>Art Center: The art center will have watercolor paints available for the month so that students can experiment and practice. Reference images of self-expressive art will be hung nearby for inspiration.</p> | <p>Library center: Will incorporate literature showcasing the health benefits of visual arts therapy, movement-based creative expression, and expressive writing.</p> <p>Other children and nature books also talk about the social and emotional benefits of spending time in nature.</p> |

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\* Note: You are designing this activity for the three children observed for your Student Profiles assignment.

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|  |  | We would combine the two literature aspects by engaging in creative activities that encourage self-expression in a natural setting. |
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| THE LEARNING EXPERIENCE   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>The launch</b><br><i>How will you engage the children in this learning experience? How will you introduce the concepts and vocabulary of the topic? How will you describe the procedures of the learning activity? What will you say and do?</i> | <p>Read Aloud: <i>The Social Roles of Bees</i> by Sum Yi</p> <p>Discuss: How honey bees can teach us to appreciate diversity and our different roles in society. Honey bees can teach us a lot about our roles, rights, and responsibilities in society. They can teach us how to appreciate our differences and jobs as members of a community.</p> <p>Read Aloud: <i>The Imaginary Garden</i> by Andrew Larson</p> <p>Discuss: As an ideal youth garden setting, the students have the opportunity to help design the garden and select the plants and special features included.</p>  |
| <b>The activity</b><br><i>List the step-by-step procedures. What will the children be doing? What will you say or do to facilitate and scaffold their learning? Be specific and detailed in your description.</i>                                   | <p>Determine guidelines:</p> <p>Before we get started, I tell students that we are going to work together to create a list of guidelines for the activity to ensure that it is a positive experience for all. For instance;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All words and pictures placed on the rocks should be school appropriate and considerate of others.</li> <li>• Remember that everyone's rocks will be different and special to them. No one should say anything mean or hurtful about anyone else's rocks.</li> <li>• When placing your rock in the garden, make sure not to disturb other rocks or nature.</li> </ul> <p>Exploration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gather an assortment of rocks of all sizes, shapes and textures; note smoother rocks will be easier to paint. Clean off any soil or dirt and if water was used, let the rocks dry thoroughly.</li> <li>• Paint the rocks using nontoxic acrylic craft paint or paint pens. Students can use traditional brushes or you can also search out other ways to apply paint, such as sponges, crumpled paper, cotton swabs, leaves, ferns, and pine needles.</li> </ul> |

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|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We would leave the subjects for their paintings wide open to anything the students want to paint. They can make pictures, write encouraging sayings, or simply use colors and patterns to express their feelings.</li> <li>• Allow paint to dry completely. Once dry, you can apply a layer of paint sealant for more weather resistance if desired.</li> <li>• When the rocks are ready, we would visit your garden and let the students find special homes for them. We can give them full range in the garden or, alternatively, we can reserve a special location to place the rocks.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Reflection</b><br><i>As the activity wraps up, what opportunities will you offer the children to respond to and reflect on this activity?</i> | <p>At the end of the activity would take photos of our accomplishments in the garden and discuss how the activity introduced students to the garden and allowed them to feel some ownership over the space. This would be a good way to celebrate the end of the year and leave messages to future gardeners. We could also continue engaging in rock decorating as often as the children would like to, providing them with a way to express their feelings and emotions.</p>  |
| <b>Possible Extensions</b><br><i>What could you do on another day to build on this activity?</i>   | <p>In addition to the student-painted rocks, we can also provide a set of pre-painted garden rocks that feature words or letters and allow them to leave temporary messages to others. We would want to remind each other of the guidelines we developed for their rocks to make sure it continues to be a positive and encouraging activity for all.</p>   |

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| <p><b>Multimodal Engagement</b><br/> <i>Identify and explain the ways in which this activity offers opportunities to use at least three different learning modalities (kinesthetic, tactile, linguistic, visual/spatial, auditory, musical)</i></p> | <p>The read aloud to launch the activity and the subsequent discussion offers opportunities for the children to use Linguistic Intelligence, Interpersonal, and Naturalist learning modalities.<br/> The collaborative establishment of guidelines for the activity offers opportunities for the children to use Intrapersonal and Interpersonal learning modalities.<br/> The explorative activity itself offers opportunities for the children to use Visual/Spatial intelligence, Logical thinking, Kinesthetic, and Interpersonal learning modalities.</p>  |
| <p><b>Differentiation</b><br/> <i>How will you modify this activity for learners with different learning styles and/or special needs (SLLs, physically active, etc.)?</i></p>   | <p>This activity can be easily modified for learners with different styles and needs. It can be curated as a three-fold process depending on the children's preferences in creative application. We would go outside on a mini-excursion in the school's surrounding environment, for example, a garden, forest, or a field.<br/> Depending on preference, some children will collect items in nature and create an art piece with the items they have collected, which will be displayed in the classroom. Others will take photographs of things they find beautiful, for instance animals, plants, scenery, or rocks. They will then choose about five of their favorite photos and present a showcase in the classroom. Similarly, some children will find something inspiring and make a drawing of it, which will also be displayed in the classroom.</p> |

| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>GROWTH AND LEARNING</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>How will this learning experience support the children's growth and learning in the following domains? Use your knowledge of child development.</i></p> |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Cognitive/thinking</b>   | The children's free use of tools to paint and draw supports their creative and intellectual development at both the preoperational and concrete preoperational stage.   |
| <b>Physical</b>   | The children's use of tools, such as natural and construction materials, and drawing and painting apparatus fosters their fine motor skills.                            |
| <b>Social/emotional</b>   | Sharing their creations with their peers supports the children's socio-emotional development as they learn to appreciate each other's differences.                      |
| <b>Language/literacy</b>  | Having a communal creative arts area for the children to play en-masse supports their pragmatic capacity to communicate verbally and non-verbally in social situations. |
|   | -----<br>List 10-15 target vocabulary words: Artform, Self-Expression, Beautify, Wenhua (Culture), Healing  |
| <b>Content Area(s)</b>  | Visual Arts, Emergent Literacy, Movement/Dance, Drama, Social Studies   |

| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>STANDARDS/GOALS</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>What Pre-K Common Core Learning Standards are addressed in this activity?</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Use the PKFCC to respond.</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Be specific—choose those standards that are <b>actually targeted</b> by this learning activity (e.g., can development in regard to the standard be measured by the evidence gathered (authentic assessment) during this learning activity?)</i></p> |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Domain 1:<br/>Approaches to Learning</b>   | Engagement: 1. Actively and confidently engages in play as a means of exploration and learning.<br>a) Interacts with a variety of materials through play.  |
| <b>Domain 2:<br/>Physical Development and Health</b>  | Physical Development: 5. Demonstrates eye-hand coordination and dexterity needed to manipulate objects.<br>c) Uses materials such as pencils, paint brushes, eating utensils and blunt scissors effectively.   |
| <b>Domain 3:<br/>Social and Emotional Development</b>   | Self-Concept and Self Awareness: 1. Recognizes himself/herself as a unique individual having his/her own abilities, characteristics, feelings, and interests.<br>c) Demonstrates knowledge of his/her own uniqueness (talent, interests, preferences, gender, culture, etc.).  |
| <b>Domain 4: Communication, Language, and Literacy</b>  | Representing: 4. Demonstrates his/her ability to express ideas using a variety of methods.<br>d) Reviews and reflects on his/her own representations.  |
| <b>Domain 5:<br/>Cognition and Knowledge of the World</b>   | Visual Arts: 1. Expresses oneself and represents what he/she knows, thinks, believes and feels through visual arts.<br>a) Experiments with a variety of mediums and methods of using art materials (such as using a big brush to paint broad strokes, combining colors, etc.). |

| AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENT  |   |
|---|---|
| <p><i>What will you do to gather evidence to assess each child's developmental progress?</i></p> <p><i>How will you determine whether or not individual children are getting the Big Ideas and/or exploring the Overarching Questions?</i></p> <p><i>Evidence may include responses recorded during a group discussion, a visual arts project, a performance, etc.</i></p> <p><i>Your assessment activity MUST be connected to the Big Ideas and Overarching Questions.</i></p> | <p>Students would be assessed through two different measures.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Performance Based: Prior to making their rock-art pieces, I will work together with the students to create a list of guidelines for the activity to ensure that it is a positive experience for everyone. If some children have trouble understanding the guidelines, each child will be guided through individual conversation to support unique self-expression. (It is critical that all students are on-boarded at this juncture). During the art making process, I will observe how the children are representing their unique ideas of self-expression. I will take notes about how their marks are being given meaning. Some children may choose to use colors symbolically.</li> <li>2. Reflective Assessment: During the activity, I will ask them to reflect on their choices. At the end of the activity, we would take photos of our accomplishments in the garden and discuss how the activity introduced students to the garden and allowed them to feel some ownership over the space. The children will also be asked to describe their feelings and emotions about their rock decorations. I will see how they feel about their unique quality and if they continue to feel that it represents an aspect of their personality/identity. In our closing activity, I will observe and support positive responses to each other's rock decorations and that they are valuing the differences that make up our classroom community.</li> </ol> <p>Students will be able to contribute to the classroom discussion about the shapes and colors of the rock decorations while their photos are displayed on the discussion board. Once the photos are removed from the classroom display, the individual photos will go in each child's portfolio.</p> |

# Science Activity Plan

## Curriculum Topic: Nature Adventures

| OVERVIEW/FRAMING   |   |                      |                           |                         |
|--|---|----------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>TOPIC</b><br><i>Explain how the topic of this activity is developmentally and culturally appropriate for the group of learners for whom you are designing it.</i>   | <b>Eating Like a Bird</b><br><p>The activity is developmentally and culturally appropriate for a diverse group of pre-k learners. Developmentally appropriate practice refers to techniques that are used to enhance each child's growth in a uniquely favorable manner, which promotes the child's strengths and sense of engagement. For young children, particularly, the preceding can be accomplished through intentionally-crafted play-based learning. In that sense, this nature activity grounded in science offers opportunities for students to improve their scientific skills through observation and classification. Engaging in activities that allow observation and classification in garden spaces can provide a boost to mental and emotional health while connecting children to the natural environment.</p> <p>This activity is also culturally responsive since it serves as a window that increases children's awareness of the diversity found in nature. Learners start to organize, describe, arrange, and compare groupings from the pile and the characteristics of objects and materials in their social and natural environments.</p> <p>The activity is also a sliding door that allows children to connect with and learn from the natural environment and their exploration of it. Learners demonstrate subjectivity and uncertainty in an activity's participatory process of interpreting and judging the shapes and patterns of natural materials.</p> |                      |                           |                         |
| <b>BIG IDEAS/OVERARCHING QUESTIONS</b><br><i>What kinds of questions will be explored and/or what new connections and ideas will be engaged through this activity?</i> | <p>This activity asks the overarching question "Which foods are preferred by which birds?"</p> <p>The objective of the activity is for students to use the scientific method to design and carry out experiments to explore the food preferences of birds that visit the schoolyard or other local areas.</p>   |                      |                           |                         |
| <b>CONTENT FOCUS:</b>  | Visual Arts<br>Emergent Literacy  | Music<br>Mathematics | Movement/Dance<br>Science | Drama<br>Social Studies |



|  |   |
|--|---|
| <i>Identify which content area(s) will be addressed in this activity</i> |   |
| <b>LANGUAGE AND CONTENT OBJECTIVES</b>                                   | <p>The activity also offers opportunities for a range of learning styles and needs. The observable opportunities for exploration and investigation in this activity are bound to the environment and the physical universe. Accordingly, the children should embrace this activity easily as the experience offers plenty of opportunities for learning. The activity's symbolic play will also foster the children's abilities to use symbols in mean-making.</p> <p>Furthermore, to foster symbolism through the associative play between my group of preschoolers, they would be actively involved in coming up with plans, assign roles, and act out sequenced stages of the activity. In that way, the children learn how to symbolically plan their future play activities with their counterparts.</p> |

| <b>KNOWING THE LEARNERS</b>  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>AGE RANGE:</b>  | Pre-K  |
| <b>CURRENT DEVELOPMENT:</b><br><i>What do you know about the current growth of learners in this age range for the content focus?</i> | <p>This activity plan involves the instructor and a small group of learners between the ages of 3 and 5.</p> <p>The zone of proximal development for learners in this age range is typically a combination of solitary and communal play that is manifested through vague object or pattern recognition. More importantly, this ZPD is situated in the domain of cognitive development. At this stage of their development, the children's actions seem to be happening deliberately, considering the repetitive process of their play, thus affirming Piaget's idea of sensorimotor period of development.</p> <p>This nature activity grounded in science fosters the preceding cognitive development of the children by developing their sense of observation, comparison, classification, measurement, communication, inference, and prediction. The intention of the learning experience is to foster meaningful scientific thinking in the children.</p> |
| <i>What misunderstandings might children in this age range have about the topic/content and how do you plan to address this?</i>     | <p>Young children may become disengaged if they feel the activity might be too challenging for their liking. To address such a challenge, I would work individually with each disengaged child, inviting them to look at the natural material I've brought to the learning exercise. I would then ask the children what they notice about the natural</p>  |

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|  | materials and discuss their interpretations to make them more assured about the activity.   |
| <b>SOCIO-CULTURAL CONTEXT:</b><br><i>What do you know about this group of children in terms of their cultural backgrounds, learning styles, languages spoken, and learning experiences to date?*</i> | <p>The diversity of my intended group of students in Queens is somewhat stable considering the group is generally homogenous within the Asian community. However even that seemingly homogenous group has nuanced diversification based on Asian sub-communities. Accordingly, this activity is social-culturally appropriate because it lays out ideas for using bird feeders in the garden to allow young explorers to test themselves, to communicate with each other, and to contribute to the garden in a personal way.</p> <p>Furthermore, I have developed this experience because I believe it will aid the children through their cognitive development. The nuances of this experience is cognizant of the diversity within the classroom and as such, I am implored as the educator to recognize the full range diverse interests among the children. Accordingly, what one child finds interesting and relevant to them and what is of cultural importance within their background is bound to impact my interaction with that child while he/she is under my care during the activity.</p> |

| MATERIALS & LEARNING ENVIRONMENT PREPARATION  |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| MATERIALS   | LEARNING ENVIRONMENT   | EVENTS/RESOURCES  |
| <i>What materials will you need to teach this activity?</i><br><i>List <b>all books and materials</b>, including any used during the launch/reflection and during set up and cleanup</i>  | <i>What modifications will you need to make to the classroom to support this activity? (e.g., centers, bulletin boards, meeting spaces)</i>  | <i>What events or resources, including people, might you need to arrange in advance?</i>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One or more bird feeders</li> <li>Several types of bird food—e.g., black oil sunflower seeds, gray-striped sunflower seeds, white millet, Niger thistle seed, mixed wild bird food,</li> </ul> | Art Center and outdoor garden: The art center will have the materials available for about five class periods so that students can construct, observe, and record. We would then openly discuss | This activity can be done at any time of the day during class so long as there's conducive opportunity to include out-of-class activities. The learning |

\* Note: You are designing this activity for the three children observed for your Student Profiles assignment.

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| <p>cracked corn, different types of fresh or dried (preservative free!) fruits.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Field guides and other resources for identifying birds.</li> <li>• Naturalist's charts.</li> </ul> <p>Note: It is possible to do this activity using one bird feeder, but it will be more efficient to use several similar feeders, each with a different type of food.</p> <p>It is also acceptable to use existing or homemade feeders placed together in a protected location.</p> | <p>the identity of each bird from the documentation and then working together to categorize the identified birds by arranging them according to the similarity of groups.</p> <p>Note: We would eliminate food choices to which any students might be allergic.</p> | <p>prompts in the activity will be visual, spoken, and written cues.</p> <p>One class period to design the experiments; three or more class periods to carry out the experiments and analyze and report the results.</p> |
|--|---|--|

| THE LEARNING EXPERIENCE  |   |
|--|---|
| <p><b>The launch</b></p> <p><i>How will you engage the children in this learning experience? How will you introduce the concepts and vocabulary of the topic? How will you describe the procedures of the learning activity? What will you say and do?</i></p> | <p>Read Aloud: <i>An Egg is Quiet</i> by Diana Hutts Aston</p> <p>Summary: <i>This book is a beautifully illustrated and informative introduction to the beauty and classification of eggs in the natural environment. It includes information about the variety of eggs found in nature, particularly bird eggs, and illustrates the patterns associated with their different shells. The book's lyrical wordplay and refined aesthetic purposefully engrosses learners while delivering interesting facts about the various types of eggs found in nature.</i></p> <p>After the reader aloud, the teacher asks open-ended questions and lets the children take a guess:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do you think these pieces belong together? They are big and blue</li> <li>• Do these other ones belong together? They are small and white.</li> <li>• What about this one? It's big and blue. It looks like a rock.</li> </ul> |

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| <p><b>The activity</b></p> <p><i>List the step-by-step procedures. What will the children be doing? What will you say or do to facilitate and scaffold their learning? Be specific and detailed in your description.</i></p> | <p>Exploration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have a class discussion about what birds eat, starting with the question, “Do all birds eat the same thing?” Encourage children to describe their own observations and experiences and also to speculate. Record their answers on the board or chart paper without labeling them as right or wrong.</li> <li>• Explain that students are going to conduct an experiment to determine whether birds prefer some foods over others, and if they do, to identify which birds prefer which foods.</li> <li>• With the whole class, brainstorm ideas for conducting an experiment to answer the research question about birds’ food preferences. Review with students the importance of keeping variables in the experiment the same except for the one variable they are interested in—the type of food. Create an experimental plan that outlines the steps the class will take to carry out the experiment.</li> <li>• Divide students into working groups—making the feeders (if applicable); creating a schedule for placing different food options, observing birds, and recording the results; and so on.</li> <li>• Distribute copies of the “Bird Feeder/Bird Food Data Collection Sheet.” Make sure students understand the information they will record on the sheet.</li> <li>• Assign a number to each feeder. Record the type of feeder(s), feeder number, and type of food in each feeder on the data sheet. For example: Feeder #1, tube feeder, thistle seed.</li> <li>• Set aside class time for students to observe and record birds’ behavior. Allow enough time for birds to discover and try each different food option. This may be days or weeks.</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>Reflection</b></p> <p><i>As the activity wraps up, what opportunities will you offer the children to respond to and reflect on this activity?</i></p>  | <p>After the students have collected enough data, have small groups analyze and create presentations on what the data mean. All groups should start with the same raw data, but each group can come up with its own method for analyzing and presenting its findings.</p> <p>Set aside class time for presentations and discussion. If groups disagree about the findings, invite students to come up with a way to resolve the differences, including another experiment.</p>   |

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| <p><b>Possible Extensions</b><br/> <i>What could you do on another day to build on this activity?</i></p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We can duplicate this activity using different suet “recipes.”</li> <li>• We can repeat the experiment at a different time of year to investigate (1) the preferences of year-round resident birds compared with those of migratory birds and/or (2) whether the preferences of resident birds change as seasons change.</li> <li>• We can design and carry out other experiments—e.g., find out if certain birds prefer one feeder design over another; whether birds choose foods based on color (use nontoxic food coloring to color _____ seeds you know birds will eat); whether birds eat more at different times of day.</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>Multimodal Engagement</b><br/> <i>Identify and explain the ways in which this activity offers opportunities to use at least three different learning modalities (kinesthetic, tactile, linguistic, visual/spatial, auditory, musical)</i></p> | <p>Linguistic &amp; Auditory: The read aloud to launch the activity and the subsequent discussion offers opportunities for the children to use Linguistic Intelligence, Interpersonal, and Naturalist learning modalities. Learners respond verbally and non-verbally to the things they see, hear, touch, feel, and taste.</p> <p>Visual/Spatial &amp; Kinesthetic modalities: The explorative activity itself offers opportunities for the children to arrange the feeding materials according to type, pattern, or other characteristics they identify.</p> <p>Tactile: Learners start to organize, describe, arrange, and compare groupings of birds from their observations and the characteristics of birds in their social and natural environments.</p>   |
| <p><b>Differentiation</b><br/> <i>How will you modify this activity for learners with different learning styles and/or special needs (SLLs, physically active, etc.)?</i></p>   | <p>This activity can be easily modified for learners with different styles and needs. It can be curated as a three-fold process depending on the children's preferences in creative application.</p> <p>Those who can, will go outside on a mini-excursion in the school's surrounding environment, for example, a garden, forest, or a field to record the birds that interact with the feeders.</p> <p>Depending on preference, some children will collect items related to the birds, such as twigs and feathers, which will be displayed in the classroom.</p> <p>Others will take photographs of things they notice during the excursion. They will then choose about five of their favorite photos and present a showcase in the classroom.</p> <p>Similarly, some children will make drawings of patterns they notice, which will also be displayed in the classroom.</p> <p>Those who cannot go on excursion due to special needs, will engage in a field marking activity and read aloud related to the types of birds found in nature before reconvening with the rest of the children to discuss the documented birds and patterns during the excursion.</p> |

| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>GROWTH AND LEARNING</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>How will this learning experience support the children's growth and learning in the following domains? Use your knowledge of child development.</i></p> |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Cognitive/thinking</b>   | The children's free use of tools to record and draw supports their creative and intellectual development at both the preoperational and concrete preoperational stage.  |
| <b>Physical</b>   | The children's use of tools, such as natural and construction materials, recording equipment, and drawing and painting apparatus fosters their fine motor skills.       |
| <b>Social/emotional</b>   | Sharing their observations and discussion with their peers supports the children's socio-emotional development as they learn to appreciate each other's differences.    |
| <b>Language/literacy</b>  | Having a communal creative arts area for the children to play en-masse supports their pragmatic capacity to communicate verbally and non-verbally in social situations. |
|   | <p>.....</p> <p>List 10-15 target vocabulary words:<br/>Scientific, method, feeder, perch, observe, compare, classify, measure, scavenger, prey, feathers, nest</p>     |
| <b>Content Area(s)</b>  | Emergent Literacy, Science  |

| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>STANDARDS/GOALS</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>What Pre-K Common Core Learning Standards are addressed in this activity?</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Use the PKFCC to respond.</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Be specific—choose those standards that are <b>actually targeted</b> by this learning activity (e.g., can development in regard to the standard be measured by the evidence gathered (authentic assessment) during this learning activity?)</i></p> |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Domain 1:<br/>Approaches to Learning</b>   | Engagement: 1. Actively and confidently engages in play as a means of exploration and learning.<br>a) Interacts with a variety of materials through play.  |
| <b>Domain 2:<br/>Physical Development and Health</b>  | Physical Development: 5. Demonstrates eye-hand coordination and dexterity needed to manipulate objects.<br>c) Uses materials such as pencils, paint brushes, eating utensils and blunt scissors effectively.   |
| <b>Domain 3:<br/>Social and Emotional Development</b>   | Self-Concept and Self Awareness: 1. Recognizes himself/herself as a unique individual having his/her own abilities, characteristics, feelings, and interests.<br>c) Demonstrates knowledge of his/her own uniqueness (talent, interests, preferences, gender, culture, etc.).  |
| <b>Domain 4: Communication, Language, and Literacy</b>  | Representing: 4. Demonstrates his/her ability to express ideas using a variety of methods.<br>d) Reviews and reflects on his/her own representations.  |
| <b>Domain 5:<br/>Cognition and Knowledge of the World</b>   | Visual Arts: 1. Expresses oneself and represents what he/she knows, thinks, believes and feels through visual arts.<br>a) Experiments with a variety of mediums and methods of using art materials (such as using a big brush to paint broad strokes, combining colors, etc.). |

| AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENT  |   |
|---|---|
| <p><i>What will you do to gather evidence to assess each child's developmental progress?</i></p> <p><i>How will you determine whether or not individual children are getting the Big Ideas and/or exploring the Overarching Questions?</i></p> <p><i>Evidence may include responses recorded during a group discussion, a visual arts project, a performance, etc.</i></p> <p><i>Your assessment activity MUST be connected to the Big Ideas and Overarching Questions.</i></p> | <p>Students would be assessed through two different measures.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Performance Based: Prior to collecting and recording the birds feeding in nature, I will work together with the students to create a list of guidelines for the activity to ensure that it is a positive experience for everyone. If some children have trouble understanding the guidelines, each child will be guided through individual conversation to support unique self-expression. (It is critical that all students are on-boarded at this juncture). During the activity, I will observe how the children are engaging with the environment to notice evident patterns. I will take notes about how the patterns they notice are given meaning. Some children may choose to use symbolism.</li> <li>4. Reflective Assessment: The preceding science activity demonstrates how the learners' understanding of birds' feeding patterns and classifications is critical to fostering their scientific thinking. Accordingly, the learners should be capable of identifying familiar birds from their observations that variations in both color and feeding patterns. Some will identify the feeding patterns for a couple of repetitions using the observations while others will struggle. Nonetheless, the process of identifying feeding patterns should be somewhat easy compared to that of classifying the birds. It is expected that not all learners will be able to identify patterns that vary only in color. The learners should also demonstrate some development in their spatial and geometric thinking through the feeder construction part of the learning experience. Ideally, all learners will be capable of describing familiar shapes such as circles and squares. The learners will also be capable of easily recognizing different examples of the shapes they have identified during the excursion. Furthermore, using the natural materials I brought into the classroom before the activity and those collected from the excursion, all the learners should capably identify the shapes pointed out by their peers and I, while also recognizing other examples of the same shape.</li> </ol> <p>In connection to the Big Ideas and Overarching Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learners utilize pedagogical forms of documentation such as photographs, drawings, and oral descriptions to record what they see and interact with.</li> <li>• Learners use the documentation of the materials to identify and characterize the birds and they observed through the learning exercise.</li> </ul> |



# Commentary

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The commentary must be 2 pages long. Please leave the bold headings and answer the questions under each heading in paragraph form.

## **Describe topic of your Focused Curriculum**

The theme of my curriculum for pre-k is Nature adventures. The theme explores how learning occurs through play within the context of nature. The activities therein use connections to nature to critically contribute to children's physical, cognitive, language, and socio-economic growth and development.

This focus of the curriculum is a group of pre-k learners between the ages of 3 and 5. The zone of proximal development for learners in this age range of about 4 years of age is typically a combination of solitary and communal play that is manifested through a vague object or pattern recognition.

## **Implementation of Activity Plans**

We would start implementing the lesson plans with the social studies activity plan to foster a sense of camaraderie between the learners and allow them to get used to the natural environment. The preceding activity plan would then be followed by the math activity and the science activity respectively.

The activity plans would segue into each other seamlessly in an effort to progressively grow and develop the children's domains. After building camaraderie, the math activity would familiarize the children to skills such as counting and measurement and the science activity would delve deeper into an exploration of those skills.

## **Relationship of the Activity Plans**

The learning experiences in my activity plans connect to the larger themes of my curriculum as they allow the young children's creativity to flourish into a maturing form of self-expression without the fear of judgement. The creative activities therein use connections to nature through which the children organize and make sense of their environment as they engage actively with people, objects, and representations.

At this stage of their development, the children's actions seem to be happening deliberately, considering the repetitive process of their play, thus affirming Piaget's idea of the sensorimotor period of development. Through self-expression, they are learning what makes them unique and how to value and connect to others through their similarities and differences.

The diversity of my intended group of students in Queens is somewhat stable considering the group is generally homogenous within the Asian community. However, even that seemingly homogenous group has nuanced diversification based on Asian sub-communities. Accordingly, these activities are socially and culturally appropriate because they lay out ideas both personally and communally, recognizing the full range of diverse interests.

The activity plans can be easily modified for learners with different interests and needs. Those who cannot go on excursions due to special needs will always be engaged in alternative activities related to the topic being explored, before reconvening with the rest of the children to discuss their documentations and findings.

### **Strategies and Connections**

Developmentally appropriate practice refers to techniques that are used to enhance each child's growth in a uniquely favorable manner, which promotes the child's strengths and sense of engagement. In that sense, these activities tied to nature offer opportunities for students to express their feelings, thoughts, and ideas. Engaging in activities that allow self-expression in garden spaces can provide a boost to mental and emotional health while connecting children to the garden and to each other.

Integrating or focusing the curriculum involves a holistic learning process in which the students are not constrained within the narrow boundaries of subjects. The teaching method integrates the curricular intentions and approaches from multiple disciplines centering on the main theme, topic, matter, or issue. By recognizing and fostering the preceding links, teachers can implement productive learning in the classroom. Integrating the curriculum in a preschool classroom allows teachers to design learning environments that simultaneously develop the preschoolers cognitively, socially, and emotionally. It is also a useful asset in fulfilling the knowledge demands and learning styles of different students.

### **Assessment**

For the math activity, learners should be able to use the documentation of the materials to identify and characterize the patterns and shapes they noticed through the learning exercise, identifying a familiar pattern from the materials that vary in both color and number. For the social studies activity, Students will be able to contribute to the classroom discussion about the shapes and colors of the rock decorations while their photos are displayed on the discussion board. The children will also be asked to describe their feelings and emotions about their rock decorations. For the science activity, the learners should be capable of identifying familiar birds from their observations that variations in both color and feeding patterns. The learners would use the documentation of the materials to identify and characterize the birds and they observed through the learning exercise.

### **Conclusion**

The themed curriculum I created is personally interesting to me because it is intentionally designed for use in different educational environments, taking into consideration different educational, cultural, and philosophical approaches to teaching and learning. I am

most proud of the way my work integrated different concepts and readings related to my reflection on creative lessons for young students. I think the essay is a coherent and well-written paper. Perhaps I should work on integrating more autonomy for my students in the activities I introduce into the classroom. All in all, despite the difficulty of curating challenging lesson plans, I think the activities in general lead to a more fun experience for the young students.