

Activity Plan

Designed by: Sum Yi Au-Yeung

| OVERVIEW/FRAMING | | | | |
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| This Activity Plan is part of a larger Learning Experience Unit on: Nature Adventures | | | | |
| TOPIC <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>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> | | |
| BIG IDEAS/OVERARCHING QUESTIONS <i>What kinds of questions will be explored and/or what new connections and ideas will be engaged through this activity?</i> | | <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> | | |
| CONTENT FOCUS: <i>Identify which content area(s) will be addressed in this activity</i> | | Visual Arts Emergent Literacy | Music Mathematics | Movement/Dance Science |
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| KNOWING THE LEARNERS | |
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| AGE RANGE: | Pre K |
| CURRENT DEVELOPMENT: <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</p> |

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| | <p>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 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> |
| <p>SOCIO-CULTURAL CONTEXT: <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?¹*</i></p> | <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.</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. 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 | | |
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| MATERIALS | LEARNING ENVIRONMENT | EVENTS/RESOURCES |
| <p><i>What, if any, materials, including set-up and clean-up, will be needed?</i></p> <p><i>List all materials, including any used during the launch/reflection.</i></p> | <p><i>What, if any, modifications will you need to make to the classroom to support this activity?</i></p> | <p><i>What events or resources, including people, might you need to arrange in advance?</i></p> |

¹* Note: You may not be designing this activity with a specific group in mind. If that is the case, envision and describe a group of children you *could* anticipate working with in a NYC early childhood classroom.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> rocks in assorted sizes paints and paint brushes or paint pens (nontoxic, acrylic) paint brushes sealant (optional) old t-shirts, smocks, or aprons | <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. Other children and nature books also talk about the social and emotional benefits of spending time in nature. We would combine the two literature aspects by engaging in creative activities that encourage self-expression in a natural setting.</p> |
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| THE LEARNING EXPERIENCE | | Multimodal Engagement <i>Identify and explain the ways that this activity offers opportunities to use multiple senses and intelligences.</i> | Differentiation <i>How will you modify this activity for learners with different styles and needs? (e.g., children who have special needs, very physically active, or emergent bilingual, etc)</i> |
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| The spark/launch/intro <i>What will you say or do to engage the children in this experience? To define specific vocabulary, concepts, or procedures, describe how you would introduce them.</i> | <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> | <p>←Linguistic Intelligence ←Interpersonal ←Naturalist</p> <p>←Intrapersonal ←Interpersonal</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.</p> |
| The activity <i>What will the children be doing? List the procedure step-by-step. What will you say or do to support their process?</i> | <p><u>Determine guidelines:</u> 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"> All words and pictures placed on the rocks should be school appropriate and considerate of others. Remember that everyone's rocks will be different and special to them. No one | | |

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| | <p>should say anything mean or hurtful about anyone else's rocks.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> When placing your rock in the garden, make sure not to disturb other rocks or nature. <p>Exploration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 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. 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. Allow paint to dry completely. Once dry, you can apply a layer of paint sealant for more weather resistance if desired. 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. | <p>←Visual / Spatial Intelligence</p> <p>←Logical ←Bodily-kinesthetic</p> <p>←Interpersonal</p> | <p>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>Reflection <i>As the activity wraps up, what opportunities will you offer the</i></p> | <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</p> | | |

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| <i>children to respond to and reflect on this activity?</i> | 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. | | |
| Possible Extensions <i>What could you do on another day to build on this activity?</i> | 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. | | |

GROWTH AND LEARNING

How will this learning experience support the children's growth and learning be in the following domains?

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| Cognitive/thinking | 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. |
| Physical | The children's use of tools, such as natural and construction materials, and drawing and painting apparatus fosters their fine motor skills. |
| Social/emotional | Sharing their creations with their peers supports the children's socio-emotional development as they learn to appreciate each other's differences. |
| Language/literacy | 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. |
| | List 3-5 target vocabulary words: Artform, Self-Expression, Beautify, Wenhua (Culture), Healing |
| Content Area(s) | Visual Arts, Emergent Literacy, Movement/Dance, Drama, Social Studies |

STANDARDS/GOALS

What Pre-K Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS)^{2} are addressed in this activity?*

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| Domain 1: Approaches to Learning | Engagement: 1. Actively and confidently engages in play as a means of exploration and learning. a) Interacts with a variety of materials through play. |
| Domain 2: Physical Development and Health | Physical Development: 5. Demonstrates eye-hand coordination and dexterity needed to manipulate objects. c) Uses materials such as pencils, paint brushes, eating utensils and blunt scissors effectively. |

^{2*} For CCLS, please go to the following URL:

<http://www.p12.nysed.gov/earlylearning/standards/documents/PrekindergartenFoundationfortheCommonCore.pdf>

HYPERLINK "http://www.p12.nysed.gov/ciai/common_core_standards/pdffdocs/nyslsprek.pdf"

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| Domain 3: Social and Emotional Development | Self-Concept and Self Awareness: 1. Recognizes himself/herself as a unique individual having his/her own abilities, characteristics, feelings, and interests. c) Demonstrates knowledge of his/her own uniqueness (talent, interests, preferences, gender, culture, etc.). |
| Domain 4: Communication, Language, and Literacy | Representing: 4. Demonstrates his/her ability to express ideas using a variety of methods. d) Reviews and reflects on his/her own representations. |
| Domain 5: Cognition and Knowledge of the World | Visual Arts: 1. Expresses oneself and represents what he/she knows, thinks, believes and feels through visual arts. 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 | |
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| <i>What will you do to determine whether or not the children are getting the Big Ideas and/or exploring the Overarching Question? (This may be a conversation, a group project, a performance, etc...)</i> | <p>Students would be assessed through two different measures.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 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. <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> |

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| POST-ACTIVITY REFLECTION ^{3*} | |
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| <p><i>What aspects of this activity seemed to be most successful in supporting the children's growth and learning?</i></p> <p><i>What, if any, surprises were there?</i></p> <p><i>What, if any, challenges were there?</i></p> <p><i>Record the results of your authentic assessment activity.</i></p> <p><i>How would you modify this activity the next time to make it more successful?</i></p> | |

* You may not actually have the opportunity to implement this learning experience. In the future, though, you should build a practice of returning to your plan to document your post-activity reflection.