GUIDELINES ON INNOVATIVE LEARNING SPACES

CASE STUDIES

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"Teaching learning spaces competence from early childhood education"
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Erasmus+ Strategic Partnerships for school education

Project partnership:

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Contributor template

The template that follows is for contributions of case studies to the ***Guidelines on innovative learning space case study***

Instructions on writing up the case study

Case studies should be examples of good practices and must be well documented, evidence based and demonstrate success or progress related to implementing measure that enhance learning spaces.

Case studies must provide a sufficient level of detail so that the reader can understand what was done, by whom and potentially be inspired to replicate a similar programme or intervention.

Please, follow the next structure to present your own case study.

Context

Kindergarten

Age of children: *4-5,5*

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Title of your contribution	Sensory Learning Spaces
Typology of learning spaces	*Please, choose the most relevant category:* Indoor spaces of classrooms Working areas in thematic projects
Development domain	Choose the most relevant domain: Language and Communication domain; Science field; Human and Society Domain; Aesthetic and Creative Domain
Area of focus	*independent learning, project based learning etc.*
Terms, acronyms and abbreviations	Attachment, secure attachment, language development, cognitive development, social and emotional development, aesthetics, literacy preparation, sensory-motor skills, independence, emotion and anger management, experiential learning, individual learning, project-based learning, science-nature, games, gaming, art.

Description of the case study (max. 1500 words)	Aim and objectives of the intervention project: The aim of the project is to support the most effective learning of children individually and as a group. In addition to learning by taking individual responsibility, it is aimed to adapt to social life and rules through group activities. Another aim of the project is; To create an educational environment for all senses by taking into account the individual differences and learning processes of children. Location (country & city): Turkey & Izmir Background and context How did you come up with the innovative idea? The idea of the project emerged from the necessity of establishing different learning centers suitable for each child's individual differences and learning speeds. In order for children to adapt to school and activities, they first need to establish a secure relationship with their teachers. It is stated that adults and educators should behave very sensitively in order to establish a secure relationship with the child in the early period (Cugmas, 2007). This can be achieved by feeling that they are valued. Therefore, we can say that the project emerged with the aim of creating an attentive educational environment by taking into account the individual expectations of children. The importance of ensuring that children willingly participate in studies and activities during the day is undeniable. We were also inspired by the idea of playing games in ever-changing centers that they can individually choose to contribute to their decision-making process. Some children like to play alone, while others like to play with friends. For this reason, being in an educational environment that can provide them with this opportunity will also help them feel safe. In this context, when all these ideas came together, they created the project. How was the intervention project developed? Explain briefly the process and who was involved, highlight the participation of service users, if the case. First, ideas were made on how the existing materials in the classroom could be improved. Afterwards, the individual characteristics and general expectations of the children were observed. Remaining materials and various materials have been collected for the centers that need to be built on our needs and

deficiencies. Old materials have been reconstructed. The materials that we need to place in the planned centers were designed based on the ideas of the children. Our teachers designed the materials together. Afterwards, the class was divided into centers. The centers were organized according to certain criteria. The materials were placed considering the physical conditions of the classroom. The materials were designed in accordance with the developmental characteristics of children. It has been placed in such a way that they can easily reach and use by themselves.

BEFORE

AFTER

Main achievements

What where the main achievements of the intervention project (quantitative or/and qualitative)?

The main success of the project is that we have established a learning environment that allows children to play comfortably in an environment where they feel valued, to develop their sense of responsibility by making individual decisions, to socialize, and to develop their sense of secure.

It was observed that the children also improved their time management skills as they planned the activities themselves. Since a certain number of children could play in the centers, they began to learn to queue up and respect each other. They learned in a more comfortable way that they need to share and cooperate during different activities by sharing toys in the centers. They learned how to behave in a group, to cooperate, to choose a leader when necessary and to follow him.

A new learning environment and diversity allowed children to increase their interest in studies and the amount of time they played individually.

Another factor that attracted the attention of the children was the colors and designs of the materials used. In addition, the fact that some of the materials in the centers were made using leftover materials collected by children and their families helped children to raise awareness about recycling.

In addition, through centers established in different subjects and fields, remarkable progress has been made in children's creative, caring, critical and collaborative thinking skills.

Key factors

What where the key factors that facilitated the success of the intervention project?

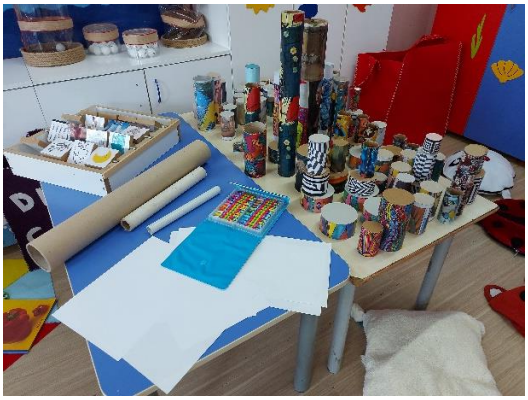
Most importantly, in order to create an effective educational environment for the classroom, a needs analysis study was carried out together with the teachers and by consulting the ideas of the children. The materials and the centers created were developed with the ideas and suggestions of all teachers. The materials are designed in a way that children can easily use and

	understand. In addition, residual materials were evaluated. Simple materials were also used to create such educational environments for schools that did not have sufficient facilities. List of useful equipments/resources needed Two-sided open cabinets to create centers Tables that can be used for centers and activity times All kinds of waste materials and materials, cones, log pieces, caps, wool etc.. Stick puppets, hand puppets, masks, etc. Various story books Magnetic boards Educational toys, board games, mind and intelligence games illuminated tables story stones Drama pillows or cushions Printouts of various branches of art for the field of art, pictures Various crayons, brushes Challenges When children were involved in a different and new learning environment, they had some difficulties with how they should behave at first. Some children thought that every child should play in the same centre. We had difficulties in finding ready-made materials for the intended materials. Therefore, most of the material was made by teachers. The physical structure of the classroom was challenging when creating the centers. Categoria of improvements In which ways could the intervention project have been improved (lessons learned, crucial aspects for replication etc.)? Illustrated guidebooks can be prepared for children. Rules about each center, use of the center etc.. In addition, the variability of centers and materials can be increased by providing more materials through sponsors. A larger-scale attempt can be made to establish a psychomotor center by working with an architect to change the physical structure of the classroom. Climbing areas or reading circles could be mounted on the walls. Swings and a movement-activity center could be created for the

	classroom. Edge protectors can be used for a safer environment. A number of materials can be used to make children feel at home. For example, armchairs, some items from their homes.

Characteristics of the innovative spaces for active learning	a. Physical environment (design, light, surfaces, organisation, aesthetics etc.) We paid attention to a bright and heartwarming design of the classroom. We have endeavored to place the centers in an accessible and harmonious manner. Materials and materials were designed according to the ages and interests of the children. In addition, while arranging the learning spaces, we aimed for children to gain an aesthetic point of view. b. Furniture We chose the furniture from durable and healthy materials that are suitable for the age and physical development of the children. We took care to place the furniture in a way that does not pose a danger to children. c. Working corners/ Interest Areas We have organized the centers by considering areas that require a calm and peaceful working environment. In addition, we organized the centers taking into account the wishes and needs of the children. From time to time, we renewed and changed the centers according to their interests. d. Online/Virtual corner/learning space e. Materials: • Smart toys/devices • Sensorial materials **Game Center**

Creativity And Art Center



Literacy, Drama, Storytelling Center

Science-Nature-Science Center

Playing At Families

Benefits	1. Teachers In an educational environment where children trust their teachers and accept their responsibilities, teachers will be able to adapt themselves more easily and plan activities that support the development of their students. 2. Children Children who are educated in a learning space that trusts their teachers and is prepared taking into account their individual characteristics will participate in the studies much more comfortably and effectively. Children can undertake individual and group activities by assuming the necessary responsibility. In this way, children's cooperation, critical and problem-solving, attentive and creative thinking skills will develop. Children will learn to respect each other and to solve problems when necessary, as they will play in the centers in turns or by mutual agreement. 3. Parents, if it is the case Family participation studies will gain variety through centers. In addition, financial or moral support will be provided from the families while the centers are being organized. In this way, families will be involved in the process and the involvement of families in the process will ensure that children are much happier in the school environment.
Discussions/ Reflection (aprox. 500 words)	The concept of attachment is closely related to the child's sense of security. In other words, when the attachment situation occurs, the presence of the person to which they is attached gives the children a sense of security and comfort. The children wants to use the person they is attached to as a secure base while exploring the rest of the world (Bee and Boyd, 2009;95). Therefore, this concept forms the basis for individuals to show a healthy development (Slater, 2007). Considering that the next person with whom the children can establish a close relationship after their family is their teacher, the children should be securely attached to their teacher. It has also been proven by theories and research that educators who respect the individual characteristics and personality of the

	children, are attentive and have an responsive attitude towards children, greatly support the development of children in all areas (Kontos, Burchinal, Howes, Wisseh, & Galinsky, 2002). For this reason, it is of great importance for educators and teachers to prepare a learning space where children can feel safe, express themselves comfortably and support their development. The age of six, which is one of the critical periods of development, is the end of the preschool period and the beginning of the school period. The five-year-old usually appears relaxed, harmonious, and calm. But; It is noteworthy that towards the middle of this age, the children begin to change and take on a more active and incompatible appearance. The children, who can dress and undress by themself, do the toilet themself, and even manage to clean themself, is now extremely curious, they are interested in everything around them. they are eager to learn. Therefore, a good school environment is extremely beneficial for a six-year-old children. In addition, studies support that there is a parallel link between the quality of the school environment and the child-teacher relationship (Pianta et al., 2003). Education and a qualified teaching environment at school offer the children the opportunity to develop themself. In addition, it can be said that the quality of the social and physical environment presented to the children in the preschool period has a great impact on their future development in every field (Oktay, 2005). For this reason, it is of great importance to organize learning spaces in an innovative way by considering the developmental characteristics of children. When we think about it in this context, the newly created learning spaces increases the social, emotional, cognitive and academic development of students. Collaborative projects and group work, individual learning opportunities offer a different perspective to the children. Innovative educational environments encourage students to explore. Therefore, it offers children many new activities and experiences. It will be beneficial if the furniture and materials used in the arrangement of the learning spaces are of a size and weight that

	will not cause problems in rearranging and changing the environment. In order to keep children's interests alive, the learning spaces should be constantly renewed.
Future directions/ Next steps	Preparing illustrated rule booklets for the centers created, To create new centers in the missing areas (Themed centers, music center, block and construction center, etc.), Activity centers that can be organized weekly for families (Listing of activities that can be planned in line with the wishes and interests of the parents), Creating innovative approaches to the use of centers, Creation of funding for the establishment of a psychomotor center.
Success stories and/or quotes (150 words)	If you have a quote or statement from an evaluation or user satisfaction survey and the permission to use these quotes, they may be added here to illustrate the success of your case study.
What are the three key messages from this case study	1. In order for children to adapt to school and activities first of all, they need to establish a secure relationship with their teachers. Teachers can establish a secure bond and communication with children by carefully arranging learning spaces by taking into account the individual differences of children. 2.The effective organization of learning spaces facilitates the child's learning by taking individual responsibility, as well as adapting to social life and rules through group activities. 3.Educators and teachers need to improve themselves in the organization of learning spaces. It would be beneficial for teachers to collaborate on this issue and work through projects within the school.

Citations (full references)	Cugmas, Z. (2007). Child attachment to his/her mother, father and kindergarten teacher. Early Child Development and Care , 177 (4), 349-368. Bee, H., & Boyd, D. (2009). Çocuk Gelişim Psikolojisi. (O. Gündüz, Çev.) İstanbul: Kaknüs Yayınları. Slater, R. (2007). Attachment: Theoretical development and critique. Educational Psychology in Practice , 23 (3), 205-219. S., Burchinal, M., Howes, C., Wisseh, S., & Galinsky, E. (2002). An eco-behavioral approach to examining the contextual effects of early childhood classrooms. Early Childhood Research Quarterly , 17, 239-258. Pianta, R. C., Hamre, B., & Stuhlman, M. (2003). Relationships between teachers and children. W. M. Reynolds, & G. E. Miller içinde, Handbook of Pyschology (s. 193-229). NJ: Wiley Oktay, A. (2005). Okul Öncesi Eğitimin Önemi ve Yaygınlaştırılması. A. Oktay, & Ö. P. Unutkan içinde, Okul Öncesi Eğitimde Güncel Konular (s. 11). İstanbul.