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UNIVERSITATEA „ALEXANDRU IOAN CUZA“ din IAȘI

Teaching learning spaces competence from early childhood education

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LESSON PLAN FOR EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING IN APPLIED DIDACTICS LABORATORIES

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Educational level: kindergarten, level I
Activity title: *„Discovering nature!”*

Pedagogical approach:

Children have a thousand ways to play, think or talk…
A thousand ways to listen, to marvel, to love, to enjoy, to sing and to understand.
A thousand worlds to discover, a thousand worlds to invent, a thousand worlds to dream.
Loris Malaguzzi

In the last three decades, the Romanian educational system has undergone important transformations, consonant with the global trends in the field of education. One of the most significant interventions, which had a direct impact on early childhood education, was the focus of educational efforts on the needs of the child.

The approach of the curriculum from the perspective of global development emphasizes both cognitive and physical development, socio-emotional development and learning abilities of the child, the instructional-educational program comprising three types of learning activities: *Activities on experiential fields*, *Free chosen teaching activities* and *Personal development activities*, these being sources and ways of harmonious development of the preschool child.

Each learning activity carried out in early childhood education is an opportunity for the child to expand the horizon of knowledge previously acquired, to put into practice skills, to practice social relationships, to experience emotional feelings, to prepare him for life.

Among the *Personal Development Activities*, a favorite activity for children is the *Morning Meeting.* This type of learning activity starts from the idea of achieving an open, friendly emotional climate at the start of the entire day, an activity in which children socialize, relate, share knowledge from everyday life, live the feeling of belonging, encouragement and trust within the group; this incites curiosity, develops attitudes, social and emotional skills. The form of accomplishing this type of activity is materialized in a meeting of the entire group of children with the teacher, where they greet each other, share their feelings, express their thoughts, emotions and, of course, update some of their knowledge.

Key concepts: seasons, season-specific phenomena, simple and developed sentence forms

Description of the teaching / learning experience (purpose):

The structure of the morning meeting has mandatory moments (greeting, presence, nature calendar) and moments of choice (sharing with others, group activity and the novelty of the day).

In this project our goals is to share our experience during a morning meeting. The activity refers to the changes that occur in nature in the four seasons, from the atmospheric conditions specific to the day / season.

Through this activity we also aimed to emphasize developing vocabulary, formulating simple and developed sentences, analyzing some images, formulating spontaneous answers to questions, accepting the requests of others, encouraging free attitudes and behaviors: active participation (all children take part in the session) critical thinking, encourage children to share their experiences and ideas.

Objectives:

O1: Description of the characteristic aspects of the seasons based on direct observation / intuitive support;
O2: Stimulating initiative in communicating thoughts, emotions and feelings;
O3: Formulating simple and developed sentences, correctly composed from a grammatical point of view;
O4: Interrelationship and cooperation between group partners.

Materials needed and a brief description of the learning space:

The activity takes place outdoor, in the sensory garden of the kindergarten. The children are directed to the space arranged with wooden logs. The weather station is used in carrying out the activity, where images of all the seasons and their specific phenomena can be found. Representative plates for each season and tokens with specific phenomena are used for the group activity. Children pick flowers from the flora in the garden, that are offered to their colleagues when they greeted each other. The rain gauge (element of the weather station) is presented and used in the didactic section, the novelty of the day. To complete the nature calendar, a cardboard frame is used that suggests the outline of a TV, the simulation of the weather report also benefited from a microphone.

Steps in the experiential learning activity:

1. **Planning the experiential activity:**

Step 1: One sunny morning, a little girl in the group insisted on taking the umbrella from home because she heard on TV that it would rain. When she entered the group room, her colleagues started telling her that it was

clear outside, that it was summer, it was warm, it was not raining, and that she did not need an umbrella.

Starting from this point, we decided that day to hold the morning meeting in the sensory garden, to complete the calendar of outdoor nature to directly observe the sky, if it is clear or cloudy, to feel directly the temperature outside, if it is hot or cold, to remember the specific phenomena of each season, summer is light rain, spring and autumn it rains more, how differently we dress depending on the season, what are the activities of children depending on the seasons.

In order to make the activity more attractive and to understand what a weather report means, we decided together with the little preschoolers to make a weather report.

The children were presented with the rain gauge on the weather station, what is its role, what is the amount of water collected.

2. The experiential activity itself:

Step 2: The children were placed in a circle on wooden logs. The presence of the children was made with the help of their own photos, photos framed in the shape of a flower, everyone chose their photo and placed it in the space for the children present. The preschoolers specified the names of those who are not with them and they also mentioned the reasons why their classmates are missing.

Sharing with others is a moment that leads to the exchange of ideas. There was a discussion about the umbrella that their colleague brought to kindergarten. The children were asked: *When do they use the umbrella and why? Why is rain useful? How do they feel when it rains, happy or sad?* Then, together, we performed a rhythmic song called *“Rain”: Pic, pic, pic / Who is it, who? Pic, pic, pic / On the roof / Pic, pic, pic / I feel it too / Pic, pic, pic / On my nose / Pic, pic, pic.*

The Greeting "Good morning, dear children!", where the children greet each other with the colleague on the right, each one chose the way to greet (clap, shake hands, greet with hand, hug, offering a flower picked from the garden).

The novelty of the day was made by presenting a rain gauge. The children first noticed the object, then found out that the rain gauge measures the amounts of water that fell in the garden. That way, when it comes to watering, we know exactly how much water needs to be added! They learned that it is an essential tool for measuring precipitation and therefore for saving water. It is easy to use and very useful for our garden.

Afterwards, *the group activity* was updated with the knowledge regarding the characteristics of the seasons. We drew the children's attention with pictures of the seasons and a basket of chips representing natural phenomena or other characteristics of the seasons. After establishing the order of each season, the children came, in turn, to the chip basket, chose one and placed it at the right season, motivating the placement (eg: *"I placed the image with the snow star in the winter season because only it snows in winter*"). At the end of the game, the children discuss the phenomena specific to each season, the changes that occur in nature and the joys it offers.

We made this *calendar of nature* with an attractive method for preschoolers: the weather report. In turn, each child assumed the role of a announcer, weather presenter and presented the time supported by

colleagues and educators through helpful questions (What was it like when you came to kindergarten? How were you dressed? Why?). "Hello, dear viewers! Today, the sky is clear and you will have to leave your umbrella at home because there will be no rain." During the game, the attention was on the children's correct wording of the sentences, the way they are expressed.

At the end of the activity, the children sang songs about the summer season and enjoyed the beautiful weather building sand castles.

2. Main findings and discussions:

The children were extremely enthusiastic about the activity carried out in the outdoor space, this aroused their interest and curiosity.

Adela: *The sun is yellow! But why can't we look at it?*

Radu answers: *It shines so brightly that our eyes hurt!*

Andrei: *Why are all the leaves green in spring and summer, and in autumn with more colors?* Arian: *Because autumn is even more colorful than spring!*
Iris: *No! In autumn, the leaves age!*
Eduard: *Why thunder and lightning?*
Eve answers: *Because the clouds collide with each other!*
Teacher: *I think the most appropriate song for today's activity would be "Color's quarrel", because all seasons are full of quarrel some colors and want to win the beauty contest.*

3. **Reflections:**

The preschoolers of the group agreed that sometimes, during summer, there can be short and fast rains so that their colleague did not make a mistake being prudent, bringing the umbrella with her, especially because most of the time the weather forecasts come true.

The children updated their knowledge about the characteristics of the seasons, the specific phenomena of the summer season, reminded them of the actions needed to be taken in the garden during the warm weather, listed types of clothing according to the season, described the weather etc.

They interacted optimally within the group and collaborated in carrying out the tasks. They expressed themselves in full sentences, grammatically correct and had the opportunity to express their thoughts, emotional feelings, being spontaneous, socializing with other colleagues.

4. **Use in different contexts:**

• reading pictures with actions that take place in a certain order (the schedule of a day in kindergarten, times of day, seasons) that involves asking questions to help them discover the chronological order in which certain events take place (When we come to kindergarten? Until when it snows?);
• activities of investigating the environment through the senses that lead children to ask questions and to find out about things that interest them;
• organizing observation activities in which children ask questions to the adults or colleagues, to support them in knowing things and phenomena in the environment (What is it made of? What color is it? What is it used for?);
• water, art and music games designed to give children the chance to figure out how things work and explore what they can do with objects or tools. This discovery process can stimulate them to ask new questions and find answers to things of interest to them;
• educational games: What happens? The colors of the seasons? Describe the picture? Kindergarten events!

5. References:

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