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Partner responsible: Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, P1

STRUCTURE OF THE LESSON PLAN

FOR EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING ON APPLIED DIDACTICS

Name of the authors: Merve Öztemir, Kader Benzeş Tıkır, Yeşim Gül Tuluk, Deniz Akan
Affiliation (institution) and country: : Anafartalar Primary School

Type of school level education: Primary school education
Title of the Activity: Greening gardens

Pedagogical approaches (max. 500 words): More than one pedagogical approach was used while creating the lesson plan. A qualitative study conducted in the UK revealed that the most effective pedagogical approaches are those in which the interactions initiated by children and teachers are balanced. These approaches encourage "the sustained shared thinking" approach, allowing children to work together in interaction, for purposes such as producing a solution to a problem or clarifying a concept (Wall, Litjens, & Taguma, 2015). In the sustained shared thinking approach, two or more people work together to solve a problem, clarify a concept, or evaluate an activity. In this context, it has been found that children generally make more progress in environments where sustainable shared thoughts occur more (Siraj-Blatchford et al., 2002). Another inspired approach is "the structured support" approach. In this approach, it involves supportive, structured interaction between an adult and a child to help the child achieve a specific goal. Studies have shown that children in structured, support-oriented learning environments have more positive effects on their development than children in teacher-centered and child-centered environments. Finally, in the child-centered approach, which has a learning method and pedagogy that prioritizes the activities initiated and selected by the child, activities initiated by the teacher are limited in number. In addition, the application of child-centered approaches in early childhood is more effective in supporting the development of socio-emotional skills such as self-regulation and self-control, as well as providing children with the opportunity for autonomy. A lesson plan created by blending these pedagogical methods will focus on the individual characteristics of children and an environment where they can do group work.

DRAFT – PILLOTING SESSION

Partner responsible: Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, P1

Beyond providing the best conditions for teachers and staff involved in early childhood education and care to support children to become self-sufficient individuals; It is emphasized that children should be offered cultural areas, including skills in language, reading, mathematics and science (Schleicher, 2019). In addition, there are studies showing that the educational environments/learning spaces created through these approaches in early childhood education and care for the children of low-income families are effective in achieving the desired cognitive and academic outcomes (Dickinson, 2011; Justice et al., 2008).

For this reason, it is of great importance to create educational environments where children can develop themselves in all areas and to involve children in the planning process in this environment. In this way, the planned activities and lessons will be handled much more effectively.

3 Key-Concepts: Lifecycle, nutrition, awareness of nature.

Description of teaching and learning experience (goal): The primary goal of the teaching and learning experience is to enable children to make sense of the results by observing the lifecycle of a plant. Another important goal is to enable them to develop their research skills to protect the natural environment and to raise awareness about nature. It is among the goals to enable them to produce solutions to problem situations and to support them to be active in the experiential learning process.

Plants can produce their own food. Animals feed on other animals and plants. It is aimed that children learn this cycle and reach the conclusion that they need to protect plants. For this reason, they tried to find different solutions to protect the plants. The children chose the solution they voted for and completed the activity.

3-5 Objectives:

• To be able to process the observation results of a plant's life cycle

• Developing research skills to protect the natural environment

• Generating solutions to problem situations

DRAFT – PILLOTING SESSION

Partner responsible: Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, P1

Necessary Materials and short description of the learning space:

• Seeds (grass and wheat)

• Vases

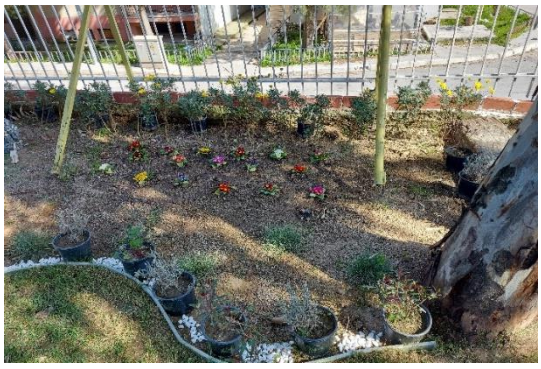
• Garden broom-broom stick

• Waste paper

• Pieces of fabric

Vases for planting

Examples from plants



Planting area and irrigation system

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Partner responsible: Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, P1

Activity steps for the experiential learning:

1. Planning of the experimental work

Before the lesson, children are asked to do research on the lifecycle of the plant. In addition, grass and wheat seeds are requested from the parents. The teacher prepares slides and videos about the lifecycle of plants.

2. Experimental work

The children worked in the classroom on the life cycle, growing and care of plants. Children watched the lifecycle process of plants through educational videos. After watching the video, they created their own loop diagram. They talked about how and where to plant the plants. Meanwhile, while growing the wheat they planted, they started to produce ideas about how to protect them from crows. The teacher wrote the ideas on paper for voting after planting.

Then the children went out to the sensory garden. After making a little observation in the garden again, they split into groups. A group of children hoeed and dug a hole in the ground. The other group planted the seeds. The last group gave water to the seeds they planted.

DRAFT – PILLOTING SESSION

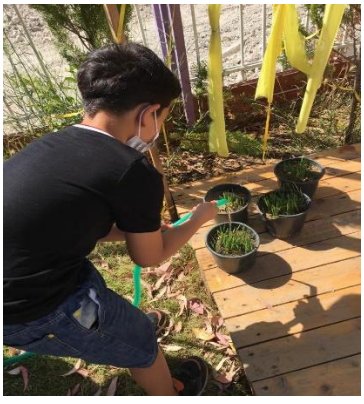
Partner responsible: Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, P1

After the planting process was completed, the children voted on their ideas to protect their plants in the classroom and decided to make a scarecrow. They planned a design from waste materials found in the school.

DRAFT – PILLOTING SESSION

Partner responsible: Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, P1

After completing the scarecrow, they mounted it in a suitable area in the garden. Then they took turns taking care of the seeds. Every day, certain people did watering and maintenance. The children observed that the birds tried to eat the plants as they were growing. Therefore, they produced more scarecrows. Thus, a problem situation was resolved.



DRAFT – PILLOTING SESSION

Partner responsible: Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, P1

3. Main findings and discussion

When teachers plans a lesson, they considers different ways of presenting the content. This decision will be made based on their teaching preferences, experience and the content they teach. All pedagogical approaches used while creating the lesson plan were used to help children learn in an innovative and supportive way.

As the children were involved in every step of the lesson plan process, they participated more actively. As their individual characteristics were blended with group work, all children eagerly participated in the work. It was observed that they learned to respect each other's ideas thanks to the research done at the beginning of the lesson and the brainstorming they made during the process. They respected different ideas and interpretations. Significant developments regarding the problem solving process were observed. The students decided to turn the activity they started in class into a larger project work. It was observed that their awareness towards nature increased significantly. In the process of growing their plants, their sense of responsibility developed. If we consider it as a process, being able to support the development of children in every way has been one of the most important achievements of this course. In this context, among the primary objectives of primary education are to support the development of children, to prepare them for life and to eliminate inequalities of opportunity (MEB, 2013). These goals serve social, educational and developmental purposes. As a matter of fact, an increasing number of studies provide data that a quality early childhood education and primary school education makes personal, social and economic contributions (Melhuish et al., 2015). Quality early learning opportunities also have the potential to improve the living standards of children from disadvantaged families. It is known that a qualified education provided in early childhood creates positive outcomes such as progress in education and career, less involvement in crime and gaining basic social and emotional skills. Research by Heckman (2012) shows that every $1 investment made for children from disadvantaged families in early childhood returns 13 dollars to the national economy (Bekman and Gürlesel, 2005).

In addition, many studies reveal that inequalities in education are observed up to the age of 10 (OECD, 2018b). Early childhood and primary education is one of the most effective

DRAFT – PILLOTING SESSION

Partner responsible: Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, P1

intervention areas to reduce these inequalities. In recent years, most countries have focused on policies to increase access to early childhood education and care in order to provide equal learning opportunities for all students. For this reason, it is of vital importance to create innovative educational environments where children can have equal conditions that support their development.

4. Reflection

Children were able to participate in all activities willingly, as their individual characteristics were considered important and they were involved in the whole process. They began to respect each other's ideas and different interpretations. They have made progress with the problem solving process. Their awareness of nature began to increase. Great improvements were observed in their sense of responsibility. Thanks to the scarecrow they produced, they were very happy to ensure that the plants grew unharmed. In this way, they started to develop different project ideas.

Using in other contexts and age groups

The children themselves expressed their wishes to turn this lesson into a project. In this context, a larger scale project can be organized across the school, district or province. A nature conservation book can be produced by bringing together different ideas for greening schools and protecting nature. Considering different age groups, small groups can do seed planting and irrigation, while older age groups can undertake hoeing and pruning. Working together of different age groups will contribute to the development and wishes of children. Specialists can be invited to the school and workshops can be organized for families and children. By making cooperation between schools, it can be ensured that the forests and nurseries can be increased as well as greening the schools. With the support of the necessary institutions, sapling and seed planting trips are planned for families and children.

DRAFT – PILLOTING SESSION

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