



Process versus product

Whose art is it anyway?

The paper plates are in easy reach. There are boggle eyes and coloured triangles ready to be used and there are enough glue sticks for four children.

On an easel nearby an example of a paper plate fish is on display. "One we made earlier". Coloured ovals are in a little basket ready to decorate the fish as if they were scales.

Sounds familiar? Perhaps you can recall preparing a craft activity just like this. Maybe it was egg carton caterpillars with pipe cleaner antennae or perfectly cut out frog shapes ready to be painted with eye droppers so they look like Picasso.

Have you included such activities because they have sprung from children's interests? Did someone bring in a photo of them fishing on their holiday? Did a child find a caterpillar by the gate as they arrived? Did the children enjoy reading Picasso the Green Tree Frog over the last week?

It would seem reasonable then to include some reference to these children's interests in the program if the educator determined that further opportunities to explore these experiences were necessary. Not every interest is worth following or possible to follow. We need to consider what is the most important 'possible line of development' and which to leave aside for the time being.

Perhaps more important than that, we need to determine HOW we will expand on these children's interests and WHAT learning is possible from the activities or experiences we program. Will we offer children an opportunity to engage intellectually with the experience? Is it sufficient to simply offer them a template to complete with largely adult prepared craft materials?

When considering the paper plate fish craft experience we might ask ourselves, how many decisions have the children made about the materials, tools and process they use? Who decided on the paper plate? Who chose the boggle eyes? Who cut out the triangle tails? Who chose the coloured paper and who cut them into scales? How much of this process will the children get to do for themselves? Have we taken away all the learning possibilities from the children before they even start? Are we focused on the finished product rather than on the process of learning?

By providing an example of "one we made earlier" we are showing the children what their product is expected to look like. If their fish doesn't look like the readymade example they might feel like they are wrong, not competent, not capable. And rather than engaging the children's intellect, the children are only required to glue the elements of the fish in the right place. Not a very rigorous challenge for a lively child's mind. This approach actually stifles children's creativity. They must suppress their own ideas of what they know or imagine about fish while they recreate the adult example?

"I suggest that early childhood curriculum and teaching methods are likely to be best when they address children's lively minds so that they are quite frequently fully intellectually engaged." (Katz 2015)

"INTELLECTUAL GOALS. Intellectual goals and their related activities, on the other hand, are those that address the life of the mind in its fullest sense (e.g. reasoning, predicting, analysing, questioning, etc.), including a range of aesthetic and moral sensibilities." (Katz 2015)

"The children love craft like this," we often hear. Sure children like a lot of things that are not in their best interests. Sugar, staying up late, excess screen time, so we monitor these things and offer them sparingly. Lillian Katz says that just because children can do something it doesn't mean that they should and just because they like to do something doesn't mean that they should either. As the educator we have the responsibility to provide opportunities for rich learning and capitalise on them when they spontaneously present themselves.

So if we don't offer these closed, product focused craft activities and we aspire to a more engaging experience for a child's intellect what other possible lines of development could there be next time a child arrives with a photo of their fishing trip, a caterpillar or their favourite book of Picasso the Green Tree Frog? What else could we do? I wonder what the children would say if we asked them?

Professional Development with Gowrie SA

These sessions are scheduled in our professional learning guide and can also be delivered at our service.

Holistic planning: capturing the uniqueness of the child 3 hours

How can educators engage in a genuine way to ensure 'each child's current knowledge, ideas, culture, abilities and interests are the foundation of the program' (ACECQA 2013, Guide to the National Quality Standard, p.26).

Emergent curriculum (UniSA Lecture Series)

What is emergent curriculum? How do we articulate its worth to our families? Does my team all have the same understanding?

Come and hear the Uni SA lecture where we will explore the foundations of emergent curriculum and what it looks like in practice in comparison with other curriculum models. We will look more closely at the underlying beliefs and the role of the educator in creating a successful emergent curriculum model.

How to 'do' literacy and numeracy authentically

This interactive session will have everyday literacy and numeracy experiences set up so participants can 'play' as well as learn about how these experiences support children's literacy and numeracy progress. There will be 2 spaces set up with experiences aimed at children under 3 years and over 3 years of age. Come along and have some fun while learning about the everyday resources you can use and access to support literacy and numeracy.

To register for sessions

Visit www.gowriesa.org.au/register-training



or scan the QR code to go directly to the registration page on the Gowrie SA website.

For more information call 8234 5219

These sessions are scheduled in our program guide, and can also be delivered at your service.

www.gowriesa.org.au



Introduction to the EYLF for new staff

Belonging, Being, Becoming - The Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF), aims to improve professional practice including curriculum decision making, knowledge building and critical reflection. This session provides an overview to support educators and leaders who are new to the EYLF become more familiar with the learning outcomes, principles and practices and explore what this looks like in practice.

Meaningful observations: notice, recognise, respond

An opportunity to more deeply consider what it is that educators do when they are more intentional in the way they observe children at play.

- Noticing - how do we gather information
- Recognising - interpreting observations and identifying the learning
- Responding - looking at strategies to support and enrich the learning we observe

Play based learning and intentional teaching

Play based learning is a context for engagement that allows us to nurture children's creativity and promote their sense of agency.

- Acknowledge the stages of play and the role of the educator in play
- Explore the opportunities for play based learning within your context
- Identify strategies for intentional teaching or intentionality within your own pedagogy
- Consider ways to nurture children's creativity and learning dispositions.

References

Teacher Stories – Where is the PLAY in worksheets, colouring in, art templates, phonics programs, sight words and early readers; Bronwyn McGregor, *Educating Young Children – Learning and teaching in the early years Vol 16*, No1, 2010

Nurturing Creativity, Stonehouse, Bonson, and Michelle Gujer, *NQS PLP e-Newsletter No.44* 2012,

The Boy and the Red Flower, <http://barefootandconnected.com/the-little-boy-and-the-red-flower-a-poem/>

Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR). (2009). *Belonging, being & becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia*. Canberra: DEEWR.

Lively Minds: Distinctions between academic versus intellectual goals for young children, *Defending the Early Years*, 2015, Lillian G Katz, University of Illinois