

Name _____

Date _____

Instructor _____

Class time _____

Chapter 5: Redefining Curriculum Themes

Practice What You've Learned

Practice Responding to Children's Themes

Practice applying the ideas and skills in this chapter. Read about each of the following projects and decide which responses involve a child-centered approach. Write your responses in the space provided.

Samantha's Project

Samantha is working in the carpentry area. She puts a piece of wood in the vise, measures it, and saws off a piece of wood about six inches long. Then she uses that piece to measure and cut another piece the same size. Removing the wood from the vise, she places the two cut pieces on top of each other and, with two hands, begins hammering a nail through the top piece. She hits the nail head every third or fourth try and periodically stops to reposition the wood, which slides around the table. When she realizes the nail isn't attaching the two pieces together, she leaves the area. The next time you notice her, she's back in the carpentry area with a bottle of glue. Having attached the two pieces of wood together, she is now gluing some Styrofoam circles on the side.

1. What developmental themes and learning domains are apparent in Samantha's play? From your observation, describe her approach to learning, the ideas she is exploring, and the skills she is using and practicing.

2. Consider the role the teacher plays in each of the responses listed below. Evaluate the response by asking yourself these questions: How might Samantha feel or interpret this response? Does this response help the teacher learn more about Samantha?

a. The teacher says, "Oh, what a nice car you are making."

b. The teacher says, "I noticed how you used the vise to hold the wood while you measured and sawed. What did you discover makes it easier to cut?"

c. The teacher says, "There's paint in the art area. Would you like to paint your car?"

d. The teacher asks, "How many wheels does a car need?"

e. The teacher stands back and watches to see what Samantha is going to do next.

3. What response would you like to see happen? Explain your answer.

Mario's Project

Mario seems to be enjoying himself in the sand area. He filled a baby bottle with sand, first using his hand as a scoop and then using a cup. He then turned the baby bottle over and used it as a scoop. Now, using a funnel as a scoop, he is noticing that the sand can run out both ends of the funnel into the bottle.

1. What developmental themes and learning domains are apparent in Mario's play? From your observation, describe his approach to learning, the ideas he is exploring, and the skills he is using and practicing.

2. Consider the role the teacher plays in each of the responses listed below. Evaluate the response by asking yourself these questions: How might Mario feel or interpret this response? Does this response help the teacher learn more about Mario?

- a. The teacher picks up a bigger funnel and asks, "Which of these funnels is bigger, yours or mine?"

- b. The teacher picks up a funnel and tries using it just like Mario, thinking to herself, "Maybe if I get a container and funnel and use them the same way he does, Mario will talk to me about his play."

c. The teacher says to Mario, "You figured out how to get sand into that bottle two different ways! What have you discovered about what works best?"

d. The teacher says, "Mario, are you making a birthday cake?"

e. The teacher says, "Mario, why don't you pour your sand over this truck and bury it?"

3. What response would you like to see happen? Explain your answer.

LaToya's Project

LaToya seems to be hanging around the edges of the dress-up corner and beauty parlor play as if she would like to join in. She is holding a purse and some rollers and is watching the "beauty parlor lady" interact with the girl in the chair getting her hair done.

1. What developmental themes and learning domains are apparent in LaToya's play? From your observation, describe her approach to learning, the ideas she is exploring, and the skills she is using and practicing.

2. Consider the role the teacher plays in each of the responses listed below. For each response, answer these questions to help you evaluate the teacher's responses: How might LaToya feel or interpret this response? Does this response help the teacher learn more about LaToya?

- a. The teacher says to the other children, "LaToya wants to play. Why don't you be nice and invite her to play with you?"

- b. The teacher thinks to herself, "Maybe if I get a purse and some rollers, I could say, 'Hi, I'd sure like to get my hair fixed too.' I'll wait to see if LaToya wants to keep watching or if she wants to join in the play."

c. The teacher says, "I see you have a purse and some rollers with you. Are you going to fix the doll's hair?"

d. The teacher says, "Only four people are allowed in the dress-up area, LaToya. You'll have to find somewhere else to play until someone leaves this area."

e. The teacher says, "Hey, beauty parlor lady, you have another customer waiting for her appointment."

3. What response would you like to see happen? Explain your answer.

Notes about Your Theme Planning

Reflect on your use of themes in your curriculum planning. The following questions will get you started.

1. Look over your last few months of curriculum. Has your planning provided for the children's developmental themes or only topical themes? Explain your response.

2. What changes would you like to make?

3. What is your next step?
