AGE-APPROPRIATE PEDAGOGIES

Aligning curriculum, pedagogies and assessment
An example of practice in Prep
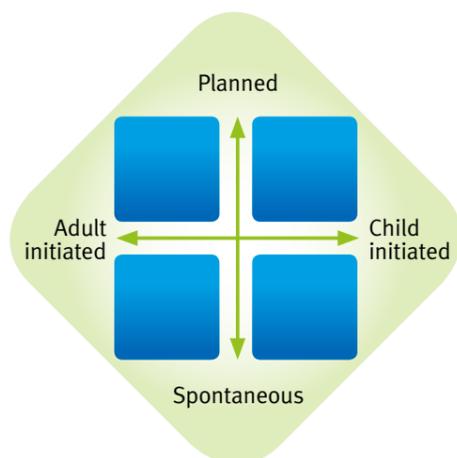## Project approach - 'My bedroom is a special place'

Australian Curriculum - Humanities and Social Sciences - Geography

Sequencing teaching and learning

How do I teach it?

Achieving range and balance*

Planned

Adult initiated

Child initiated

Spontaneous

Approach
- Project approach

Practices
- Child initiated
- Limited duration
- Block play

Strategies
- Use of class dolls
- Including recording materials
- Researching
- Construction

Characteristics of age-appropriate pedagogies*
- **Active**
- **Agentic**
- Collaborative
- **Creative**
- Explicit
- Language rich and dialogic
- **Learner focused**
- Narrative
- Playful
- **Responsive**
- Scaffolded

See over for an explanation of approaches, practices and strategies, and the characteristics of age-appropriate pedagogies evident in this Example of practice.

Our students

Working together to ensure that every day, in every classroom, every student is learning and achieving

This is an example of how one teacher incorporated a **project approach** when implementing the *Australian Curriculum* Humanities and Social Sciences (Geography) learning area.

One of the children in the class had been having renovations carried out at home and was very excited to share with his classmates that the final touches were being added to his bedroom, and that he would be, 'Having [his] first sleep in [his] special place tonight!' This generated lots of conversations about the children's bedrooms. Another child asked, 'Can we take *Annie and Jake* home to see our bedrooms?' The teacher decided to use this idea, due to its potential for linking to the Humanities and Social Sciences curriculum as focus for a project, 'My bedroom is a special place'.

Annie and Jake, two classroom dolls, shared photographs and drawings/maps of their bedrooms (modelled responses created by the teacher) with the children. *Annie and Jake* were sent home with a camera, pencils, pens, crayons and paper to allow the children to create a visual representation (map/drawing) of their bedroom. During this home visit, the children acted as researchers, to investigate the Geography key inquiry questions 'What are places like?', 'What makes a place special?' and 'How can we look after the places we live in?'

The children's visual representations were then displayed in block corner. These were used as plans for block constructions of the children's bedrooms. This block play lead to geography-rich conversation between the children, focused on the key inquiry questions. The teacher was part of these conversations, and recorded and transcribed evidence of learning related to the applicable Content Descriptions.

This project lasted for three weeks. The children accessed block corner during indoor learning time, choosing to work independently, with a partner or in small groups.

Assessment

What do my students already know? How well do they know it?

Assessment **for learning** - bedroom photographs/drawings/maps, transcript of questions/discussions
Assessment **as learning** - pre and post block play discussions, peer feedback, teacher feedback
Assessment **of learning** - Unit 2 - Geography Year Prep (V4.0) - Guide to making judgements

Making judgments

How will I know how well my students have demonstrated the Achievement Standard?

C2C Unit 2 - Geography Year Prep (V4.0) - Guide to making judgements

Applying (AP) - Refers to data collected to support an explanation of why a place is important to others. Gives a detailed description of how a place may be cared for. Represents the distribution of features accurately.

Making Connections (MC) - Gives a detailed description of the features of places. Describes direction and location using simple geographic terms.

Working With (WW) - Describes the features of familiar places and recognises why some places are special to people. Recognises why places are important to people. Observes the familiar features of places and represents these features and their location. Shares observations in a range of texts. Uses everyday language to describe direction and location and reflects on learning to suggest ways that they can care for a familiar place.

Exploring (EX) - Recognises a special place. Shares observations with teacher prompts.

Becoming Aware (BA) Names a place. Names a feature.

Feedback

What do my students already know?
What do my students need to learn next?

The teacher used the children's bedroom photographs, drawings, maps, and transcript of questions and discussions to inform feedback.

The feedback provided the children with progress on their learning to date (*Cody, I noticed that you were describing the furniture in your bedroom to Bryce and Eloise*), and gave specific information about what to do next (*Remember that you can use the words left and right to help you describe the position of the furniture*).

The teacher provided the children with informal verbal feedback when discussing their photographs, drawings and maps, and while they were working in the block corner as appropriate to this project approach.

Curriculum intent

What do my students need to learn?

Australian Curriculum - Humanities and Social Sciences

Foundation (Prep) Year Level Description

The Foundation (Prep) curriculum focuses on developing students' understanding of their personal worlds, including their personal and family histories and the places they and their families live in and belong to. The emphasis is on the student's own history and their own place. They explore why places are special to them and others. As students explore the people and features of their social and physical worlds, they examine representations of place and sources, which may include stories from family members and from different cultures. They may also study places of similar size that are familiar to them or that they are curious about, coming to see how people feel about and look after places. Learning about their own heritage and their own place contributes to students' sense of identity and belonging, beginning the idea of active citizenship.

Foundation (Prep) Year Content Descriptions (as applicable to this project approach)

Knowledge and Understanding
- **The representation of the location of places and their features on simple maps and models (ACHASSK014)**
- **The places people live in and belong to, their familiar features and why they are important to people (ACHASSK015)**
- **The reasons why some places are special to people, and how they can be looked after (ACHASSK017)**

Inquiry and skills
- **Sort and record information and data, including location, in tables and on plans and labelled maps (ACHASSI003)**
- **Draw simple conclusions based on discussions, observations and information displayed in pictures and texts and on maps (ACHASSI008)**
- **Reflect on learning to propose how to care for places and sites that are important or significant (ACHASSI009)**

Foundation (Prep) Year sub-strand-specific Achievement Standard - Geography

By the end Foundation Year, students describe the features of familiar places and recognise why some places are special to people. They recognise that places can be represented on maps and models and why places are important to people.

Students observe the familiar features of places and represent these features and their location on pictorial maps and models. They share and compare observations in a range of texts and use everyday language to describe direction and location. Students reflect on their learning to suggest ways they can care for a familiar place.

Queensland Government

Characteristics of age-appropriate pedagogies evident in this example of practice

The children's engagement occurred both at home and school. The children were able to move, do and interact within a range of environments and with a range of materials. They were able to build on their own real-world understandings and experiences throughout this project through the use of their own 'special place' as a focus. The children were able to investigate and research their own 'special place' and make creative decisions about how they would model, draw, or map their understandings. This project recognised that children have different cultural, social and personal experiences and perspectives, and that not everyone's bedroom will be a 'special place'. This was acknowledged by being flexible in allowing the children to choose an alternative special place as the project's focus (e.g. the fort in the playground, a tree in the backyard, Grandma's house). The project was responsive in balancing structure, spontaneity, open-ended and specific tasks.

Although only five of the characteristics of age-appropriate pedagogies have been highlighted here, opportunities for each of the eleven characteristics to be embedded were evident.

Characteristics of age-appropriate pedagogies

Active
Requiring physical and embodied engagement across all areas of learning. Whether this is indoors or outdoors, activity is essential in order to activate children's full potential. Their focus, concentration, motivation and self-regulation are enhanced through moving, doing and interacting within a range of learning environments.

Agentic
Ensuring that children have voice in their learning. Their ideas and interests initiate, support and extend learning possibilities in order to build on their real-world understandings and experiences.

Collaborative
Being social and co-constructed. Children and educators work together to identify ways of learning and understanding through sustained shared thinking and action.

Creative
Inviting children to consider "What if?" They encourage investigation, inquiry and artistry to explore new possibilities and ways of thinking.

Explicit
Making conscious for both learner and educator the relationships between the learning purpose and processes employed and the skills and understanding these processes support.

Language rich and dialogic
Ensuring that learning occurs in environments where rich language is modelled and employed by both children and educators. Meaningful dialogues between children, as well as between children and educators, are created to support thinking, learning, engagement and imagination.

Learner focused
Recognising that all children learn in different ways and that learning is a highly individualised process. They also acknowledge differences in children's physical, intellectual, cultural, social and personal experiences and perspectives.

Narrative
Acknowledging the important role that personal, written, oral and digital stories play in all our lives. They support both the production and comprehension of narratives through active processes, especially play.

Playful
Encouraging children to make connections through imagination and creativity to explore alternate worlds and ways of thinking. These worlds, not bounded by reality, offer the freedom children need to innovate and enact new possibilities.

Responsive
Incorporating a willingness to be flexible, to ensure that learning is always child, context, content and discipline appropriate. To achieve this, educators will balance opportunities for structure and spontaneity, open-ended and specific tasks, and child-led and educator-led learning.

Scaffolded
Including such actions as modelling, encouraging, questioning, adding challenges, and giving feedback, provide the support needed to extend children's existing capabilities. Effective scaffolding by both educators and other children provides active structures to support new learning; it is then progressively withdrawn as learners gain increasing mastery.

Approach - Project approach

Practices*

Child initiated
After having renovations carried out at home, one child was excited that he would be sleeping in his new bedroom. This generated lots of conversations amongst the children about their bedrooms. Another child asked, 'Can we take *Annie and Jake* home to see our bedrooms?'

Limited duration
This project was prompted by a special event in one child's life. Time constraints, including school-based events and balancing other curriculum areas, meant that this project was limited to a three week timeframe towards the end of Term Three.

Block play
Block play was used to further enhance the children's geographical knowledge of modelling and mapping at school after their project research at home.

These are examples of the Practices implemented, and not intended as a finite list.

Strategies*

Use of class dolls
Annie and Jake were honorary members of the class. They had been used to support the teaching of social skills in the classroom earlier in the year, and had visited the children at home at the end of Term One, as part of a History task.

Including recording materials
Annie and Jake were sent home with a camera, pencils, pens, crayons and paper to allow the children to create a visual representation (map/drawing) of their bedroom.

Researching
The children acted as researches to investigate the Geography key inquiry questions for Foundation:
- What are places like?
- What makes a place special?
- How can we look after the places we live in?

Construction
The children were offered time to construct models of their bedrooms using blocks, boxes and other construction materials as a can do activity during indoor learning time.

* These are examples of the Strategies implemented, and not intended as a finite list.*

Questions for teacher-based reflection
- How is an array of effective pedagogies ensured?
- How are holistic development and academic goals balanced?
- How is a balance between child-initiated and adult-initiated learning experiences fostered?
- How are positive personal relationships with children nurtured?
- How is playfulness in learning and teaching interactions embedded?
- How are high-quality, verbal interactions encouraged?
- How are interactions to scaffold cognitive challenge and develop higher order thinking incorporated?
- How are real-life, imaginary, spontaneous and planned experiences integrated?

Questions for school-based reflection
- How is the provision of training, resources and support considered?
- How are the professional demands on teachers, and the lead-in time required to establish new approaches, recognised and supported?