Engaging Children’s Minds: The Project Approach, 1989

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The Project Approach

Lilian Katz and Sylvia Chard

49 years of collaboration

Illinois Summer Institute
1992 - 2012

The Child Study Center
University of Alberta, Edmonton, Canada

Kindergarten

Grades 1 - 6

- Sort information acquired
- Discuss priorities
- Choose tasks
- Collaborate
Two practical guides for teachers

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The Project Approach

By Sophia C. Charette, PhD

Certificate Course

Getting Started
What it is all about

Objectives
Course objectives & requirements

Resource Site
www.project-approach.com

News & Announcements
Update: June 27, 2009
WHAT IS A PROJECT?

A project is an extended and in-depth investigation of a real world topic.

HOW DO I GET STARTED?

During Phase One:

• The teacher selects the topic of study.

• The teacher makes a topic web and a curriculum web to envision the potential of the topic.
• The teacher helps children represent their previous experiences in different ways.

• Parents are informed about the topic of study so that they may contribute with their expertise, with objects and by sharing memories their child has in regards to the topic.

DEVELOPING THE PROJECT: PHASE TWO

How do I help children find answers to their questions and represent their understanding?

• The teacher arranges opportunities to conduct field work and talk to experts.

• The teacher identifies and helps the children formulate questions that will guide the investigation.

• Children seek answers to the questions raised in phase one, and think of new questions.
• The teacher provides additional sources for research.

• Children use various materials and representational strategies to show their understanding.

• The teacher displays experiences and work processes that show aspects of the investigation which children may discuss and revisit.

• The teacher together with the children, plan a culminating event to share their work with members of their learning community.
A Project on Fruit

Projects are a perfect instructional means for achieving the standards of a given school or school district.

Uses all five senses to examine different objects with attention to detail.
Makes predictions and develops generalizations based on past experiences.
Identifies similarities or differences in objects.

Groups objects and counts the number of groups.

Begins to understand concepts of weight.
Asks questions about growth and change in plants and animals

Demonstrates understanding of changes in the appearance, behavior, and habitats of living things
Participates in experiments provided by adults and describes observations
Uses vocabulary that shows recognition of scientific principles to explain why things happen.

Demonstrates and explains the safe and proper use of tools and materials.
Records information from an experience
Begin to recognize that information comes in many forms and can be organized and displayed in different ways.
Communicates information learned from exploration of the natural world
We have to draw the people from the back, because they should be facing the stage.

We have to draw the bench and hide a part of the legs of the person who is sitting, but we should be able to see their feet.

We need to draw the person's arms next to his body.

We need to draw more than one person, because you need to draw more than one person to have an audience.
After several attempts, Isabella made a series of drawings to represent a step.

**Ariela’s first drawing shows a frontal view of a person’s legs.**

Ariela’s second drawing is an attempt to show that there is a space between the floor and the foot when you take a step.

Finally, she makes a drawing crossing the legs and explains that is needed to take a step.
They decided to work collaboratively.
APPENDICES

- Project Planning and documentation Chart
- Examples of letters to send home
  - to inform parents about the topic of study
  - in preparation for a field trip
  - inviting parents to a culminating activity
- Questions, Predictions, and Findings Chart
- Meeting STEM objectives through project work
### PROJECT PLANNING CHART

**STAGE 1: DEVELOPING THE PROJECT**
- Preparing to create the very first project.
- Evaluating the project.
- Considering the project throughout the project.
- Following up with the project.

**STAGE 2: DESIGNING THE PROJECT**
- Preparing to create the very first project.
- Evaluating the project.
- Considering the project throughout the project.
- Following up with the project.

### QUESTIONS, PROJECTIONS, FINDINGS CHART

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QUESTIONS</th>
<th>PROJECTIONS</th>
<th>FINDINGS</th>
<th>HOW WE CHECKED THE FINDINGS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What other materials are there on the table?</td>
<td>Are the materials on the table the same as before?</td>
<td>Materials are the same as before. The materials on the table are the same as before.</td>
<td>Children traced different materials on the table and compared the materials to see if they were the same.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The color of that does not really match the color of that?</td>
<td>The color of that does not really match the color of that?</td>
<td>The color of that does not really match the color of that?</td>
<td>Children used colored papers to create the colors and compared the colors to see if they were the same.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What color are the same color as the color?</td>
<td>Are the colors the same color as the color?</td>
<td>The colors are the same color as the color.</td>
<td>Children used colored papers to create the colors and compared the colors to see if they were the same.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is this the same color as the color?</td>
<td>Are these the same color as the color?</td>
<td>These colors are the same color as the color.</td>
<td>Children used colored papers to create the colors and compared the colors to see if they were the same.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How are these colors the same?</td>
<td>Are the colors the same?</td>
<td>The colors are the same.</td>
<td>Children used colored papers to create the colors and compared the colors to see if they were the same.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How are these colors different?</td>
<td>Are the colors the same?</td>
<td>The colors are the same.</td>
<td>Children used colored papers to create the colors and compared the colors to see if they were the same.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the name of a color?</td>
<td>The name of a color?</td>
<td>The name of a color?</td>
<td>Children used colored papers to create the colors and compared the colors to see if they were the same.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### MEETING STEM OBJECTIVES THROUGH PROJECT WORK

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STEM EDUCATION</th>
<th>PROJECT APPROACH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INQUIRY</td>
<td>Science is asking questions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CURiosity</td>
<td>Children are encouraged to develop their own ideas about how things work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INVESTIGATION</td>
<td>Science is observing and making connections.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EXPLORATION</td>
<td>Science is exploring. Children are encouraged to observe, process, and come to understand new information using their five senses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DATA GATHERING</td>
<td>Science is data gathering.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PERSPECTIVE</td>
<td>Teachers are encouraged to listen with an interest to the students and have them listen to each other as well.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>