

Cultivating engagement and improving reading scores through the Cosmic Curriculum

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Introduction Into Action Research

Submitted To:

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Problem Statement

Who is affected by the problem or issue?

- I am concerned that my emergent readers and lower functioning montessori students are not as engaged or involved in the learning process as I think they could be.

What is the nature of the issue or problem?

- The sensitive period of children ages 6-12 is for the acquisition of culture.
- Previous attitudes of the morning workcycle being used solely for math and language lessons will be examined.

What is suspected of causing the problem or issue?

- Young children have little context for typical math and language lessons, which leave their minds free to wander towards exterior stimulus (video games, pop culture, etc.) I suspect this also affects their ability to obtain foundational reading skills.

What do you intend to do to address the problem?

- In order to connect the child to the universe I will implement cultural lessons first in the morning and continue traditional math and language lessons into the afternoon.

What is the goal or outcomes for improvement?

- The goal is to increase emergent reader scores and student engagement and collaboration throughout the day.

Action research question

What effect will giving cultural lessons at the beginning of the day have on Montessori lower elementary student, engagement and emergent reading scores?

Data collection sources

Data will be collected from four sources to measure the effects of giving cultural presentations in the morning on student engagement and emergent reading scores. This data will specifically measure the effectiveness of prioritizing cultural lessons as a way to increase student engagement throughout the day as well as improve emergent reading scores.

- Data Source 1- Observational data-A checklist will be created to measure student engagement in cultural activities. Including; how often children are working on expanding a cultural lesson throughout the day, trips to the cultural shelves and the use of non-fiction books.
- Data Source 2- Artifacts- Pre and Post DIBELS Reading Assessments-these tests show growth in specific reading skills including fluency and comprehension.
- Data Source 3-Artifacts-Student Journals will be used with occasional writing prompts to gauge engagement throughout the intervention.
- Data Source 4- Inquiry Data-Conferencing will be used to explore student perceptions of cultural lessons as well as their perceived engagement in periodic lessons.

Timeline

August 15th-Parent Orientation Night

Describe Dr. Montessori's planes of development and the role the acquisition of culture plays in a 6-9 year olds development. Give a brief overview of the great stories and cosmic curriculum. Ask parents to sign release form.

August 19th- School begins

Begin observations of children to determine approximately 10 students to focus on. The goal is to get a good range of achievement and interests. From low to high, across all age levels.

August 26th-decisions will be made resulting in approximately 10 focus students.

GREAT STORIES

August 22nd- Present "Birth of the Universe"

Weeklong Extension activities

- Cosmic Nesting Boxes
- Impressionistic charts
- Creative Writing
- Art projects
- Discussions

August 29th-Present "Coming of Life"

Weeklong Extension activities

- Creative Writing
- Timeline
- Art projects
- Discussions
- books

September 5th- Present "Coming of Man"

Weeklong Extension activities

- Black Timeline
- Creative Writing
- Art projects
- Discussions
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September 12th- Present "Story of Numbers"

Weeklong extension activities

- Art projects
 - Cuneiform in clay
 - knots on a rope
- Creative writing
- Books
- Children's own number systems

September 19th- Present "Story of Writing"

Weeklong extension activities

- Art projects
 - Paper bag papyrus
- Creative writing
- Books
- Children's own writing system

CULTURAL LESSON OUTLINE

August 26th- Cultural lessons to begin, following the curriculum map. (See attached .pdf document)

Monday-History

Tuesday-Botany

Wednesday-Geography

Thursday-Zoology

9-9:20-3rd grade

9:25-9:45-2nd grade

9:50-10:10-1st grade

(Times and schedule may be adjusted according to observations of children's needs)

Monday-Thursday afternoon-Continent study of Africa during closing circle through books, discussions, artifacts, videos, etc

Friday-Physical Science (ALL levels together-after Studio rotations, lunch and recess)

DATA COLLECTION

Daily- Observations will be done by Ms. Carolyn and myself.

Weekly- Journals of selected students will be checked for content and notes made for children to reflect upon.

Periodically- Conferencing done with selected students

September 3rd- Begin DIBELS reading assessment for baseline data

November 19th-

Begin DIBELS progress monitoring for those students who scored below benchmark level. In the case that there is not enough data, University of Utah reading assessment scores and prior DIBELS scores will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention.

Begin final conferencing, journal review and observations.

November 22nd-Summarize findings