

Week 14: Presentations

I. Highlights

- A. Art should be free self-expression, focused on the process instead of the end result.
- B. We have to put our own culture on hold and meet children and families where they are, respecting and adapting to their culture as much as possible.

II. Homework

- A. If you didn't present today, it's your turn next week.
- B. Final exam is two weeks from today.

III. Assignment Notes

- A. Next week is the rest of the presentations.
- B. Next week is a snack potluck too. (Optional, but you have to be here the whole class period whether or not you bring anything or eat.)
- C. Next week we get our study guide for the final exam. Allowed one sheet of notes (one side, handwritten) just like the midterm.

IV. Presentation notes

- A. Spring-loaded clothespins are a good way to build finger/hand strength (fine motor) which helps scissor skills.
- B. Plastic clothespins are usually easier to open than wooden ones.
- C. If a child isn't sure where to hold the clothespin or anything else, put a small circle of Velcro where their fingers should go. It's a tactile reminder.
- D. Ms. Zarghami feels strongly that crayons should not have papers on them. Peel every crayon because this is art. The paper limits them to writing with the tip.

Once you take the paper off, they can use the side or other areas, can be more expressive, especially with fat crayons. Helps to soak it in lukewarm water (not hot) to get the paper off more easily.

- E. Stir two packets of unsweetened Kool-Aid powder into your playdough to add natural color and scent.
- F. When a young child is hesitant to touch something (playdough, fingerpaint, etc.) don't force them to do it. Just offer the activity to everyone and that child will come when they're ready because it's so appealing.
- G. RAFT (Resource Area for Teachers, www.raft.net) is an excellent place to get supplies for activities!
- H. Real colored sand from the preschool art catalog is expensive! Make your own by rubbing chalk against a surface to make it into dust. Mix that dust into salt. The salt will absorb the color.
- I. If your kids are overwhelmed by 10 blocks and can't count that high reliably, start with fewer blocks. Start with 4 or fewer. Then use more as they get comfortable with smaller numbers. Build it up so they can be successful.
- J. Before adding and subtracting, kids have to understand the numbers. Do they know that three objects mean the number "three" and the symbol "3"? If not, then asking them $3 + 2$ will be pointless. Start with number recognition and one-to-one correspondence.
- K. For a child with motor issues in their arms (such as a child with locked elbows), put the art project on a Wilton cake decorating "lazy susan" (spinning tray) so the project turns instead of the child having to move all around. That will help them reach the different sides of the project the way other children can naturally do by moving their arms. (Even children who are typically developing can benefit from this if it's really big paper and they can't reach.)

- L. If the little plastic droppers are too hard for a child to squeeze, use children's medicine droppers or turkey basters.
- M. Art in early childhood is focused on the process and created by the child. It should not be focused on an end result (that's a craft) and it should not be teacher-directed (that's an activity).
- N. Cooking projects are great for young children. Cooking is a basic life skill, plus it supports sensory, science, math, reading, cognitive development, following directions, etc. It's very engaging for them! If they're struggling with not nibbling during the process, let them take a tiny taste of each ingredient before you start. That helps them wait more calmly for the end to eat the finished product.
- O. Birth to 3 years old = no projects. Provide safe materials and let them use it as they wish.
- P. Ask the children with cognitively helpful questions such as, "What would happen if you..." or "How does it feel when you..." Don't just ask them to follow directions. Prompt them to go beyond that basic level.
- Q. Great idea to read books on the topic (such as color mixing) before the project to set the stage, prepare the children for the project. The way you talk to the children and talk about the project also prepares them. Don't just tell them, "Come do this." Sit and do it with them, enjoy it with them.
- R. If you do an activity and it's no fun, put it away. That happens sometimes. It doesn't make you a bad teacher. It does mean it's time to stop with that and try something else.

V. Communication

- A. Examples of communication barriers we've seen in the past few weeks
 - 1. Not speaking the language the parents speak, or if parents can't read the language we write in. If you can't communicate with the families, how can you build a relationship?
 - 2. Parents not giving us the information about the child's special needs. Parents may be afraid that children will be kept out of school, but if they don't tell us, we don't always know how to meet their needs.
 - 3. People not speaking up for themselves when something is wrong. Harder to address a problem later when it's bigger.
- B. Teachers can do inhalers and pills/syrup medications if we have been trained in child health & safety. For injections or through the rectum, it has to be given by a licensed nurse.
- C. [scholastic.com](http://www.scholastic.com) has a "Teachers" resource section including lots of stuff on multicultural communication strategies.
- D. It's difficult but important to put your own culture on hold, step beyond it, and at least meet the other person halfway between your culture and theirs. We are in such a diverse multicultural area that we have to do it even though it's hard!