

Curriculum themes for C1

Child development and lemotif for this class

One of the main characteristics of children between the seventh and ninth year [age 6-8] is their desire to learn, without any need to form their own judgements. Memory, imagination, enjoyment of rhythmical repetition and a desire for universal concepts presented in pictorial form, come to the fore at this stage. Children actively seek guidance from the adult world and whilst they continue to imitate what they experience, their behaviour is modelled on how the significant others and in school the teachers are. Children start observing those around them for signs of how to be. They look to the teachers for guidance in all aspects of being in school and learning. Gesture is a powerful means of gaining their attention, words have to be generate images in the minds of the children and the way the teachers act in all things great and small shows children how things can be in ways that foster well-being, social awareness and moral authority.

A child's inner question to the teacher is: 'do you see me?' , "do I belong here?', 'can I participate?' and 'Can you help me encounter the world?'. These basic questions direct the teacher's position and relationship in regard to the child. These are answered in and through the lessons which aim to let the children actually experience the world, and teach them the basic cultural and social techniques they need to engage with others and the world. The teacher who succeeds in meeting these expectations of the children will be accepted by them as an authority.

Children in Class 1 are making the transition from Early Childhood education, with its focus on learning through imitation, practical activities and child-led play, into formal schooling, where there is more need to listen, wait, follow and participate. They learn to become part of a new learning community, building on the learning habits, dispositions and attitudes that have been fostered in kindergarten, and learning new classroom routines and behaviours. Children are ready and eager to take on the challenge of this new phase of their learning, keen to get started on the exciting adventures of literacy and numeracy. Teachers are ready to meet the children, however ready they are, and seek to integrate them into the learning community. The class as learning community has to establish its classroom rituals and ways of being and working together and the pedagogical priority in class 1 is establishing good, healthy learning habits and rhythms and they need to understand the factors that enhance and inhibit flow in the classroom situation (i.e. that activities move smoothly from one process to another in a way that makes sense).

Stories and explanations of things (such as classroom tasks, introductions to numbers and reading and writing) work best through providing pictures and appropriate images, which are embodied and enable the imagination to begin mapping out interior spaces. The rhythms and rituals help the children be able to focus on the structuring of numbers, letters, forms, rules. As children gain greater control of their limbs, feet and fingers, they also expand the internal spaces of the imagination, learning to focus their mental imaging. It is important to cultivate a natural sense of wonder, which is an uninhibited opening to the world and to other people.

The gesture of Class 1 is one of opening the book of learning and beginning the process of 'reading' . Reading in this sense starts with exploring, playing with, engendering curiosity and kindling interest, followed by guided access to the archetypal 'secrets' of symbols, letters, signs, numbers and forms. In class 1 children are exposed to a world of new languages including two other languages, literacy, numeracy, the dynamic world of form, colour, movement. They need to feel welcome in these new

C1 Curriculum Themes

worlds, which they need to quickly become familiar with and for this they need to feel safe, supported and encouraged.

Narrative Themes

Folktales, tales of wonder and magic, nature tales.

Folktales, tales of wonder and transformation, tales of magic, sometimes called fairy tales, are characterized by the appearance of archetypes, or frequently recurring motifs that have specific narrative functions (e.g. the offer of magic help) and often appear in a specific order (e.g. like three trials) they are impervious to material facts and have their own internal logic and often reflect the cultures in which they were recorded. There are suggestions that many folktale motifs go back to a common proto-European language, but equally they can be the products of contemporary literature. Many such folk tales have a common narrative structure (preparation, complication, transference, struggle, return, recognition), similar to the structures found in myths.

Musical Themes

Qualities:

- Still pentatonic, fairly high in range, no strong pull to a key note.
- Fairly free in rhythm (unless skipping to the song).
- Constant repetition, and slight variations.

Topics: Songs to accompany activities, counting rhymes, seasonal and nature, fairy tales

Artistic Themes

Simple representation of people and animals in side profile, lack of perspective and proportion.

Painting colour stories and moods.

Materials: wax sticks and blocks, thick (Lyra) pencils, coloured chalks, watercolour paints (warm and cool primary colours), beeswax/organic plasticine/clay

Physical Themes

How to be in the body in ways that free up the mind to engage with new complexities and abstractions. body geography, throwing and catching, skipping, string games, coordinating hands and eyes