

Free Play Fun!

Overview

This lesson plan introduces collaboration, imagination, and risk taking

Level: Beginner

Age Group: K-2

Time to Complete: To be determined by facilitator

Main Goal: Step back and allow participants to play freely, without managing or prescribing the process.

Guiding and supporting play:

- Observe, observe, observe!
- Allow children to explore their own Rigamajig play ideas. There is no set formula for “right” or “wrong” outcomes.
- Children may produce a variety of Rigamajig ideas to meet the basic objectives of the lesson plan. No two creations or play sessions are alike. Be comfortable with letting children’s play evolve.
- There are no mistakes, let them explore and problem solve.
- Resist the urge to “fix” things for children and to show or tell children how to do things. Observe, and pay attention to children’s ideas and actions. Support play in ways that focus children on their own ideas. Ask about what students are planning to do, what they are making, and what they can change to make their Rigamajig work better?
- Discover insights into children’s creative thinking, and foster creativity!

Materials needed:

- Rigamajig Basic Builder Kit

Getting started:

By allowing students to follow their instincts and take the lead in their explorations, facilitators will witness creations emerge through their imaginative play. However, sometimes students may need a little boost to get started.

The foundation for play begins with developing a common language with your students by naming the parts that are included in the kit. This process is described in the Explore Rigamajig Project

Plan. A common language enables students to communicate in a productive manner. From here, if your students need some scaffolding for their play exploration, teachers may consider giving them a goal for their play. Below are pictures of kindergartners who were asked to build a playground for their class pet turtle, Elmer.

While play is underway:

Observe with an interested and supportive attitude and, as needed, encourage problem solving thinking, creativity, collaboration, discussion, and questions.

- Challenges for Students:
 - Begin by asking students to think about what they typically see on a playground. They will most likely start to list things such as tunnels, slides, ladders etc. This exercise get students in the playground mindset. Now that they are thinking about playgrounds and what is on them, they may be more confident in creating a playground of their own from the Rigamajig kit.
 - This challenge can be met as a class or in small groups. After exploring what's on a playground, the teacher can assign small groups to build each of those components. After they have had some time to construct their playgrounds, the class can regroup to combine their creations for one complete playground.
 - The goal of this Project Plan is to inspire teachers to give autonomy to their students. Rigamajig shows its fullest potential when teachers excuse themselves as leaders and allow the children's young minds to take over.
- Have Fun!

Vocabulary

Post some of the following words on a White Board, SmartBoard, sheet of chart paper or have the students make their vocabulary lists or posters of the key words. Encourage children's use of these words as they design and build. Encourage children to label the physical components of their creations.

- Goal
- Design
- Evaluate
- Teamwork

What to look for:

- Watch for children's collaborations in their thinking and construction. Offer encouraging words about working together to build something.
- Pay particular attention to how children go about their construction process. Do they seem to have a specific goal? Or, do they seem more focused on learning about the properties of the materials and different things they can do with them?
- Pay attention to the language. What do their words reveal about their knowledge of objects, physical processes, design, and/or social collaboration?
- When children indicate they accomplished something, give them a chance to demonstrate their construction and how it works, and share with other children.

What if the children "stall"?

- Sit with the group and ask them to discuss their ideas for what to build. Can they agree on something?
- Reinforce that any kind of construction is OK, it's whatever they want to do!
- Pick up a few pieces and put them together for children to see. Don't be afraid to model taking a risk, exploring, or changing an initial idea.

Wrapping up & reflecting:

- What makes a good collaborator?
- Tell us about a problem you encountered and how you solved it?
- Create drawings and descriptions or photographs and descriptions of work, including step by step as preferred
- Share and present work, include discuss about how and why construction decisions were made

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With the help our Captain of Play and Learning Ngina Johnson, we've put together a few project plans to get you started.