

## 21<sup>st</sup> CENTURY/INQUIRY-BASED CLASSROOM EXAMPLES

Reflections/Anecdotes/Evidence of Change  
Provided by 2007-2008 Year I ISS Participants

### Example 1:

J. decided to play with the blocks during free choice time. He made a six block pattern before he started lining the blocks up in the same direction. This child has severe motor and visual delays so it makes this experience even more worthwhile.



--Lisa G. and Wendy B., Mingo County Pre-K Teacher and Assistant

### Example 2:

Spring brings the interest of new life and metamorphosis. A student brought a Mason jar filled with tadpoles to school. Ms. Lynn and I have never raised tadpoles, so we (along with the children) immediately started asking parents, teachers, and students how to do this. After many questions the students and I decided to check the Internet for information. We are happy to report the tadpoles are doing well and we are looking for their back legs to appear any day!



--Ginger M. and Lynn C., Wyoming County Pre-K Teacher and Assistant

**Example 3:**

In both pictures the children are using real world tools, interactive communication, curiosity, creativity, collaboration, self-directed learning, problem solving, and scientific inquiry in the block picture.

In the block picture, the children were making ramps and driving cars & trucks up and down the ramps. I sat down with them after this picture and asked questions about what they were doing. I helped to extend their learning when one of the children discovered that if he used a cylinder block with a long straight block on top it would roll. He was really proud of himself and continued play until time to clean up.

In the wood working table picture, the children were hammering nails and another child came over to join so they worked together to get his goggles on. I also remember them talking about what they were "making" and worked at it for a long time.



--Dianne B., Roane County Pre-K Teacher

**Example 4:**

Picture #1 - During free choice center time a group of children decided that they wanted to build a city in the block center, so they started building their structure. One child said, "Let's see if our buildings are straight." Then another little girl said, "Let's see if our buildings are level." I thought that was a pretty neat observation and took a picture of their structure. When they were finished, it turned out to be a really cool city.



Picture #2 - The children love utilizing the digital camera. They take pictures of everything, even themselves. This little girl sees me taking a picture of the block city and decides to take one also. She turns the camera up longways and takes her picture, then shows it to me. She did a really good job!



--Shawnee W. And Karis M., Mingo County Pre-K Teacher and Assistant

**Example #5:**

The camera has made a huge impact on our classroom. One picture is of the students and I making observations and discovery what is inside of a pumpkin. Before this activity we made predictions about pumpkins and wrote them down on chart paper. The children absolutely love this activity several of them had no idea what was inside of a pumpkin. During this activity we were able to incorporate many skills. The students were able to use their senses and were able to count the seeds. We used these pictures to reflect on that activity and what we learned about the pumpkins and what is inside the pumpkins. The pictures really helped the children reflect back on that activity.



-Misty K., Clay County Pre-K Teacher

**Example #6:**

Our children were so interested in houses; building them, decorating them, all sorts of great ideas! They built houses daily in the block area and wanted something large enough for them to fit inside. So we asked the children what they could use to build a house that large and they came up with a cardboard box. One of our children's mom had just purchased a new washing machine and she donated us a box. The picture attached is of the children painting the house purple, their choice of course. After this picture, we came up with ways to make a roof and decorate the house. The children wanted curtains so we helped them choose fabric and sew curtains for the windows.



--Tamra F. and Karris M., Mingo County Pre-K Teacher and Assistant

**Example 7:**

We were outside in our play area when one of the children spotted a turtle. One of the children picked it up while others were afraid. They were curious how it felt, why it put its head inside, where it came from and where it was going when we saw it. Some of the boys knew the answers but we looked on the Internet to find out more about them. We asked several other teachers and looked at books about turtles. We didn't know of anyone else to ask about turtles. Eventually everyone touched the shell to feel it.



--Barbara P., Roane County Pre-K Teacher

**Example 8:**

S's dad is a truck driver and he brought the truck to school after we wrote a letter asking him to come. This would be collaboration as well as technology and literacy. We are having a blast!



Naida H. and Sabrina P., McDowell County Pre-K Teacher and Assistant

**Example 9:**

This small group of children worked together (Collaboration) to build an enclosure for animals (Creativity). They talked about what they were doing (Interactive Communication) as they figured out how to balance the blocks (Problem Solving).



--Kathleen K. and Sherry K., McDowell County Pre-K Teacher and Assistant

**Example 10:**

We are continuing to focus on the students' interests. We have been learning all about ponds. Also, while playing on the playground the students found a toad. We discussed the differences in a toad and a frog, such as where they lay their eggs, how they look and feel, why it was laying in a little hole in the ground, and many other questions.

We also watched our chicks hatch. The children have acquired a great deal of new vocabulary through these experiences. We compared the chicks to humans. Comparing our feet, noses, arms, the way we eat. It was such a great experience for all of us.



--Anissa C. and Carol C., Clay County Pre-K Teacher and Assistant

**Example 11:**

We have created more space for block play to allow the children to create more elaborate structures. We have added hollow blocks along with more cardboard blocks to give the children more of a variety of blocks. We are working on maybe getting a bigger room next year so that we will have more space for block play.

Children are allowed to investigate and explore on a daily basis or as interests emerge. The interest of one child lead to a project about coal. We made furniture around, added large furniture boxes, and constructed a simulated mine in our room. The comments from the kids let me know that the children really enjoyed this project. We also created a class book with drawings and dictations.

Shawnee W. and Judy S., Mingo County Pre-K Teacher and Assistant