



Learning to Teach

Observing and Reflecting

This video series, “Learning to Teach,” provides a platform for professional development in early childhood education. It introduces viewers to compelling early childhood classroom footage accompanied by facilitated discussions about observations and teaching practices. You will get a hands-on look at how beginning teachers learn to closely observe children and engage in reflective conversations about children, materials, the classroom environment and themselves.

The video has three parts: classroom routines and transitions, dramatic play, and early childhood materials. It enacts two essential elements of Bank Street College of Education’s teacher education pedagogy: close observation of children and reflective practice.

A classroom of four year olds is a busy place. You will see children enter school, say goodbye to their caregivers, engage in interactions with their classmates, play with a range of materials, listen to a story, and get ready for lunch and outdoor play. In short, these vignettes illuminate authentic moments that are typical of classroom life with young children. Many of these situations represent sources of teacher difficulty or frustration. When should a teacher intervene? When can children solve problems without a teacher’s intervention? What kinds of routines support children as they learn to regulate themselves? What behavior is worrisome or requires a closer look? Whether experienced or new to the field, these are questions that continue to engage early childhood teachers.



Prior to each video clip, a Bank Street graduate faculty member introduces the situation, shows the video, and then engages novice teachers in a discussion. Viewers can engage in a similar process: watch, consider, and discuss. Then join the graduate student panel as they puzzle out what they saw and try to make sense of the children and the teaching situation as well as themselves as early childhood teachers.



Learning to Teach, Part 1

30 minutes



Learning to Teach, Part 2

17 minutes



Learning to Teach, Part 3

16 minutes



Learning to Teach

Part One: Classroom Routines and Transitions

PART ONE

Routines and transitions provide a structure for classroom life. They enable children to move smoothly through the day and “borrow” the external regulation that teachers establish to begin internalizing developing their ability to self-regulate. In these clips we watch:

Starting the Day | 1:33

Children enter the classroom to begin the school day. They say goodbye to their caregivers, eat breakfast and engage in classroom activities.

Cleaning Up | 7:07

Clean up can be a challenging time for teachers and children. We will see how this teacher encourages the kind of behavior she wants from the children.

Story Time | 11:06

Story is an important part of everyday life in early childhood classrooms. How is it set up in this classroom? How do you think about the value of story time?

Show and Tell | 16:32

Many classrooms set aside time for

children to “show and tell.” We can examine the interactions among the children and the teacher’s role during this activity to consider what children are gaining from this activity.

Leaving the Classroom | 23:37

Moving in and out of the classroom – in this case to go outdoors to play – requires regular routines. How does the teacher help the children manage this transition? What do you notice about the children’s self-regulation skills?



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Part Two: Dramatic Play

PART TWO

In this part of the series, we take a close look at what is happening when children engage in value dramatic play. Scenes include:

Doll Play | 0:59

Doll play in which two young boys express strong emotions through their play. Young children often express intense feelings through their play. This can evoke strong feelings in teachers, too.

Extending Play | 5:03

Sometimes children need help moving their play along. A puppet show that the teacher encourages is focused on two children. What do you think about the girl who has a different idea? When should a teacher step in? When should she allow children to direct their play?

Balancing Attention | 11:34

The last clip illuminates a common challenge: Supporting children's play and balancing attention among children.



Learning to Teach, Part 2

17 minutes



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Part Three: Early Childhood Materials and Environment

PART THREE

Open-ended materials are the ‘texts’ of the early childhood classroom, providing limitless opportunities for children to create, engage, represent, and imagine. Scenes in this series show children working with a range of materials in an environment designed to support their growth:

Playing Alone | 0:59

How do we understand a situation where a child plays alone? In the first scene, we focus on a child playing by herself.

Open-Ended Materials | 6:37

Paper, scissors, crayons. These are some of the open ended materials you will find in an early childhood classroom. We’ll look at what the children do with these materials and with each other.

Around the Sand Table | 10:26

This interaction at the sand table helps us understand how another open ended material gives children so much to work with. There’s a lot going on! Pay attention to the language children use.



Learning to Teach, Part 3

16 minutes



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