

11/16/14

Mentor Transcript: Primary (Background Music, Late Starting Older Children, Sensorial Materials)

wendyc(P)	Hi to all. Ready for the next set of questions.
(Q)	Is background music appropriate in the classroom? We are a divided camp right now, amicably divided, I should say. One primary 'teacher' likes to have different kinds of music (pop, jazz...) playing in her room. Another lower elementary 'teacher' says it seems like it's an intrusion on the students' concentration. I don't know where I stand, so we thought we'd ask someone with expertise.
wendyc(A)	I can't say that I have a single answer for this. There are likely variabilities with time of day, particular tasks being worked on, and the make up of the class. I am easily overstimulated, so for me music would be a challenge. But only trial and observation will give you the answer you are looking for. Turn it on and see how it impacts concentration, noise level, etc....
R(Q)	The second question that seems to be a question of every guide I speak to is how/where do you "catch up" or "jump in" with students who are starting primary at 4.5 or 5 years old? It seems every year we get one or two new students in this category, and I have a difficult time assessing which building block materials are essential and not to be skipped (golden beads, seems to be a hang-up of mine) versus when to just start with what my album says is "age appropriate" (say, stamp game, in the instance of a 5-year-old).
wendyc(A)	The first thing I always did was see if I could still get a little work out of the Sandpaper Letters. You are really past the sensitive period, but some children will work with them for a short while. As quickly as you are able, though, get on to the moveable alphabet and start introducing new sounds through this work as well. You can also continue to introduce new sounds using the sandpaper letters by working on writing on the chalkboard. You need this combination of different approaches to learning the sounds once they are five. They are not particularly attracted to tracing anymore and they will not likely learn all of the letters through three-period lessons using the SPL.
wendyc(A)	Get them going with sensorial games and some of the more complex practical life exercises. And finally math. If the student has not established one-to-one correspondence, there is no getting out of it. If they don't know the numbers,

	<p>work on learning the symbols by writing on the chalkboard. You can go through all of the lessons for 1 - 10, but more often you are just showing them the work, giving them a turn and moving on to the next lesson. For example, number rods. Show them, take turns, if they are interested and take them out, great. If not, on to the spindle boxes while working on writing numbers and identifying the symbols at the same time.</p>
wendyc(A)	<p>As soon as some progress is being made, on to the demonstration tray of the golden beads. The golden beads really cannot be skipped. This is the basis of all math work with the decimal system. The older the child is the less interested he will be in manipulating all of the cards, but you have to guide him through the four processes. Repeat each process as many times as you can keep his interest. Begin the stamp game as soon as you feel the process of addition is making sense.</p> <p>So essentially you are still working through most of the materials, but the child's interest will not be as long with most of them. You will have to keep moving along.</p>
(Q)	<p>The children in my class are not very interested in the sensorial materials. I give the lessons, but they only repeat the exercise once and then they don't take it out again.</p>
wendyc(A)	<p>It is hard to say what may be impacting your class without asking a few more questions. But there are some common mistakes that many of us make. So I will address a few of those here.</p> <p>Oftentimes we do not stay with the children to repeat the lesson ourselves. We have to model repetition if we want to see it in our classrooms. Probably more now than ever. Repetition is not as automatic as it was fifteen years ago. But we know that it is a human tendency, so it can't be gone altogether. ;)</p> <p>The second thing to consider is how well the child is able to complete the exercise on his first try. If he is completely successful with the material, then you are presenting it too late and his interest will not be there.</p> <p>The third thing to consider is language work. We need to be teaching the language of long, longer, longest; heavy, heavier; heaviest.</p> <p>Fourth remember the games. This is where the children often have the most fun. Build the pink tower on one rug, and then take all the pieces down and build it again on a rug across the room. Have 8 children hold the brown bells in mixed order on one side of the room and have one other play the matching game until he has restored all of the bells to their proper places. Sensorial should be fun, fun, fun.</p> <p>And finally, remember that these materials are to help the student explore, understand, learn the language of, refine and then hold a quality of his world</p>

	in his mind. The final step with every sensorial material is to apply the quality to the contents of the classroom. "Can you find something in the room that is even a lighter green? No. Well, then this box is the lightest."
wendyc(A)	I am closing in on Summer Institute sessions. Sanford Jones will be joining us again to teach primary music, presenting bell work. He is the master. Watch for emails shortly to announce that registration is open.