



The Early Years Learning Framework Professional Learning Program



Talking about practice: Intentional teaching

This is the second in *Talking about practice series*. This series is intended for use in conversation between early childhood educators.

Suggestions for using this presentation

As the director/leader, watch the presentation first and decide how you might use it in your setting. Think about the experience and understandings of the staff and what you hope to achieve.

How to watch the presentation

When you watch Talking about practice: Intentional teaching you will see that it has four parts:

- A general scene setting discussion about intentional teaching and what it means.
- A lunchtime routine—discussion and Vignette
- Trucks, rocks, bark and trees—discussion and Vignette
- Play-Doh and maths—discussion and Vignette

Watch as a whole or one part at a time

After the general discussion at the beginning of the presentation, each of the three following segments ends with a video Vignette. If you choose to watch the presentation in sections, the natural breaks occur at the end of the general discussion and then after each of the video Vignettes.

It may be that you will want to watch all, or part of the presentation more than once.

The conversation and the video Vignettes are equally important

It is very important to listen to the rich conversation between the Director and the Interviewer about intentional teaching, rather than focus solely on the video Vignettes that are part of this presentation.

Facilitating the discussion

There are many ways to facilitate a reflective discussion with your staff. How you do it will be dependent on what you are trying to achieve.

Whatever you do, it will be important to give your staff the opportunity to respond to what they have seen in the presentation, before you ask them to think about what intentional

teaching does or does not mean in your setting.

Two approaches to facilitating the discussion are set below:

- An approach based on Learning Circles—some of you will be familiar with this.
- An approach based on prompts and reflective questions.

Facilitation Approach 1

Using a LEARNING CIRCLE to promote a reflective discussion about *Talking about practice: Intentional teaching*

How to go about it

- Remember the group rules—only one person talking at time, all ideas accepted.
- Make sure each person has a chance to make a response to the questions before moving onto the next question.
- There are four steps in this process but it is likely that your initial discussion will progress only through the first three.

Reflect

You will see that there are two types of questions in the set below. The first set is about what can be described (objects, what happened, etc.)—and when described everyone will agree that this is so. The second set (what delights you, etc.) is about how your staff feel individually about what they are seeing. The information from the responses to both sets of questions are important in deciding what to do next.

- What did you see—equipment, objects?
- What happened?
- What words, phrases stand out?
- What delights you; what intrigues, frightens, worries, annoys and excites you?
- What surprised you?
- What it reminds you of?
- What did you struggle with?
- What comes to you as something new or fresh in this?
- Where did you raise your eyebrows?



- What words were challenging?
- What experiences do you associate with this?
- When have you seen similar situations?

Reframe

This set of questions builds on the data and comment of the reflections above. This is the part of the discussion that will probably take the longest as the questions ask for deeper thinking. Make sure you remember to remind people to give everyone a turn and the chance to respond to each of the questions before moving on.

- What is happening here; what is this all about?
- Why is this significant; how do you know this is significant?
- Where have you read/heard about this?
- How is it the same or different from your understanding of intentional teaching?
- Can you give some examples of intentional teaching in your room or services?
- How will this affect your work?
- What have you learnt from this?

Act

This part of the conversation is where the implications of the prior discussion and the issues raised in the presentation are discussed. The answers may be short or long-term decisions. Making some decisions is important to give real value to the time people have given to engage in the process.

- What will you take away from this conversation in relation to your work with children, colleagues and parents?
- What ideas have you changed?
- What will you change about your practice?
- What might we need to think more about in our service?

For example:

- Does our documentation reflect our intentions and intentional teaching?
- How do educators plan for intentional teaching whilst using the children's interests and needs?
- What values and views of children underpin the approach we take in this service (or that the individual educators take to solving the problems in our service)?
- What do these mean for our understanding of intentional teaching?

A personal reflection

This does not have to be shared with the group, but it can be if the individuals wish to. It is important because it affirms the importance of being open to change, either in the form of new and/or deeper

understanding. Openness to change is essential to learning.

- I am beginning to think ...?

Review

You will need to revisit this discussion and the decisions taken at another time, to see if they have had the effect that you intended. This review phase is a crucial part of the process, as it opens up the potential for ongoing gains in professional practice and for children.

Reference

Stanfield, R.B. (Ed.) (2000). *The Art of Focused Conversation: 100 Ways to Access Group Wisdom in the Workplace*. Gabriola Island BC, Canada: New Society Publishers and Toronto, ON, Canada: The Canadian Institute of Cultural Affairs.

Facilitation Approach 2

Prompts and reflective questions for using Talking about practice: Intentional teaching

The following prompts and questions are provided to guide the discussion. In this approach each of the segments is taken separately.

PART 1

Talking about practice: Intentional teaching identifies intentional teaching as one of the eight 'pedagogical practices' described in the Early Years Learning Framework.

It said:

- Pedagogy is about our professional practice as we work with children.
- It involves building relationships, nurturing and supporting children, planning experiences for them and interacting with them to expand their understanding about the world.
- It includes all of the professional decisions and judgements we make every day; it's a kind of 'artistry' as we creatively improvise, adapt and respond to things that happen and children's changing needs.
- 'Pedagogy' combines all our knowledge and skills, our values and personal beliefs and our strategies for 'guiding children'—the word 'pedagogy' literally means 'to guide'.

What does a phrase like 'pedagogical practices' mean for you?

Talking about practice: Intentional teaching also said that:

- intentional teaching is built on relationships, values and beliefs about children, about childhood and about learning
- we recognise that educators have intentions and so do children, and that we negotiate much of the learning that occurs as we interact with children's interests and pursuits
- sometimes a learning activity is child-initiated; sometimes it's

led by the educator; sometimes we follow a child's lead, but extend the learning beyond where a child might go alone.

What do you think about 'intentional teaching'?

What does that mean for you and the educators at your service?

Is intentional teaching about particular, planned learning experiences, or is it more pervasive than that?

For example, in *Talking about practice: Intentional teaching* the Director says:

- it can be both. Educators have long-term and short-term goals; they might want children to learn about using art materials, or how books work, for example; or they might want, over a long time, to teach children about respect for people and care for the environment. Those things take a lifetime to learn!
- intentional teaching can occur in small group times or across the day, whenever an educator makes a deliberate, thoughtful, considered
- decision—to enter a child's play, to model behaviours, to involve children in decisions.

Can you think of an example that shows what intentional teaching might look like in your setting?

PART 2—Lunchtime Vignette H2

Are there different ways people might view this lunchtime segment?

What might they say?

Why might the educators in the scenario have decided to take this path?

What did children and adults learn from the way the dilemma was resolved?

For example, the Director of the service told us that:

- we need to focus on the important things about routines like lunchtime ... that they are social occasions where we enjoy being together ... that it's not about staff convenience... It's about children's rights and needs
- children learnt that they could be part of decisions and that their preferences could be taken into account.

PART 3—Vignette about trucks, rocks, bark and trees....

What we see here is children playing in a natural environment. The Director told us that the stones had been put there to solve a particular problem.

What were the educators' 'intentions'?

For example:

- Engaging children in big, real world projects gives them opportunities to feel capable and respected; to see their ideas carried out.

- Children learn about cooperation and teamwork and about respecting the rights and needs of others.
- It shows that children 'own the space' and it is there for their learning.

What else did children learn?

What values and views of children underpinned the approach taken to solving the problem.

What do these mean for our understanding of intentional teaching?

PART 4—Play-Doh and maths...

As you watch this part of the presentation think about the following:

What are the educator's intentions here?

Why did she decide to give children Play-Doh and talk about measuring things? What else is going on?

For example:

- She noticed that some children were beginning to compare things and use the language of 'longer/shorter/taller'.
- She thought Play-Doh was a good material to explore maths concepts around measurement.
- She let children settle into the group and gave children her undivided attention as she concluded conversations with them.
- She introduced mathematical language around comparison.
- She knew the early maths concepts and language that young children need so they can engage with mathematical, or numeracy ideas.

Finally

Overall, it seems that we have learned that 'intentional teaching' can take many forms and that it can one-to-one, small group, whole group and happen in a planned time slot, or spontaneously as something occurs during a day.

What are some of the areas for discussion and debate about 'intentional teaching'?

For example:

- Does it mean that we plan everything and children just go along with it? Or that we have goals and we seize the teachable moment to promote particular learning for children?
- Is it about 'taking over'? Or about working alongside children, interacting to guide and support them to achieve what we believe they are capable of?

What do educators have to know and understand to be intentional every day, across the day?

