

12 - Educational Displays in the Classroom

Original Air Date: 1/13/21

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Audience: Current Active & Enrolled Students

Episode Transcript

Dr. Tisha Shipley Speaker: Hello everyone, welcome to Early Childhood Chatter with Dr. Shipley and Dr. Heald.

Dr. Stephanie Heald Speaker: Twice a month we will come to you with a 10-minute professional development that you can quickly listen to for new ideas to use today. Be sure to subscribe to this podcast for future episodes.

Let's get started. Anita Schlaht holds a master's in education and is the author of the children's book and poem, Just Playing. She was the owner, director, and a preschool teacher at Children's World Gateways to Learning Development Preschool in Edmond, Oklahoma from 1974 to 1999.

She also taught kindergarten in the Edmond Public Schools from 1992 to 1996. She retired in 2019 from her nonprofit position and is the mother of four and a grandmother of eight, ages two and a half to six and a half.

Dr. Tisha Shipley Speaker: We are so excited to talk to Anita today and she's going to talk to us about educational displays in the classroom and when she sent this in, I was like, this is such a cool topic.

So, Anita, thank you for joining us today.

Anita Schlaht Speaker: Thank you for having me.

Dr. Tisha Shipley Speaker: Tell us a little bit about why you chose to talk to us today about educational displays.

Anita Schlaht Speaker: When I was teaching back in the early seventies, I attended a workshop at an early childhood conference and this lady had this idea and I just thought it was such a great idea that I wanted to incorporate it into my teaching and I even use it now with my grandchildren when they come to my house sometimes. So, it's just such a, you know, with young children, they go into new environments and what do we say to them? We say, don't touch, use your eyes, not your hands. You know, when you go into a store or anything like that.

And so, so much of their lives, they're told, don't touch, you know, just look. And so, it's the idea of creating something very aesthetically inviting to children and allowing them to touch.

Dr. Tisha Shipley Speaker: I love that idea.

And I have said those same words. So, you're exactly right. So, tell me about the steps that there are in setting up an educational display for those of us who don't really know what they are and want to incorporate those today.

Anita Schlaht Speaker: So, the first thing you need to do is identify your space where you want to do the display. You can use a table, you could use the floor, you can use a countertop, whatever is available to you in the space that you're using. And then you want to have some kind of a table covering.

You can, a lot of times I would find a piece of fabric or a tablecloth at a garage sale or a thrift store that went along with the topic that I was going to use, or it can just be bright colors. It doesn't have to be exactly along with the topic, but just something to kind of designate the space. And so then after you've done that, you want to start looking for, decide what

your theme or your topic is going to be to go along with whatever you're teaching, or a holiday, or a letter that you're teaching the children.

And then you start to gather your items, your things that you're going to put on the table. And these need to be things that are not necessarily toys, but things that children see in the environment that maybe they're told they can't touch, but then you're allowing them to touch them. And so, you want to incorporate different textures, different sizes, different colors, and you gather all these things together.

And then you also want to add some literacy things. You want to add some name cards or some letter cards or some number cards. You want to add photographs along with actual objects so that children, you know, need to learn to transfer the one-dimensional object to the three-dimensional object and understand that those two things are the same.

And then you're going to arrange those things, and you want to arrange them in an aesthetically pleasing kind of way that would invite children to come in and touch, but also it needs to be something that you're okay with the children rearranging because that was one of the most fun things to do was to watch the children interact with the items on the table and rearrange them and regroup them.

Dr. Tisha Shipley Speaker: I love that idea. So, when you're setting up this educational display, do you align this display to your standards, your state and national standards? Do you write them into your lesson plans? How do you do that to prove and document?

Anita Schlaht Speaker: So, yes, you would look at your standards.

You can incorporate things from obviously your language goals and standards for literacy, for vocabulary development, for letter recognition and beginning reading skills. You can also incorporate math into it by adding number cards and having things that there are multiples of. You can talk, you know, with young children, talk about likes and differences.

You could do some different combinations of things for their early math skills, social studies in learning about cultures and learning about things in our environment and holidays. They're great for that. Also, your science, your science activities and themes.

You want to do a lot of hands-on things. And so, this is a great way to group those things that you want the children to explore, that you want them to touch and feel and weigh and measure and learn to observe the whole science theme goals of observing and recording. You know, if you do older children and new themes, then they can have ways to record different things from the display.

Dr. Tisha Shipley Speaker: So, I love that. So just as I sit here and think about the things that you're talking about, I get excited. I would love to set one of these up.

So, what are your students' reactions when they see these displays?

Anita Schlaht Speaker: You know, just giving them permission to touch some of the things that you're going to have on the table is exciting to them, as well as giving them the open-ended opportunity to rearrange and to group and to explore those different things. It was always I usually set it up as one of my centers. And so, it was always one of the favorite things because it was it was so tactile and interactive.

And it was those things that they were told, you know, not to touch so much of the time.

Dr. Tisha Shipley Speaker: So how often do you change out your educational displays? Do you just have one going at a time or can you have multiple? And then how often do you switch them out?

Anita Schlaht Speaker: Usually I have one at a time and depending on how long my unit or my theme on that particular subject, you know, it could be up for two weeks, sometimes just a week if it was a holiday theme, you know, or longer, just depending, especially if it were a science or social studies theme that, you know, you might have a longer kind of

goal in mind, you know, in the nice thing about it is you can add new things into it as you go along. So, you could extend it over a longer period of time.

Dr. Tisha Shipley Speaker: OK, perfect. So at the end of this, we always like to give our listeners three takeaways. What are three things that you want them to remember that they can do going into setting these educational displays up?

Anita Schlaht Speaker: I want you to remember that it's just normal things.

It doesn't take a lot of work. You can, you know, use some kind of a box that you keep all of your table coverings in and then you just gather the things as you're working on that particular unit. Some of my favorite ones that I used were just, you know, went along with the themes that we have that we were doing.

Maybe it was a letter of the week that we were doing. And so, when we did letter M, I had money and map display where they had maps of different kinds, a globe, an atlas. And then I invited the children to bring money from home, from travels, from their parents.

We put all different kinds of money from all over the world. We found those countries on the map. Of course, kids love money.

They love to feel like they have money. And so, you know, I'm just I want you to be encouraged to try something and just kind of work with the children. It's something that the children can be involved in bringing things that would go into the display.

And I also want you to think about how you can integrate your different learning into those those activities and and just try it and see, see, you know, how you can change it up and make it exciting for children.

Dr. Tisha Shipley Speaker: OK, do you want to leave our listeners with one final challenge?

Anita Schlaht Speaker: Yes, I would just say in your next unit coming up to, you know, try one and just see how it works. Thank you so much, Anita and everybody.

We will be back with a new episode soon, so make sure you subscribe.