

Extended Block Play: Community Block Projects

After months of individual block building experiences in the block area, Preschoolers and Kindergarteners are ready to use this dynamic space as a studio for sharing all they know about a valued curricular topic. We will examine the case studies of two very different class block projects: "Bird Town" and "Life in the Longhouse," each of which emerged as extended, six week interdisciplinary studies in the block area, involving every child in the classroom community. Using table blocks, natural materials and simple found objects, we'll give a try to community building ourselves!

Key Concepts:

Full class projects emerge with the sustained interest of the class, and only after repeated experiences with the materials and guidelines of the block area.

The block area can be seen as a laboratory of ideas and concepts, as a studio, or as a play map, depending on the parameters of the project.

As you consider the documentation of my Kindergarten's Community Block Project, jot down two burning questions:

1. _____

2. _____

We will return to these questions after our Block Play.

The Community Block Project

Step 1. Make a Denizen (A denizen is a resident, a citizen, a dweller, an inhabitant...)

- Create a denizen, using corks as a base, and any materials on your table
- On the small post-its, write a biography of your denizen. Take a photo!
- Introduce your denizen to your 4 partners

Step 2. Make a World For Your Denizens.

- Use table blocks and any materials on your table
- Work together: feel free to talk, share ideas, revise and improvise
- Be ready to tell other groups about the world you've made

After sharing our Community Block Projects, we will come together again to think about our own classrooms.

Provocations set by the teacher are best informed by careful attention to areas of high interest within the classroom. Using the Project Web, think about your own classroom, and what topic of study you might explore within the Block Area.

Return to the questions you wrote down after viewing the Digital Story. What questions still linger after your experiences here today?

How might the documentation of Extended Block Play support your ongoing relationships with children/parents/administrators/community members?



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