

Fehintola Alao
Child Dev. 143
05/01/11
Assignment : Field Trip #3

On April 9, 2011, I and some of my classmates went to “The Little Red Schoolhouse, Nature Center Forest Reserve” located in Cook County district, for the group field trip. This place has several exhibitions and activities to engage younger children, teens, adults, family, tourist, and groups of students. The nature center was my first visit and experience in a nature area, and I had a lot of fun. Although before I decided that I would go to this place, I had a second thought about why the instructor chose or suggested this place? Hence, I was contemplating whether or not I should go, because I assumed that it was too far from where I live. Secondly, the fact that it was a forest reserve center discouraged me more. Nevertheless, after further consideration I decided to go, and it was worth the effort.

The place was located on 9800 Willow Spring Rd, by 104th Avenue (West side of Willow Spring). The little Red Schoolhouse, Nature Center has free science and nature activities that are hands-on activities for children. Likewise, there were workshop activities that the teachers and the family could benefit from in terms of planning science and math curriculum activities for the children or students. Also, all and sundry could benefit in terms tourism. There were parking spaces for vehicles and mobile toilets. The pathway through the entrance to the schoolhouse was designed with a variety of leaf patterns. Hence, the schoolhouse building was painted red with white trim. Likewise, there were ponds and forests that surrounded the schoolhouse. Similarly, inside the schoolhouse were several exhibitions like Building a Wigwam, White-Tailed Deer, Garter Snake Wood Land, Woodland Ecosystem, and activity for children.

They have exhibits like Building a Wigwam also known as Potawatomi Indian Wigwams, whereby tools and buffalo or deer’s hides were hung on the wall, covering the Wigwam in order to keep the inside warm and dry. Hence, the frame of the building was made from a variety of natural materials like sassafras and street birch. There is another exhibit named White-Tailed Deer, referred to as *Odocoileus Virginianus*. The scene was displayed in a glass cage, showing a mother caring for her young offspring. Statistics regarding the animal’s weight, size, height, diet, and range were displayed next to the exhibit. The next exhibit that I saw was the Woodland Ecosystem, also known as Noggin Knowledge. It is a very interesting exhibit that was designed or configured as manipulative puzzles for children who displayed mental constructive ability and were curious to explore their imagination skills. While, I was observing

some exhibits, I noticed that many children were gathering near the exhibit and having fun by guessing the animals and opening the pots.

Moreover, there were other exhibits, which I will only mention without giving much detail, such as Monarch Butterfly, Red Fox, Eastern Fox Squirrel, The Exterminator (Species of Centipedes,) Devonian, Permian, Terraria, Large and small aquarium. The Terraria consist of frogs, toads, turtles, and snakes. The large aquarium has identical native fish. The small aquarium contains tadpoles, salamanders, and aquatic insects.

In addition, there were interesting activities for young children that I later came across. For instance, I noticed that some kids were having fun playing with the grain table. Therefore, the nature center has a grain table that has grains with different kinds of colorful insects or critters. Also, there were books on the shelves, and a display of stem trees hanging several colorful, round and oval fruit shapes, made with cardboard paper. More so, there were artistic displays of colorful bugs. Also, there was an area for the children to build a shelter for a homeless Beaver.

Furthermore, the out-door environment also has some interesting views, such as watching the duck move inside the pond. Also, I saw the honey bee production amenities. Likewise, there were families, men, women, and other people walking by. However, inside the Schoolhouse was not over crowded, but there were lots of people visiting. The Schoolhouse has notice boards for event activities, keeping people posted or up-dated on sequences of events, such as workshop activities like get your garden started, the bee movie, egg stravanza, and mother nature and family program (About bunnies) with activities and crafts for young children. There were rules and regulations like no picking of things on the ground and no picnics in certain places or areas. I was able to observe the premises and other activities going on around me. For example, my intention was to see if the environment is age appropriate for my class. What kind of educative activities did they have in terms of math and science and are the activities age appropriate? Is there avenue for other children that are physically challenged? How safe and convenient is it for young children?

Considering my intentions for this trip, I think it is resourceful for the age group and fosters curriculum development in the areas of science and math. The interesting thing about math and science at the Little Red Schoolhouse, Nature Center, was that most of the children will be able to explore and discover the nature gift through several exhibitions and activities within and outside the Schoolhouse premises. Likewise, the children will be able to construct their physical, logicomathematical, and social knowledge as they get involve in different activities and explore their thinking ability in all things they get involved with.

I plan to bring preschoolers here because I want them to develop their curiosity in the areas of nature and, to enhance literacy skills in math and science. The plan is to bring fifteen children to the reserve. I have to notify the school administrators and the parents to get their consent. Then, I will involve my assistant and other staff to also check the location before contacting the officer in charge of booking appointments at the nature center. Next, I will get feedback from my colleague and proceed to picking the date and time. After, I will make some calls and emails to the parents to inform them of a fieldtrip in a couple of weeks to a place called The Little Red Schoolhouse, Nature Center, for their children. Hence, I will tell them that I will be keeping the up-date on our plans. Also, I will include in my correspondence that some parents will need to be present to help chaperone, and funding will be required as well. Likewise, I will inform them about the dress code for the children's safety. Then, I will arrange for a school bus to provide transportation, and give the booking agent another phone call as a reminder of our trip, and the expected assistance that we may need at the nature center.

There were several exhibits and activities at the nature center, but I plan to take the children to the Terraria and the large and small aquariums, whereby the children can explore different kinds of creatures inside the water. Hence, the children will be able to discover something cool and unique that they have heard about but have not experienced themselves. Also, the woodland Ecosystem that has several puzzles will be another exhibit to expose them to different kinds of animals and their featured traits. More so, the snakes will be part of what I plan to show the children. Likewise, I plan to take the children outside the Schoolhouse to the forest in order to find treasures that will satisfy their inquisitive and intellectual disposition toward nature. For instance, the children will be able to explore their eyes to see different creatures in nature, like birds. Hence, they will be able to use their hearing to listen to various sounds and

noises, then differentiate between them. Likewise, the children will be able to investigate the outside environment with their nostrils to perceive smells that they might experience. Also, they can touch the plants or soil and feel its properties.

My educational goal for this trip is to promote and develop the children's interest in areas of math and science. Hence, I wanted to motivate and encourage the children to embrace the inquiry process of exploring, identifying, classifying, compare and contrasting, hypothesizing, and generalizing. Also, my reasons in planning this trip is centered on enforcing parents to help in building their children's learning skills and interest in math and science by taking them to outdoor activities that are math and science oriented. Additionally, this trip will foster ideas in science and math and it will prepare and equip the children for later activities in the class.

There will be limitations for both the teachers and the parents, for the safety of everybody on the trip. First, each teacher and the parents must wear their identity tags that I will provided for them. Secondly, each adult must take care of their respective duties. For instance, the ratio of each child to an adult will be two-to-one and those children must be watched and assisted to explore what he or she needs to learn within the time limit. Also, no child should be left unattended and must be with an adult when using the restroom. Hence, both the teachers and parents must look after the children's well-being and ensure that the nature center policies are not be broken by anyone.

There is a need for parental support in both their time and funding, because the nature reserve is wide and big, therefore, anything could happen. I really recommend a lot of support from the parents, considering the size of my class, staff ratio, and the established goals and purpose of the trip. If I have the opportunity to see many parents volunteer for the trip, I will discuss the importance of suggesting this fieldtrip for the children based on the educational benefits in terms of math and science. On the other hand, if they refuse to turn up for the trip, it will affect the success of teaching in detail to the children and exposing them to activities and exhibits that can foster knowledge in math and science. I have to tell them that I need their support and cooperation during this moment for the present and future benefits of their children.

I am planning to read the children books that are both in-depth in fiction and non-fiction. Before going on the trip, I will be read a book named, "What Game Shall We Play" by Pat

Hutchins. The book is about different animals seeking one another at their habitat to play with, thereby, as they were seeking for each other, they increase in group size. For instance, the Duck and Frog went out to play, then the Duck asked, "What game shall we play" and the Frog said I don't know, but we can ask Fox. The game continues from animal-to-animal like the Mouse, Rabbit, Squirrel, until they reach the Owl that says, "Should we play hide and seek." Therefore, all the animals hide in their respective places as the Owl closes his eyes. The Duck and Frog hid in the pond, the Fox hid in the wall, the Rabbit hid in the hole, and the Squirrel hid in the leaves in the tree. Then, the Owl went to look for them.

I plan to take materials like notes to document interesting things. Also, pencils, paper, crayons, erasers, clip-board, skipping rope, small plastic bags, 8 by 30 binoculars, small hand lens or good magnifying glass is a must for tiny specimens. Likewise, a good map will enable us to plot our discoveries and locate new areas or places to explore. Hence, a compass may also be needed to plot our bearings to know the direction of the wind or a flock of migrating birds in the notebook.

In addition, after exploring the area, the children will then be served their lunch and given some time to play around when they get to the picnic side. After, on our way home, the children will be given pencils, paper, a crayon, and eraser, to share their experiences in writing or drawing on the paper handed to them. Then, the paper will be collected and the children will take their lunch, and another book on nature will titled, "About Birds" by Cathryn Sill, be read to them. The book is about the world of birds from eggs to nests, from songs to flight; hence, what birds are and how they live.

Thereafter, a book named, "The young Naturalist" by Andrew Mitchell will be read to the children in the class, the following few weeks. It is about being a naturalist, setting the pathway to think beyond simply collecting and identifying animals and plants. This book addresses the means of collecting, observing, and experimenting in the natural world. This book serves as an inspiration to young children planning or dreaming of becoming adventurous. There are several activities and projects to execute, and ideas for further studies. From this book, the children will be able to develop their skills and ideas in math and science as they demonstrated their thinking ability in gathering information by applying the inquiry process in exploring, identifying, classifying, comparing and contrasting, hypothesizing, and generalizing toward their activities.

In addition, from this book there are several activities and projects that can inspire the children for a long period of time. Therefore, I will be focusing on this very one as a resource material and literature book for the children to use after the trip. Thus, it has several activities that I have to group as follows: First, individual animal and plants; second, how to study them separately or together as a living community; thirdly, ecosystem, ecology, pollution, questions and books will take after. For instance, I will start with animals by identifying the kind of animal inside the book according to name, vertebrate or invertebrate animal classification, bone study, habitat and feeding, characteristics or features of the animal through its life cycle (Movement, respiratory, nutrition, ingestion, growth, excretion, and reproduction.) Then, the specialist from the field such as the zoologist and the nature of their discipline will be examined. The outcome of this will enable the children to be inquisitive in nature, to satisfy their already established ideas, experiences, and curiosity in math and science from their visit to The Little Red Schoolhouse, Nature Center. This will help the children display what they have learned like the following: One-to-one-correspondence, sorting, measuring, exploring with their senses, (Mind, eyes, nose, and hear) proportion, hypothetical question through inquiry question from the children, and generalizing, as they use hand on activities to display the result or through trial and error procedure.

More so, as for the plant, the same thing will be done like identifying the different plants, experimenting with the plantation of different plants, the life cycle of plants with leaves and without leaves, plants that eat dead bodies, flowers and trees' life cycle (Reproductive system of flowers as advanced group of plants to please human eyes but to attract insects). Also seedlings, fruits, seasons, and decomposition will be part of the project approach and activities that can be examined after reading the book, "The Young Naturalist."

I will be implored by my students to ask questions and use more statements that will help foster ideas on the kinds of inquiry questions that can promote both math and science by starting with statements like, I wonder if... Thereafter, I will be reading books and engage the children with more hands-on activities to stimulate and foster math and science experiences and knowledge. Also, the science, math, manipulative, technology, arts, library, and dramatic area will be equipped with more items or resources, like books, props, artifacts, children's artwork in documented portfolios, pictures in albums, and software on plants, animals, and nature in

general. More so, the classroom will be designed with specific characters from the nature trips. Also, out-door activities on nature will be encouraged once a week, and the treasures that each kid brought back from our out-door activities will be stored and named after them for future references. Likewise, we will be experimenting planting seedlings in class as part of additional extension activities. Hence, the children will be implored to participate and practice the plantation at home and bring with them to school a few days later.