

Using a numbering system to make observations (see chapter three) EXPLANATION AND DISCUSSION POINTS

Careful readers will note that there is no Number 33 on the observation sheet – my omission during observations.

<p>In early observations, interactions are infrequent. Each of the four seems pre-occupied with their individual activity although there is some reciprocity with positive responses to instructions and children looking across as someone comments on action.</p> <p>Two girls turn the sand wheel quickly, putting sand through the top of the wheel. They have made this difficult by piling pebbles and shells in the opening. The third girl instructs: “You keep it going and I’ll get more things” turns to select pebbles and shells. The two girls drop sand through the restricted opening. The boy gives instructions about which pebbles and shells to select. They seem urgent and focussed; ‘Keep it going, don’t let it stop’ referring to the turning wheel. The play is quite noisy with all four voices raised at some point.</p> <p>A fifth player, a boy, enters. Play stops and one girl says: ‘You have to go out, only four allowed, only four’. There is discussion of the notice which states: ‘4 in the sand’. Further discussion and she says: ‘One person has to go, you can only have four’ and orders the new boy out. He goes and they briefly discuss: ‘we’re right, we’re not lying’. He returns at about 22 and says: ‘I’m five, I don’t have to leave’ apparently mistaking age for the numbers who can play. The playing boy says: ‘And I’m four’ and a girl says: ‘And I’m two’ and laughs. The unwanted boy watches for a while and others stand around and partly resume their play. He leaves and play returns to the previous vigour.</p> <p>One girl draws a heart on the sand tray and calls to others to look (<i>number 25</i>). This leads to a shout: ‘The monster’s here’ (<i>number 26</i>) with lively discussion on this theme. One girl crawls under the sand tray and bangs on the bottom. The two above remain anxious to ensure sand flows: ‘put a finger in’ ‘hurry, it’s running out’. The boy puts sand in with urgency.</p> <p>The girl bangs again on the underside of the tray, laughing and calling something inaudible. She explains to others, in narrative style, the monster is coming (we now realise that this is the banging on the bottom of the sand tray). It also becomes apparent that the sand through the wheel is designed to ‘invoke’ the genie to come and save them</p>	<p><i>Numbers 1 – 9</i> are all in the social domain of single actions with limited reciprocity. One comment on action, although directed at a peer (6) elicits no response.</p> <p><i>Number 10</i> is noted as the four seem to have a shared understanding of what needs doing. From this point until <i>number 20</i>, the recording shows a movement across the highly social and the cooperative domains as the play is observed and decisions made. This period lasts several minutes.</p> <p>This is at <i>number 21</i> on the sheet. The entering of <i>22 and 23</i> are entered whilst a parallel discussion begins about whether or not he can stay in the sand. The four original players sustain their interactions about the turning wheel as well as intermittently stopping their play to discuss his presence</p> <p>The play moves quickly to the cooperative domain with <i>number 24</i> being entered after a minute or so as the four children quickly return to their previous play.</p> <p><i>Number 27</i> in Highly Social shows eye contact, laughter and play noises as a combined cluster</p> <p>This is noted in social as <i>numbers 32 and 34</i>. <i>Entries 35 and 36</i> reflect new observer understanding and <i>37</i> shows a re-interpretation of the purpose of the previous play. As we realised this, the supply teacher announced that it was tidy up time.</p>	<p><i>Track these entries and consider whether momentum seems to be building in the interactions.</i></p> <p><i>10’ leaps’ to the cooperative domain. The schedule allows the observer to record complexity without fully understanding play purpose – is this helpful to the observer do you think?</i></p> <p><i>Should an adult intervene at such a time do you think? Are the rules useful, a) to the entering boy, b) to the playing peers?</i></p> <p><i>Momentum builds quickly. The play is noisy but other children do not seem interested. The teacher later admits she would have quietened the children had she not been watching. Is this type of adult intervention appropriate/usual/helpful?</i></p> <p><i>In post-observation discussion the teacher recalls fairy tales as a literacy related activity and is pleased children are re-visiting these themes in their play. How long should the adult wait to understand the purpose of play?</i></p>
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