



2018-2019 Curriculum Report

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Daily Routines

We began each day greeting each other in Morning Meeting. This is a time when we came together as a group to acknowledge each child as part of our community. This group was particularly interested in different languages and cultures, and often choose to greet each other in another language. Not only did they learned how to say “Good Morning” in 16 different languages, but Morning Meeting was also the time when they were taught Spanish. The learned how to ask how each other is feeling and respond in detail, along with the numbers, animals, and simple hobbies.

After greeting, children were given the opportunity to share, and each child had an assigned day to make sure they have this opportunity every week. We learned about that day’s schedule and studied the calendar, often using it to teach a math mini-lesson. Before sitting to read and write, we often did a short activity that allowed our body to move so that we were able to focus on our morning message. The morning message tied in language arts, math, or social studies learning goals, and often asked students to write in their journal or think about a concept we recently taught or will introduce. Our morning meeting routine finished with a riddle of the day, encouraging children to think critically about words and their meaning.

Each morning, we worked with the class in half or quarter groups for word study and math instruction. These times allowed us to focus on specific children and make sure everyone’s needs were met.

Most days were finished with 20-30 minutes of “tinkering.” This is a time when children could choose how they want to direct their learning through discovery, collaboration, and innovation. The children wrote, rehearsed, and performed multiple plays, created elaborate and imaginative structures with blocks, legos, magnatiles, and other building supplies, used up countless rolls of tape building intricate cardboard creations, and wrote and illustrated entire books, all during Tinkering Time.

Daily Schedule	
8:25-9:00	Morning Meeting: Greet, Share, Activity, Message

9:00-10:00	Language Arts
10:00-10:30	Snack Choice
10:30-10:45	Picture Book Read aloud or Word Wall Study
10:45-12:15	Math (Specialists, Half Group)
12:15-12:45	Lunch Choice
12:45-1:10	Lunch
1:10-1:20	Read Aloud
1:20-1:50	Social Studies Theme study
1:50-2:20	Writer's Workshop
2:15-2:45	Tinkering Time
2:45-2:55	Closing Meeting

Community and Social Studies

The beginning of the year began by building and establishing our classroom community. Our first theme of the year focused on the concept of identity. We began the year learning about our individual selves and one another by asking questions such as: "What do I like? How do I learn? What are my hopes and dreams?" When we discovered and share our similarities and differences we learn to accept and support each other. Then we dug deeper by taking a critical look at ideas about family, culture, race, and heritage. As we grew in our understanding of ourselves and each other, we broadened the discussion to explore how our personal identity influenced and informed our communities.

Woven throughout the concept of identity is that different people meet their needs differently. Each child identified their own Hopes and Dreams, and then we discussed how we will work together as a classroom community to ensure we help each other make their dreams come true. This discussion then evolved into developing our classroom guideline for the year: We promise to take care of ourselves, each other, and our environment.

As we got ready to break out into small groups for math and reading, we focused on how we learn differently and how to make mistakes. We discussed learning how to focus when we need to be listening. Some students are challenged when asked to show focused listening, while other children have already progressed further in their listening skills. Tactile input can help our brain stay focused, so we all explored different ways to sit and different fidgets we can hold to help our bodies when we need it to be still. We have a basket of items that provided different

sensations (smooth, spiky, furry, heavy, rubbery, etc.) that children were welcome to draw from when they needed to be listening.

Language Arts

At Miqon we offer a comprehensive language arts program that supports each child in their journey of becoming a reader, writer, listener, speaker and *thinker*.

Readers' Workshop

Children were introduced to the format of reader's workshop, where they worked to read independently or with a partner to practice good reading habits. During this time, they selected books at their independent reading level, where they could decode the words fairly easily. This allowed them to build fluency and self-monitor for meaning and understanding.

Word Study/Phonics/Handwriting

All children in our group participated in Foundations, a multisensory program that provided a foundation for reading and spelling. The program emphasizes systematic phonics and study of word structure. Children also engaged in "word wall" activities to solidify knowledge of high frequency sight words. The Foundations program also integrated handwriting of lower and uppercase letters. We have introduced all the letter sounds to the first grade group, and are working on blending sounds into 3 letter CVC (consonant - vowel - consonant) words. The second grade group reviewed all 5 digraphs this fall (th, ch, sh, wh, and ck) and are learning about the sounds that other letter groups make, like -ung, -ink, -old, -all, -ay, and more.

Read Aloud

Children are read to from picture books and/or chapter books *every day*. Books are often curricularly connected to a broader theme, and/or writing, reading, and math investigations. Throughout the read aloud children are invited to make predictions, raise questions and respond to one another's emerging understandings. This year we enjoyed numerous picture books, as well as the chapter books, "Polly Diamond and the Magic Book," "Zoe and Sassafras," "The Hen Who Dreamed She Could Fly," "Charlotte's Web," "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory," and "Zita the Spacegirl."

Writers' Workshop

During writer's workshop, to set a purpose for writing, we modeled to the class what writers *do*. Students engaged in the writing process, working individually or collaboratively with a writing partner, while we conferenced with individual students. At the end of the writing session, students reconvene as a whole group to recap and reflect upon the experience.

The first writing genre that we explored was connected to our theme "Who Am I," and we integrated our knowledge of friendship with writing, word study, and phonics. Each child was selected as a "Friend of the Day." When they were chosen, we use word study concepts as we spelled their name, chanted it, and cheered as we study the letters and sounds in their name. After the name study, each child made a page in a book for that day's friend with a portrait and a personal compliment for the Friend of the Day. Our ability to craft specific complements grew as we worked through the list of students. At the end of each day the book is presented and sent home until every child has one.

Our next genre study focused on “How To” books. We read model texts like cookbooks, drawing books, and even some silly fictional books like “How to Make an Apple Pie and See the World.” After being immersed in the genre, the children began creating How To’s, starting with the supplies, and then working to sequence the appropriate steps until completion.

Our final genre study looked at realistic fiction. We read model texts like “Whistle for Willy” and “A Letter to Amy” by Ezra Jack Keets and “The Other Side” by Jacqueline Woodson. All these books follow a simple 5-step pattern: The characters and setting are introduced, the story begins, a problem is presented, the characters try to solve the problem, then the problem is finally solved. Our children learned how to tell these five steps using their five fingers, and then transferred these steps to a five-page booklet.

Math

Investigations is the math program we based our math work on this year, and we followed this program as our scope and sequence. Many lessons, games, and investigative work were from this program. We developed math activity centers to allow for smaller group instruction, and to practice the concepts we have learned.

A typical math lesson included teaching the topic or concept in a small group, using manipulatives to get a hands on view of the concept, and then processing the activity. Math topics this fall included number sense, numeration, operations (addition and subtraction), money, and patterns.

For number sense, we introduced use of a number line and a hundreds chart, and investigated the ways we could use these tools to help us count, add, subtract, and skip count. Some of the games we played to develop an understanding of number sense and greater than and less than, were “top it” (similar to “war”) and “guess my number” (using a number line to help eliminate guesses along the way).

In studying money, we had a wonderful learning opportunity after Halloween, when some children brought in money to donate to UNICEF. We used these donations to study the coins, and made drawings and rubbings as we worked to identify them. The children were fascinated to find how many different types of quarters, nickels, and pennies there were. We reviewed skip counting and how it can help us count different coins, and the second graders played different equivalency games as we added up coins and exchanged them for other coins of the same value. Finally, we added up all our classroom donations before contributing them to UNICEF.

This winter, we introduced Math Cards, popularized by the educator Marcy Cook, and the students were very excited! Using logic and mathematical reasoning, the children filled the card with exactly 10 rubber tiles of each digit (like a Sudoku) as they built mathematical skills in a variety of areas--computation, money, time, early algebraic thinking, etc. When a child felt they had completed a card correctly, a teacher marked it off, and they worked toward completing a whole set of 20 cards. When a child completed a whole set, they added their name to a “name chain,” and when the chain grew long enough to touch the floor, we celebrated with a math party!

In addition to these projects, we worked on telling time to the minute, used a hundreds chart to add and subtract groups of double digit numbers, solved story problems with addition and subtraction, learned about geometry and how to construct and deconstruct 2-d and 3-d shapes,

and expanded number sense by developing strategies to add double digit numbers and determine place value.

In February, the group took on the The Barnes Foundation Art of Math Challenge. The Art of Math was a weeks-long project celebrating the union of fine art and mathematics, as well as language arts, art history, planning and strategic thinking, and working collaboratively in groups. The challenge asked us to design and build a three-dimensional scale model, based on one of two paintings at the Barnes: *The Raft*, by William James Glackens (1915, Oil on canvas), and *Bathtub and Cat* by Angelo Pinto (c. 1944, Reverse painting on glass).

First, to prepare us for the challenge, the students learned about shapes, both two-dimensional (rhombus, square, triangle, circle, parallelogram, trapezoid, etc.) and three-dimensional (cube, cuboid, pyramid, cone, sphere, cylinder, etc.). Then we looked at photographs of classroom objects to observe how 3-D shapes are represented on a 2-D canvas. We also noticed how perspective changes their size and referenced mathematical concepts like number, vertical/horizontal positioning, and negative space.

Using our "How to" writing template of materials and sequential steps, each child wrote down the steps they thought we'd need to follow to make a 3-D model of their chosen painting. Many children immediately figured out that **planning** would need to happen before **building**, and when they discussed their steps in groups, they all decided that the first three steps would all be talking steps (1-Talk about the materials needed. 2-Talk about the size of the things. 3-Talk about who makes what things.) The students then followed the steps they had decided on to create and build the models, using materials like modeling clay, paper mache, wood, tissue paper and other classroom materials. The children would frequently need to count the figures that had already been crafted, and regularly check their work to ensure everything was made the correct size.

Finally, the models were presented at the Barnes Foundation on a Sunday in March. A panel of judges interviewed the children who came to represent their groups and hundreds of guests reviewed the models and mathematical statements the children wrote. There were two awards for 1st-4th grade students, and each of the models for our group won one of the awards!

In the spring, we rounded out our mathematical studies with data collection and charting. Tiny silkworm eggs began to hatch along with the budding of the mulberry leaves. We began measuring the silkworms every day on the overhead projector, using it like a giant magnifying glass so that we can determine how big they are to the millimeter. When they hatched, they were 3mm long, grew to 5mm within the week. Each child charted their growth, and we looked at our chart to help us make predictions for how big they will be in the future. After a few weeks, we learned that their growth didn't happen in a straight line; they started growing faster and faster, making our chart into a skateboard ramp!

Our charting also prompted discussion of scientific method. Some children wanted to add the weekend days into our chart. They said "I know the silkworms were 3mm on Saturday and Sunday, since they were 3mm on Friday and 3mm on Monday." We acknowledged this was likely the case, but as scientists, we can only record what we observe. So, some children choose to leave the weekend days blank and others placed question marks there as placeholders.

End of Year

We finished off the year with a culminating performance, connecting our themes of the year. As a group, we read many books about community and social justice. The students were especially moved by stories of communities that used art to transform and uplift each other, especially the book "Hey Wall: A Story of Art and Community" by Susan Verde. The children chose this book to dramatize and re-work into a play format. We made connections with Hey, Wall's community and our own communities and then small groups acted out each scene, talking about what kind of dialogue might happen on each page, beginning the script writing process. After collaborating on the script, the children chose a scene to be a part of and created their character. The children built props, including a wheeled ice cream truck, a snowman, and a huge canvas wall that everyone was a part of creating. Over the course of this project and unit of study our students worked collaboratively between the two first and second grade classrooms. Our learners were able to:

- Deepen their sense of story
- Have an authentic purpose for rereading and developing fluency
- Develop confidence in front of an audience
- Know how to communicate in front of an audience

Our play was performed and enjoyed at our end of the year potluck for all first and second grade families.