The Project Approach (Chard, 2014) supports a play-based approach to early education. This can be motivating to children as they are supported to explore, document and share their interests.
Educators can highlight children’s new learning and changes to thinking and provide tools for them to document their learning.

Incorporating digital technology such as open-ended tablet apps can motivate children and accommodate different learning styles and stages. Suggestions in blue type indicate where an open-ended iPad app could be used.

Sample Curriculum Plan

1. Educators observe children’s interests and record questions
   - Children are observed creating structures in new or repetitive ways

2. Educators ask children about their work to find out what motivates them, their knowledge-base and theories
   
   A. Traditional tools and methods:
      - Record children’s ideas on chart paper
      - Children draw pictures on paper
   
   B. Children’s use of digital technology:
      - Short video clips of each child’s answer
      - Photo of group and audio clips of ideas
      - Photo or short video of student-built structures to share with group

   C. Combination:
      - Audio/video record and record ideas on chart paper

3. Educators facilitate discussion with student builders: what can we build; how can we plan; how can we find out more about structures and document what we learn?
   
   - Small groups taking pictures or drawing within the app (plans, required tools, resources)
   - Library books
   - Look to student experts for advice/information
   - Books from classroom
- What could educators do at this stage?
  - Model an in-app search engine (e.g.- Pixabay) if available to locate images to support building ideas
  - Research with children (computer, books)
  - Suggest photographing structures they have built to use for future plans
  - Suggest making ‘how-to’ videos or tip sheets for others to use
  - Look for signs of construction on a neighbourhood walk and document
  - Making chart of different construction materials they have used and ranking them based on various qualities
  - Can suggest different ways to use familiar materials
  - Survey children about what techniques/materials they have found to be most effective (digitally or on paper and audio record their responses)
  - Provide tools: cardboard, tubes, milk crates, wooden planks, logs, log slices, PVC pipes and connectors, clipboards paper and pencil, to record findings/draw plans
  - Support effective problem-solving (e.g. - ensuring there is space for structures to remain ‘up’ for a specified time period)

4. Share findings
  - Present to another class, principal, families and so on, invite them for a tour of the build site
  - Can use slideshow video to present
  - Can use photos/digital drawings to create tip sheets to address common challenges or recommend building ideas
  - Can use digital images to create photobook of student-built structures
  - Can electronically share images (through HiMama or email) with families

Educators can document the progress of children’s thinking and learning over time using the open-ended app
Specific tips

- Some apps may have the ability for each child to maintain their own file. This can become a personal journal or portfolio, where they can record their questions, add daily/weekly drawings and photos to document what they are learning throughout the project.

- For the adventurous, children’s photos, drawings and videos can be compiled using iMovie, or another movie making app, to create a continuous video.


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