



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
1993 Volume I: The Symbolic Language of Architecture and Public Monuments

Kids/Blocks/Learning

Guide for Curriculum Unit 93.01.01
by Patricia Gaffney Ansel

This unit is presented as a discussion of the role and use of blocks in the K-2 curriculum. Based on my observations of the behaviors of 4 & 5 year old children entering Kindergarten, I am concerned that they are exhibiting developmental delays due to a lack of traditional play experiences in the home setting. In our changing society, children now play with techno-toys instead of toys such as blocks, dolls, or others which engage the imagination. Children are not participating in self-directed activities which develop eye/hand coordination, spatial perception or visual memory. Play activity of many urban children is inhibited by the violence in their neighborhoods which keeps them inside for the sake of safety.

KIDS/BLOCKS/LEARNING links current national reform in education to that advanced by Friedrich Froebel in the mid 1800s in Germany. Both reforms were driven by mathematics and the use of manipulatives. The unit continues with the history of the development of block systems used in education including those of Montessori and the unit systems used in early childhood classrooms today.

The role of blocks in the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains as well as the findings of studies with children and their use of blocks is described. Lessons are presented in three areas of the curriculum, math, language arts and architecture(art). An annotated bibliography for teachers is included, as is a reading list for students.

(Recommended for Centers, Art, Math, Language Arts, Grades K-2)

Key Words

Children Psychology Behavior Mathematics Basic

<https://teachersinstitute.yale.edu>

©2019 by the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute, Yale University

For terms of use visit <https://teachersinstitute.yale.edu/terms>