Patterns: A Cross-curricular Thematic Unit

Sequencing Rationale

The concept of patterns naturally begins early in the kindergarten year, after routines have been established and practiced. The unit will begin with movement that includes both gross and fine motor activities. Gross motor activities will incorporate music and counting to provide some framework and purpose for the movements. Fine motor activities will promote dexterity while students explore color and shape as they work with beads, Lego’s and small blocks.

Math concepts will be introduced next, because students will be able to experience concrete learning with the materials that accompany each lesson. The topics of numbers, shapes and measurement overlap and spiral as concepts are first introduced and then practiced. Fine motor activities are woven into many lessons as students practice counting skills using small objects, and gross motor activities encourage students to use their whole bodies to demonstrate their understanding of numbers, shapes and measurement.

Once students have had a chance to listen to stories read aloud or told by others, and have told stories of their own, pattern books will be introduced. The books will serve two primary purposes: the first is to support students’ early reading abilities by providing predictable text and pictures; the second is to provide a model for the writing they will do on their own. The student’s ability to recognize particular patterns will help determine the type of pattern book he or she will be able to write. During word work, students will practice using patterns to create word families. Chanting, clapping, and snapping will reinforce pattern concepts using music and gross and fine motor skills.

Because the kindergarten science curriculum focuses on noticing, exploring and investigating, students can look for patterns in their world as they study nature and the changing seasons. During art students will create a finished product that demonstrates their understanding of patterns, sometimes using materials found in nature, and sometimes using materials to mimic patterns seen in nature.