

Energy Meets Energy

With Alexis Reich

I believe children are the most awesome and fascinating people on the planet. Children are my whole life. I have worked with children as a nanny and a teacher since the 1990's. My university concentration of study revolved around elementary education and early childhood development. I have worked with children internationally in Europe, Asia, Central America, Australia and the U.S. coast to coast. I currently work with Preschool and Grade One at a school here in the Maldives. My work revolves primarily around dramatic expression that coincides with the students' existing energy. The children feel an intense sense of control over their own environment which builds self-esteem. These activities serve to draw out even the shyest students. An array of activities utilizes movement and dramatic expression which instills teamwork while enhancing coordination. The students love these activities - all of which foster self-control as well as enhancing spatial, kinesthetic and interpersonal intelligence. I also currently publish a mini newspaper for young children entitled **The Alexis Nexus** which is also the title of all my work. The newspaper focuses largely on children's involvement in performing arts areas such as film and music with an overall emphasis on the limitless potential of children who excel in these areas. The publication educates while building confidence in every child's creative potential. I would like to focus on the following concepts that envelope my approach to working with young children:

I. Positive Rapport

- Known on a first name basis?
- Does teacher formality hinder creativity?
- Do my students feel close or do they feel intimidated?
- Am I strict or am I liberal?
- Am I above them or am I one of them?
- Do my students know I love them?
- When "You're not a teacher" is the best compliment you could receive.

II. Enthusiasm

- Do you have to keep up with their energy or do they have to keep up with yours?
- Is my class fun?
- Do I entertain while I teach?
- Body Language – Energetic or dull?
- Hard work? You'd better believe it is!

III. Appealing to the Natural Side of a Child

- Activities that revolve around a child's existing exuberance.
- Are classroom activities child centered?
- Children ask: May we scream? May we jump? May we run? Teachers should answer: Only if it fosters organization, teamwork, cooperation and self-control.
- Do something spontaneous!

IV. Drawing out the Best Qualities

- Building self-esteem
- Drawing out the shy
- Instilling self-control
- Teaching teamwork
- Enhancing spatial, kinesthetic and interpersonal intelligence

V. Managing a Dramatic Classroom

- Is there discipline? Absolutely!
- Constant reminders that this is organized fun.
- Knowing when to start and when to stop.

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VI. The Pace

- Tranquil beginning
- Gaining momentum
- Crescendo
- Decreasing momentum
- Tranquil Ending

VII. Welcoming Change

- Do you have professional latitude?
- Appealing to parents about change or more positive rapport.
- Should you ask, “What would people think or what the children think?”

Conclusion: Dynamic, high energy teaching requires a compatible personality. Such an approach requires a teacher to be extraverted, enthusiastic, innovative, and compelled by energy to bring dramatic expression into the classroom. A program with dramatic expression as the theme will not make your job easier. Instead, it is physically intensive and might be met with opposition from parents and administrators. Getting past the approval of the administration at your school as well as receiving support from the parents might tend to be more of a challenge than carrying out the method itself. In my experience, I’ve received nothing but compliments; however, your situation might be different. A commitment and belief in the philosophy of teaching with dramatic expression as the theme is imperative. Keep in mind that positive rapport is a prerequisite. Drawing children out through dramatic expression is not possible unless a child feels comfortable with their teacher and their environment. The method is far more conducive to the natural side of a child. There is one certainty: children love the approach.

Disclaimer: No part of the approach, methods or philosophy expressed here are representative of any school in this country nor is the content in violation of the confidentiality of any curriculum of any school in this country. The entire content including the approach, methods and philosophy are exclusively that of Alexis Reich.