



National Quality Standard Professional Learning Program



Connecting with practice—EYLF and NQS

Vignette: Discussing butterflies' markings

Note: Use these notes in conjunction with the [General information](#) sheet for *Connecting with practice*.

Overview:

Using an image on an iPad™, an educator and several four-year-old children discuss protective markings on a butterfly's wings.

Possible focus points:

- Conversations that support learning
- Tone, content and nature of educators' interactions and verbal communication and their likely impact on children's learning
- Value of small groups
- Importance of finding out what children know
- Educators' engagement
- Children's engagement.



Key Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) concepts:

- Principle: Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships
- Practice: Intentional teaching
- Practice: Learning environments
- Key Component of Learning Outcome 2: Children become socially responsible and show respect for the environment
- Key Component of Learning Outcome 4: Children develop dispositions for learning such as curiosity, cooperation, confidence, creativity, commitment, enthusiasm, persistence, imagination and reflexivity
- Key Component of Learning Outcome 5: Children interact verbally and non-verbally with others for a range of purposes.

Key links to the National Quality Standard (NQS):

Quality Area 1: Educational program and practice

Element 1.1.1: Curriculum decision-making contributes to each child's learning and development outcomes in relation to their identity, connection with community, wellbeing, confidence as learners and effectiveness as communicators.

Element 1.1.2: Each child's current knowledge, strengths, ideas, culture, abilities and interests are the foundation of the program.

Element 1.1.3: All aspects of the program, including routines, are organised in ways that maximise opportunities for each child's learning.

Quality Area 3: Physical environment

Element 3.2.1: Outdoor and indoor spaces are organised and adapted to support every child's participation and to engage every child in quality experiences in both built and natural environments.

Element 3.2.3: The service cares for the environment and supports children to become environmentally responsible.

Quality Area 5: Relationships with children

Element 5.1.1: Responsive and meaningful interactions build trusting relationships which engage and support each child to feel secure, confident and included.

First viewing: What did you notice?

Ask participants to watch and listen to the vignette. After viewing it, ask some general questions to start the discussion:

- *What did you notice?*
- *What were the children doing and saying?*
- *What was the educator doing and saying?*
- *What did you notice about the physical environment and the experience itself? What stood out for you?*

Participants are likely to notice different things. These differences are interesting, as in our work we notice and pay attention to different things. Highlight that we often have different perspectives on the same experience or behaviours. Each perspective enriches what we can learn. This is why sharing ideas, listening to others' views and having discussions can be so valuable.



Second viewing: Looking more deeply at learning, teaching and links to the EYLF and the NQS

This vignette can prompt discussion about a range of topics.

You could begin by asking a general question: What do you think the children in this vignette are learning or demonstrating that they have learned?

In this vignette the children show that they have some knowledge about butterflies and their markings. Remind participants that, when introducing a new topic or focus, it is important to find out what children already know. How does the educator in this vignette do this? What do the children already know?

Remind participants that figuring out what children may *be learning* or *what they have learned already* goes beyond focusing on what they are *doing*. Pay close attention to the educator's and children's communication.

What Learning Outcomes does this vignette illustrate? Why do you think this? Encourage participants to be specific in reflecting on this question by going beyond the headings of the Learning Outcomes and looking at the details within them.

- *What do you think the educator's intentions were? In other words, what was she trying to achieve?*

Pay particular attention to the educator's use of language and the way she interacts and talks with the children. She is quiet, calm and speaks naturally and respectfully, avoiding being patronising or 'talking down' to them. She invites their participation in the conversation by her manner.

She elaborates what children say, affirming their contribution and providing more information. Ask what purpose this elaboration serves. It not only confirms and extends what has been said, but is also likely to be helpful for children who are not as familiar as the others with butterflies and the function of their markings.

She gives clear explanations. It is almost as though she and the children are unraveling a mystery or a story together!

Notice the rich vocabulary that both the educator and children use—for example, words such as *predators, humans, creatures, frighten, beautiful, actually*. You might want to show the vignette and ask participants to focus on and make notes about the language. Discuss how the language and conversation enrich the experience and the learning possibilities.

- *If you had been the educator in this vignette, what, if anything, might you have done differently?*

This vignette offers a good opportunity to reflect on balancing the use of questions and other kinds of verbal communication by educators, as well as the value of open questions. Why are open questions considered to be generally more valuable than closed questions as a way of teaching? What might be the effect of overusing questioning with children?

- *What EYLF Principles and Practices does the vignette illustrate?*

The vignette is a reminder of the value of small groups and the importance of educators planning the program to create opportunities to have sustained interactions. How does the number of children—three, and briefly four—with one educator affect the quality of the experience? How would it be different if six or eight children were with the educator?

The physical setting also contributes to the quality of this experience. There are few distractions and minimal background noise. Discuss how the location of learning opportunities—that is, where they are offered and what is going on around them—impacts on the quality.

The children are obviously interested in the information shared in this experience. How might the educator follow up? What additional learning opportunities might she plan that would extend the learning further and build on the children's interests? Remember to think broadly about possibilities.

- *What would have made this experience more effective?*

If you were observing this experience, what would be worth recording about children's learning? How does the fact that you don't know the children affect your observations and analysis?

This vignette is a reminder that one of the most powerful ways to help children learn to respect and care for the natural environment is through teaching them about a wide range of topics related to the natural world. In other words, it is important to go beyond explicitly teaching how to *care for* the natural environment to helping children *learn about it*. The more amazing, funny, touching, odd, surprising and interesting facts about the natural world children know, the more likely they are to value, respect and care for it.

Third viewing: What have we learned? What next?

You may want to discuss the priority placed in your group or service on having sustained interactions and conversations with children, both individually and in pairs or small groups. What can we do to increase the frequency and quality of these?

Discuss the ways that educators find out what children already know about a topic and use that to build their knowledge and interest.

- *Do we make effective use of computers, iPads™ and other technology to support children's learning? What are some additional innovative ways that we can trial using technology to support and extend children's learning?*
- *To what extent do we teach children about the natural world and build on their sense of wonder with the aim of helping them learn to respect and care for the natural environment? Do we need to be more intentional in our efforts to do that?*
- *What might families see in this vignette? How could the vignette be used to have discussions with families about children's learning?*
- *What might the children involved see in the vignette? What would be the highlights for them? (Remind participants that it is always valuable to think about what an experience might mean from the child's perspective.)*
- *What else have we learned that we can apply to our practice?*
- *What actions might we take as a result of the discussion about the vignette?*



An Australian Government Initiative

The NQS Professional Learning Program is funded by the Australian Government Department of Education.



Brought to you by

Early Childhood Australia
A voice for young children