

Sample of a Consultant's Work with an Center

The following is how a Consultant, Center Director and educators created the consulting work for several months of work. It uses the JECEI Principles of Excellence to organize the work. The Center is in the middle of its first year of work with JECEI.

Basic Information on the use of JECEI in Classroom: Annotated agenda

DATE and Beginning Ending Times	AGENDA ITEM	INTENDED OUTCOME (WHAT YOU WANT TO ACCOMPLISH)	ACTION TAKEN	RESULTS
x/2/200? 6:00-8:30	What is learning? Lens study Creating focus for classroom visits Teachers had also been given and some read Bambini chapter (see materials below)	Begin conversation and heighten awareness of values and actions associated with both learning and the lenses; view images of quality learning experiences that can inspire a dialogue among teachers	See agenda attached	Intended outcomes satisfied, however some teacher felt that there may have been too much to accomplish in one evening together. Wanted more time for lens study and to go deeper.
x/3/200? 9:00-12:00	Classroom time Classroom time in pre-k	To observe: the flow of the day; individual children who teachers are concerned about; the role of the teacher in	Consultant moved from room to room.	The morning time in the classrooms gave us an opportunity to learn about the work of the teachers and the context for conversations in the afternoon

		children's learning. To spend time in the classroom and to get to know		
1:00-3:00	Pre-k team meeting	To have a dialogue about learning in the pre-k classroom; deepening from the staff meeting and responding to what is on the teacher's minds	Engaged in dialogue	The conversation focused on the learning environment and changes that might be possible. The conversation moved into areas that later the team and Lori felt may have advanced too quickly with enough thoughtful attention to developing relationship of trust and understanding.
x/4 / 200? 10:30- 12:00	Leadership Team meeting	To have a conversation with members of the Leadership team around JECEI lenses and principles of excellence	Conversation focused on questions raised by executive director	
1:00-3:00	Teacher Team of Classroom "x" meeting	To have a dialogue about learning in the teachers' classrooms; deepening from the staff meeting and responding to what is on the teachers minds	The Consultant and the Director worked with the teachers.	Meaningful conversation Got to know the children and teachers better

x/5/200?			Time spent	Established plans for beginning the second semester with new and continuing children and families. Experienced teachers supported one another in a meaningful and competent way.
9:00-12:00	Classroom time with pre-k, followed by Shabbat Sing	To spend more time getting to know the teachers and families.		
1:00-2:45	Leadership team meeting	To have a dialogue about learning in the classroom;	Focus on transition to second semester	The Center Director has a set of ideas growing out of the conversation that can inspire our future work together.
3:00-4:15	Wrap-up meeting with the Center Director.	To process the visit and to share impressions	Talked about the history of the Boulder JCC; about play-based learning; about teacher-leadership and possibilities	

Materials and Handouts

Gandini, L. and Goldhaber, J. (2xxx) "Two Views of Documentation" in Gandini, L and Edwards, C. *Bambini* NY: Teachers College Press

Staff Meeting on the JECEI Principles of Excellence

Task: JECEI PRINCIPLES OF EXCELLENCE - Please describe your work with the Center on the Principles of Excellence.

PRINCIPLE #1 – RELATIONSHIPS

- This principle was the main focus of the time that the Consultant spent in both of the "x" classrooms. I worked in "x" teachers' room and they had asked that I focus on the feel

and tone of the classroom, the working relationship between the teachers, and their interactions with parents and children.

- In our post-classroom time conversations, we came together as one group where we asked the teachers to share with one another what happened in their conversations with the Consultant. .
- One set of classroom teachers shared that they discussed:
 - focus on two children in particular; different ways to talk with children, esp. child who they have concerns about, new ideas to think about, but also lots to support what we have done.
 - how to engage the children in play to support their interactions and learning
 - We also discussed communication with parents at the beginning and end of the day and the many ways to share and also how to normalize things that happen with all young children when parents raise concerns about particular children.
- Another set of classroom teachers shared that after dialoging with the Consultant, they think that:
 - some changes to the environment might support the children's learning, for example developing the area with art supplies and creating a mini-office or message center.
 - it's all about investment; who you are and how you are with the children and your co-teaching relationship an collaboration.
 - creating an intimacy in the classroom is the main reason to work with the one group of children separately, rather than combining the two classrooms too much; have a responsibility to these 16 children.
 - perhaps, working more often with smaller groups, where one teacher can focus and the other teacher take responsibility for the bigger picture...can deepen the emotional and learning relationships with the children.
 - inviting environments and the environment as third teacher (as a support for children's relationships and learning

PRINCIPLE #2 – VISION

Indicator 4 *Key stakeholders in the community are involved in creating a vision integrating JECEI's lenses and principles of excellence.*

The following questions were written by the Executive Director of the Host Institution. The questions would be discussed in the next Leadership Team meeting.

- As we begin to integrate the JECEI lenses, how do we characterize (in marketing phrases and descriptions) the "Jewishness" of our program?
- How do we balance that fine line between being "too Jewish" and yet proudly offering those gifts that Judaism has provided to the world?
- How do we characterize our Jewish practices?
- What's the language that tells a potential preschool parent that we're totally inclusive yet committed to a Jewish framework?
- What's the starting place for the conversation about curriculum in our initial discussions with the Day School?
- Is there an opportunity within the JECEI framework to allow for different "tracks" of Jewish practice? Is that practical? What about an English/Hebrew bilingual track?
- How do we balance the need for a Day School "feeder preschool" and the secular nature of the vast majority of our population?
- How do we discuss the fact that the management of the preschool must remain with the host institution? It is cooperative/collaborative, to be sure, but the host institution must retain ultimate decision-making ability.

Indicator 5 *The professional leadership and teachers grow in their understanding of themselves as Jewish educators in early childhood*

This was the first formal introduction of the lenses. The staff was very excited to begin their journey with the lenses and also raised questions about how to connect to the lenses if you have little experience with Judaism, Jewish text, or the origins of Jewish values. The Center Director did a good job of responding to this concern by expressing her perspective. Additionally, when the dyads reported out from their conversations, it became clear that the lenses are accessible, and can be interwoven through the life of the preschool and the lives of the teachers and families there. It is a matter of finding the lenses, embracing them and making them visible. One teacher, in particular found this part of the evening particularly important and raised questions about why wouldn't we have spent more time on this (and not on what is learning?). I encouraged the teachers to keep this alive by bringing the lenses into their conversations in their meetings and other interactions they have with one another (and beginning with parents) between visits.

PRINCIPLE #3 – LEARNING COMMUNITY

Indicator 6, *Children explore life through the JECEI lenses.*

Indicator 7 *Families are partners in the creation of the learning community*

Indicator 8 *Teachers document children's learning*

Indicator 9 *The teachers implement the JECEI principles of excellence – an integration of the JECEI lenses with Reggio inspired, constructivist, progressive and emotional responsive theories and practices- in their work in the classroom and with families*

A highlight for me around this principle is the conversation and learning that is gradually happening at the Center around philosophy and practice. The Center Director has supported staff in implementing and parents in their understanding of play-based curriculum. Our conversations are just beginning about how the Reggio philosophy and play-based connect and diverge.

The pre-k team asked most directly about role of the teacher and their availability to the children...balancing observation and facilitation. When working with this team, we entered into territory that began to touch these considerations and seemed we may have moved too fast. We need time to cultivate our relationship and honor the elements of the work that the teachers value. We jumped too fast into the possibilities and will during the next visit move in a more thoughtful way to understand what is there and where we might go in our work with this principle. The Center Director Leadership Teams' recent visits to the Wonder of Learning exhibit is something that I am certain will support the ongoing dialogue and learning.

Indicator 10 *Ongoing paid professional development is aligned with the Center's vision.*

I am very excited and grateful that the teachers have made themselves available one evening and one or more afternoons to engage in professional development during my Consultant visits. The Center Director is doing a great job of working with me in advance so that we can provide dates and times as soon as possible for people to make arrangements. Teachers are fully present during these meetings. We will continue to maximize this time as we deepen our work in each visit.

PRINCIPLE #4 – SHARED LEADERSHIP

Indicator 11 *Lay leadership partners with Professional Leadership to champion the JECEI change process*

See Leadership Team agenda/notes. There is a high level of commitment and partnership that this small leadership team has given to the preschool and will continue to give through the process of what the team has decided to call growth!

Indicator 12 *Professional leadership designs and maintains structures that support daily operations in alignment with the Center's vision.*

Indicator 13 *Professional Leadership partners with teachers to carry out the vision of the Center*

There is great potential at this to work toward an evolving shared vision and to deepen shared leadership toward that. The history and prior journey that the Center has been on is a gift as well as are the new ideas that the Center Director and the teachers and Leadership Team can begin to weave together with the past.

PRINCIPLE #5 – ENVIRONMENT

Indicator 14 *The environment reflects the Center's vision*

I shared many images both in the staff meeting, with the pre-k team (perhaps too many) and a few with Jeanne and Joan that reflect pedagogical environments that supports wonder, inquiry, small group learning, reflection, dialogue, and ways of making learning visible. As noted above, we went too fast with the pre-k team, and slowed things down with butterflies. Much more work to do with this principle. There is with great potential if we move slowly and intentionally.

PREPARATION FOR NEXT VISIT

Hopefully, towards the end of each visit the Center Director and/or the Leadership Team and the Consultant begin to plan for the next visit. This includes both what the Center is going to work on between Consultant visits and plans for the next visit.

CENTER'S WORK

Please describe what the Center has agreed to work on between visits.

- The Center Director and her 2nd tier leader will attend retreat; Leadership Team will visit the Wonder of Learning Exhibit with the JECEI community
- The next staff meeting will focus on the using the JECEI lenses to think about how Jewish living and learning is present in the classrooms.
- Full staff will meet with the Consultant after the JECEI Community Learning day to create a thread from the experiences of the last visit and upcoming work with the Consultant. A member of the Leadership Team noted that she would value working on “hopes and dreams” of the Center. Beginning the conversation around identity and a vision process could be just perfect for some of our work together at during the next visit.