

Session 7: Objects in Teaching

Session Overview

This session is one of four *Apply and Refine* sessions, which can be done in any order. In this session, participants examine the use of objects in learning experiences in informal environments, and think about the role of the objects in conversations and interactions. Participants explore how different types of objects that are commonly found in informal environments can be used to support learning. They are challenged to use the “*Characteristics of Exemplar Activities and Facilitation*” they have been developing in class, and then create and implement an activity or program to teach one idea using four types of objects. This activity provides them with a common experience to think about and compare the talking and doing that may occur with different types of objects.

Session Objectives

In this session, participants:

- . Discuss role and use of objects in learning and teaching
- . Discuss features of objects in learning conversations
- . Reflect on how and why educators use objects in their interactions

Session Activities at a Glance

Quick Write. Participants reflect on and write about their thoughts from the reading. They share their ideas on the role and use of objects in informal environments.

Research Discussion. Participants do a jigsaw to discuss ideas from research on conversations about and engagement with objects.

Activity: Teaching with Objects. Working in small groups, participants use the Characteristics of Exemplary Activities & Facilitation list to guide design of a program, activity, exhibit, or environment featuring one of four different objects—real specimens, photos, models and videos.

Work with Partner. Participants work with their partner to incorporate new ideas into the design of their activity.

Homework. Readings and tasks are assigned.