

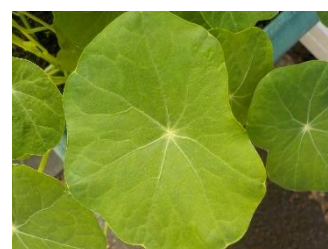
Developing practice

The project was undertaken with a focus group of four F1 children in a Nursery class. After learning about progression in pattern learning, practitioners decided that the first priority for this project would be to encourage the children to become 'pattern spotters'.

We also decided that giving children the opportunity to explore and play with pattern, alongside their pattern spotting experiences, was fundamental to helping them to further understand and articulate what they had seen.

Pattern spotting

The focus group were encouraged to look for patterns in the outdoor environment on a regular basis and this soon became something that they tuned into without support. Some examples of the outdoor patterns spotted by children in the focus group can be found below.



Playing with pattern

In order to facilitate the children's representation of patterns they had spotted, the classroom environment was adapted to maximise opportunities for the children to explore patterns on a daily basis. The resources added were available continually which allowed the children to explore and become familiar with them. This approach was a change from previous practice, where pattern was taught as stand-alone sessions using fewer, more typical pattern making resources (such as pegs and boards). Some examples of the children's 'play with pattern' are pictured below.

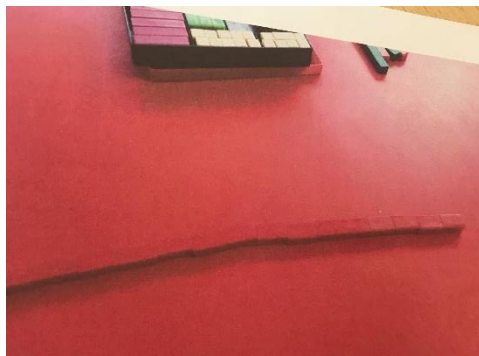


Adult encouragement to be a 'pattern spotter', coupled with the freedom to play with a variety of familiar resources, led to children recreating patterns in order to explore concepts and demonstrate their understanding.

Summary

Children in the focus group were encouraged to spot patterns on a regular basis and were given the freedom to explore what they had seen and understood through an enabling environment. As a result, the children often explored and represented patterns in a variety of ways. They were able to articulate the rules of the patterns they had seen. Previously, when teaching pattern as stand-alone sessions, children in Nursery had not demonstrated this deep level of interest in pattern and understanding of patterning.

Lilly's learning - Recreating patterns



When Lilly, age 3, began exploring pattern she would make simple A patterns such as those pictured below made with Cuisenaire rods and circular craft materials.

By the end of her Nursery year, Lilly spotted a flower with a growing pattern in the outdoor environment and was inspired to recreate what she had seen using a variety of resources. She made comments including “It’s getting bigger” and “I need to put the green counters all around the circle to make a flower”.

