BOOK REVIEW

Talking and Doing Science in the Early Years: A practical guide for ages 2-7

by Sue Dale Tunnicliffe

2013; 192 pages
Routledge, London.
ISBN 978-0415690904

This up-to-date book is a very welcome addition to the literature on Early Years Science. It is interesting and easy to read and will be of value, as a model of best practice, to Early Year practitioners, as well as those training to work in Early Years Settings (e.g. nursery, kindergarten etc.) and Primary Schools. It will also be an invaluable resource as a course text for initial and in-service teacher training courses. This is due to the raison d'etre that underpins the author's and the book's philosophy about Early Years Science; one that is firmly grounded in allowing children to learn by making connections with their everyday experiences and discussing them in a supportive and encouraging environment so that they can turn their curiosity and questions about the world around them into genuine and authentic scientific enquiry.

The comprehensive content is thoroughly researched and theoretically sound with regard to scientific concepts and linguistic development with lucid explanations of how this can be made accessible to young children. Throughout the text the reader is invited to engage with pertinent ideas and concepts to stimulate their thinking in order to develop their practice to promote children's scientific interest and facilitate their understanding of science.

The book is divided into thirteen chapters, the first three of which provide contextual detail about Early Years education and dealing with young children as scientists including the need to engage in dialogue in order to promote language acquisition whilst engaging in practical activities to enhance conceptual and skill development. Useful information is provided about resources and inventive ways to report and record children's activities whilst the real life scenarios add an authentic dimension that readers will readily relate to and will be able to connect to their own experience and practice.

Each of the next ten chapters deals with some of big ideas in science from a biological, physical or environmental perspective and how these can be made explicable to young children through the use of appropriate language, discussion and enquiry based practical activities. Each chapter also provides some useful background information about the science content to support the reader's background knowledge and there are plenty of suggestions for suitable activities to undertake with children. There is also a useful reference and additional reading list.

I would recommend this book to anyone interested in helping young children to enjoy the world about them, develop their natural curiosity and scientific interest.

by
Dr. Jenny Byrne
Senior lecturer
The University of Southampton, UK