

**Kindergarten Matters:
Re-imagining Literacy and Mathematics Throughout the Day
Reflections on Learning: Karyn Callaghan**

[Music]

[Text on screen]: Reflections on Learning: Karyn Callaghan

[Karyn Callaghan sits facing the off-camera interviewer]

KARYN CALLAGHAN: When we're involved in reflective practice, we're questioning our certainties so the things that could end up becoming rote or just sort of a scripted response, we're disrupting that intentionally and again, involving ourselves in a constant inquiry into what we believe and why and does it fit in the situation so we have child development theory to guide some of our decisions but we should also be questioning that theory because it is theory and so we can become part of constructing knowledge about practice and not just consuming theory about practice.

Educators are making maybe hundreds of decisions every day about what to pay attention to, what to ignore, when to ask a question, when not to intervene, when to refer children to each other; all of those decisions reflect back to us our view of children and teaching and learning. So if we become accustomed to using questions as a lens, questions about what do I know about myself through decisions, we will then be on a journey of getting to be better and better as teachers all the time. And we can also invite our co-teachers to be critical friends with us so to intentionally seek out different perspectives because we're constructing knowledge together all the time so it's constant research, research about children, research about teaching as well, and if we become, just every day, accustomed to asking ourselves questions about why that decision and not this one and what does this show me, we will be constantly improving as teachers. Provocateur is a wonderful word to describe our role and it's different from being a facilitator. Facilitator, of course, comes from the French facile, meaning to make easy. A provocateur is doing the opposite, provoking, becoming, in essence, a de-facilitator, if you want to make up a word, another word in French, making it more difficult and more complex so it's looking for challenging questions, looking for the incongruities in what children are doing and saying, finding the soft spots in their theories so that we can live with those ideas a little longer, stay with them, ask those challenging questions. Lovely example from our program, where a child had drawn a beautiful drawing of a sailboat and had shown it to the artist in the program and I know myself as an early childhood educator, I would have probably said that's a really nice boat and that would have been the end of it and the drawing would have gone home. The artist instead said, I'm not sure I'd get on that boat and the little boy said well why not. And Jay said well, I can't see how it goes and I can't see how it stops so the little boy pulled his drawing back and started adding things to it. He added three winds, he added a porthole that was closed and that's where the sailors were sleeping and a porthole that was open and that's where they were there reading their books. He drew an anchor and attached it to the side of the sailboat and showed it back to the artist, who said I can see how it goes now,

I can see that there's an anchor to make it stop but I don't see how the anchor works, it's up on the side of the boat. The little boy then added a windless; he said it's a hose pipe kind of things, just like you'd have at the side of your house for wrapping up a hose. And that's how the anchor would go down. He had all of that in his mind but we wouldn't have known that from his drawing so being a provocateur, you're going a little bit further to see how the child is making sense of this, what more they know than has come out in that situation so that we can then take those ideas to other children or go further. He, in fact, ended up translating that drawing to a three dimensional model. He brought back a tuna can from home and some rope and plastic spoons so that he could construct into it an actual working model. So there's more than we might give children credit for so we have to make sure that we're not putting up a false ceiling but being comfortable asking those authentic questions so that we can understand what they understand and how.