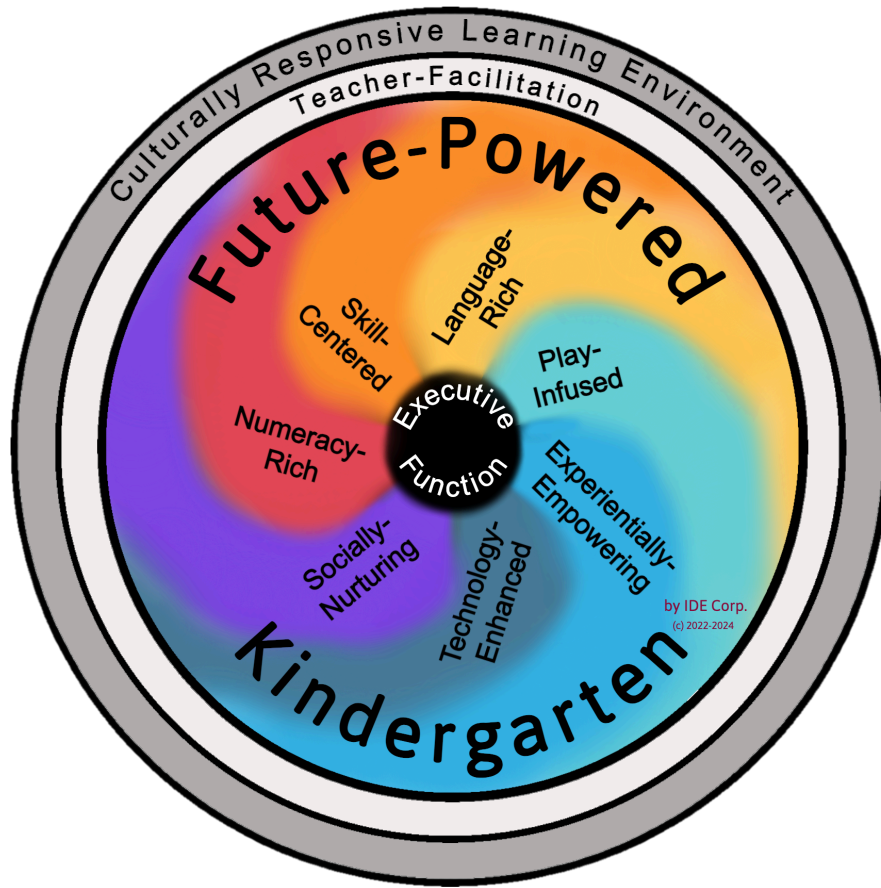


A Look Into Ms. Rivera's Future-Powered Kindergarten



It's a mid-November morning as students enter Ms. Rivera's classroom. They put away their coats and get settled, finding their name tags on the magnetic "I'm Here" board and moving them to the section that indicates the lunch they want, so that Ms. Rivera has both attendance and lunch count. Students walk to the "breakfast cart" to pick up breakfast and walk back to their tables to eat.

If students are not eating breakfast, or after students clean up their area from breakfast (following a protocol they learned the first week of school), they head to the *Resource Table* to retrieve their personal two-pocket folder and this morning's *Activity List*. They look in the folder to see any comment words (e.g., great!, super!, etc.) or stickers left on their work by Ms. Rivera and put the *Activity List* on the left side of their folder. They then use the time for optional activities at their desk: reading, coloring, writing, etc.

After about 20 minutes, Ms. Rivera rings a chime to let students know it's time to put their materials away and come to the carpet for the Morning Meeting. Ms. Rivera has students tell her

today's date, the day of the week (they sing a song about that), and the weather outside. She shares some ideas about the problem-based task they are working on: "Twenty Ways to Make a Difference" – each student is selecting twenty different ways to help others, selecting one way each day and sharing about it in a journal through writing and drawing. She asks some students to share what their way for helping others for the day is; she shares how she's seen students helping one another and her; and she asks them for more ideas from their day. As a class, they are holding a food drive for a local homeless shelter. She points to a filled box and shares that parents and community members dropped off more food items for the drive. The students are excited!

To finish their meeting, Ms. Rivera projects the *Activity List* and, for any activity not already familiar to the students, she explains more about it. She points out that one of the activities is to go through the food box and count the number of different types of items, then color in blocks to indicate the totals. She then holds up a 10" cardboard letter "R" and tells the students today she'll be on the lookout for words that start with the same sound that the letter "R" makes – and she shares the "R" sound and has students offer examples. She tells them to be on the lookout for words that begin with the "R" sound so they can share those with her and one another throughout the day. She ends the meeting by holding up a red triangle with the numeral "1" in it to represent Learning Block 1, which she then places in a prominent location for students to see, reminding them to return to their seats, schedule their morning, and start on their first activity.

Students then move back to their seats and take the *Activity List* out of their folders. They look at the list, which includes three skills-based activities, including learning about the letter "R" sound, and one choice for structured play. For some activities, the students may have a choice of how they want to learn, for example, a learning center or a video. For a "Let's Read" activity, for example, students may select any books from their designated leveled books. Students are empowered through choice!

In some cases, an activity may have a Learning Block numeral already there, which means Ms. Rivera wants the student to join her at the small-group table at that time to work on the skill together. Students circle any choices they have to make and, for each learning block, they write the numeral 1, 2, 3, or 4, depending on the order in which they want to accomplish the activities. Ms. Rivera walks around and sits with the groups to help students make their selections. She puts her initials on the top of the sheet so the students know she agrees with their choices. As soon as they complete their choices, they put their ordered *Activity List* in their folders and move to retrieve the materials they need, log onto the computer, or move to the area in the class where they will engage in their first learning activity. Ms. Rivera continues to move around the room assisting in the process until she has initialed each student's sheet. She then sits next to individual students or pairs to observe them working and offer suggestions, questions, and guidance as needed.

Ms. Rivera carries a clipboard with a *Facilitation Grid* of student names and academic skills so she can track student progress. She also carries an executive function *Facilitation Grid*.

The morning for students is divided into timeslots as follows:

Breakfast and choice time (at desk)	20 minutes
Morning Meeting (at group area)	15 minutes
Activity List scheduling	5 minutes
Learning Block 1	15 minutes
Teacher Read Aloud (at desks)	10 minutes
Learning Block 2	15 minutes
Group Meeting - Let's Move! (next to desks)	10 minutes
Learning Block 3	15 minutes
Special - Art	40 minutes
Learning Block 4	15 minutes
Group Meeting - Academic Focus	15 minutes
Afternoon Planning	10 minutes
Lunch	40 minutes

Toward the end of the first learning block, Ms. Rivera looks to see if classmate Yurgos is going to sound the chime, indicating it's time to clean up and sit at their desks. Yurgos wanted to be the Chime-Master for the day, using a picture of a clock to match the actual clock to sound the chime.

As students settle into their seats, Ms. Rivera reads a book to the class (from their literacy program), projecting the pages of the book on the wall so that she can point to pictures and words, using gestures and props, to build language understanding. She uses the interactive Word Wall and Cognate Wall to point to words so that students see that some of the words in the book are defined on the wall. When she finishes, she holds up a blue rectangle with the numeral "2" on it, pausing to ask what color it is; she then asks what shape it is and what letter starts that word (after all, she's looking for words that start with "R".) She draws their attention to the Sound Wall and has students make the sound of the letter "R." Finally, she has them look at their *Activity List* and put their finger on the activity they numbered "2," then has them go ahead and get started. She draws the clock for Yurgos to sound the chime for the end of that Learning Block.

Students move into their second activity. This time, Ms. Rivera has indicated that 5 students should join her at the small-group table to work on understanding ordinal numbers with her. While she is working with the group, Ms. Khan, the Teaching Assistant, is moving about the

room, helping students as needed. At the end of this Learning Block, Yurgos sounds the chime and students return to their desks.

It's time for some movement! Ms. Rivera picks a song she likes and guides students through some movement, working on gross motor skills and executive function: following directions, following multiple steps (e.g., let's hop on the right foot three times, hop on the left foot three times, and then jump with both feet three times); cause-and-effect (e.g., when the music stops, put your hand on your head); and so forth. When they finish, she holds up a green square with the numeral three on it to remind them to find the activity they numbered "3" and get started.

This time, Ms. Rivera moves around the room, sitting with students and facilitating instruction. As she observes two students buddy-reading, she holds up a "10" question mark and says, "I have a question?" Then she holds up her "R" and asks, "Can you share some of the words in your book that begin with the letter 'R'?"

Meanwhile, a student, Keyana, is at the small-group desk with those students who chose to join her for sight words. This is because Keyana has shown she knows her sight words very well and she chose to run a session on helping others learn their sight words. Ms. Rivera spoke with her yesterday to show her what to do. Ms. Khan joins the group to observe the students in action and ensure Keyana has it covered!

Yurgos, the Chime Master, signals for students to return to their desks. It's time for art class, so Ms. Rivera and Ms. Khan have students line up and then walk them to art class.

As students return to class, Ms. Rivera is holding up a yellow circle with the numeral "4" on it, reminding students to start on the fourth activity they scheduled for the morning. She continues to facilitate learning.

Before you know it, it's time for lunch!

Additional Thoughts . . .

The afternoon activity list, which students will retrieve from the *Resource Area* after lunch, has activities that offer two opportunities for structured play, and other activities related to their "Twenty Ways to Make a Difference" project. One of their afternoon meetings will focus on this as well and help students select the "way" they will help others throughout the evening and tomorrow. Ms. Rivera will continue to hold some small-group lessons in the afternoon.

Future-Powered Kindergarten is a place where students take charge of their own learning while building executive function, social, emotional, collaborative, and academic skills. It's an immersive experience for language building. It prioritizes students' learning over teachers' teaching; and shifts the teacher's role to instructional curator and facilitator. And best of all, it's a lot of fun for students and teachers alike.