Words of Wisdom from Lilian Katz

September 26, 2015
College of Marin Early Learning Summit

The "mother", no QUEEN, of Project Approach, Lilian Katz inspired over 150 early childhood educators on September 26 at MCOE. College of Marin, in collaboration with Marin County Office of Education, held its annual Early Learning Summit, featuring Lilian Katz. Special thanks to Peggy Dodge, Lori Moraca, Lyda Beardsley, and Carol Barton for leading this tremendous work; and as ever, Ethel Seiderman, our very own Marin County expert, advocating for equity for our youngest children. (Learn more at the University of Illinois website at illinoisearlylearning.org and ECRP.uiuc.edu)

Needless to say, it was an experience of a lifetime to be in the presence of such an extraordinary educator, who continues to be an international expert in early childhood education. What was particularly rewarding, in addition to her exceptional words of wisdom, was her theoretical alignment with the work we have been doing in Quality Improvement and PreK-3 Early School Success through the generous support of Marin Community Foundation. Specifically supported by Lilian was "Teaching Pyramid with PDA-positive descriptive acknowledgement and Concept Development and Quality Feedback (CLASS); First School research on young boys and learning, as well as, the importance of metacognition and evidence based learning through questioning; and finally, Carol Dweck's work on "Growth Mindset", effort oriented learning and belief that effort makes a difference.

Words of wisdom from Lilian Katz are beneficial to children and adults of all ages.

1. Know as much as you can about each and every child.
2. Add an “R” to STEM or STEAM to make “STREAM” to add relationships to learning
3. Positive dispositions affect us for a lifetime
4. Find out what is impacting a child’s experience socially and academically
5. Build the foundation properly or it will be difficult and expensive to repair later. Social competence must be achieved by age 6.
6. Children ignored by others, by the time they are six, are adversely effected for the future in terms of building healthy relationships
7. Don’t start children on the 3rd Floor of learning, it is only short term learning and cannot be sustained

8. Curriculum is defined as a plan for learning; uncover a subject rather than cover it

9. Address four basic questions in lesson planning to elicit deeper learning
   a. What should be learned? (Intellectual goals—understanding a subject in depth)
   b. When should it be learned based on the sequence of development?
   c. How is it best learned?
   d. How can we tell if we did well on the first three questions?

10. Children cannot develop confidence from empty praise; provide informative feedback

11. Speak clearly, honestly and emphatically; say what is needed and change the subject and tone. (“Of course you are disappointed but.....”)

12. Parents are key to social competence

13. Rejected kids later join others who were rejected early on, to form gangs to respond to society that rejected them as children

14. The best predictor of adult adaptation, is the adequacy with which the child gets along other children

15. Create mental dispositions (Habits of Mind) for learning through observation, analysis, synthesis, prediction, and cause and effect-dispositions to pursue questions, alternative solutions, courses of action. Consider disposition to use as well as learning

16. Focus on what students want to find out vs what you want them to know

17. Break the “recursive cycle” to increase peer interaction and acceptance

18. Align goals with Growth Mindset:
   a. Effort oriented
   b. Concerned and interested in own mastery
   c. When faced with difficulty vary the strategies
   d. Belief that effort makes a difference

19. Brain development for girls occurs a year earlier than boys. Boys catch up by age 8

20. Focus on intellectual dispositions by asking why, how, what, encourage reasoning skills and prediction

21. The younger the children, the more they learn from interactive experiences first hand

22. Mixed age groups provide rich learning
23. Young children need “continuous contingent interaction” – back and forth conversation

24. Don’t confuse excitement with building interest. Interest sustains itself over time in engagement

25. There is inborn disposition to be curious

26. Emotion regulation is the ability to postpone one’s first impulse

27. Parents have the largest role in social emotional development in children

28. Make a distinction between indulgence and understanding. Be sensitive, not intimidating

29. Project Approach is in-depth investigation of a topic worthy of children learning something about that is something real and includes:
   a. wide variety of integrated subjects (ELA, Math, Social Studies, Science)
   b. includes cooperation, collaboration, debate, prediction, suggestions, negotiations, turn taking, negotiating, bargaining, compromise)
   intellectual development and academic knowledge
   c. in-depth question strategies of why, what, and how
   d. how do things work; what do people do? How do things happen?
   e. topics are relevant to the child’s environment
   f. children are resources and make predictions, hypothesis, and become experts
   g. first hand direct investigation
   h. tell the story of the project from beginning to end

30. Believe in every child placed in your care