

## TRAINER TOOL

### Role of the Teacher

#### **Demonstrate an attitude of respect.**

We reflected on our own biases and how we may not always exhibit an attitude of respect toward nature. For example, some may want to grab the bleach bottle and kill ants the moment they see them, but what a great opportunity to stop and study the ants instead. Many people considered how they could shift their attitudes and treat living things more respectfully. This also led to a conversation about fears of spiders and how to use staff members that aren't fearful of nature as necessary.

#### **Model curiosity, wonderment, and excitement.**

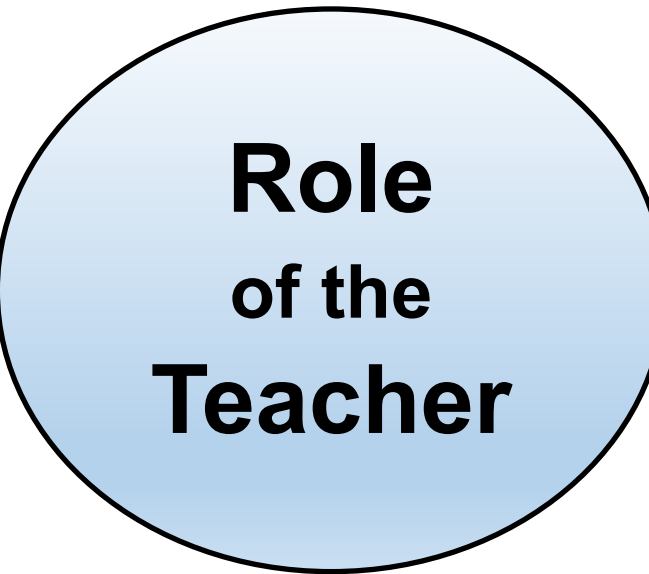
We started with this role because participants were clearly excited and curious after the Live-It-Up Café. We let them share their excitement and brainstorm for how they would bring these exciting experiences into the classroom. One teacher shared how they had had someone very enthusiastic about gardens a few years ago, so they now have a garden and that enthusiasm continues.

#### **Provide guidance in describing observations.**

We discussed using open-ended questions to expand on children's observations and to help guide them to the key concepts. During the Live-It-Up Café we (trainers) noticed that the open-ended questions were somewhat shallow, so we used this time to have participants think about how to use open-ended questions to prompt thinking about the focus key concepts.

#### **Make it as natural as possible.**

We posed the question, "What do you think it means to make things as natural as possible?" Participants answered, "Using real items, not just Lakeshore items; being outside when you can." We expanded on these answers and used the Habitat group as an example, saying, "Today we explored potatoes planted in a bucket. Do you think this was a natural experience?" Many participants answered, "Yes." The question was then posed, "How could it have been more natural?" Trainer paused about a minute and then asked, "What if we had been outside? Or, what if we planted them in the ground and then dug them up?" This led to a conversation about the idea of "as possible" and how this is different for every place and situation. We discussed how important it is to be reflective about each situation and to try to make each experience as natural as possible.



#### **Provide tools and time for observation and documentation.**

Participants discussed the tools at their table and talked about any "ahas" they had had. The magnifying glasses with lights were the favorite observation tool. The Appearances and Behaviors group shared how much they liked the leaf rubbing as documentation. This led to a conversation about how to use other forms of art for documentation.

#### **Expand on the observations of children.**

Some participants discussed how to help children understand the "right things" here. We spent some time talking about how to build up on children's observations and thoughts—regardless of accuracy. We practiced expanding with questions to prompt thinking and not telling children they are wrong. For example if a child says, "I think beans need wind to grow," a teacher should not say, "Oh that is interesting, but actually they need water and soil to grow." Instead, a teacher would expand on the observation by saying, "Really, and why do you think that?" Or, "Interesting thought; what did you observe that makes you think that?"