

Principles of Teaching Early Childhood Education

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Outline

- Developmentally Appropriate Practice
- Characteristics of Young Children
- Characteristics of Young Children's Learning
 - Play and Children's Learning and Development

Overview

- **Teaching Method:** Technique chosen to achieve a learning goal (objective)
- The phrase *teaching strategy* is used interchangeably with *teaching method*.
 - They really mean the same thing. However:
 - The term Method often suggests a procedure, which is not always appropriate
 - The term Strategy simply means a careful plan

Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP)

- **DAP:** Practices that promote young children's optimal (best) learning and development
- Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP) Position Statement
 - **Revised (2019):** https://www.naeyc.org/sites/default/files/globally-shared/downloads/PDFs/get-involved/leadership/initial_public_draft_dap_2019.pdf
 - **Original (2009):** <https://www.naeyc.org/sites/default/files/globally-shared/downloads/PDFs/resources/position-statements/PSDAP.pdf>

Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP)

- **Core Considerations:** Early childhood educators make many decisions each day that influence the learning and development of the children under their care. Those decisions should be based on:
 - Knowledge of child development and learning
 - Knowledge of an individual child
 - Knowledge of the social and cultural context

Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP)

- **Principles of child development and learning that inform practice**
 - All domains of child development are important; each domain both supports and is supported by the others (#2)
 - Children are active learners from birth, constantly taking in and organizing information to create meaning through their interactions and experiences (#4)
 - Curricula and teaching methods build on each child's assets by connecting their experiences in the school to their home and community setting (#5)
 - Play is an important vehicle for promoting the development of content knowledge as well as self-regulation, language, cognition, and social competence (#6)
 - Development and learning advance when children are challenged to achieve at a level just beyond their current mastery and when they have many opportunities to reflect and practice newly acquired skills (#8)

Principle of Child Development #2

All domains of child development are important

- **Cognitive:** Mental/thinking abilities
- **Physical:** Growth and health
- **Social:** Interactions with others
- **Character:** Behavior that reflects good morals and ethics
- **Spiritual:** Daily transformation in the image of God through faith and obedience

Principle of Child Development #4a

Children are active learners from birth

- Even in crèche, children are learning:
 - Language (foundation of reading)
 - Physical development
 - Social development (e.g., attachment theory)
 - Foundational mathematics skills
 - Scientific method

ECE 224: Early Childhood Education Methods

Principle of Child Development #4b

Constantly taking in and organizing information to create meaning through their interactions and experiences

- Children create ideas about the world based on their experiences in the environment
 - Teachers must identify children's beliefs and either build on or correct these basic ideas
 - Teachers should look for opportunities to use children's daily experiences to teach content knowledge (e.g., English, reading, writing, maths, science)

DAP Curriculum: Mirrors and Windows

- The metaphor of mirrors and windows is useful for curriculum development in the early years
- **Mirror:** Children see themselves, their family, and their culture in the curriculum, including the content, learning environment, materials, and activities
- **Window:** The curriculum provides a window to the world, exposing children to different people, places, sciences, arts, etc. that they may not otherwise encounter

Principle of Child Development #5

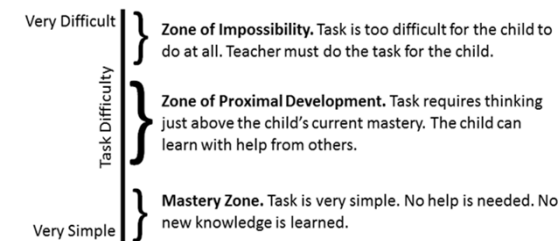
Curricula and teaching methods connect to their experiences in their home and community setting

- Culturally Appropriate Practice (CAP)
 - Educational practices should be based on culturally relevant standards of development
 - Education should reflect the goals and resources in the child's natural environment
 - Education should complement children's development within their family and culture

Principle of Child Development #8

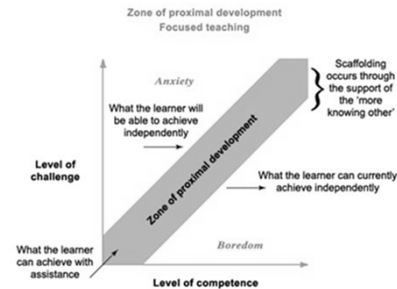
Development and learning advance when children are challenged to achieve at a level just beyond their current mastery

Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development: Range of tasks that a child can not do alone but can accomplish when assisted by a more skilled partner



Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)

- The ZPD is where real learning is possible because the task is above the child's current level of mastery, but still within reach
 - Instruction should always be aimed at a child's ZPD.
- The ZPD is continually changing as children practice and master new skills



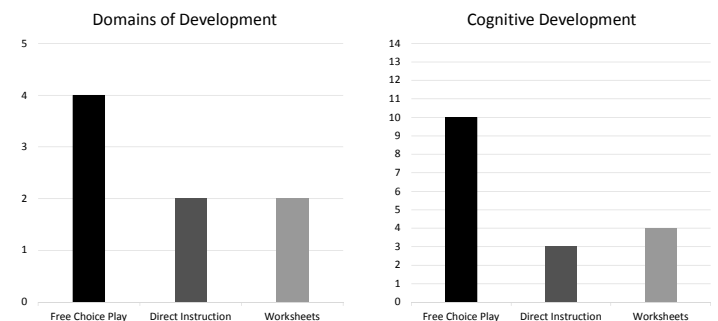
Scaffolding

- To assist in learning within a child's ZPD, the teacher should provide scaffolding
 - **Scaffolding:** Assistance by a more skilled person that allows a child to complete a task they cannot do independently
- Types of Scaffolding
 - Adapting content or learning materials to children's developmental level
 - Modeling
 - Questions

Characteristics of Young Children's Learning

- Warm relationships
- Enjoyable learning experiences
 - Joy and learning go hand-in-hand (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009)
- Active learning experiences
- Time
- Repetition
- Mistakes
- Implicit learning experiences
 - *Implicit:* The ability of being understood from something else, though not directly revealed or expressed
 - Children learn and develop much through play

Analysis



Conclusion: Free choice play nurtures many more areas of development than direct instruction or worksheets

What if free-choice play can be transformed to guided play whereby teachers integrate instructional activities with play to purposefully foster learning and development?

Principle of Child Development #6
Play is an important vehicle for learning and development



Conclusion

- Learning in the early years is much broader than head knowledge
- Integrating instructional activities with play is a powerful way to nurture a broad range of developmental skills and knowledge
- Early childhood care and education in Nigeria needs to be reconceptualized to integrate playful, culturally relevant activities that nurture this broad range of skills and knowledge