Methods of Teaching Young Children:
Curricular Approaches

Dr Katrina A. Korb

University of Jos

Outline

- Overview of Curriculum
- Integrated Curriculum
- Thematic Curriculum
- Project Approach

Curriculum Overview

- **Curriculum:** Comes from the Latin word that means *the course to be run*
- **Definition:** "The curriculum consists of the knowledge, skills, abilities, and understandings children to acquire and the plans for the learning experiences through which those gains will occur." (DAP Position Statement, p. 20)
  - *What* learning outcomes
    - "developmentally and educationally significant"
  - *How* the outcomes occur
    - Learning experiences: play, small group, large group, learning centres, routines

Curriculum Introduction

- Children learn more in ECE programs with a well-planned curriculum
- The foundation of the curriculum is the goals for what children are to learn and develop in the ECE program
- A good curriculum is well-structured, but also flexible to allow the teacher to integrate pupils' needs and interests
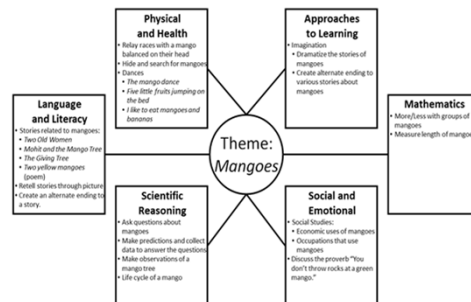
Integrated Curriculum

- **Integrated:** Blended into a unified whole
  - One learning activity achieves learning goals for multiple subjects and developmental domains
- Stories are an effective tool for integrating diverse learning goals into one activity
- Science is a powerful subject to integrate learning from other subjects (e.g., reading, writing, maths)
- Advantages
  - More realistic, allowing for more powerful learning
  - More interesting and engaging
  - Able to achieve more learning goals in a shorter period of time

Thematic Curriculum

- **Thematic unit:** Broad topic of interest used as the basis for learning activities across subjects
  - Day-long theme examples: Nigeria on Independence Day, Cultural Day, 100th day of school
  - Longer themes: Mangoes, Rainy Season
- Advantages:
  - Help children develop more in-depth understandings
  - Improve interest and motivation in learning

Planning a Thematic Curriculum

- Use a Thematic Web to brainstorm ideas about activities from the theme according to the goals of the program

Project Approach

- **Project Approach:** In-depth investigation of a topic relevant and important to children
  - Incorporates multiple subjects and domains with the goal of studying a project in-depth
  - There are three phases of a project
    1. Select a topic
    2. Collect data
    3. Share findings with others