

CHLD 105: Early Childhood Curriculum Development – Discussion Questions

The following questions are suggested for use within an online discussion board. They could also be incorporated into a traditional classroom environment.

Discussion Board 1: DAP

Review the NAEYC Position Statement on Developmentally Appropriate Practices [http://www.naeyc.org/files/naeyc/file/positions/position_statement_Web.pdf]

The NAEYC position statement includes guidelines which are divided into 5 key areas of practice. Read the Guidelines section carefully and identify one guideline from each area that you see as being important when including children who are culturally, linguistically and/or ability diverse. Explain why you suggested each of these guidelines and discuss how you will assure these guidelines are applied in your current or future classroom.

Discussion Board 2: Storytelling

Your textbook gives you many guidelines and a detailed plan for conducting effective whole-group activities. The sample in Figure 4.4 was built around “The Three Billy Goats Gruff.” Your post requires that you create a whole-group storytelling plan for a story and post the lesson plan. You can use the sample plan in Figure 4.4 on page 103 for ideas. Review the “HCC Lesson Plan Form,” “HCC Lesson Plan Guidelines,” and “HCC Lesson Plan Grading Rubric” and follow the suggested format.

When creating your whole-group storytelling plan, keep in mind that there are lots of ways to tell stories with sound effects, flannel boards, puppets, props, dramatizing, etc. Be creative and plan an activity that you would enjoy conducting and one in which a diverse group of children could all be happily engaged. Be very specific so others will be able to replicate your activity. Post your plan in the Discussion area when complete.

*HINT: You may want to save some of the good ideas from your classmates for your own class someday. You will have the components of a useful storytelling resource booklet.

Discussion Board 3: Classroom Arrangement

Classroom arrangement has been referred to as a teaching strategy and the classroom environment as the third teacher. Based on your textbook readings and experiences, explain how classroom arrangement is a teaching strategy and the environment is a vital third teacher.

What elements will you adopt to maximize your current or future classroom arrangement and support use of the environment as the third teacher?

Discussion Board 4: Family Engagement

Consider the following scenario:

Naomi is a new teacher in a preschool classroom. She was told by her center director that she needs to develop a series of policies and practices that will ensure families are engaged within her early childhood classroom. Naomi later comments to one of her coworkers "I really don't see any benefit to getting families involved. To me, it is a lot more headache than it is worth."

Post how you would respond to Naomi, keeping in mind the importance of family engagement. As well, consider challenges that might come into play when trying to engage families including the challenge that several of her families have limited English. How might you handle these?

Discussion Board 5: Aesthetic Awareness

In her article "The Intangibles in the Early Childhood Classroom" [http://www.childcareexchange.com/resources/view_article.php?article_id=5020412&page=1&keyword_id=%5D] Carol B. Hillman offers this advice on developing children's aesthetic awareness:

"Developing children's aesthetic awareness starts with the teacher's choices about how the classroom is set up: the materials presented to the children, and the manner in which they are displayed. It is seeing that the paints are fresh each day and maintaining a sense of order by creating a separate space for each object. It is arranging and rearranging wall displays throughout the year and making the mainstay the work of the young artists in your classroom. Creating an aesthetic sense also has to do with simplicity: knowing that clutter is counter-productive. Blank spaces on the walls allow the eye to rest and the body to relax".

"An aesthetic sense can also be heightened by having live plants and flowers growing in your classroom to look at and wonder about each day. These lend beauty, color, and fragrance in subtle but satisfying ways. Keeping an aesthetic sense alive calls for a great deal of thought and planning that is woven into the very fabric of who you are, how you think, and how you choose your actions. It is like an artist who mixes the colors from her palette, overlaying the colors, one atop another until the blending creates just the right shade of color she sought."

Based on these quotes from the article, describe in detail how you will develop and heighten aesthetic awareness in your classroom.

Discussion Board 6: Colorin Colorado

To prepare for this Discussion Board, view the webcast:

Palacios, R. (n.d.). Colorin Colorado. *Preschool for English language learners: Academic skills* [Video file]. Available from <http://www.colorincolorado.org/webcasts/preschool/>

This webcast features Dr. Rebecca Palacios and offers information on the following components of a Pre-K English Language Learners program: language instruction, curriculum, professional development, and family outreach.

After you complete the webcast, post your thoughts on why preschool is so important for the young English language learner and how language instruction, curriculum, professional development and family outreach all support optimal development.

Discussion Board 7: Cultural Determinants of Activity

To prepare for the discussion, read the article “How We Play— Cultural Determinants of Physical Activity in Young Children.”

Emma, L., & Jarrett, M. (2010). How we play— cultural determinants of physical activity in young children. Virginia: Head Start Body Start: National Center for Physical Development and Outdoor Play. Available from http://www.aahperd.org/headstartbodystart/activityresources/upload/HowWePlay_LitReview.pdf

This resource summarizes several research projects looking at how children play and their level of physical activity. The research shows that socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity and gender all have an impact on level of play and physical activity.

Read the article and identify cultural determinants that impact activity level. Identify key ways that early childhood teachers were encouraged to increase physical activity in young children and how you think early childhood professionals can impact the obesity epidemic by applying this research to daily practice.

Discussion Board 8: Project Approach

The Project Approach represents the constructivist approach to supporting children's development and learning within an effective early childhood curriculum. A project is an in-depth investigation of a topic undertaken by a class, a group of children, or an individual child in an early childhood classroom or at home.

Resources on the Project Approach are available on the Illinois Projects in Practice (Illinois PIP) web site [<http://illinoispip.org/>], which is designed and maintained by the Illinois Early Learning Project.

The Illinois PIP site includes a variety of resources, including definitions, research, examples of projects, an online template for teachers to use to share descriptions of their projects, and Lilian Katz's blog highlighting aspects of the Project Approach. It also includes examples of many exciting projects completed with young children.

For your discussion this week, please review one of the projects listed on the site. In your initial post,

- provide an overview of the project that you selected, and

- identify what you see as the strengths and challenges of utilizing the project approach with young children.