Research-Based Developmentally Appropriate Instruction in Kindergarten

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• What does Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP) mean?
  – Developmentally appropriate practice (DAP) means assuring that classrooms, instruction, and assessment for young children take into consideration three major dimensions: age, individual growth patterns, and cultural factors.

Krogh, 1997; Bredekamp & Copple, 1997
DAP in Kindergarten

Is a literacy focus in Kindergarten appropriate or is it just down shifting 1\textsuperscript{st} grade curriculum?
Is Teaching Reading to Young Children DAP*?

“Learning to read and write is critical to a child’s success in school and later in life…the early childhood years – from birth through age eight – are the most important period for literacy development. It is for this reason that the International Reading Association (IRA) and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) have joined together to formulate a position statement regarding early literacy development “ (pg. 1).

Systematically analyzing a vast body of qualitative and quantitative research, Chall compares achievement rates that result from traditional, teacher-centered approaches with those resulting from progressive, student-centered methods. Her findings are striking and clear: that teacher-centered approaches result in higher achievement overall, with particular benefits for children of lower socioeconomic status and those with learning difficulties.
In Order to Effectively Teach At-Risk Children, Reading Instruction in the Early Years Must Be Explicit and Systematic.

NRP, 2000
So, What Does It Mean to be Explicit and Systematic With Your Instruction? A Look First at Explicit Instruction.

Explicit instruction is unambiguous and clear in teaching reading skills and strategies.

There are five characteristics in explicit instruction.

- **Key features of explicit instruction.**
  - Clear instructional targets
  - Clear purpose for learning
  - Adequate modeling
  - Scaffolded practice
  - Progress monitoring assessments

(Modified from Arrasmith, 2005)
1. Clear Instructional Targets

- Explicit instruction begins with a clear understanding of what students will learn and be able to do as a result of reading instruction across the year (i.e., knowing what letter/sound goals are to be attained across the year) as well as within the lesson. The teacher knows what to teach students to do across the school year.
2. Clear Purpose for Learning

• The teacher and students understand the outcome of teaching.

• Instruction must lead to an ability to understand written text. (Torgesen, et al., 1998).

• “Direct children’s attention toward letters and sounds to enable them to use strategies, not learn skills” (Cunningham, 2000).
3. Adequate Modeling

- Modeling shows the students what they are expected to do within the context of reading. Demonstration reinforces understanding and improves practice. Presenting examples reinforces the directions and explanations.
4. Scaffold Student Practice

- Guided practice helps students explore and learn. It is important that they have immediate feedback on their attempts. Student’s inappropriate attempts are corrected so that wrong applications are not reinforced.
5. Progress Monitoring Assessments

- Progress monitoring assessments can help ascertain the level of proficiency achieved by the student. The goal is to know when a student is struggling and in need of additional support or when it is time to move on.
DAP in Kindergarten

• What should children learn about literacy in kindergarten?
  – Oral Language
  – Concepts about Print
  – Letter Names
  – Phonological and Phonemic Awareness
  – Beginning Phonics (CVC words)
  – 25 Sight Words
  – Listening Comprehension Strategies
If we adopt a literacy and math focus, then what happens to art, music, dance, science, and social studies?

The State of Utah has adopted a *K-2 Integrated Core Curriculum* to assure that young children receive opportunities to experience these important content subject areas through integrated theme units of study. Ideally these content subject areas will be also integrated into literacy and mathematics learning in the early grades.
DAP in Kindergarten

• What happens to play in Kindergarten?

Play should continue in Kindergarten. However, it may need to be effectively integrated with literacy, math, & content subject area learning.

--Neuman & Roskos, 1992
Neuman, 2000
DAP in Kindergarten

What do good academic learning centers look like in Kindergarten?
Promoting and Assessing Effective Literacy Learning Classroom Environments

D. Ray Reutzel
Lesley Mandel Morrow

Plato once wisely observed, “What is honored in a country will be cultivated there.” And so it is in classrooms where teachers honor the development of reading and writing not only through teaching the curriculum but also through creating print-rich environments in which literacy-learning activities are an integral part of every school day.

The physical design of a classroom has been found to affect the choices children make among various learning activities (Reutzel & Cooter, 2004; Morrow & Weinstein, 1996). Classrooms that nourish literacy provide a print-rich environment, an interdisciplinary approach to promoting literacy growth, recognition of individual student differences, and a thorough understanding of the levels of literacy development. In this chapter we describe (1) the characteristics of classroom environments that support literacy learning; (2) how effective teachers create and orchestrate such environments; and (3) the types of assessments that help teachers and administrators evaluate and monitor the quality and appropriateness of classroom learning environments.

As a backdrop and as a way to create a context for the discussion that follows, we begin with a brief description of a print-rich classroom in which children participate in functional literacy activities, using materials and space that are deliberately arranged to stimulate young children’s literacy development.
Kindergarten: Learning Centers

• Learning centers are to support the literacy, mathematics, and the Integrated K-2 Core Curriculum.
• Only previously explicitly taught strategies and tasks should be found in academic learning centers – independent or collaborative practice NOT exploration!
• At some point learning tasks must be differentiated for children – Not the same task/level for all children in the center.
Kindergarten: Learning Centers

- Learning centers must encourage self regulation and independence.
- Learning centers must have a designated leader.
- Learning centers must have clear procedures for entry, behavior, clean up, and exit.
- Learning centers must have an overall routine for use.
- Learning centers must require some kind of accountability for students.
Kindergarten: Learning Centers

• Learning centers need clearly posted directions, objectives, and expectations or rules.

• If there isn’t sufficient room for stand alone learning centers – make transportable centers.
Kindergarten: Learning Centers

- Learning centers must be clearly organized with sufficient tools for learning and exploration.

- Learning centers must have an explicitly labeled place for everything – Every thing has a place and is in its place.
Kindergarten: Learning Centers

- Exploration centers must also include “literacy, math and content knowledge enriched play” for developing kindergarten children’s oral language and background knowledge.
Kindergarten: Learning Centers

• Develop learning centers one at a time and get them right before creating another.

• Add other learning centers as you are able to create and manage.
What is the importance of oral language in Kindergarten?
Oral Language Abilities are a Powerful Predictor of Later Literacy Achievement

• Early language ability is a powerful predictor of reading achievement 3-5 years later.

  --Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children

• Meta-analysis of 61 studies

  --Scarborough, H. 2003. Handbook of Early Literacy Research
Oral Language Abilities are a Powerful Predictor of Later Literacy Achievement

• Dickson and Tabor Home-School Study -- Language and literacy tests administered to preschoolers and then when in 4\textsuperscript{th} and 7\textsuperscript{th} grades.

• Kindergarten measures are strongly predictive of the scores children received on language and literacy tasks in 4\textsuperscript{th} and 7\textsuperscript{th} grades.

--Beginning literacy with language, 2002
Oral Language Abilities are a Powerful Predictor of Later Literacy Achievement

• Especially after grade 2, many children at the 25th percentile in reading comprehension have oral language comprehension levels that are too low to profit from independent reading of most “grade-level” textbooks.

--Chall and Conard, 1991
The crucial role of oral language vocabulary in reading comprehension was documented by four studies conducted with elementary or middle-school English Language Learners. Research findings suggest that limited vocabulary knowledge is associated with low levels of reading comprehension in English, and ELL with a large repertoire of high frequency and academically relevant words are better able to process written texts than ELL without such a repertoire.

--August & Shanahan, 2006
DAP in Kindergarten

What is the importance of concepts of print in Kindergarten?
DAP in Kindergarten


- Learning concepts of print early on influences children’s language development, phonemic awareness, phonics, word reading, and reading/writing development (Morris, 1993; Roberts, 1992).
DAP in Kindergarten

What is the importance of phonological and phonemic awareness in Kindergarten?
DAP in Kindergarten

• Research conducted over the last 20 years has shown that children vary significantly in the phonological component of their natural capacity for language.
  --Liberman et al, 1989

• Approximately 20% of children lack PA in an “average” group of children.
  --Adams, 1990
DAP in Kindergarten

• Longitudinal studies:
  Most children who are poor readers in third grade were having difficulty right from the start with phonologically-based reading skills.

  (Learning First Alliance, 2000).
• Measures of preschoolers’ level of phonemic awareness strongly predict their future success in learning to read – English, Swedish, Spanish, French, Italian, and Russian

DAP in Kindergarten

What is the importance of assessment in Kindergarten?
DAP in Kindergarten

Types of Assessment for Kindergarten

**Screening** - Designed as a first step in identifying children who may be at high risk for delayed development or academic failure.

**Progress Monitoring** - Determines through frequent measurement if students are making adequate progress or need more intervention to achieve desired outcomes.
DAP in Kindergarten

Types of Assessment for Kindergarten

**Diagnosis** - Helps teachers plan instruction by providing in-depth information about students’ skills and instructional needs.

**Outcome** - Provides a bottom-line evaluation of the effectiveness of the instructional program in relation to established performance levels.
DAP in Kindergarten

What is the importance of listening comprehension in Kindergarten?
“Beginning readers generally have stronger listening comprehension skills than reading comprehension skills.”

(Curtis, 1980; Ashby & Rayner, 2006)

Many early childhood educators do not consider comprehension instruction to be an important part of primary grade education.

(Pearson & Duke, 2002)

Neuman (2001) asserted that early childhood (K-3) programs have traditionally emphasized learning processes to the exclusion of content. The National Reading Panel (2000) suggested that connecting the instruction of comprehension strategies to learning information in content areas may be an efficient approach.

(Reutzel, Fawson, & Smith, 2005)
DAP in Kindergarten

What is the importance of writing in Kindergarten?
Walter Loban (1964) once said that the relationship between reading and writing is “so striking to be beyond question” (p. 212).

“Writing is the foundation of reading…. When our students write, they learn how reading is put together because they do it. They learn the essence of print” (Hansen, 1987, pp. 178-179).

In the *Handbook of Writing Research*, Shanahan (2006) explains that “…reading and writing are dependent upon shared cognitive abilities (e.g., visual, phono-logical, and semantic systems or short- and long-term memory), and anything that improves these abilities may have implications for both reading and writing development…” (p. 174).
DAP in Kindergarten

What is the importance of small group differentiated instruction in Kindergarten?
Full Day Kindergarten

Small group differentiated instruction in Kindergarten

• “Group instruction, particularly small group instruction is consistently associated with positive gains in achievement…." (Pearson, 1984, pp. 6).

• “Recent research by Mathes, Denton, Fletcher, Anthony, Francis, and Schatschneider (2005) has shown that small group differentiated reading instruction has significant positive affects on young struggling readers’ progress and achievement in reading. The structure that small group differentiated reading instruction takes, whether it involves teacher guided groups reading leveled books or rigidly defined lessons in which the teacher reads from a script and students read from a scaffolded text, does not seem to make much of a difference. What seems to matter is that children, with similar instructional needs, are grouped together into small groups for targeted and intensive reading instruction.” (Reutzel & Cooter, 2008).
DAP in Kindergarten

• What is the role of academic engaged time in at-risk Kindergarten?

ALT ~ Growth, Development, and Achievement

Fisher, Filby, Marliave, Cahen, Dishaw, Moore, and Berliner, 1978

BTES Studies
DAP in Kindergarten

• What should Kindergarten teachers be teaching in Kindergarten?

  - Literacy
  - Mathematics
  - Integrated Core Curriculum
DAP in Kindergarten

- **What is the role of classroom management in Kindergarten**

Wong and Wong (1998) point out that the critical part of an effective first day is establishing effective classroom management from the outset.

Wang, Haertel, and Walberg (1994) examined 11,000 research reports to determine the factors that most influence student learning in school classrooms. They found there were 28 factors, but the single most important factor governing student learning in classrooms was – classroom management. They concluded that a teacher who is, “grossly inadequate in classroom management skills is probably not going to accomplish much” (Wong & Wong, 1998, pg. 84).
DAP in Kindergarten

• How should full day Kindergarten differ from half day Kindergarten?

COHERENT, DEEP, FACTUAL KNOWLEDGE +

Dr. Susan B. Neuman (2001), former U.S. Asst. Secretary of Education, argues “that early childhood programs have emphasized process to the exclusion of content, placing the utmost importance on how children learn rather than on what they learn, instead of striking a better balance” (p. 470).

She asserts further, “educators may not be teaching enough knowledge in early literacy…. Comprehension instruction was minimal from Grades 1 through 3…Books may well make people smarter…Today in the U.S., economic differences between the haves and have-nots are greater than at any other time in history since 1929…Teachers must ensure that children develop factual knowledge that has coherence and depth. All of our children, rich and poor and in between, deserve no less” (pp. 470-70).

DAP in Kindergarten

• How should full day Kindergarten differ from half day Kindergarten?

**ORAL LANGUAGE ACQUISITION**

Children must be relatively fluent in oral language use to communicate effectively with the teacher and with other students in their “learning networks” found in the classroom and in life (Pinnell, 1998; Pinnell & Jaggar, 2003).

Oral language ability is the bedrock foundation upon which all future learning is built (Scarborough, 2001; Shannahan, 2006; Smith, 2001; Vygotsky, 1978).

Children who come to school with thousands of “words in their head”—words they can hear, understand, and use in their daily lives—are already on the path to learning success (Allington & Cunningham, 1996).

Similarly, children who have small listening and speaking vocabularies must receive immediate attention if they are to have any real chance at reading success (National Research Council, 1998; Johnson, 2001).
DAP in Kindergarten

• How should full day Kindergarten differ from half day Kindergarten?

Coherent, deep, factual knowledge
+ Oral Language = Success!!
If you would like to get this power point presentation on “Full Day Kindergarten” please contact or visit the website...

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