



Curriculum Decision Making: Dimensions to Consider

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Introductions

- Please share:
 - Your name
 - Your job title
 - What brought you to this session?
 - What curriculum are you using/are you interested in using?



The Current Preschool Context

- Heightened understanding of young children's abilities
- Rising preschool enrollment
- Increasing use of accountability standards and Quality Rating and Improvement Systems
- Many curriculum options and lack of guidance for choosing





“The National Research Council (2001) warns that . . . a piecemeal approach can result in a disconnected conglomeration of activities and teaching methods, lacking focus, coherence, or comprehensiveness.”

(NAEYC/NAECS-SDE Position Statement)





This Presentation

- Decision-Making Framework
- Examining Curriculum Selection Resources
 - (Being a critical consumer)
- Closing Discussion



Decision-Making Framework

- Research base
- Theoretical orientation
- Comprehensive domains of learning
- Opportunities for differentiated instruction
- Coherent assessment system

Other Things to Consider:

Professional development model

Specific materials and space

Related services



RESEARCH BASE

- Developed using research-based child development principles
- Evaluated with rigorous research methods
- Published by peer-reviewed journal or some other reputable source (i.e. department of education)
- Considers fidelity of implementation
- Associations with children's learning outcomes



RESEARCH BASE CONT'D

- Do you know the research base for your current curriculum?
- Is there evidence to support its effectiveness?
- Report out in groups.



THEORETICAL ORIENTATION

- Clear theoretical framework
- Objectives, activities, materials, daily routine, and environment logically flow from the theory
- Definition of play and the teacher's role in play



THEORETICAL ORIENTATION, CONT'D

- Take some time to reflect on the theoretical framework for your current curriculum, and how it affects the environment, materials, teacher's role, etc.
- Report out to the whole group.



Domains of Learning



- Comprehensive or focused?
 - Integrated or specific activities by domain?
 - Emphasis on oral language development, higher order thinking, and problem solving or on discrete skill learning?
- * Aligned with state standards?



DOMAINS OF LEARNING CONT'D

- Take time to reflect on the learning domains and integration addressed in your current curriculum.
- Emphasis on oral language development, higher order thinking, and problem solving or on discrete skill learning?
- Report out to the whole group.



DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION

- Age range
- Dual Language Learners
- Culturally sensitive
- Inclusive of children with varied social/emotional/cognitive/physical needs



DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION CONT'D

- Take time to reflect on the opportunities for differentiated instruction within your current curriculum.
- Discuss areas where it is effective and where it falls short.
- Report out to the whole group.



COHERENT ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

- Consistent with learning objectives and state expectations
- Includes constrained and unconstrained skills
- Provides insight into individual children
- Informs teachers' practices
- Communicates with parents and future teachers



COHERENT ASSESSMENT SYSTEM CONT'D

- What type of assessment system is used with your current curriculum?
- What are the positives and negatives?
- What can you do to ensure it is implemented as intended?
- Report out to the whole group.



Other Things to Consider

- Professional development model
- Specific materials and space
- Related services
 - Parent programs
 - Transitions





Being a Critical Consumer

Find your curriculum on the resources provided.

- What criteria were used to rate your curriculum?
- How do these criteria differ from what we discussed?
- Why do you think that might be? (hint: what is the purpose of the resource?)



- What surprises you?
- What questions does this raise for you?
- Does the curriculum that you currently use / plan to use align with the curriculum components most important to you?



How has your perspective on
choosing a curriculum changed?



Resources

- Preschool Curriculum Consumer Report; The National Center on Quality Teaching and Learning (NCQTL), 2010.
- Matrix Comparing Comprehensive Curricula; Excerpted from Seattle Preschool for All Action Plan, 2014 (<http://murray.seattle.gov/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/AttachmentAthruE.pdf>)