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ABSTRACT

Universities in Florida, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, and Minnesota have been collaborating in an effort to implement a pedagogical model for early childhood teacher education that helps prospective teachers identify their own cultural and ethnic backgrounds and to understand cultural diversity while helping them learn to be sensitive to the cultural backgrounds and characteristics of the young children they will teach. This study focused on how prospective teachers infuse the notion of developmentally and culturally appropriate practice (DCAP) into their field-based preparation and is based on an interactive virtual discussion conducted through a Web site and WebBoard interaction. Participating in the virtual discussion were 64 prospective early childhood education teachers from five universities in four states. Their discussion was monitored, collected, and analyzed using data reduction, unit analysis, pattern coding, and memoing. Findings indicated that prospective teachers defined DCAP as a philosophy of teaching that makes teachers aware of cultural differences in child development and learning, requires teachers' adjustment to fit children's needs, and makes everyone realize that learning never ends. The prospective teachers saw that the conceptual understanding of DCAP guides teachers to reach all learners and frequently specified limited English-speaking children and children with special needs. They often noted that due to large group classes or state mandates, a teacher-driven curriculum is necessary and DCAP difficult to implement. The prospective teachers also constructed a self-image of a socially proactive teacher as a needed DCAP teacher quality. (Contains 30 references.) (KB)

ED 437 202

A Brief Report

**Fourth-Year Theory, Research and Practice:
Developmentally and Culturally Appropriate Practice (DCAP) Through
Field-Based Teacher Preparation**

“ECE Prospective Teachers’ Socially Constructed Voices From the WebBoard”

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**Fourth-Year Theory, Research and Practice:
Developmentally and Culturally Appropriate Practice (DCAP) Through
Field-Based Teacher Preparation**

“ECE Prospective Teachers’ Socially Constructed Voices From the WebBoard”

Perspective:

Since 1987, the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) has embraced Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP) as a pedagogical guideline for Early Childhood Education (Bredekamp, 1987; Bredekamp & Copple, 1997). Over the last decade many early childhood educators have critiqued DAP (Bowman, 1994, 1992; Bredekamp & Rosegrant, 1995, 1992; Cannella, 1997 & 1998; Delpit, 1988, 1995; Derman-Sparks, 1992; Jipson, 1991; Mallory & New, 1994; Spodek & Brown, 1993; Swadener & Miller-March, 1993). DAP, they argue, must pay greater attention to cultural differences and be extended to include culturally appropriate practice. In response to this criticism, several teacher educators (Hyun, 1998; Hyun, 1996; Hyun, & Marshall, 1997; Hyun, & Marshall, 1996) developed a model which expands DAP called Developmentally and Culturally Appropriate Practice (DCAP).

Teacher preparation for DCAP is a proposal for early childhood teacher education to help prospective teachers identify their own cultural and ethnic backgrounds and to understand cultural diversity while helping them learn to be sensitive to the cultural backgrounds and characteristics of the children they will teach. This model intends to help prospective teachers develop multiple/multiethnic perspective-taking abilities and culturally congruent critical pedagogy so that they can incorporate the cultural diversity of the children into their teaching. This approach ultimately aims to make early childhood education for all children.

In order to adapt DCAP as a framework for providing early childhood education that is more sensitive to multiple and multiethnic perspectives, teachers and prospective teachers should be familiar with the following components which serve as a foundation for DCAP: (1) Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP) (Bredekamp, 1987; Bredekamp & Copple, 1997); (2) the goals of multicultural education and appropriate messages for young children (York, 1991); (3) Anti-Bias Curriculum (Derman-Sparks, 1989), and (4) Culturally Congruent Critical Pedagogy (Hollins, King, & Hayman, 1994; Giroux, 1997, 1988, 1989; Ladson-Billings, 1992; Nieto, 1992).

Based on these knowledge, teachers are required to reflect on their teaching by critically inquiring whether every child in the classroom has received an equal and culturally congruent teaching and learning experience for their development. The teacher strives to learn about and understand each child's unique family influence

which directly affects the child's learning and problem solving skills. Through this process of critical pedagogy, the teacher reflects on how s/he can use the child's unique background as a powerful instructional tool for all the children in the classroom. This kind of fundamental reflective thinking used with the teacher's actual everyday practice is what is meant by developmentally and culturally appropriate practice. Such reflection helps to ensure that teachers consider multiple and diverse viewpoints as well as the long-term social and moral consequences of their decisions. Teaching in this fashion will more likely result in education that is for all individuals.

We need multiple approaches in preparing early childhood teachers for their future developmentally and culturally appropriate practice. For that purpose, a research-net called Early Childhood Teacher Preparation for DCAP was formed. This project started since 1995 with a few early childhood teacher educators. Currently the research participants has increased up to 65 participants, 22 states. Active leadership members are from CA, FL, OK, PA, MN. This particular research group meets annually at NAEYC and NAECTE annual conferences and shares their story of DCAP teacher preparation. This research-net project is designed for the national participants to present their ways of preparing early childhood DCAP teachers and the effectiveness of it as well as to share dilemmas, obstacles, re-defined/new ideas for practices, and personal insights.

Research Contexts:

1999-2000 is our fourth-year of the collaborative effort in preparing early childhood teachers for DCAP. This year our research focus was "how prospective teachers infuse the notion of DCAP into their field-based teacher preparation." During the Fall semester of 1999 research period, ECE prospective teachers from the four different states (FL, OK, PA, & MN) participated in an interactive virtual discussion to share their stories of DCAP implementation. The interactive virtual discussion was through DCAP Research-Net web-site

(<http://coe.fgcu.edu/faculty/Hyun/ResearchNet/DCAP.html>) and WebBoard (<http://onyx.fgcu.edu/~71>) interaction. The prospective teachers' on-line discussion were monitored, collected, and analyzed to un-cover how the early childhood education (ECE) prospective teachers make sense of DCAP through field-based preparation.

WebBoard is a new form of social context that brings a space for socially constructed knowledge among the participants in the contemporary culture of electronic communication era. Due to the nature of WebBoard discussion as the main research activity, the data and research results present the participants' socially constructed knowledge about DCAP through the WebBoard discussion as well as individual prospective teachers' field-based DCAP experiences. Table 1 presents the WebBoard introduction that was presented to the on-line participants.

Table 1: WebBoard Introduction to the Participant (from <http://onyx.fgcu.edu/~71>)

Post | Reply | Reply/Quote | Email Reply | Delete | Edit
 Previous | Next | Previous Topic | Next Topic

Topic: About this interactive WebBoard (1 of 1), Read 43 times
 Conf: Welcome DCAP prospective teachers!
 From: Eunsook Hyun (ehyun@fgcu.edu)
 Date: Wednesday, September 01, 1999 03:17 PM

This WebBoard is designed for early childhood prospective teachers who are in the middle of field base teacher preparation for Developmentally and Culturally Appropriate Practice (DCAP). In this WebBoard discussion, you will be able to virtually interact with other early childhood prospective teachers from four or five different states.

Please feel free to share your thoughts, concerns, questions, struggles, insights, and positive or negative stories regarding your current DCAP teaching experiences.

If you have any questions, comments, or suggestions regarding this WebBoard interaction, please feel free to share it with your ECE professors who have introduced this WebBoard to you, or contact Dr. E. Hyun: ehyun@fgcu.edu

Please read the listed conferences on the left side of this screen and interact with others virtually! Have fun!

Technical tip: Post your thoughts by clicking the word "Reply" and type your voices, and press "Post." You can also interact with others by clicking the words "Reply/Quote" and type your thoughts, comments, or suggestions, and press "post."

Research Objective:

Three questions were explored through the WebBoard discussion:

- How do the ECE prospective teachers define DCAP?
- How do the ECE prospective teachers see the need of DCAP?
- What is the ECE prospective teachers' dilemma or concern in implementing the notion of DCAP into their field-based practice?

Participants:

Total 64 ECE prospective teachers from the four different states, five universities were participated in this web-board discussion. The participated institutions are Florida Gulf Coast University, FL, Clarion University of Pennsylvania, PA, Southeastern Oklahoma State University, OK, University of Pennsylvania, PA, and Winona University, MN.

All of the participated ECE prospective teachers were enrolled in an internship course or a course that had a field-based component in it, taught by one of the DCAP research-net faculty member during the semester.

Data Collection and Analysis:

On the WebBoard, there were conference topics for the ECE prospective teachers to choose to participate on-line discussion and sharing. The main conference topics were; Define DCAP, why DCAP? sharing stories of DCAP experiences in the classroom, and sharing dilemmas and obstacles in DCAP-based field experience. Data were collected from the students' WebBoard postings regarding the conference topics. There were many other topics that had been added by either the student participants or ECE research-net faculty during the semester. For this brief research report, only the first original conference questions were analyzed. Table 2 presents a brief overview on the WebBoard conference page.

Table 2:

Brief Overview on the WebBoard Conference Page (from <http://onyx.fgcu.edu/~71>)

Conferences

- An Important Message!!! (1)
- Let's connect! (2)
- Welcome DCAP prospective teachers! (98)
 - About this interactive WebBoard 09/01
 - Define DCAP 09/01
 - Why DCAP? 09/01
 - Emerging needs of DCAP 09/01
 - Hope for DCAP 09/01
 - DCAP lesson plan sharing 09/01
 - Your best example... 09/01
 - Please share your DCAP field experience 09/01
 - Ask questions to the online participants! 09/01
 - Rooms for open voices 09/01
 - Your dilemmas or obstacles... 09/01
- DCAP and Curriculum (29)
 - What is curriculum? 09/15
 - Critical questions from DCAP perspective 09/15
 - How does DCAP curriculum look like? 09/15
- DCAP and Gender Issues (219)
 - Are boys and girls different in their play? 09/20
 - How does DCAP relate to gender issues in...? 09/20
- Please give suggestions to ECE teacher educators (30)

The WebBoard discussion was weekly based. Every participant was required to visit the WebBoard. Posting was suggested as weekly activity for all individuals. Since this WebBoard is originally designed for the students' free open voices, the participated faculty only monitored the discussion with a limited on-line interaction.

Data were analyzed qualitatively using data reduction, unit analysis, pattern coding, memoing (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Strauss & Corbin, 1990) in order to find categories and patterns which represent emerging themes. Data reduction refers to the process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming data. Data reduction occurred continuously throughout the semester. To make deeper, careful, and conceptually coherent sense of what is happening in the data, a memoing technique was used. In memoing, reflective remarks, marginal remarks, mapping, and pattern coding were utilized throughout the process of data analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Results and Conclusion:

As results of data reduction and selective coding, patterns of themes were identified in responding to the original research questions:

- How do the ECE prospective teachers define DCAP?
The prospective teachers define DCAP as a philosophy of teaching that; 1) makes teacher aware of cultural differences in child development and learning; 2) require teachers' adjustment on curriculum, environment, and lesson plans to fit the needs of the children; and 3) makes everyone realize learning never ends.

[Example 1]

Topic: Define DCAP (3 of 17), Read 117 times

Conf: Welcome DCAP prospective teachers!

From: [REDACTED] ([REDACTED]20@aol.com)

Date: Thursday, September 02, 1999 09:32 PM

DCAP is a philosophy of teaching. It involves the students in the planning of activities and takes their background into consideration. Only problem with DCAP is that most curriculums are teacher based so educators have to sneak this into the curriculum.

[Example 2]

Topic: Define DCAP (7 of 17), Read 120 times

Conf: Welcome DCAP prospective teachers!

From: [REDACTED] ([REDACTED]183@aol.com)

Date: Wednesday, September 01, 1999 10:33 PM

Developmentally and Culturally Appropriate Practice to me means that as a teacher I need not only to look at a child's developmental needs but also how their culture can affect the way they learn. If as a teacher I want to teach child to the best of their ability, then I must be somewhat knowledgeable about the cultural differences as well as their developmental differences.

[Example 3]

Topic: Define DCAP (13 of 17), Read 88 times

Conf: Welcome DCAP prospective teachers!

From: [REDACTED] ([REDACTED]@clarion.edu)

Date: Tuesday, September 14, 1999 07:22 PM

I feel that DCAP is a very important concept in the teaching field. As educators we have to be able to open children's minds to other cultural backgrounds that they might not be aware of. In the process of our teaching we have to be aware of their developmental needs. In the teaching field learning is something that never ends and with DCAP everyone is always learning.

- How do the ECE prospective teachers see the need of DCAP?

They see that the conceptual understanding of DCAP guides teachers reach ALL learners. In their reason for "why DCAP," they frequently make connections with limited English speaking children and children with special needs to fit the needs of those children. Simultaneously, they construct a self-image of socially proactive teacher as a needed DCAP teacher quality.

[Example 4]

Topic: Why DCAP? (2 of 17), Read 107 times

Conf: Welcome DCAP prospective teachers!

From: [REDACTED] ([REDACTED]@eagle.fgcu.edu)

Date: Wednesday, September 01, 1999 10:05 PM

DCAP is needed so that the teacher can reach ALL students. My heart breaks when I see the needs of Limited-English speaking students, for example, being neglected because they are not accustomed to doing things in the teacher-directed fashion that is prevalent in the classroom.

[Example 5]

Topic: Why DCAP? (3 of 17), Read 107 times

Conf: Welcome DCAP prospective teachers!

From: [REDACTED] ([REDACTED]183@aol.com)

Date: Wednesday, September 01, 1999 10:28 PM

I agree with Lorrie! Recently, I volunteered in the schools, before our university classes began. There is a lot of testing going on at the beginning of the school year with kindergartners. I took over a kindergarten class for the day when the teacher did her testing. As the fill-in I had direct contact with the children all day and when you are do verbal activities you can pick-up the children that are quick to answer and those that are not. Anyway, I had a child who spoke no English. She had cried everyday she had attended. She cried the first part of the morning, but by using my Spanish I have obtained over the years and through my Spanish class I was able to get her to do some class work and stop crying. The teacher told me at the end of the day that she had done more work that day than whole time she had been attending. I used praise and encouraged her to participate with the language I have and the help of another student. Why hasn't this teacher picked up any Spanish? Our community receives any Hispanic people because of the vegetation in the area every year. I would think if a teacher is there to teach the children in her room that she would adapt to the community and make it possible for all the students in her room to be taught to the best of their ability. The other child I used to help me translate Spanish and English, was also tested

by another person. This took place during rest time so I had the opportunity to listen and observe, but that only angered me. When this child was tested the person testing did not allow enough wait time for her to translate in her mind the information from her language to our language and back again. When she did not respond she "bluffed" her off as though she did not know the information. I found this unfair, this was one of the children who responded to the verbal lesson aloud extremely well. She also taught me that I did not do the calendar and days of the week the way the teacher did and proceeded to tell me the "right" way.

[Example 6]

Topic: Why DCAP? (6 of 17), Read 32 times

Conf: Welcome DCAP prospective teachers!

From: [REDACTED] ([REDACTED]@carion.edu)

Date: Friday, September 24, 1999 01:11 PM

I agree that the teachers are not solely to blame for children falling behind in their education due to the lack of the "same" language, however the teacher does spend more time with the children each day than anyone else. I feel that teachers need to go to their home districts and get a group of teachers together to explain to the school boards that our children need to have a multiculturally diverse learning environment and if we are limiting our response time to questions and not allowing children to speak in their native language we are placing barriers on their learning experiences.

[Example 7]

Topic: Why DCAP? (7 of 17), Read 84 times

Conf: Welcome DCAP prospective teachers!

From: [REDACTED] ([REDACTED]@eagle.fgcu.edu.com)

Date: Friday, September 10, 1999 10:17 PM

When thinking of DCAP, I'm reminded of one classroom of 2nd graders I volunteered in. There was a boy in this classroom that had a definite learning disability. He couldn't draw like the other children, couldn't create stories like the others, and was withdrawn socially. The teacher decided to 'punish' the child by seating him in the back of the room, whereas the others' desks were seated in circle groups near the front of the class. He had no interaction with the class. I tried to help him during one session and she responded by saying "He doesn't understand anyway". Now, this was a pretty good teacher, she handled her class well. Sometimes things just get too hard and a teacher cops out from her responsibilities. Well, back to my answer- the reason we have to implement DCAP is because of the inclusion that's happening now in schools. Teachers can't expect a classroom of children who all understand and who have similar abilities. We all have to do our part and be prepared to help all children. We need to treat them fairly in every way possible.

[Example 8]

Topic: Why DCAP? (17 of 17), Read 22 times

Conf: Welcome DCAP prospective teachers!

From: [REDACTED] ([REDACTED]@oio.net)

Date: Sunday, October 03, 1999 04:57 PM

DCAP is important because each child is a unique person with an individual personality, learning style, and family background. All children do not learn in the same way or at the same pace but we must understand that ALL CHILDREN CAN LEARN!

[Example 9]

Topic: Emerging needs of DCAP (4 of 6), Read 40 times

Conf: Welcome DCAP prospective teachers!

From: [REDACTED] ([REDACTED]@hotmail.com)

Date: Monday, September 20, 1999 06:46 PM

There are many reasons that DCAP is important for all classrooms. Don't look at this from a purely cultural aspect, but instead look at the individual differences between the students. I mean, there is more than just culture that cause differences in children. I find that children, in most cases, don't like to mingle with children who are not like them. Children with developmental disabilities, physical disabilities, mentally challenged individuals, exceptional learners, and emotional differences all come into play when trying to teach children. The difficulty is that the children are not always taught how to embrace all of these differences. It is extremely important that children have an understanding of the differences of others, and learn to accept these differences. Exposure is key!!!! Expose the students to different cultures, students with different social, mental, academic, and physical abilities. This will be the solution to the need for DCAP.

- What is the ECE prospective teachers' dilemma or concern in implementing the notion of DCAP into their field-based practice? In many cases the ECE prospective teachers concerned that, due to the large group classes or state mandates (standards, tests, required lesson plan) teacher driven curriculum is necessary. Thus, DCAP is hard to use.

[Example 10]

Topic: Emerging needs of DCAP (2 of 6), Read 67 times

Conf: Welcome DCAP prospective teachers!

From: [REDACTED] ([REDACTED]@mindspring.com)

Date: Tuesday, September 07, 1999 07:47 PM

I have seen a first hand experience for the need of DCAP in the classroom. I am at a school where there are 25 to 27 kids in a classroom and they have five kindergarten classrooms right now. They have hired a new teacher, which will bring the ration down to 21 to 22 kids for 1 teacher. There are no teacher aids in the classrooms so everything must be handled by the teacher. My cooperating teacher would like to use the DCAP ideu with her students but we have been discussing it and have found that it is very difficult with the large ratio of students and we also have a child with a special need in the classroom who needs special attention but because of the large class and the need to be teacher directed it is very hard. Although she and I are trying ideas and really working on getting DCAP in the classroom.

[Example 11]

Topic: Your dilemmas or obstacles... (1 of 14), Read 136 times

Conf: Welcome DCAP prospective teachers!

From: [REDACTED] ([REDACTED]@fgcu.edu)

Date: Wednesday, September 01, 1999 04:36 PM

One of the difficulties I have come across is a classroom (second-grade) I have been in is almost totally teacher-directed. Given the requirements of the school to teach from workbooks, I feel this is not DCAP policies. How can we do any different and DCAP lessons when we have to follow the required curriculum?

However, in response to these limits and dilemma, some of the prospective teachers begin to construct and share their critical analysis of what may actually limits teachers' DCAP. They say, as example, if you impose your (teacher's) way of teaching--due to the state mandates--to the diverse learners these kinds of practice will fail DCAP-based effective teaching.

[Example 12]

Topic: Emerging needs of DCAP (3 of 6), Read 60 times

Conf: Welcome DCAP prospective teachers!

From: [REDACTED] ([REDACTED]@eagle.fgcu.edu)

Date: Wednesday, September 08, 1999 11:21 PM

If the classroom is truly DCAP, then children will be engaged in activities that interest THEM and when it's "really working," what I mean is, everyone is involved in something they want to do and they are doing it at their own speed, then, the classroom will run so smoothly that you won't even know that there are 21 or 25 students. It is when the teacher tries to impose activities that have all been chosen and orchestrated by her, that she will have disciplinary problems.

Through the prospective teachers expressions of their dilemma and obstacles in implementing the idea of DCAP, their images of DCAP also captured, such as; they see DCAP responds to child's language, special needs, emerging interests and connection making between what has been taught and current events. By doing so, you as ECE teacher become a co-learner with the culturally diverse children.

[Example 13]

Topic: Teachable moment-oriented curriculum practice 93 of 9), Read 101 times

Conf: DCAP and Curriculum

From: [REDACTED] ([REDACTED]@eagle.fgcu.edu)

Date: Wednesday, September 15, 1999 07:55 PM

As the children in the Kindergarten class where I am interning were coloring the letter "B" page of their "Letter People Alphabet Books" (not DCAP, but hold on), a Mexican-American child was counting the buttons around Mr.B which he had colored many different colors. He would count for example "uno, dos, tres butones verde." (forgive my Spanish) When I noticed what he was doing I knelt beside his table and repeated whatever sequence he said. He instantly became the "Spanish teacher" and I soon realized the frustration of learning a new language, especially when learning the word for "purple." He would say it over and over again to help me learn it. Once I said a series of words correctly and he patted me on the back and said "Muy Bueno." The child took a typical worksheet and turned it into a wonderful teachable moment!

[Example 14]

Topic: Teachable moment-oriented curriculum practice 93 of 9), Read 101 times

Conf: DCAP and Curriculum

From: [REDACTED] ([REDACTED]34@aol.com)

Date: Saturday, September 18, 1999 06:28 PM

In my interning class, the students were doing phonics, and were practicing the "F" sound, and "F" words, then a Mexican-American child said, "F, Floyd the storm that is coming to get us!" Noticing that the child seemed concerned from morning the teacher mentioned that we were all going to be ok and after the "F" lesson, she went into a

weather 'mini lesson', and explained what a hurricane is, and what we can do to keep safe. I thought this was a good teachable moment for the children. Would it be DCAP for the child? I think so, because he now belongs to this culture as well, and will have to deal with the preparation of hurricane seasons to come. ?? I also benefited from this moment, because I realized that children get scared about what is on the news, and need explanations and reassurances. I think I will have a 'weather' thematic unit around hurricane season when I am a teacher.

Based on the results from the current WebBoard data, two main socially-constructed knowledge appeared. First, the field-based DCAP experiences and the discussion made the prospective teachers' self image as learner in order to be a thoughtful, responsive, and effective teacher in working with diverse children. This phenomenon is a positive indication of the prospective teachers' use of multiple and multiethnic perspective taking as part of their development of critical pedagogy (see example 3 & 13) (Hyun, 1998; Hyun & Marshall, 1997). The other, by interacting with in-service teachers the ECE prospective teachers learn social and political issues in public education that would limit teachers' DCAP. However, through the WebBoard sharing they construct a self-image of socially proactive teacher as a needed DCAP teacher quality (see example 6).

The data collection and analysis continues until the end of the 1999-2000 academic year. This brief report only presents several themes that currently appear on the on-line discussion. More further and in-depth data analysis and discussion are needed to follow.

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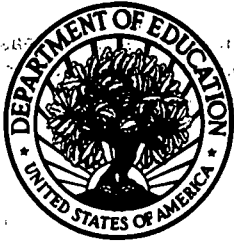
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