How do you integrate D.A.P. Art and STEM learning experiences in an early childhood classroom?

Developmentally appropriate practices in Arts and STEM learning experiences can easily be integrated and incorporated into early childhood classroom. To successfully integrate DAP approach, the teacher needs to be very intentional in their teaching (Reutzel, 2013). For instance, the classroom set up and the lesson plans need to be based on a set goal. The set goals should be able to provide a challenge to the students and remain attainable. One can start by engaging the students in activities that they can master based on their skills, cultural backgrounds, and development. To integrate DAP Art and STEM learning experiences in an early childhood, the classroom can be set up in a way that provides age and culturally appropriate materials. For example, the class materials and equipment such as the chairs and shelves need to be appropriate for the children’s height and these should be changed regularly to reflect the learners’ interests and needs. Always understand that each child is unique, respect their social and cultural contexts, and support children’s play. This way, it becomes easier to integrate developmentally appropriate practices in a classroom.

One of the best ways to integrate developmentally appropriate practices in STEM for early childhood is giving students fictional books to read and come up with solutions faced by one of the characters in the reading. This way, the students will be able to effectively build, explore, and learn new concepts as well as models of solving real-life problems. Also, exposing students to technology presents an effective way of integrating developmentally appropriate practices in classroom. For effective integration, the Art and STEM lessons should focus on real world issues such as pollution and sanitation. Additionally, the lessons should be able to provide hands-on and collaborative activities. Another developmentally appropriate practice that helps in integrating Arts and STEM learning experiences in early childhood classroom is by asking the learners good questions that needs critical thinking and letting them look for solutions (Reutzel, 2013).

References

Reutzel, R. (Ed.) (2013). Handbook of research-based practice in early education. New York, NY: Guilford Press.

NAEYC. DAP: Defining Developmentally Appropriate Practice. <https://www.naeyc.org/resources/position-statements/dap/definition>