

Language and
development
observation of child
with downs syndrome



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

I observed four year old Mia, who is female. She has both active parents in her life, along with a younger sister. She has downs syndrome. She can communicate fairly well verbally but also uses sign language and body language to communicate. Her parents used many early intervention programs to help with Mia's language and thus she has less significant delays than others at this age might. (Trawick-Smith 2014, pg. 180)

This observation took place at a preschool. The room is set up like a standard special needs classroom. There were tables and desks set up and there was also a sensory corner, with a trampoline and a swing. We sat at the library area of the classroom. I chose this section because it was on the far side of the room and had Mia facing away from the sensory corner. As we learned from the Information Processing Theory, the main components of learning are memory and attention. (Trawick-Smith 2014, pg. 61) In order to have Mia focused on the task I was completing with her, there were no other children present during this lesson.

I believe that Mia is in the preoperational stage of the cognitive-developmental theory. (Trawick-Smith 2014, pg. 55) She is using her own thoughts but requires some cues from the adults in the learning environment. I watched Mia playing in the room prior to our lesson. Mia was participating in symbolic play. She told me " call daddy" and proceeded to take a plastic banana to her ear and start talking. During our observation time Mia was playing with her younger sister. Mia kept telling herself " Gentle with the baby", something her mom confirmed she tells her often. This is a direct form of what Vygotsky calls self-directed speech. Vygotsky

believes this type of language contributes significantly to cognitive development. (Trawick-Smith 2014, pg. 255)

I believe Mia needs remedial works in language due to her down syndrome. She is not completely verbal and speaks in broken words and nonsense. If you are familiar with Mia you will understand what she is trying to convey but ultimately she needs help in this area. Mia is currently struggling with connecting the alphabet to the phoneomes. I decided to use animals because she is familiar with what the animals are which makes it a little easier when sorting them by letter. I also used the pictures because I know that she can sometimes have trouble using words to respond but that she may know the answer with a picture instead.

The main theorist that I used was Vygotsky. I used quite a bit of scaffolding in this mini-lesson. I believe that my lesson was in what Vygotsky called the Zone of Proximal Development.(Trawick-Smith 2014, pg. 59) The lesson included a mix of things Mia is familiar with but also struggling with. I acted as the more knowledgeable person to help model and guide her in the right direction. This lesson was also very strongly based on language. Vygotsky pointed out the huge importance that language has on learning, whether it be language you are hearing or using yourself, and given that this is something Mia struggles with, I thought it was important to use. (pg. 59)

I did a preassessment with Mia to figure out what she knew as far as letters and sounds along with other objects. She was very familiar with animals and could name them. She was pretty familiar with letters and sounds but I noticed that she would make the sounds for some of the letters instead of

actually naming the letter. The central focus of my lesson was to have Mia summarize a story via simple questions, name animals, and sort animals based on the sounds of the starting letter.

Mia already knows her alphabet but is working on the sounds attached to the letters. For this reason I chose to do an activity centered around that. I had given Mia a touch chat booklet which can be used as a way to communicate non-verbally. We learned from Bruner that information is visually stored, I thought that using this booklet would give her a way to select the picture in her mind as opposed to being able to vocalize when she may not have the words.(McLeod 2018, paragraph 13) I also knew that Mia really likes animals. She goes to the zoo often and especially loves books that are centered around animals. We read the story called " African Safari". During the reading of the story Mia sat in my lap. She was actively engaged in turning the pages and pointing at the animals as we went through the book. This is a common engagement strategy with special needs children. (Trawick-Smith 2014, pg. 306). This story listed different animals that you might see on a safari. After the story was completed I asked Mia a series of questions. She was able to use her touch chat pages or her voice to answer the questions. For some questions I needed to use scaffolding to help point her in the right direction of the answers. We used this time to say the names of the animals and what letters we thought they started with

For my post assessment I had plastic cups that were labeled with the letters L, E, M, Z, T, and H. Together we went over the letters on the cups and the sounds they made. I also had small animals that we went over the names of together. At first I had thought to use the animals with the story but knowing <https://assignbuster.com/language-and-development-observation-of-child-with-downs-syndrome/>

that children this age have unidimensional thought I knew there was a chance she wouldn't be able to focus on both the stories and tangible items. (Trawick-Smith 2014, pg. 246) I modeled what I wanted her to do first. I used self-speech out loud because according to Vygotsky that is an important step of using language to problem solve when you are in the preschool range.(pg. 58) I picked up the first object which was a monkey. I asked Mia what it was and she replied monkey. I repeated the " m" sound and asked her which cup she thought the monkey belonged in, and she replied M. I gave praise and then told her it was her turn to pick an object. We continued through the other animals sorting them with minor cues until we were finished.

I do believe that Mia learned from my lesson. I think it was positive practice to connect tangible items to a story that was read and to explore the phonemes that are intertwined with a story. I do believe that this lesson was a good choice but if I could do something differently I would have given a more intricate lesson that maybe pushed her knowledge a little more.

- Mcleod, S. (2018, January 01). Bruner. Retrieved from <https://www.simplypsychology.org/bruner.html>
- Trawick-Smith, J. W. (2014). *Early childhood development: A multicultural perspective* . Boston: Pearson.