

Educating the whole child



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Educating the Whole Child

Abstract

Just teaching reading, writing, and arithmetic today are not enough. It is sad to say, children face many negative daily challenges, things we would have never dreamed of twenty or thirty years ago. The Whole Child Approach is desperately needed. The whole child approach ensures that each student is healthy, safe, engaged in learning, supported, and challenged, which in turns allows them the opportunity for improvement and continued success. As educators we have vowed to be lifetime learners, we have to continually go back to the drawing board to make sure we are educating our children so that none fall through the education cracks and are left behind.

The society of today is very different than it was when I was growing up. Many things have changed, some for better and others for worse. Children of today have more issues that affect them negatively than ever before. Unfortunately, according to the NCCP, “ About 15 million children in the U. S. live in families with incomes below the federal poverty threshold. (www.nccp.org/topics/childpoverty.html) Many children do not even have the bare necessities of life: food, clothes, and shelter.

As grownups, we know firsthand how it feels to try and concentrate on school work on an empty stomach. We know it is very hard and almost impossible at times, then to think of some of the children who come to school hungry every day. A lot of schools have started to provide free breakfast for children at all the schools in my area. If it was not for breakfast and lunch at school some children would not receive a meal. I would say that is a part of the

whole child approach. Receiving the most important meal of the day sure gives the students a boost of energy for their daily activities.

In our reading class, one of our modules included information stating children most at risk of struggling with reading, are often those who are poor and who have parents who are not well educated. Keeping that statement in mind and the statistics we were given by the NCCP, as parents, grandparents, and future educators, our work is cut out for us. Sad to say in this great country, The United States, a lot of our school districts are in low-income poverty neighborhoods.

We must also create a safe environment conducive to nurturing and facilitating growth for our students. We have read and heard about the many school shootings, where innocent children and adults have lost their lives. Because of the times we are living in, we have to prepare ourselves and our students. In my school era, we only had to practice mock fire drills and tornado drills. This era we have to add to that mock lockdown drills and bomb drills in case of a school shooting, stranger on campus, or even bomb threats. The Whole Child Approach is of great necessity. It entails each student is healthy, safe, engaged in learning, supported, and challenged, which in turns allows them the opportunity for improvement and continued success. Every child should be given an opportunity to learn, grow and succeed, regardless of their race, economic status, abilities, disabilities, religion, and gender without discrimination. Educating the whole child equips the child not only with textbook knowledge but also how to survive and excel in everyday life as a productive citizen. In my childhood, the teachers only used two of the methods of learning in our classroom. If you did not grasp

<https://assignbuster.com/educating-the-whole-child/>

learning, in those two ways you were left behind. It is good to know that things have changed for the better in that area. Since then we have found out there are four types of learners, visual, auditory, kinesthetic and those that are reading/writing learners. We are now able to reach all learners regardless of their learning style.

Before we are able to teach our future students we need to know how to grasp their attention. Teachers set the tone in the classrooms and the students follow along. “ Any activity that helps students shift, move into the next part of the school day, or pay attention in an organized way can be called a transition”. Many teachers use transitions which help glue the day together and aid in classroom management”. (Transitions, page 6) All of us know, if you do not have control of the class, learning will not take place.

I have heard over the years, that experience is the best teacher. As adults, we learn by doing and children learn by playing. Playing in Learning Centers and at recess, helps children gain the social skills of sharing and working together as a team. The toys, blocks, books, paper, pencils and everything that is included in the different centers serve as necessary tools for the children’s use.

Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget strongly believed and developed the constructivism theory. He also developed the theory of cognitive development which includes four stages. The gospel according to Piaget also stated there are three kinds of knowledge: physical, logical-mathematical and social knowledge.

Stephen F. Austin's Education Department Program and the Constructivist's Theory share the same four goals autonomy, openness, problem-solving and integrity and both also welcomes educating the whole child. Autonomy- make choices on your own. Openness - being able to look at things from every angle. Problem solving - making decisions using the information given. Integrity - self motivated to do the right thing, regardless of where you are and who is with you. This allows children time to develop physically (body growth) and cognitively (brain growth) which is the end result for young children to flourish.

DAP - Development Appropriate Practice, is key in our line of work, because there is not, a one size fits all practice. As educators, we want to meet our students where they are regardless of their age, maturity, background, prior knowledge, personal interest, relationship, and economic status. To achieve this goal, we will use whatever means necessary to help our students stay motivated, to achieve their education goals. In DAP environments everything must be user-friendly for learners, even down to the size of the furniture, every detail matter. Some of our students will know what to do and do it, others will have to have to have teacher motivated assistance, others will work great in a group, or hands on kinesthetic learners.

The Twelve Principles of Child Development and Learning are important, just as the four stages of development. All the principles working together for the success of everyone. Some children advance faster than others, some will learn slower, and if they have learning disabilities we want to catch them early on, so we can provide the extra help that is needed. The more they learn the better equipped they will be in school and out of school. Children

need to know we as educators believe in them, we need to be their cheerleader, cheering them on to success. Children know when we care about them and I read somewhere, they will not learn from someone who does not care about them. We have to always look for ways to encourage learning. Every child is special and unique.

The crucial time for learning is the first eight years of life. Always expect the best from every child. Educating children is a very important business. We as educators must commit to always learning and getting better so that we can portray that to our students. After all, they model what they see parents, adults and teachers do. We are making sure we are reaching all our children, if not, we are changing our methods and studying and researching so that we can better ourselves.

As educators, we must welcome parent participation in the classroom and out of the classroom. We must make sure we keep in contact with the parents and keep them informed of their child's progress. Every opportunity we can invite the parents to our class to see what we do and why we do it enhances our students learning. The old African proverb is still true today, "It takes a village to raise a child". When the parents work with the teachers and vice versa, it builds a rapport that aids in helping educate the whole child completely.

In ECH 328 we were exposed to the overall skeleton of early childhood education, in ECH 331 we are learning more detailed information. I would say, it is safe to say ECH 331 is educating the whole educator as we learn

about educating the whole child. Teachers not only teach, but they actually learn from students too.

After substituting in the classroom for a few years, I see the different methods of teaching in operation, it is amazing to me. A lot different from the way I was taught, nonetheless, it is working. It is great to see in math class when a student works the same math problem the way they are taught today, and I work the problem the way I was taught back in the day, when it is all said and done, we arrive at the same answer.

As educators our job is to equip the future generation with the skills they need to achieve and become productive citizens by every means necessary, using our expertise we have learned coupled with the experience we have gained too. Whether it happens, One by one, two by two, or group by group. We are up for the challenge!

References

- <https://www.reference.com/education/origin-phrase-takes-village-raise-child-3e375ce098113bb4>