

Active Learning Principles: Encouraging Skill Development Through Active Participation

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Active Learning Approach

- A delicate balance is necessary for learning to take place.
 - Individuals learn best from one's own actions.
 - Activities and tasks must be developmentally appropriate to inspire engagement.
 - Guidance from peers and adults must be supportive.
- Active Learning principles provide parents, caregivers, educators and therapists with simple tools, so that individuals of all ages achieve the building blocks necessary for skill attainment.

Active Participation

The activity must be set up so that the learner is independently active!

(An image of a child with a woman caretaker or teacher, the child is playing with a bell toy)

Handmade Mobiles

Instructions on activelearningspace.org

Allow For Repetition

The learner should be able to repeat the activity over seconds, minutes, hours, days, weeks and months.

Developmentally Appropriate Activities

Activities must reflect the current skill level of the learner. New skills are mastered by introducing small refined changes to those tasks the learner has already mastered.

Focus On The Correct Reinforcement

What motivates a child to learn? Does the learner like wood, metal or plastic? Does the learner like smells, sounds or textures? Does the learner respond to certain tastes? Identifying the likes and dislikes of a learner adds information as to what is motivating.

Limit Or Respond Appropriately To Interruptions/Distractions

Not all distractions can be removed, but control those you can. Allow the learner to focus on the correct stimuli. Talking can sometimes be a distraction to the cognitive process.

Active Learning Involves

- Activity
- Repetition
- Developmental learning
- Reinforcement
- The limiting of interruptions

(A woman and a young boy pictured playing with a textured ball together.)
“Play is often overlooked as the key that helps unlock the door to learning.”

Mary Reilly 1974

Definition of Play by: Florey 1981

- A complex set of behaviors characterized by fun and spontaneity
- Play can be sensory, neuromuscular, cognitive & any combination of the three
- Play involves repetition of experience, exploration, experimentation, and imitation of one’s surroundings
- Play proceeds within its own space and boundaries
- Play functions as an agent for integrating the internal and external worlds
- Play follows a sequential developmental progression

Pathways to learning:

Think of the characteristics of objects when selecting materials

- Sight
- Smell
- Taste
- Touch
- Hearing
- Movement

How Do Children Learn New Skills?

- Stage 1: A child becomes aware & interested
- Stage 2: A child becomes curious & interested which leads to activity
- Stage 3: A child completes learning with an activity
- Stage 4: A child becomes ready for new challenges

(The 4 steps form a cycle)

The Dynamic Learning Circle- Developed by: Dr. Lilli Nielsen

Key Active Learning Concepts

- Do not manipulate the body or hands. Allow the child’s independent movement or actions to make the response.
- Allow the brain to work. Give the child time to process. Providing the answer limits problem solving/decision making.
- Build on what the learner can do.
- Allow for freedom of movement in all gross motor positions.
- Adults should facilitate learning. Too much guidance encourages dependence.
- Gather as many resources as you can.

- A child's emotional/social skill development will have a direct impact on skill achievement.

For More Information

- www.activelearningspace.org.
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