

Traveling back in time: using relationships, interactive child-centered activities and exploration to promote understanding of history social- studies curriculum for three year old preschoolers

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Abstract:

The purpose of this project was to investigate History-Social Science Curriculum project implemented to 15 three-year-olds preschoolers. Curriculum was constructively built while adapting and considering national and state resources, such as the History-Social Science Content Standards for California Public Schools, (California Department of Education [CDE], 1998), the National Center for History in the Schools (University of California, Los Angeles; UCLA, 1996), History-Social Science Framework (CDE, 2005), California Preschool Learning Foundation (CDE, 2008) and the Desired Results Developmental Profile for Preschool ([DRDP-PS], CDE, 2010). The project was assembled upon the course assignment given at the Developmentally Appropriate Curriculum (EPC 655) course at the California State University, Northridge in the Master of Arts in Early Childhood Education. During the project, children were encouraged to investigate core elements of past daily routines while stimulating cognitive and social-emotional developmental domains. For instance, they were to investigate past artifacts (such as a washboard or lantern) and concepts using their innovative and critical thinking, as well as curiosity and problem-solving skills. In addition, the project constructed child-centered activities accentuating peer-directed learning and cohesiveness, inspired by the Project approach and Reggio-based approach concepts. Perceiving the children as active learners and understanding capacities such as children's special needs, developmental competences, language skills, and cultural background, were foundational to this project. Focusing on the process of learning and on gradually scaffolding children's engagement and comprehension, the project was presented over a relatively long period of time, over one month. In order to evaluate the project and children's learning, several assessment methods were taken, depending on documentation tools (e.g., dictations, pictures, videos and etc.). Using these methods, the following paper will extensively examine and provide a vivid and comprehensive description of the project, objectives, related research and empirical studies, assessment and evaluation, modifications for special needs, English learners, families' inclusion and future suggestions.

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