Learning That Grows With Child: The Waldorf Approach Early Childhood Education

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Abstract

Waldorf Education started off as a uniquely German reform movement in 1919. Waldorf Education has its roots in the spiritual-scientific research of the Austrian scientist and thinker Rudolf Steiner. The Steiner school believes in developing the emotional side of children first and the intellectual aptitudes later. The task of the Waldorf teacher is to help the child to realize his latent capacities in each of the domain that psychomotor, emotional and cognitive.

Keywords: Waldorf Approach, Early Childhood Education, Child

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Extended Summary

Purpose

The purpose of this literature review is to introduce the many aspects of Waldorf Approach in early childhood education.

Method

The study is literature review. Waldorf approach to early childhood education has been introduced. These analyses were grouped as history of Waldorf education, Waldorf schools Worldwide, philosophy of Waldorf education, architecture of Waldorf kindergarten, learning environments, education in kindergarten, Waldorf teacher training, assessing children’s learning.

Results

Consistent with his anthroposophical beliefs, Stainer created his own theory of child development. He proposed 7-year cycles that that incorporate both physical and spiritual development. In the first 7 years of life Stainer felt that children’s development in focused on their physical body (Ensign 1996; Armon, 1997; Williams ve Johnson, 2005). The greatest task of parents and educators is to assure that the body is nourished in a healthy way. Therefore in the Waldorf kindergarten no academic instruction takes place (Schmitt-Stegmann, 1997).

Since pre-school children are in the imitative stage and learn through imitating the adult world, teachers provide ample opportunities for children to participate in appropriate activities (Easton, 1995). These activities range from cooking bread with the adults to playing with simple toys that allow children to imitate actions they observes the adults participating in around them. There is an emphasis on using toys composed of simple, plain, and natural materials such as colored silks, blocks, and dolls without many features (Watterson, 2006). Waldorf teachers encourage the children in self-discovery (Williams ve Johnson, 2005).
The strengths and benefits of Waldorf Education have been highlighted so far, but all criticized education have critics. Certainly one can criticize Waldorf early childhood education for its neglect of technology. Others may see limitations in the way Waldorf views early literacy learning goals and its laid-back approach to reading.
References


