Age-appropriate pedagogies

Approaches

A range of teaching approaches may be considered age-appropriate for teaching the Australian Curriculum in the early years. When selecting an approach, teachers need to consider the participants, context, purpose, and duration of the learning experiences, whilst also taking account of the age, background, and abilities of individual learners, and the interests of both children and teachers.

- Inquiry learning
- Event-based
- Project
- Explicit instruction
- Play-based learning
- Direct teaching/instruction
- Blended

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Inquiry learning

Inquiry learning

Inquiry learning begins with a question, problem or idea. It involves children in planning and carrying out investigations, proposing explanations and solutions, and communicating their understanding of concepts in a variety of ways. Children observe, raise questions, and critique their practices. Inquiry learning encourages collaboration and can be used in a trans-disciplinary way.

If utilised effectively, possible characteristics may include: active, agentic, collaborative, creative, scaffolded.

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Event-based approach

Event-based approach

An event-based approach may include investigations, problem-solving, and play. Children draw on knowledge and experiences that are socially and culturally significant when planning and enacting events. Their ideas and decision-making are central to this approach. The event-based approach has been identified as having positive impacts on literacy and numeracy learning.

If utilised effectively, possible characteristics may include: active, agentic, collaborative, creative, explicit, language-rich and dialogic, learner-focused, narrative and playful.

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Project approach

Project approach

A project approach is an in-depth exploration of a topic. What differentiates the project approach from an inquiry one is that within the project approach there is an emphasis on the creation of a specific outcome that might take the form of a spoken report, a multimedia presentation, a poster, a demonstration or a display.

If utilised effectively, possible characteristics may include: active, agentic, collaborative, explicit, learner-focused, responsive, scaffolded, playful, language-rich and dialogic.

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Explicit instruction

Explicit instruction

Explicit instruction is a structured and systematic approach to teaching academic skills, guided by a stated purpose, explanation and demonstration. There is an emphasis on proceeding in small steps, checking for understanding, and achieving active and successful participation by all children.

If utilised effectively, possible characteristics may include: active, explicit, learner-focused, responsive, and scaffolded.

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Play-based learning

Play-based learning

Play-based learning provides opportunities for children to actively and imaginatively engage with people, objects and the environment. When playing, children enact ideas, create worlds, and re-create experiences, promoting holistic development and oral and narrative competencies.

If utilised effectively, possible characteristics may include: active, agentic, collaborative, creative, scaffolded.

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Direct teaching/instruction

Direct teaching/instruction

Direct teaching/instruction is a step-by-step, lesson-by-lesson approach to teaching which is scripted and follows a pre-determined skill acquisition sequence. The aim of using direct teaching/instruction is for children to learn through imitation. It is also used as a general term for the teaching of skills by telling or demonstrating.

*If utilised effectively, possible characteristics
may include: explicit and scaffolded.*

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Blended approach

Blended approach

A blended approach combines elements of more than one approach.

If utilised effectively, many of the characteristics may be evident.

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