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**Commentary Paper.**

*“The aims of education are to enable students to understand the world around them and the talent within them so they can become fulfilled individuals and active, compassionate citizens.”* (Robinson, 2015, pg. xxiv).

Young children are active learners, driven by interests and curiosity. Implementing an educational pedagogy that supports their understanding and provides them with a safe environment to facilitate interactions with the physical and social world, requires a deeper knowledge of the child as a whole learner rather than a passive recipient of standardized information hence the importance and the power of observation as a tool to implement an effective curriculum and environment that supports children’s individuality, learning style, and interest.

We must find ways to break with the deficit-driven model, and we must move away from teaching as a way of attacking incompetencies, teaching as uncovering perceived deficiencies, and constructing micro-units for repair. We must find a better way, a way that builds on strengths, experiences, skills, and abilities, a way that encourages the whole person and guides that person to greater fulfillment and power. (Ayers, 2000 Pg. 32)

I believe in children’s natural talent, and it is very sad when children are forced to follow standards, a detailed description of what students should be informed about and to be able to do starting early education and their natural talent is not valued, stigmatized, and labeled with learning disability and tardiness. Young learners are curious, creative, and energetic. What is needed is a multidimensional observation that covers all the developmental domains, and to dig deeper beyond

our assumption, bias, and stereotype. This way, teachers can create a connection with each student as an individual learner and give students the confidence they need to explore the world and construct knowledge.

Over the course of this semester, we learned how to objectively observe and document children's development and experiences. The goal is to gather as much information about the child, evaluate the child's knowledge, ability, interest, and progress, and most of all to implement a responsive teaching style. The idea is to find the key to unlocking the child's willingness to learn and self-esteem Rather than the idea of competitiveness and the pursuit of merit.

Motives for learning must be kept from going passive in an age of spectatorship, they must be based as much as possible upon the arousal of interest in what there is to be learned, and they must be kept broad and diverse in expression. The danger signs of meritocracy and a new form of competitiveness are already in evidence. Already it is possible to see where advance planning can help. (Bruner 1960, Pg.80)

In this capstone project, I focused on observing Prekindergartner. At this stage "children are learning language, gaining a sense of self and developing greater independence, while also beginning to learn the workings of the physical world." (Reich-Shapiro 2018). According to Erikson's stages of development children at this stage are developing a sense of purpose, "initiative vs Guilt." And so, it's very important to know, through observations, whether or not the child is successfully fulfilling the tasks of this stage to ensure that he develops confidence and competency and ready to move to the next stage. "

If we encourage preschool children to use their energy in an active and involved way, their confidence will grow their competence will increase. If we do for them what they can do

for themselves or if we focus on the mistakes they make on the way to developing new skills, their sense of initiative can turn to guilt and discouragement. (Mooney, 2013. P.68)

Toby, Gavin, Sarah, and David, my focus children in this capstone project, all shared the same level of curiosity and eagerness for learning. Toby took the lead in finding the treasure, he was determined and energetic. His focus was on finding the treasure and following instructions. He demonstrated a great level of agility and alertness. He also demonstrated a great sense of problem-solving when he suggested sharing the treasure evenly among his colleagues, so everyone gets to be happy. Gavin, and his social skills, not only he noticed that one of his colleagues is feeling sad, but he jumped right into the action and suggested to help to make him feel better. Gavin showed a great level of empathy, prosocial, and altruistic as he didn't expect anything in return. Sarah demonstrated a great level of executive functions and the use of strategies for remembering information. she was able to memorize and explain the whole process of how roots absorb water from the soil using visual stimuli to help her focus and remember information and to test her understanding and consolidate new concepts. David showed interest in participating in the oral activity with two other students and the teacher, he would use words gestures, and facial expressions to communicate and transmit information. he demonstrated the ability to communicate and interact with others.

Observing children wasn't an easy task. The observations must be objective, comprehensive, and include all the aspects of the child's development which makes it challenging but rewarding at the same time. "Observing helps you build relationships by revealing the uniqueness of every child including the child temperament, strength, personality, work style, and preferred mode of expression." (Jablon, Dombro, Dichtelmiller, 2007, p. 11). When observing we learn about the child's prior knowledge, skills, and interests but also, we may discover "barriers to

children's learning." (Jablon, Dombro, Dichtelmiller, 2007, p. 11). Thus, it is very important to reflect and respond to the data collected during observations to make sure that children receive adequate support.

*"True education comes through the stimulation of the child's powers by the demands of the social situations in which he finds himself." John Dewey*