Constructing Appropriate Curriculum: A Closer Look (Lesson 4a)

This activity is designed to help you think critically about developmentally appropriate practice in constructing appropriate curriculum. Based on what you have learned about developmentally appropriate practice, read the following scenario and then answer, as best you can, the questions about the scenario you just read.

Scenario
A large, urban school district’s early childhood program recently decided to construct new curriculum for its preschool classes. A team of educators met together to collaboratively create new curriculum for the three and four-year-old classes. The curriculum they constructed is briefly summarized below:

Curriculum goals are focused on promoting early literacy and language skills, and providing opportunities for math and science exploration. The curriculum team felt that these areas were critically important and should make up the core content of the curriculum. Teachers will focus heavily on language and literacy for a portion of each day, using a set of books and flashcards identified by the curriculum team. Activities will occur in the large group, and the same approach will be used for all children. As part of the new curriculum, teachers will also provide daily opportunities for math and science exploration through hands-on activities focused on problem-solving and discovery. The curriculum plan also includes weekly art and music activities, but these are secondary to the core literacy, language, math and science content.

Opportunities for gross motor skill development should be provided when time allows, but must not interfere with time devoted to the core content.
**EC-S1**: Ability to deliver developmentally appropriate instructional interventions under the direction of a licensed professional for infants and young children ages 0-5 in these domains: cognitive, motor, self-help, sensory, social/play, and speech/language development.

**EC-S3**: Ability to prepare, adapt, and use developmentally appropriate materials under the direction of a licensed professional.

**Questions**

1. Identify examples of developmentally appropriate practice in the early childhood program’s new curriculum, and describe them in the space below.

2. Identify examples of developmentally inappropriate practice in the early childhood program’s new curriculum, and explain why you think they might be inappropriate.

3. How could the curriculum team change each of the inappropriate practices you described in question #2 so that they represent developmentally appropriate practices?
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4. What other changes or additions could be made to the curriculum plan so that it is more developmentally appropriate?

5. Cultural diversity is an important issue for the district, since it is located in a large, diverse urban area. The early childhood program wants to ensure that the curriculum provides opportunities to support children’s home culture and language while also developing all children’s abilities to participate in the shared culture of the program. Brainstorm at least two ways in which the curriculum could address this issue of cultural diversity.