

# Young Learners Diverse Children

Celebrating Diversity in Early Childhood



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Please enjoy this complimentary excerpt from *Young Learners, Diverse Children: Celebrating Diversity in Early Childhood*.

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2005) research in a socioconstructivistic perspective for developmental, learning, and teaching processes.

Four main pedagogical principles are derived from contemporary-mainstream and ethnic-minority research following a socioconstructivistic framework. These four main pedagogical principles are derived from the four main philosophical principles of the ethnic-educator approach discussed in Chapter 1. Table 2.1 shows the connection between the four main philosophical principles and the embedded pedagogical principles.

**Table 2.1** Main Philosophical and Pedagogical Principles for Learning and Developmental Processes

<i>Philosophical Principles</i>	<i>Pedagogical Principles</i>
<p><i>Principle 1</i> <i>Developmental and Humanistic View of Learning</i></p>	<p><i>Socioemotional Nature of Teaching and Learning Processes</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A <b>holistic developmental perspective</b> for learning across cognitive, linguistic, and socioemotional developmental and academic areas (i.e., language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Developmental and humanistic</b> view of learning processes and academic achievement</li> <li>• View of teaching and learning processes as a <i>social and affective experience</i></li> <li>• Central role of prior knowledge in learner-centered classrooms, such as culturally and socially loaded preconceptions</li> </ul>
<p><i>Principle 2</i> <i>Holistic View of Learning and the Curriculum</i></p>	<p><i>Internal and External Factors Affect Resilience and At-Risk Conditions</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Socioconstructivistic</b> theoretical perspective with the interaction of internal and external factors in developmental and learning processes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning and developmental processes are affected by the <b>interaction of internal factors</b> (i.e., maturational, psychological, and biological) and <b>external factors</b> (i.e., cultural, social, schooling, and family settings) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <i>Internal and external factors</i> affecting low-socioeconomic-status (SES), young, diverse children can support or hinder their <i>academic achievement</i> (i.e., becoming resilient or at risk of underachievement)</li> <li>○ Two complementary processes occur—learning assimilation (i.e., positive transference of concepts) and accommodation (i.e., formation of new sociocultural concepts)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

(Continued)

Table 2.1 (Continued)

<i>Philosophical Principles</i>	<i>Pedagogical Principles</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers need to help young, diverse children develop <i>conceptual frameworks</i> (or abstract learning principles and higher-level cognitive strategies) that can be transformed and become relevant to other knowledge and problem domains and that can be connected to real-world experiences</li> <li>• All students need to develop conceptual competence (i.e., principles that can be transformed into higher-level learning strategies and critical-thinking skills) and be able to apply it to factual knowledge gained in multiple academic-content and real-world situations</li> <li>• All students need to develop concepts through inquiry-based learning (i.e., active and discovery learning, learner-centered)</li> <li>• Developing higher-learning skills provides insight into self-regulation and independent thinking and learning processes</li> <li>• Teachers need to use thematic curriculums that intersect developmental and content areas through common topics and core concepts</li> </ul>
<p><i>Principle 3</i> <i>Pluralistic and Transcultural Perspectives</i></p>	<p><i>Culture and Language Represented in Assessment and Instruction</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Pluralistic pedagogical approach</b> because it celebrates cultural and linguistic diversity as an asset enriching the developmental and learning potential of young, diverse children into multicultural and multilingual minds and spirits</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Language is a conceptual tool for learning and representing sociocultural, affective, and emotional processes (i.e., cultural and bicultural identity)</li> <li>• Indissoluble connection between language and cognition, both influenced by sociocultural processes</li> <li>• Language as a conceptual tool that provides developmental continuity of the <i>index, symbolic, and sign learning processes</i> for three- to five-year-old children</li> <li>• Language learning is a cultural process in which children need to acquire sociocultural competence and new cultural knowledge</li> <li>• Schools use language to socialize children to use reading and writing as major learning tools</li> <li>• Language is used by parents as a socialization tool in relation to sociocultural factors (i.e., social class, ethnicity, topic, purpose, value and belief systems, cultural thinking and interpersonal-communication styles)</li> </ul>

<i>Philosophical Principles</i>	<i>Pedagogical Principles</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning and academic achievement are influenced by external family, community, and school conditions</li> <li>• Language learning is a process that takes developmental time and effort (5–8 years)</li> <li>• Teachers need to develop alternative pedagogical approaches that link assessment to instruction</li> </ul>
<i>Principle 4 Teachers as Advocates and Cultural Mediators</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Advocacy position</b> that calls teachers to raise their cultural awareness and develop <i>personal connections</i> between their family history and their students' sociohistorical backgrounds</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers need to develop <i>nurturing learning communities</i> in which young, diverse children can maintain collaborative relations, participate actively, and have a sense of belonging and intrinsic motivation</li> <li>• Teachers need to act as <i>cultural bridges or mediators</i> between the mainstream school culture and the minority family environments</li> <li>• Teachers need to act as <i>mentors</i> for developing <i>rapport</i> with diverse children and <i>partnerships</i> with parents to establish mutual trust and respect for cultural and linguistic diversity and idiosyncratic differences</li> </ul>

Pedagogical Principle 1 describes a holistic developmental perspective for teaching and learning processes in relation to subject matter, grade level, and purpose of instruction. Teachers following an ethnic-educator approach need to educate the *whole* child, by stimulating learning across cognitive, linguistic, and socioemotional developmental areas and across content areas (i.e., language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies). Language and cognitive development need to be stimulated using simultaneous and authentic methodologies. Teachers need to act as mediators to help children understand why, when, and how factual knowledge and abstract learning principles (or conceptual frameworks) can be transferred or transformed and can become relevant to other content areas, knowledge domains, and real-world experiences.

Pedagogical Principle 2 describes the interaction between internal and external factors in learning and developmental processes and academic achievement in young, diverse children. Developmental delays resulting from external factors need to be differentiated from genuine handicapping conditions or disabilities, especially among diverse children (for a more extended discussion of this topic see Gonzalez, Brusca-Vega, & Yawkey, 1997; Gonzalez, 2001a). Teachers need to respect