



Christian Early Education: Foundational Beliefs

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Speaking the Same Language

Education today is articulated through the use of two dynamic discourses



- A Discourse is seen to affect our views on all things. It defines the social boundary or way of thinking about a given topic.
- What is the discourse that provides a basis for understanding the field of early education and the mission, vision, and objectives of your early education program?




Human Development

- What is most important is the **development of the whole child**--- focusing on all that each child was intended to be.
- Suggests an **on-going process** and involves an **individual's growth over time**




The Whole Child

- **Physical**
- **Emotional**
- **Cognitive**
- **Social**
- **Spiritual**
- **Moral**



Human Development

- Curriculum is **flexible and individualized**
- **Ipsative** in nature
- Child-centered or sensitive
- Nurturing
- Stages
- **Developmentally appropriate**



Academic Achievement Discourse

- "The totality of speech acts and written communications that view the purpose of education primarily as supporting, encouraging, and facilitating a student's ability to obtain high grades and standardized test scores in school courses."



The Language of Academic Achievement

- Focus on rigorous curriculum
- Standards
- Testing, grades
- Norms
- High Achieving Schools
- Mastery
- Future oriented



Does it Really Matter?

It Does If....

- "More than a child's brain goes to school."
- The overall growth and development of the child is important
- We believe in critical periods

Readiness vs. Ready

- It is a false presupposition to believe that:
 - Young children think in the same ways as older children
 - Young children have the essential prior experiences and prerequisite skills needed for an accelerated curriculum
 - Preschool children can learn today what was reserved for six and seven year olds in the not so distant past
- Every child is "superkid"

Teaching the Young Child in the Context of "No Child Left Behind"

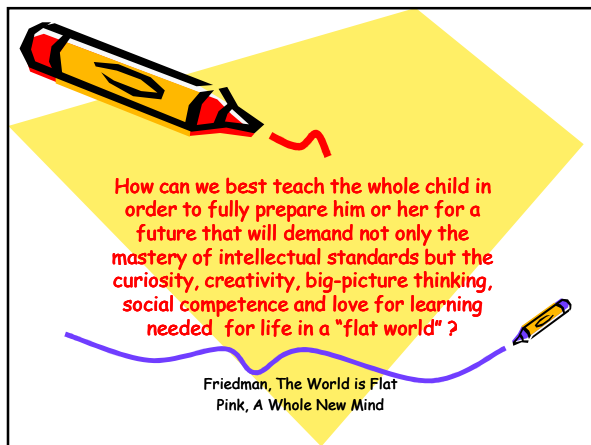
Important Questions

- Have children changed?
- Is there a new developmental timetable?
- Is a focus on the child a "dumbing down" of curriculum?



Important Questions

- What is the discourse of the Bible?
- Is it an either/or? Both/and?
- What do children need as we look to the future?



How can we best teach the whole child in order to fully prepare him or her for a future that will demand not only the mastery of intellectual standards but the curiosity, creativity, big-picture thinking, social competence and love for learning needed for life in a "flat world"?

Friedman, *The World is Flat*
Pink, *A Whole New Mind*

The World is Flat

Thomas Friedman

- In a "Flat World" we must prepare the next generation to:
 - Learn how to learn
 - Have both curiosity and passion
 - Be "people persons"



A Whole New Mind

Daniel Pink

- Artistry
- Empathy
- Seeing the big picture
- The transcendent



The Challenge is Expanded

- Not just the whole child
- But also the whole brain





Foundational Beliefs

- Individuals
- Integrated
- Immature
- Involvement
- Interaction socially
- Instruction morally

What Do You Believe?

- Listen to yourselves, read your materials
- What are your ends?
- What are your means?
- Look at your children! What are they telling you?

What Must We Do?

- "Complexity demands the absence of an either-or approach and the adoption of a both-and mentality."

M. Uecker in "Young Children: Exploring Their Nature and Needs", Christian School Education, Vol. 10 Number 3, p.25.