Learning and Development Theory

Effective learning should be captivating, challenging at the appropriate developmental level, and supported in a coordinated effort by all individuals involved in the education process. Even before children begin formal schooling, the lessons they learn and the interactions with the people in their “village” influence their ability to function with confidence in a school setting. Parents, teachers, support staff, and administrators all play vital roles in the continuing development of the child within the educational system, and in the creation of environments that motivate learning.

Children are more likely to be intrinsically motivated when they experience developmentally appropriate tasks that are challenging, and thus are more likely to persevere with the task. Although we use extrinsic motivation at times, studies have shown that it has an undesirable effect when tasks are more cognitively challenging.

Social emotional learning is an important part of development and a strong predictor of future success. It is important that schools integrate SEL into the daily flow of academics and activity so that students receive a consistent message and understand conceptual links.

I support the cognitive constructivist view of development with age related stages of readiness, and where hands on learning, observation, and experimentation lead to the development of knowledge. I have seen this type of learning take place in my classroom makerspace and have read many accounts promoting makerspaces in classrooms.

In order for optimal learning and development to take place, all members of the school and family should work together in their efforts to guide the child. This will ensure that feedback to the child and modifications to programs are coordinated. A village working in concert will be more likely to create a confident and empathetic individual.