



DAP, Developmental Cascades, and Observation Tools

We will review developmentally appropriate practice (DAP) (three core considerations and nine principles) and how DAP has evolved over four iterations. We will introduce a new lens for viewing child development by discussing developmental cascades and exploring the ideas surrounding the image of the child from various practitioners working with or on behalf of young children. Multiple tools for observing children and their development will be shared with participants to illuminate the variety that exists among settings. Participants will also gain knowledge in strengths-based versus deficit-based approaches to children's development and an understanding of what it truly means to "follow the child" in their development.



Meet the Presenters

Zlata Stanković-Ramirez

Karen Walker

Josh Thompson

Rachael Rose



Provocations – a Survey

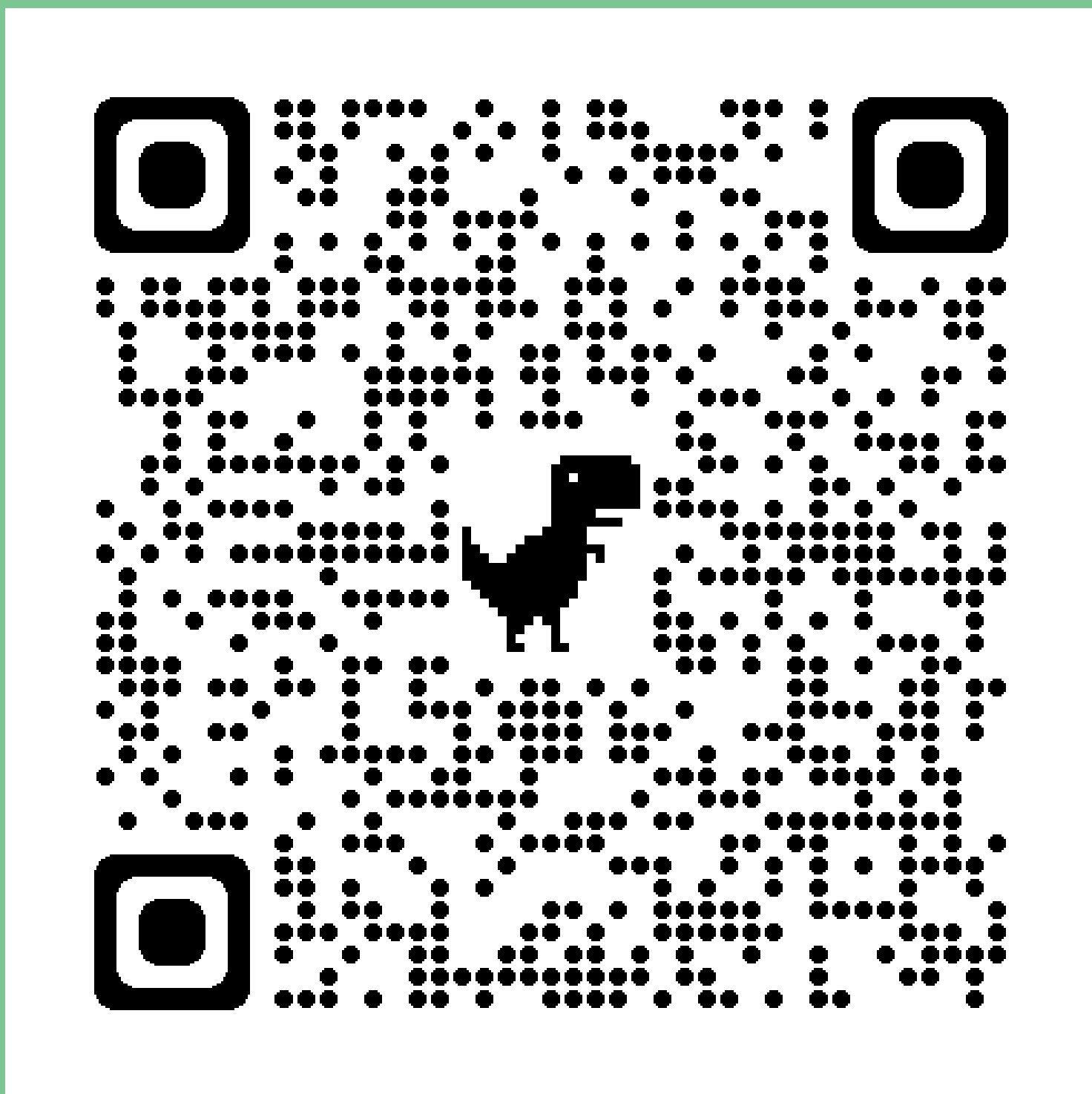
As a part of our ongoing process to explore how to make meaning of this new paradigm, we are developing a survey designed to assess your experience. We appreciate your willingness to help us pilot test the survey and provide us some feedback on your understanding and perception of the survey items. Your individual responses in the pilot test phase will not be reported to anyone except those who are designing the survey.

[Click here for SURVEY](#)

Encuesta



Inglés



Español



National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)

Vision Statement

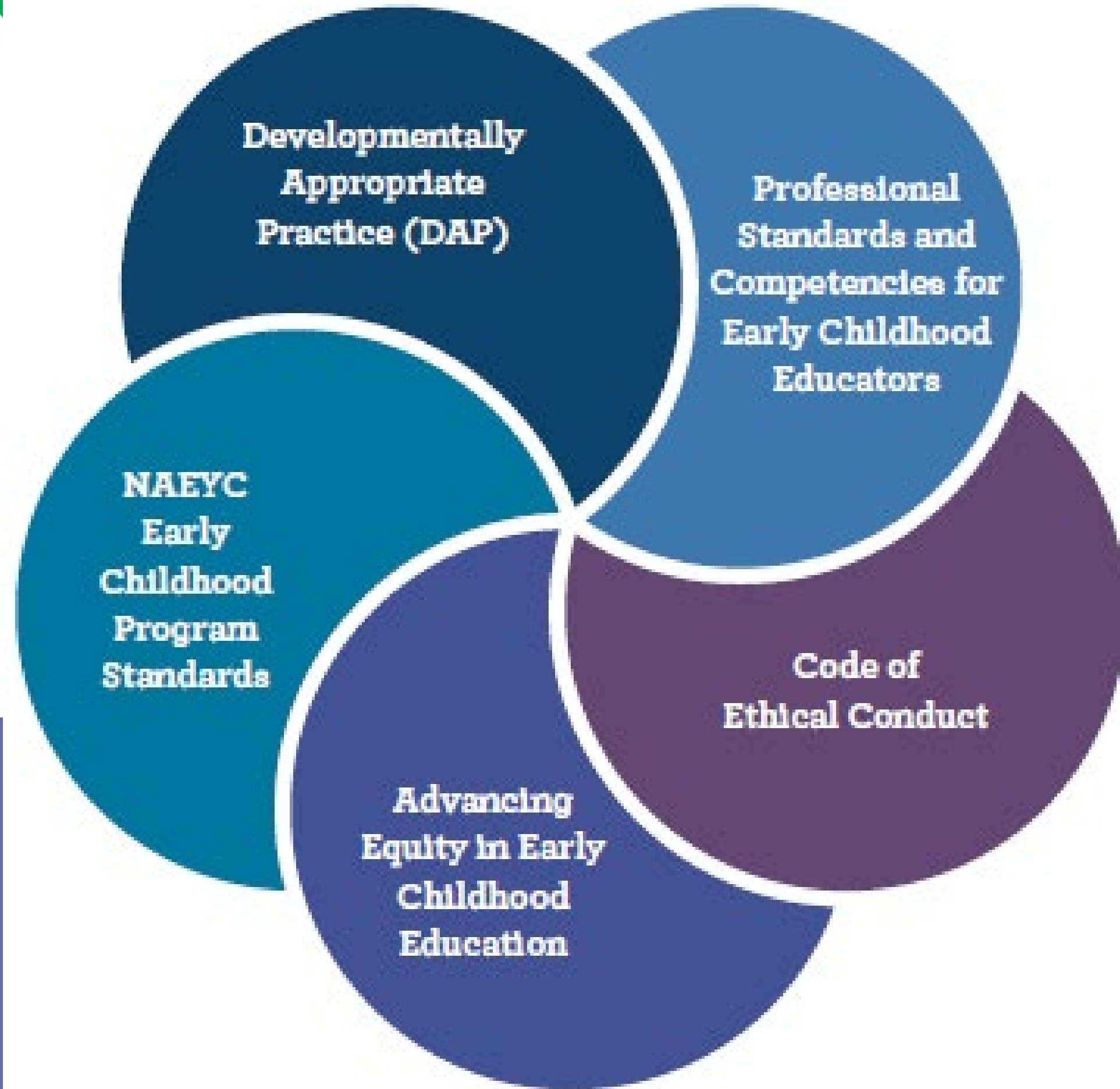
All young children thrive and learn in a society dedicated to ensuring they reach their full potential.

Mission Statement

NAEYC promotes high-quality early learning for all children, birth through age 8, by connecting practice, policy, and research. We advance a diverse, dynamic early childhood profession and support all who care for, educate, and work on behalf of young children.



Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP) is the early childhood education framework that many early childhood education programs use as their pillars for creating quality care.





First 3 editions
*** Position Statement**
*** Publication**

1987: To prevent “push down” curriculum
2 core considerations

1997: Revised, three core considerations
Diversity: social and cultural context for
Child, Educator, Program


2009: “Best practice”
Typically developing children
Assessing normative instructional practices
Deemphasized cultural contexts
Leaned in toward “best practice” for all children



Turn and Talk

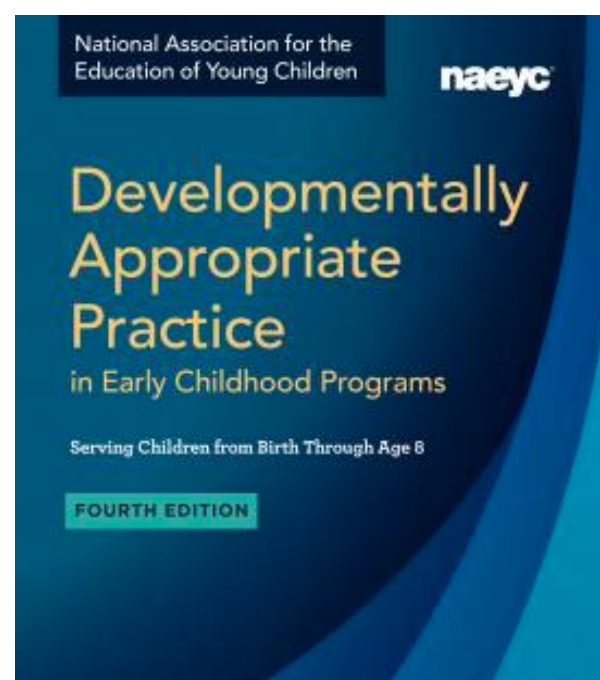
When did you first hear about DAP?

What does DAP look like in classrooms and learning environments?



Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs – 4th Ed. Position Statement 2020 Publication 2022

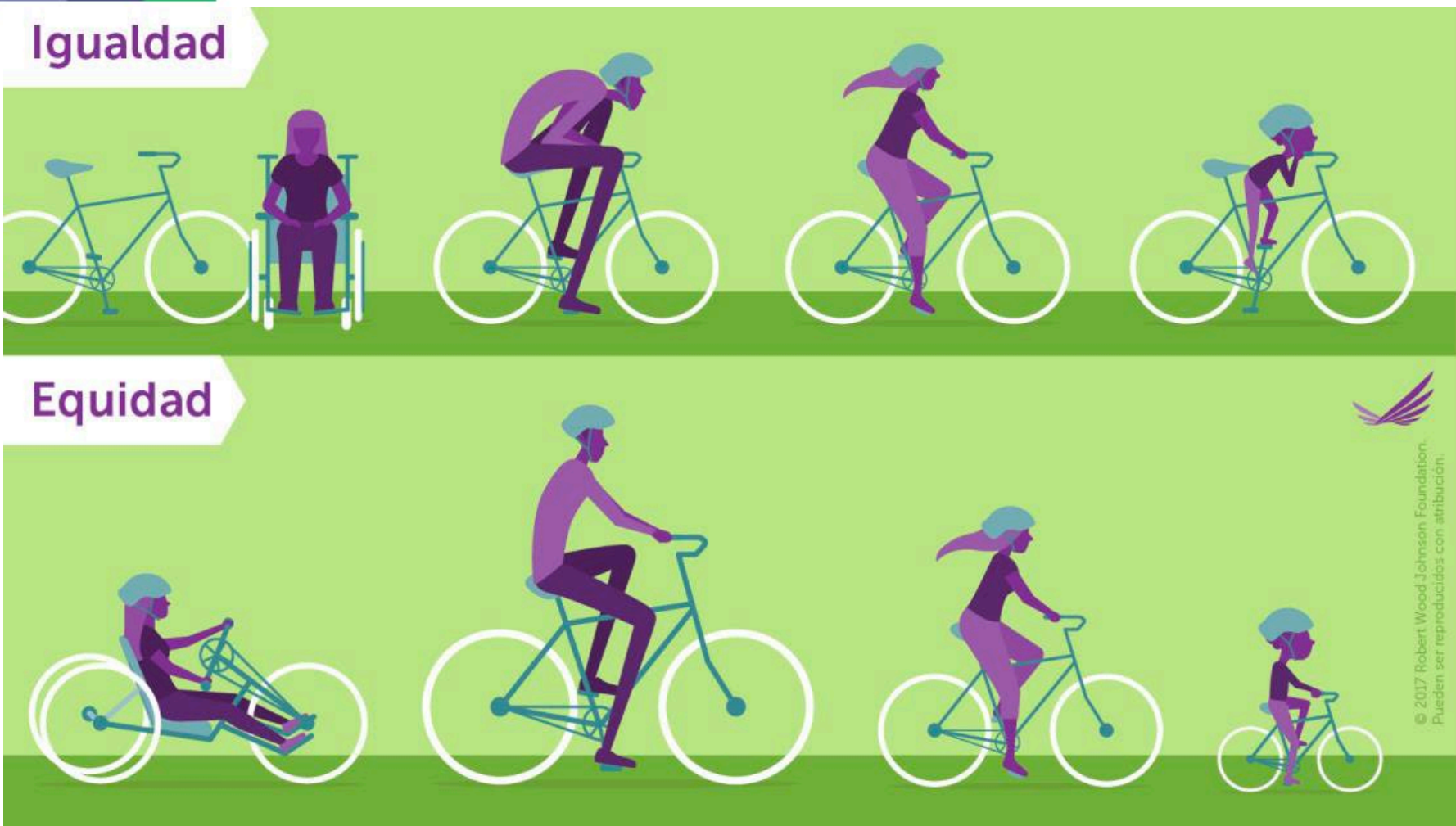
- * Shift in emphasis, away from standards-based and towards a transformative view of the young child
- * Instead of Ages and Stages, Overlapping Waves
- * Reemphasizing diversity, the unique individual



Advancing Equity in Early Childhood Education

National Association for the Education of Young Children

All children have the right to equitable learning opportunities that help them achieve their full potential as engaged learners and valued members of society. Thus, all early childhood educators have



DAP



Our study of DAP

Stanković-Ramirez, Z. & Thompson, J. (2018). Rethinking developmental domains to improve classroom observations. *Texas Child Care Quarterly*, 42(2), 20-27.

Thompson, J., & Stanković-Ramirez. (2021). What early childhood educators know about developmentally appropriate practice. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 103(2), pp. 20-23.

Stanković-Ramirez, Z., & Thompson, J. (2022). A new view of Developmentally Appropriate Practice: What early childhood educators know about waves, individuals, and equity. *TEPSA Leader: Texas Elementary Principals and Supervisors Association* 35(2), 1-7.



Please take our Survey: "What EC Educators Know About DAP"

https://tamuc.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_5mzvtbWOqXRtc1w

The purpose of this study is to discover what and ECCE professionals know about developmentally appropriate practice (DAP) in general, and specifically about recent changes in the 2020 revision. Your part in the study will be to respond to 5 short answer questions about the changes in DAP. It will take you about 30 minutes to review materials about DAP, and another 30 minutes answering the 5 short answer prompts.

<http://faculty.tamuc.edu/jthompson/DAP>





EVERY CHILD IS UNIQUE

“It’s a mistake to try to fit children into preexisting templates, insisting that every child achieve specific milestones at specific ages.”

Thompson & Stanković-Ramirez, 2021, p. 21

Waves and Cycles

“The waves of development, the ebb and flow of growth and processing, acquisition and reconsideration, all together map a process of typical child development, and attending to these waves empowers educators of children of all ages to go with the flow.”

Thompson & Stanković-Ramirez,
2022, p. 5





WAVES AND CYCLES

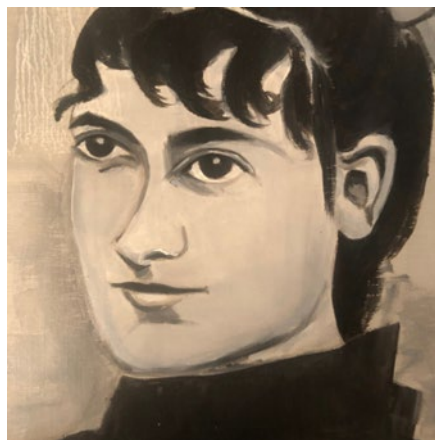
“The notion of ‘stages’ of development has limited utility; a more helpful concept may be to think of waves of development that allow for considerable overlap without rigid boundaries.” NAEYC 2020, 10

“The concept of stages does not accurately reflect the way development takes place ... These waves consist of spurts of development interwoven with periods of little apparent growth.”

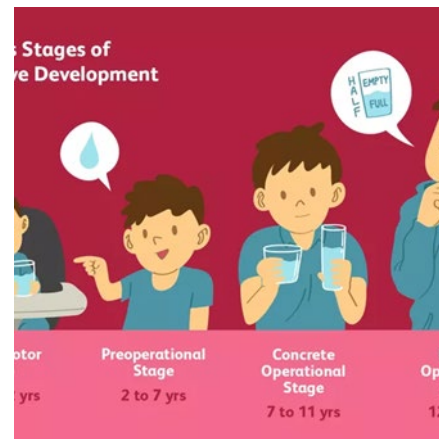
NAEYC 2022, 36

<http://faculty.tamuc.edu/jthompson/co-lab>

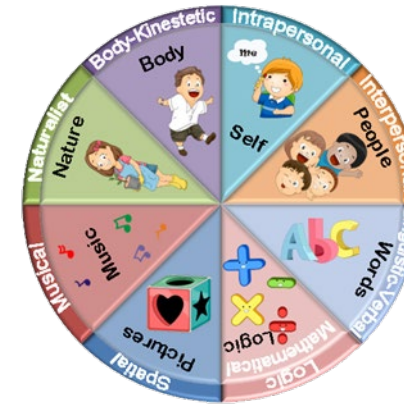
Theories of Development



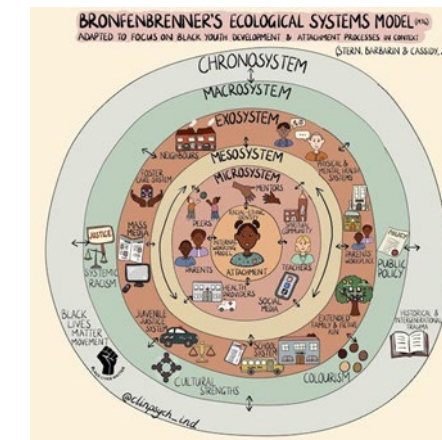
Planes of Development
Montessori



Ages and Stages
Piaget, Vygotsky, Erikson



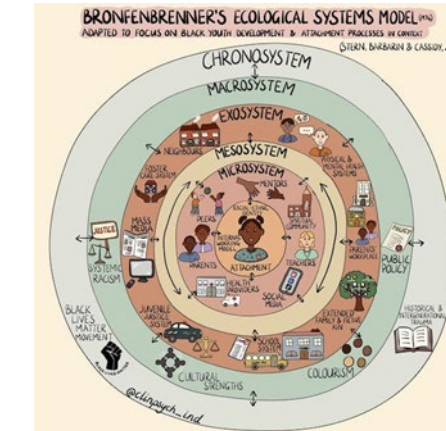
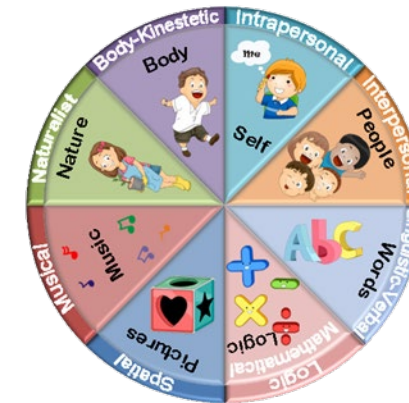
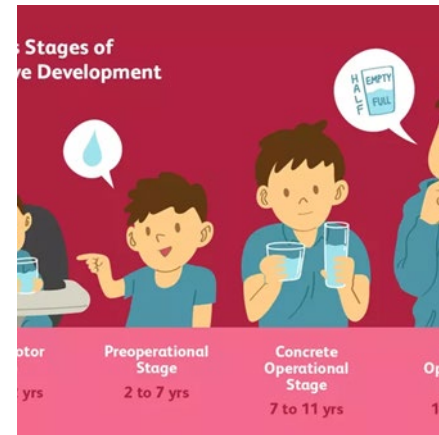
Multiple Intelligences
Gardner



Ecological Systems
Bronfenbrenner



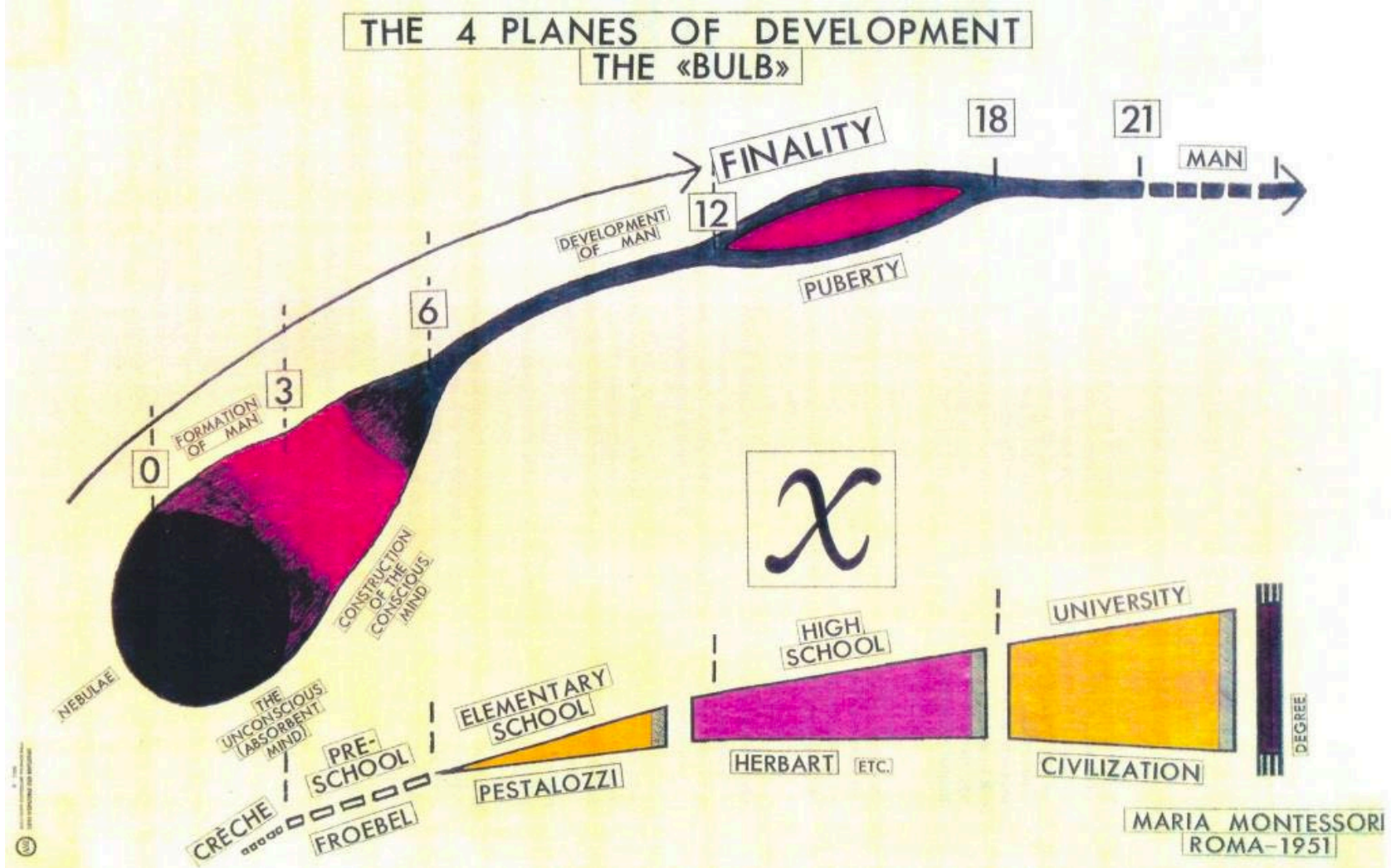
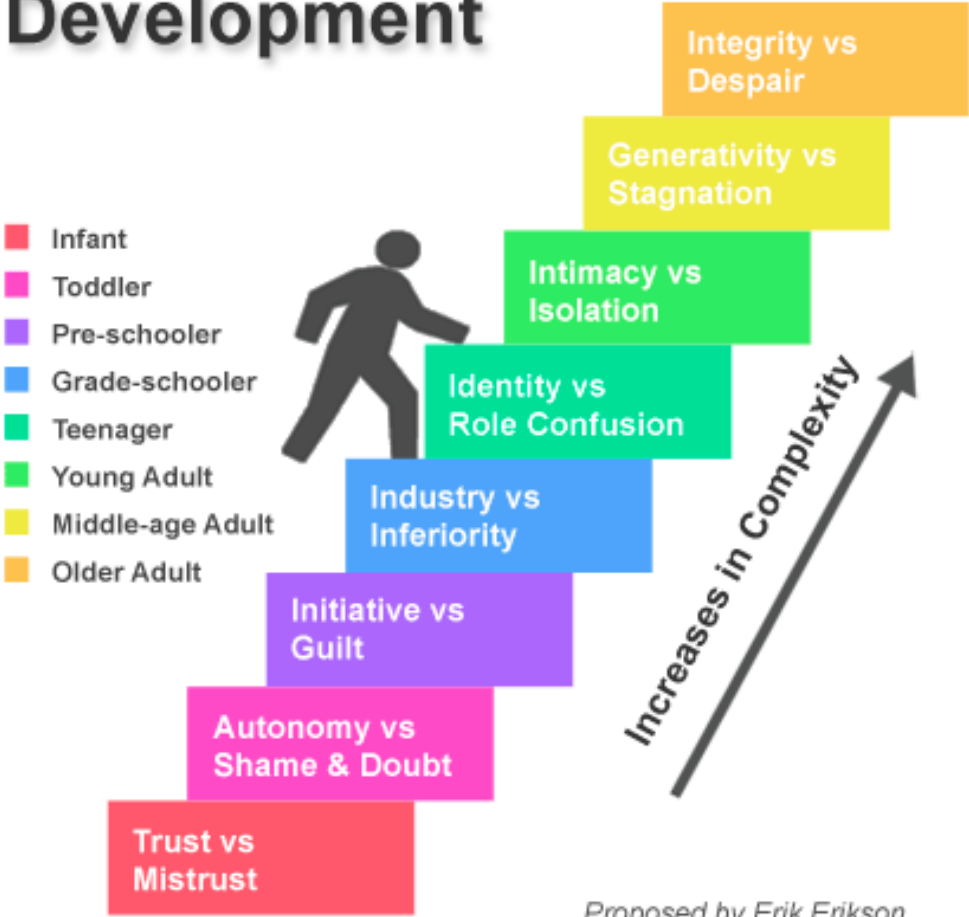
Turn and Talk



How do Theories of Development¹⁷ affect teachers' Image of the Child?
How does learning about Theories of Development help teachers change and grow?



Stages of Psychosocial Development



PARADIGM SHIFT

A simple liberating thought
came to our aid, namely
that things about children
and for children are only
learned from children.

“Follow the child”

Malaguzzi (1998, 51)





Developmental Cascades

Insights drawn from Developmental Psychology

Siegler (1996)

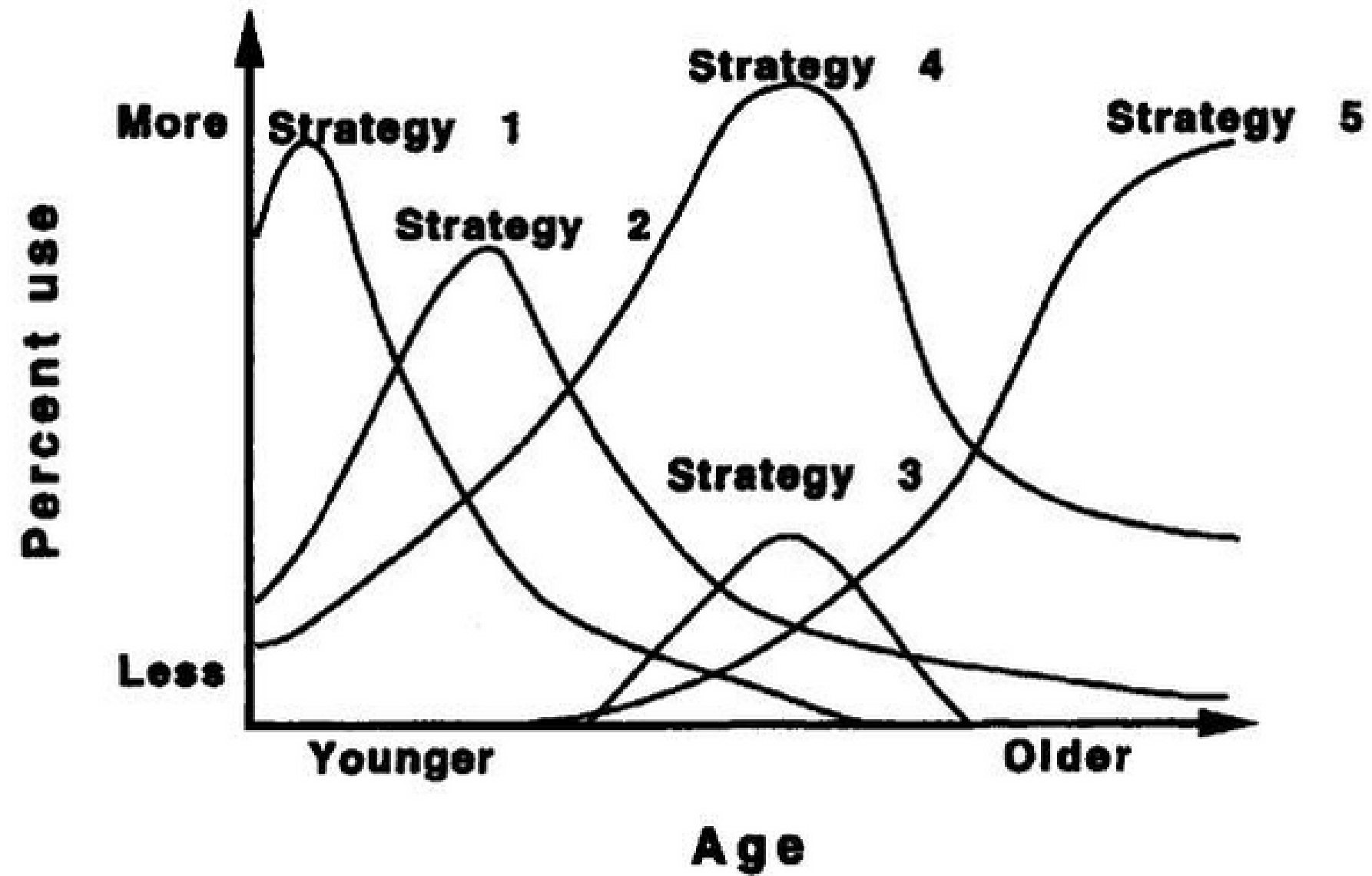
Masten & Cicchetti (2010)

Oakes & Rakison (2020)

Tamis-LeMonda & Lockman (2023)

Overlapping Waves

Strategic Development 89



Siegler (1996)

Figure 4.4. Overlapping waves depiction of cognitive development.



Masten, A. S., & Cicchetti, D. (2010).
Developmental cascades.
Development and Psychopathology,
22(3), 491–495.
doi:10.1017/S0954579410000222





Developmental Cascades

“A cascade, which can be used as a metaphor for thinking about development. Abilities begin at the top of the cascade and move down along different trajectories depending on which rocks and obstacles are encountered along the way. All drops of water, or developing abilities, end up in the pool below, but the particular position in the pool depends on the path traveled, which reflects the events and objects encountered along the way”.

Oakes & Rakison, 2020, p. 103



Developmental Cascades

“Children develop along any number of paths depending on factors such as how much freedom they are given to move, their relative size, the kind of caregiving they receive, and how language is spoken to them, and much more. It’s important to not consider differences as a way to identify deficits... understand how experience influences the shape of the cascade.”

Tamis-LeMonda & Lockman, 2023

Developmental Cascades –

In child development, the concept of developmental cascades refers to the domino effect of early experiences on later development.



- **Bi-directional effects -**
 - Early milestones influence later development, and later development can reinforce or reshape earlier skills
- **Impact across domains -**
 - Development occurs within a single domain, or across multiple domains
- **Cumulative effects –**
 - Small successes or early struggles lead to larger advantages or disadvantages later
- **Not predetermined –**
 - Development is a path of influence, not fixed destiny



Constraints – Shaping Factors

1) Biological Constraints

Genetic makeup, brain development, physical capabilities

2) Environmental Constraints

SES, family dynamics, access to resources

3) Experiential Constraints

Life experiences



3 Vignettes

NAEYC (2022) Appendix A: DAP in Action: Educator Snapshots and Reflections. *DAP in Early Childhood Programs Serving Children from Birth Through Age 8 (4th ed.)*, pp. 281–285.

**A.5 Studying
Birds in the
Spring
by Amy
Blessing**

**A.7 “A
Monster, I’m
Not Afraid of
Anything at
All”
by Ron Grady**

**A.8 The Name
by Ron Grady**





Observation Tools

<http://faculty.tamuc.edu/jthompson/Observation>



Meet Norm and Norma

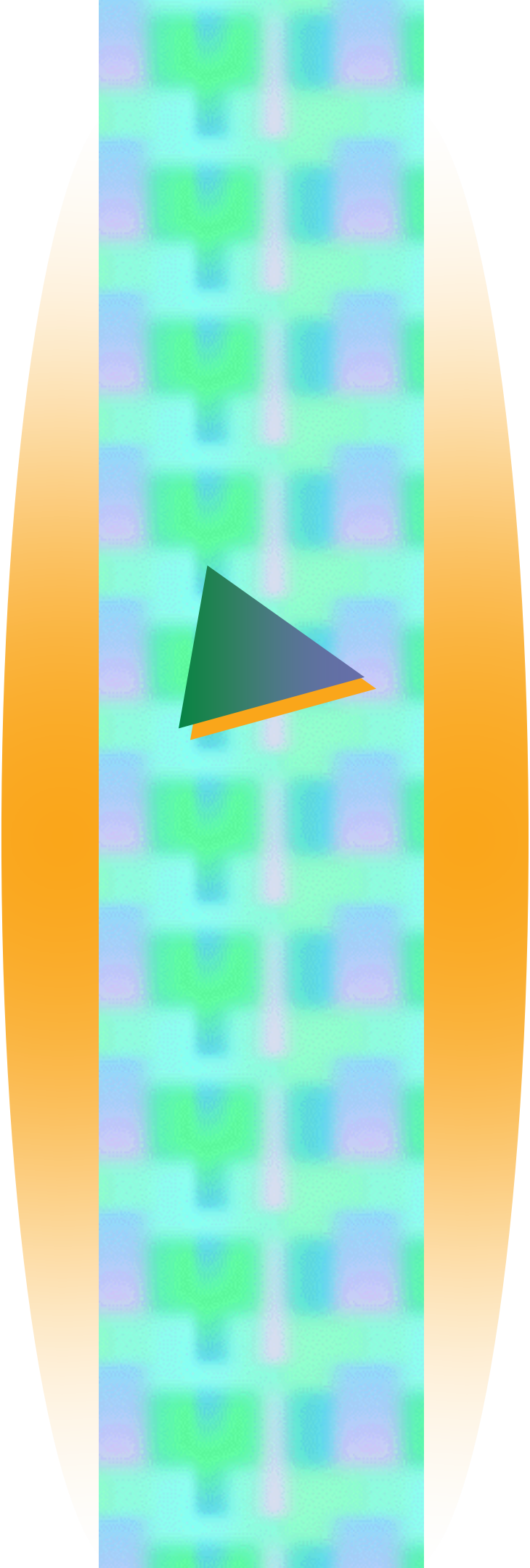
Nope, this child doesn't exist, not in your class, not in my family. Become aware of how your idealized, mental image of the child who 'should be' could potentially interfere with your ability to see the child who is there in front of you. Check your bias.

P.L.A.C.E.S.

6 Domains Of Early Learning And Development

Domain	Description	Example
P	Physical development can be divided into two components: 1) Motor Development, and 2) Health, Safety & Nutrition. High-quality learning environments provide opportunities for children to develop fundamental motor skills and to engage in healthy lifestyles.	Dasol sought any way possible to make learning physical. Once outside, this active, impetuous learner could be still for an extended period when it fulfilled his play narrative. Knowing this, the observant teacher crafted meaningful, physical engagements in and out of the classroom.
PHYSICAL		
L	Human language is a built-in genetic predisposition to connect, hard-wired into the brain. We are wired to connect. Language provides multiple important functions for children. The development and association of print with meaning begins early in a child's life.	Eighteen-month old Jake was playing at home when frightened by a loud noise. Comforted by reading, he grabbed a favorite book and turned the page until he found a picture of a scared sheep. Unable to describe his experience, he understood there was a book where his feeling was written down.
LANGUAGE		
A	The aesthetic domain refers to children's appreciation of natural beauty, and their experience in the arts (art, music, dance, drama). They make judgments and preferences based on all the exposure and discovery provided to every child in the classroom.	A teacher took her children on a nature walk when the leaves were turning yellow, red and brown. One child suggested collecting leaves. The teacher utilized classroom resources as storage options to collect leaves. Once back in the classroom, the children found different ways to use their new treasures.
AESTHETIC		
C	Asking children open ended questions about topics that interest them fuels their enthusiasm for learning. As children develop their cognitive abilities, they will be able to solve complex problems. Effective teachers strive to teach children, not curriculum.	A child asked his teacher "Where do trees come from?" This question grew within the class as they developed an abundance of activities, lessons, and circle time conversations for the entire class. Studying science was rooted in the real world the children were experiencing.
COGNITIVE		
E	Understanding one's own emotions and developing compassion for other's feelings are valuable skills. The best place to see children's emotional capacity is to observe them at play. Helping children identify difficult behavior develops resilience and helps them become effective problem solvers.	The classroom parakeet funeral was over the top for most of the kindergartners. But for one set of girls, this was just the right way to relate to one another, and this emotional expression and interaction utilized rituals to express collective loss.
EMOTIONAL		
S	The development of personal relationships and appreciating the similarities and differences among people are typical social skills a child must acquire. Social skills are best learned during situations that arise in the classroom organically.	Two-year old Gabriella encountered difficulties joining children during open-ended play. As the school year progressed, Gabriella learned how to ask her friends to join them. At the end of the school year, the teacher observed and documented that Gabriella was showing emergent leadership skills.
SOCIAL		

Adapted from Kostelnik, M., Soderman, A., & Whiren, A. (2015). *Developmentally Appropriate Curriculum: Best Practices in Early Childhood Education (6th ed.)*. London, UK: Pearson.
Table designed by Frank Ramirez (2017).




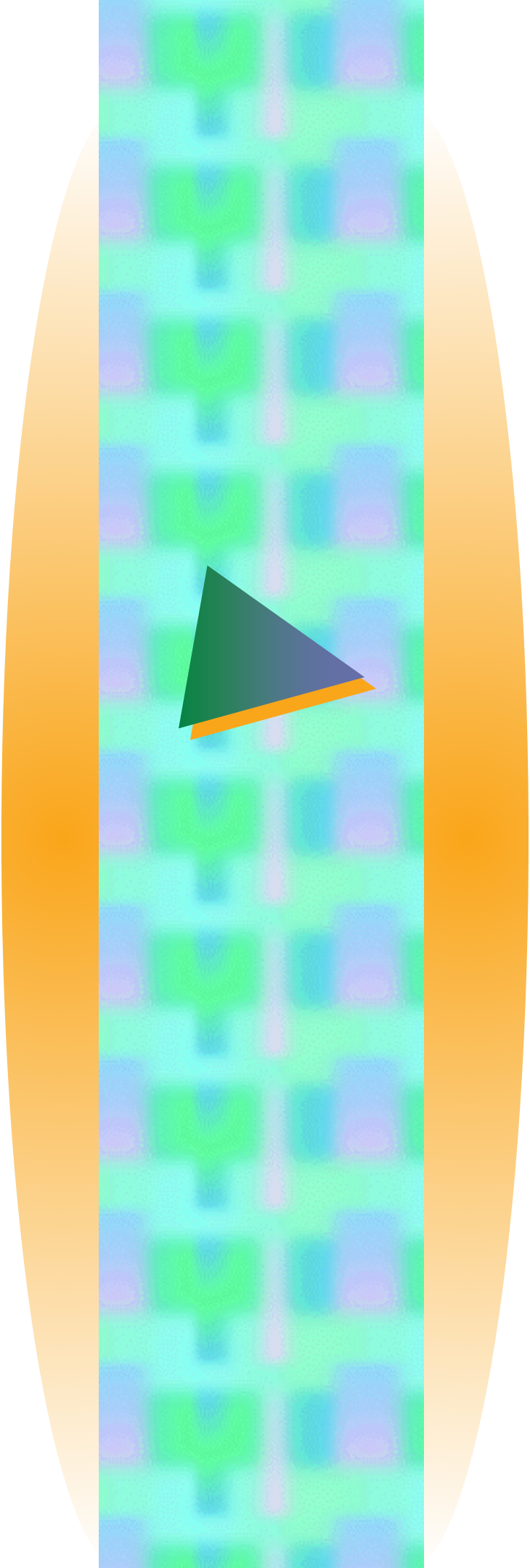
Infant
Toddler
PreSchooler
Kindergartner
Primary
School age
Pre-Teen
Adolescent



Kid Watching

Observing ongoing development through daily activities that are integral to instruction

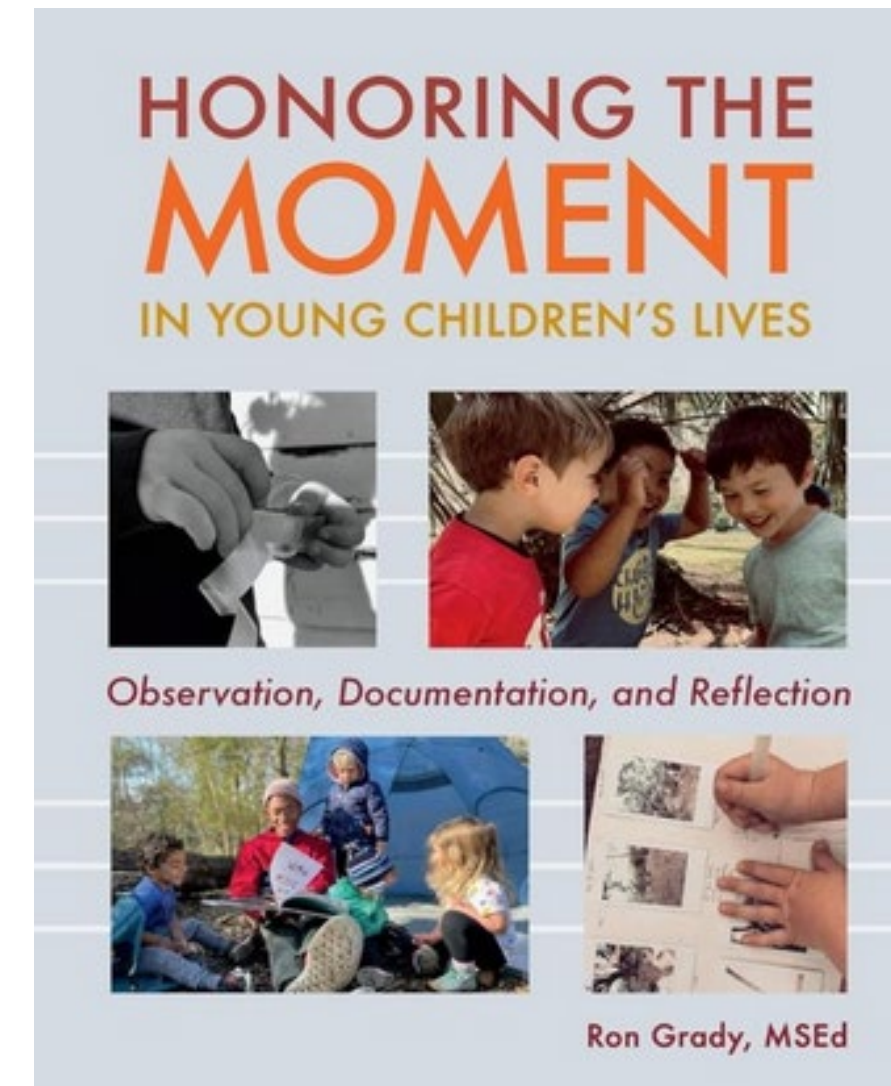
Owocki & Goodman (2002)



*Honoring the Moment
in Young Children's Live:
Observation, Documentation,
and Reflection*

by Ron Grady 2024

<https://www.childology.co/>





Ways of being with children as observer

Image of the children as full human beings

Meaningful mundane

Proximity



Ways of being with children through documentation

Documentation as Ethnography

Etic and Emic



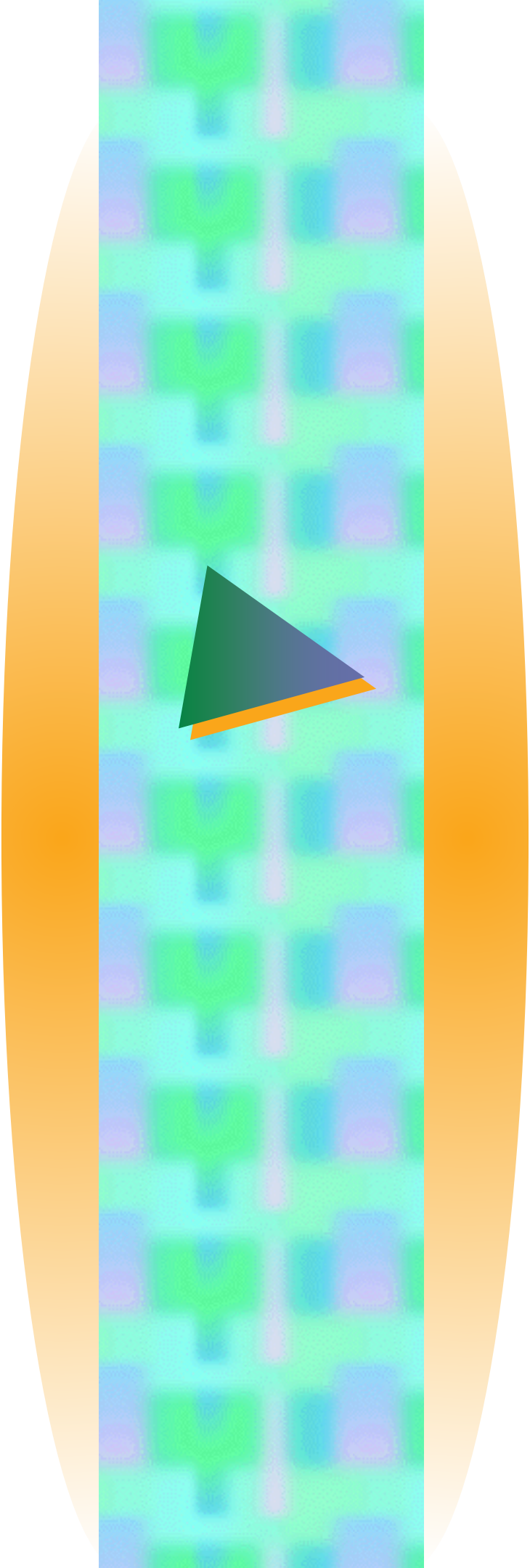
Ways of being with children in reflection

Embracing the possibilities of proximate gaze

Advocacy as relationship

Interrogating Cultures

Turn and Talk



In what ways can
Developmental Cascades
transform a teacher's
observation protocols.

Types of Observations



Narratives

Sampling

Interviews

Home Visits

Child Study

Types of Narratives



Anecdote

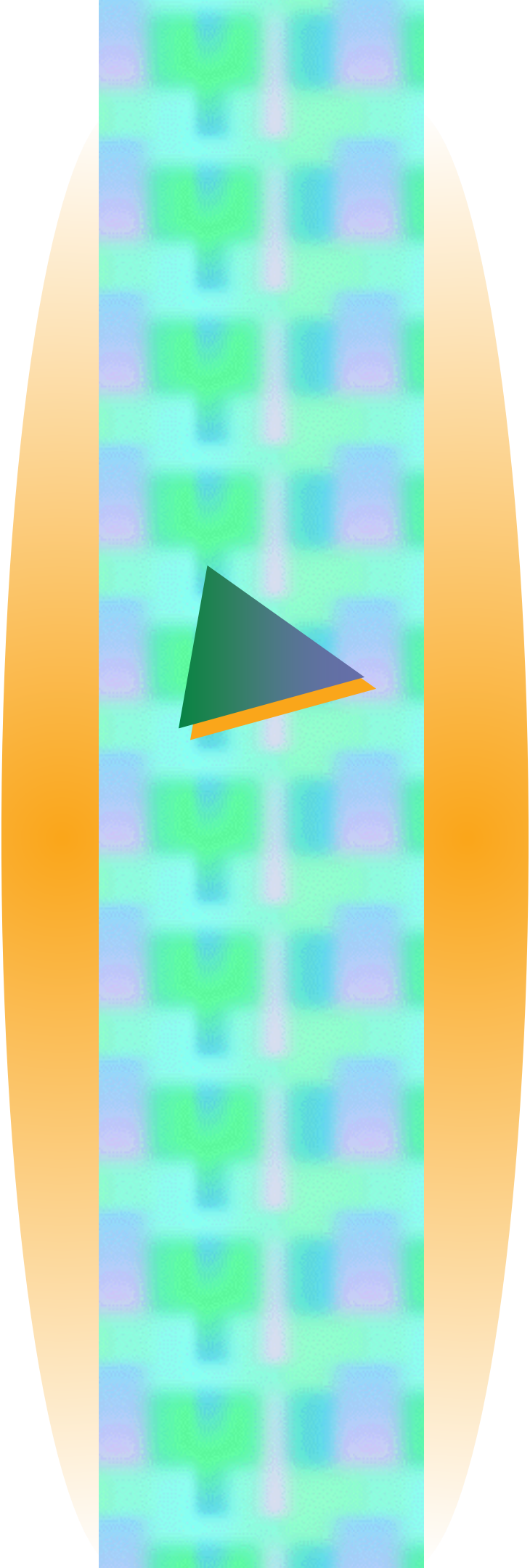
Diary

Running Record

Narratives: Anecdotes

Anecdotes or incident/ accident reports take place in the moment, during learning, with everything else going on. Keep note paper handy. Include names and date/time stamp. May include photos or artifacts.

Narratives: Diary



Observational Diary method is written in reflection, “participant observations written down with exact precision, recorded systematically with method and rigor” (p. 23).

Narratives: Diary

“The diaries were in this sense ecological, open to the constant change of conditions and to capturing situations in their richness and complexity. A precious element is the recurrent attention to describing teachers’ subjective reactions to specific facts or lived experiences: The teacher feels like a part of the context. She is herself context and is an engaged and passionate participant of the context”
Edwards & Rinaldi. 2009. *The Diary of Laura*.

Redleaf. p. 13

Narratives: Running Record

Thick rich descriptions of everything going on within eyesight and ear range

Write down everything – capture as much raw data as possible

Don't edit, just write

Use time stamp

Describe details

Use verbs

Narratives: Running Record

Frame of reference, background info

Day/Date/Time

Describe the setting – draw maps

Demographics of people present

Races, ages, genders (as relevant), languages,
SES



Sampling

Checklists

Event Sampling

Time Sampling

Artifacts

Portfolios



Portfolios

What goes in?

Who chooses?

How is material managed?

What does it mean?

Interviews and Conversations

While informal conversations are at the heart of true relationships, your professional service as an observer/ teacher brings intentionality into interviews and conversations.

Protocols and scripts

Transcripts

Interview many contacts: child, friends/ classmates, other teachers, siblings, family, extended family – be sure to include father/ male figures.

Home Visits

Rich source of data, but primary purpose is to build connections and relationship

Child's home

Teacher's home

Neutral ground (library, grandparents, friends house)

Child Study

Thick, rich descriptive observations of children in natural settings that captures all aspects of their lives: classroom environment, friendships, parents and family life, and community

Child Study

May include tools:

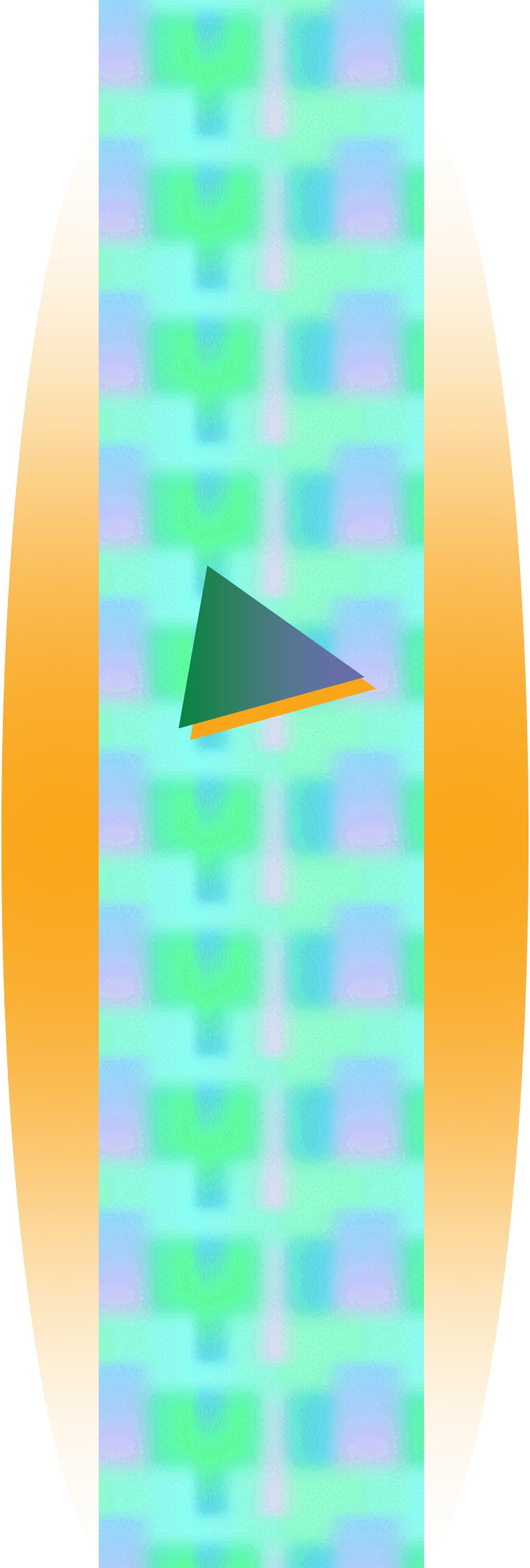
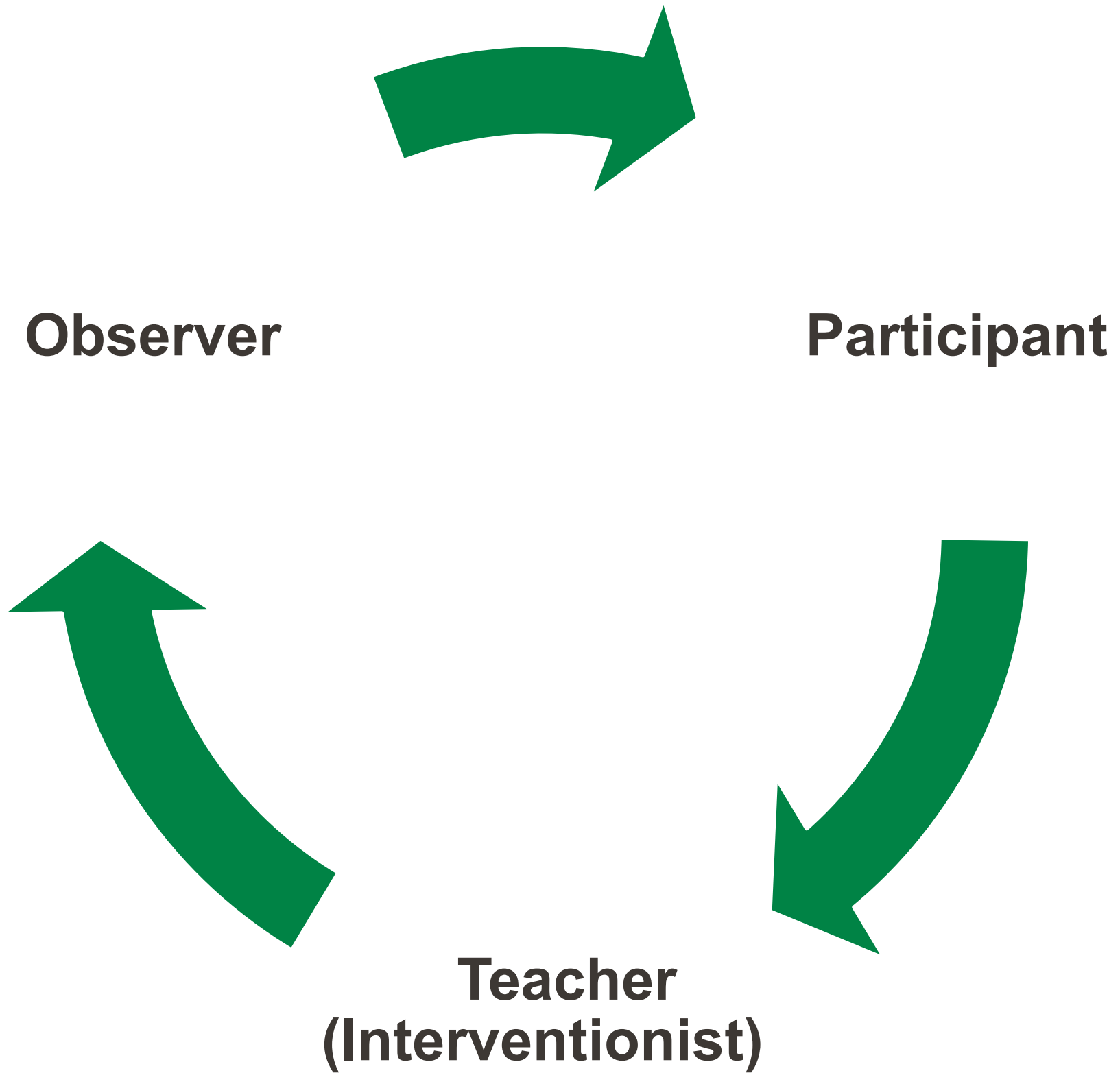
Observation records (rr, diaries, samples)

Portfolios

Interviews

Developmental checklists

Rules of engagement



Analysis

What to do with what you observe?

Making Inferences

Drawing Conclusions



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Encuesta



Inglés



Español





Co-Lab

CO-LAB

Collaboration of 9
interdisciplinary
research scholars,
international, multi-
disciplinary

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Zlata Stankovic-Ramirez, The University of
Texas at Dallas





DAP, Developmental Cascades, and Observation Tools

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