WPT #3: Ashley Durgan,

Martin Luther was one of the earliest historical figures who believed in total education of the child. He originally believed people should be able to read the Bible and think for themselves, which lead to people learning how to read so they could interpret the Bible on their own. His ideas lead to importance of school and children reading. He then concluded that each town should have a school in which boys and girls could attend, and could get intellectual, social, emotional, physical and religious development. (37) I also believe in the power of knowledge, that children should be capable of discovering and learning things on their own. While sometimes there is no other way but to be told information, I feel it is more beneficial for people and children in particular to have the chance to explore and gain knowledge on their own, whether it is through reading or interactions. This idea is very similar to Comenius, who felt that the first year of life was crucial to the child’s development and that “young children learn best from natural, real-world experiences” (Henniger, 37). I feel that Comenius’s ideas are very similar to the current idea of learning through inquiry. He felt that the learning experience should be enjoyable for children, and he hoped to create a situation where “teachers teach less and learners learn more”. He hoped that students could take charge of their own learning. His ideas are reflected in inquiry. Inquiry based learning follows the ideas that teachers are there for support and to guide learning by asking questions in order to further children’s thinking, yet are not there to give “right” answers. The children are free to wonder, question, and brainstorm about topics, and then able to try out their suggestions and learn from the experience. I am very passionate about this type of learning. I feel that it is so important to allow children to wonder, without having to be hesitant if they are right or wrong. Part of learning has to do with making mistakes and trying something a new way. I feel it that type of learning much more beneficial than being told what to do.

I feel that Johann Pestalozzi’s ideas fit into my philosophy. I do agree that children can gain a lot from using their senses to understand and learn about the world. I work in the ASCDL and I have seen from experience that touching and sensory tables are very stimulation for children they are able to experience new feelings, thoughts, and descriptions about different things. For instance, if there is a painting activity, it is likely that a child will spend their time with their hands in the paint dish squeezing handfuls of paint through their fingers rather than actually creating a painting. We do a lot of smelling and describing what we see in order to stimulate different senses. I like how he feels that each child has the potential to learn and gain knowledge if given the right situation. I totally believe that if given the proper chances any child can learn and grow, it may take extra help or support but children are very capable. He also felt that a teacher-child relationship is important. When you show a child that they are important to you, and what they do and say is important you begin to gain their trust. Once they trust you, a stronger relationship can grow and turn into a bond where they understand that you are always there for them, and they can always turn to you in a time of need. I feel that once a child knows they can count on you they are much more responsive to you and your ideas and suggestions which will enable a better learning environment. I have seen this first hand with my current job. While I have many buddies in the blue room there is one child that I am particularly close with. At first it started out as her acknowledging me, and then I would play with her and comment on things she had done or how proud of her I was for certain tasks. Once she realized I was aware of her and she mattered, we began to get much closer and now she will usually find me for anything that she needs. She is happy to see me each day as I am to see her. It shows me that the child benefits from a strong relationship but I feel the teachers benefit as well and feel more comfortable and at ease in the learning environment.

Developmentally Appropriate Practice follows the guidelines of what is appropriate for the children of a given age to be doing, yet also what is appropriate for the individual children on different levels of development. Frobel believed that play was very important to a child’s development. I think that play has a significant role in developmentally appropriate practices for younger children. Play allows children to be creative with games, learn to solve social problems, and to develop physically. Frobel also created the concept of circle time. During circle time the children are in close approximating all sharing the same experience with usually teacher lead instruction. I think this helps with peer interactions which can lead to relationships. I believe that John Bowlby’s ideas of attachment follow the lines of developmentally appropriate practices. He created four stages of attachment which followed four different age ranges of infants/children yet he still accounted for the individual differences which may occur. Piaget has stages of development which he believes that each children passes though around the same given age. I feel that Bronfenbrenner’s ecological model is a great example for the likeliness of individual differences among children and their development. Each child has a unique Microsystem (close relationships), Macrosystem (beliefs), Mesosystem (interactions between home and surroundings), and Exostystem (children’s environment) which contribute to their individual needs and possible teaching style. I feel that many historical figures and theorists have ideas that contribute to developmentally appropriate practices.