

# *If it quacks like a duck, it's probably* **BALONEY**

by Martin A. Kozloff

*When you read or hear one of the following statements, you can be nearly certain that it is not based on experimental research. The technical term used by scientific researchers to describe these ideas is “oil of snake”.*

## **We use this approach because it is a DAP (developmentally-appropriate practice).**

There is no serious research whatever to support claims about what is developmentally appropriate. Instead, the validation is nothing more than repetition of this vapid phrase — a chant. The evil side is that advocates of DAP believe that preschool kids should not be taught in a systematic fashion how to read. Maybe some kids don't need this, but disadvantaged kids often do. So, advocates of DAP either do not know (or are so blinded by their beliefs that they do not care) that disadvantaged kids will be denied exactly the sort of instruction they need to catch up with their advantaged peers. This is how “educational philosophy” comes to mean the same thing as “higher immorality”.

## **It is better for teachers not to correct students' errors immediately. Error correction makes students dependent on the teacher. Therefore, students should discover errors themselves and learn to correct them.**

In fact, research on error correction shows that failure to correct errors results in chronic error patterns and worsening knowledge gaps. Timely error correction yields higher achievement and self-esteem.

## **Having students frequently practise skills is not an effective way to foster mastery and self-esteem. Frequent practice inhibits creativity and is boring.**

There is absolutely no research to support this bogus proposition. In contrast, 100 years of serious research show that practice makes perfect. Ask any musician, dancer, writer, karate master, marksman, cook, medical intern, or barber.

## **Teachers should be facilitators rather than transmitters of knowledge. It is best for students to discover and construct knowledge on their own.**

Would you want your children's physicians to have been taught this way? Would you want your children to discover how to swim by being “immersed” in the ocean? Of course not. How so-called educators can advocate (in fact, insist on) “inquiry” methods regarding reading, spelling, math, and science is a great mystery. Staggering ignorance is a possible explanation.

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