



Unit 2 – Visual and Performing Arts: Getting Ready for the Unit and Connecting to Experience

Focus of Getting Ready for Unit 2

Students think about their roles as teachers in planning curriculum related to the visual and performing arts by connecting their own early experiences with visual art, music, dance, and drama to those of the children they will teach.

Curriculum Alignment Project (CAP) Student Learning Outcomes

The Curriculum Alignment Project's (CAP) lower division eight courses and student learning outcomes are mapped onto each instructional guide key topic. See Appendix A for the specific student learning outcomes, objectives, and examples of course content and topics for the courses listed below.

- Child, Growth, and Development
- Introduction to Curriculum
- Principles and Practices of Teaching Young Children
- Teaching in a Diverse Society
- Practicum-Field Experience

Instructional Methodologies

- Personal reflection
- Small group work
- Reflective discussion—large group
- Individual reflection

California Early Childhood Educator Competency Areas to Consider

The Faculty Initiative Project will be undertaking a comprehensive process in the future to map the content of the instructional guides to the California



Department of Education, Child Development Division's California Early Childhood Educator Competencies. The "Competency Areas to Consider" below are listed in this instructional guide as a preliminary exploration of how particular competency areas might be addressed through these key topics.

- Child Development and Learning
- Culture, Diversity, and Equity
- Observation, Screening, Assessment, and Documentation
- Learning Environments and Curriculum



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Getting Ready for the Unit



Slides 2, 5, 6

The visual and performing arts domain in the *California Preschool Curriculum Framework, Volume 2* is a companion to the same domain in the *California Preschool Learning Foundations, Volume 2* and is organized with the same strands and substrands. In both the foundations and curriculum framework, the three substrands for visual art, music, and dance are identical whereas the substrands for drama are slightly different. In drama, the first substrand is the same as for the other three disciplines, but the second substrand is a combination of the second and third substrands of the other disciplines. These differences are presented on page 49 of the *California Preschool Curriculum Framework, Volume 2*.

Strands - Visual Art, Music, and Dance

Substrand 1.0 Notice, Respond, and Engage

Substrand 2.0 Develop Skills

Substrand 3.0 Create, Invent, and Express

Strand - Drama

Substrand 1.0 Notice, Respond, and Engage

Substrand 2.0 Develop Skills to Create, Invent, and Express Through
Drama

As in the four domains of the *California Preschool Curriculum Framework, Volume 1*, the visual and performing arts domain also contains guiding principles, suggestions for environments and materials, vignettes, teachable moments, interactions and strategies, strategies for engaging families, research highlights, and questions for reflection. The 14 domain guiding principles and the 13 environments and materials are at the domain level; the research highlights, strategies for engaging families, and reflection questions are at the strand level; and the vignettes, teachable moments, and interactions and strategies are at the substrand level.

The visual and performing arts are a wonderful way to support children's language, mathematics, and social-emotional development as well as foster their natural curiosity and interest in exploring and creating. Chapter 2 of the *California Preschool Curriculum Framework, Volume 2* provides guidance for teachers in planning curriculum in the four disciplines of the visual and performing arts, ensuring



and building on child-initiated activities as well as intentionally planning environments, materials, and experiences that challenge and allow children to further their knowledge and skills.

The students may have widely varying experiences with the visual arts, music, drama, and dance and their associated concepts, skills, and vocabulary. By having a thorough understanding of the visual and performing arts foundations, instructors can better gauge their students' knowledge levels of the four disciplines and what kind of background material students will need as they begin their work with the curriculum framework. Some of the following learning experiences in the *Instructional Guide for the California Preschool Learning Foundations, Volume 2* provide opportunities for students to familiarize themselves with the visual and performing arts foundations:

- Learning Experience 3: Piecing Together the Visual and Performing Arts Domain Content Puzzle (pp. 32–49)
- Learning Experience 4: Exploring the Content of the Visual and Performing Arts Domain Through Vocabulary (pp. 50–59)
- Learning Experience 6: Using the Research Base for Understanding Children's Development in the Visual and Performing Arts (pp. 70–81)

Motivator and Connection to Experience

Before You Start

As an introduction to this unit on the visual and performing arts, it may be helpful for the students to think back to some of their own early experiences with visual art, music, dance, and drama and then consider how their backgrounds with each discipline may influence the curriculum planning they do for the children in their classes. Because the visual and performing arts encompass four disciplines or areas, students may have varied degrees of familiarity with each one.

Students could first complete a word association exercise related to the visual and performing arts. A list of suggested word prompts is included in the "Getting it started" segment, though faculty may choose to develop their own list. After completing their word associations, students then reflect on what early memories and experiences these words trigger. They may discover that they had very rich memories or experiences in one or more of the four areas and few or none in others. Some students may feel that they had very limited experiences in any discipline. It is important to point out that there will probably be a wide range of experiences and that there are many factors that contributed to this diversity. Examples include personal interests, family and community culture and values, family preferences, availability of affordable opportunities in the community, and the curriculum in students' preschool and early elementary grades.

It is also important to acknowledge that some of the students' word association responses may trigger memories of experiences that were uncomfortable. For example, some students may have been made to take music or dance lessons at a time when they didn't want to or had embarrassing moments in performances such



as school plays or recitals. Depending on the students' readiness and willingness to share some of these memories, as well as the instructors' level of experience and comfort, faculty may explore with students how these experiences could inform their work as teachers. Faculty might consider planning a short break after the final reflection to allow students an opportunity to deal with any strong emotions that may have surfaced.

A similar reflection experience for the visual and performing arts can be found in Learning Experience 1 of the visual and performing arts domain of the *Instructional Guide for the California Preschool Learning Foundations, Volume 2* (pp. 18–26); utilizing the included handout (pp. 23–26) could prove especially beneficial for students' reflective engagements.

If students are keeping journals, instructors may suggest that they include their replies to some of the reflection questions.

If faculty choose to have students complete the word association activity as a move-about exercise, several large sheets of paper, markers, and tape will be needed. Instructors may wish to prepare these sheets ahead of class; two or three words could be written across the top of the sheet to prompt the word association exercise.

Information Delivery



Slides 3-5

If students are not already familiar with the visual and performing arts domain, it will be helpful to do a brief review of the domain's strands and substrands by having students read the summary on pages 48–49 of the *California Preschool Curriculum Framework, Volume 2*.

Definitions of the four disciplines are also provided in Learning Experience 1 of the visual and performing arts domain on pages 20–21 of the *Instructional Guide for the California Preschool Learning Foundations, Volume 2* (IG PLF, V2). These definitions, taken directly or adapted from the glossary on pages 28–31 of the *California Preschool Learning Foundations, Volume 2* (PLF, V2), are included here for quick reference:

Visual Art: Products and processes of expression that use particular tools to create marks, colors, textures, and shapes of visual art. (IG PLF, V2, p. 20)

Music: Sounds selected and organized for expressive purposes; these sounds have pitch, tempo, rhythm, and tone. (IG PLF, V2, p. 21)

Drama: A participatory experience in which two or more children pretend to be someone else or to be someplace else. Drama is used in the preschool classroom as an experiential, play-based learning medium. Whereas theater is performance-oriented, drama at the preschool level is process-oriented and improvisational in nature (PLF, V2, p. 28)



Dance: Movement selected and organized for aesthetic purposes, or as a medium of expression, rather than for its function as work or play. (PLF, V2, p. 28)

Active Learning



Slide 7

Getting it started

Explain to the students that they will be doing a word association exercise about the visual and performing arts. When they are presented with a word related to one of the four disciplines—visual art, music, drama, and dance—they are to write down the first word or phrase that comes to mind.

There are two ways that this word association exercise may be conducted, depending on the size of the class and the space available in the classroom. The first way is to read each word from the list and ask students to individually write their responses on a sheet of paper. The second way is to post chart paper around the room with one to three words from the list written at the top of each paper. Students then move around the room and write their responses to the word prompts on the chart paper. Remind students to focus on their response to the word prompts rather than what other students have written. If choosing this second method, remind students to write large enough so that the words can be read while the students are seated.

The following words are suggestions for the list of word prompts:

- Drawing
- Painting
- Sculpting
- Singing solo
- Singing in a group
- Playing an instrument
- Dancing
- Pretend play
- Chalk
- Paints
- Crayons or markers
- Play dough or clay
- Collage
- Glue or paste
- Costumes and props
- Performance or play
- Art show
- Art/music/dance lessons

Online Options

Students could complete the word association prior to class and then post their responses online. Upon instructor's recommendation, students could then review their peers' lists before coming to class for discussion.



Slides 8-9

Keeping it going

Next ask students form small groups to discuss their word associations. They can use their own lists or read the ones on charts posted around the room. Ask the students to frame their



discussions around these questions:

- Which words or phrases appeared frequently? Which ones were unusual?
- Which words or phrases resonated with you? Why?
- Was there an adult who particularly encouraged you in the visual arts?
- What childhood memories of drawing or painting, singing, playing musical instruments, dancing, and engaging in pretend play or drama did these words evoke for you? What feelings were elicited?
- How might you use these memories and feelings when planning curriculum in the visual and performing arts for young children?

Taking it further

Ask for volunteers to share highlights from their small group discussions. Encourage students to describe both similar and different memories and feelings, their thoughts about why some of the experiences were different, and insights drawn from sharing these experiences that they can use in their work with children in the visual and performing arts.

Putting it together

Conclude by asking students to answer the following questions:

- What are some things that stand out for you from everyone's word associations and the discussion?
- What surprised you?
- What are some key points or themes that emerged from these discussions?
- Why is it helpful to think about your own early experiences in the visual and performing arts as you plan curriculum in these disciplines?
- What is one thing you want to remember in your curriculum planning?



Slide 10



Reflection

Students may also answer the reflective questions suggested in the “Putting it together” section individually.

This second set of questions is more general and can be used for individual reflection here and with the other key topics.



Slides 11-12

- What part of this class session stood out most for you today?
- Which ideas or concepts from today’s work reinforced what you have already learned or experienced? Which ones gave you a new perspective or insight?
- How might you apply a new idea or perspective to your work now or in the future?
- What information or support do you need to do this?
- What is a first step you could take to locate this support or information? What steps could you take to start applying the new idea or perspective?