



Unit 5 – California Preschool Curriculum Framework as a Resource for Planning and Integrating Curriculum: Key Topic 1: Three Lenses for Viewing Curriculum

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Key Topic 1 – Three Lenses for Viewing Curriculum

Focus of Unit 5 – Key Topic 1

Students explore three “lenses” through which the curriculum framework can provide guidance for planning curriculum for young children. These three lenses are the eight overarching principles, the curriculum-planning process, and the breadth of the curriculum framework across the three domains of the *California Preschool Curriculum Framework, Volume 2*.

Students also have an opportunity to explore considerations regarding cognitive development, which is not addressed as a domain in either the preschool learning foundations or the preschool curriculum framework.

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.

- Introduction to Curriculum
- Principles and Practices of Teaching Young Children
- Observation and Assessment
- Practicum-Field Experience

Instructional Methodologies

- Interview—community member
- Panel/guest speaker
- Observation
- Class discussion



- Video observation
- Reflection—individual
- Development of resource tool

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
- Relationships, Interactions, and Guidance
- Family and Community Engagement
- Learning Environments and Curriculum
- Observation, Screening, Assessment, and Documentation



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Before You Start

The *California Preschool Curriculum Framework, Volume 2* is “grounded in evidence-based practices that have evolved in the field of early childhood education over decades” (p. 34). As a curriculum framework rather than a preschool curriculum, it has been developed to provide “guidance on planning learning environments and experiences for young children” (p. 3).

One way to make use of this guidance is to use the framework as a series of lenses through which to view off-the-shelf curricula or curriculum developed within one’s program. The *California Preschool Curriculum Framework, Volume 2* provides three lenses or three ways in particular to do this.

- The first is to use the eight overarching principles as a way to reflect on curricula (pp. 5-9).
- The second is to use the curriculum-planning cycle as a way to review curriculum planning and curriculum decisions (pp. 27–34).
- The third is to use the breadth of the *California Preschool Curriculum Framework, Volume 2* across domains to ensure that curriculum serves each child as an individual and each child as a whole child.

The thrust of this key topic is to provide questions that can be used as students look through these lenses. Each lens is addressed by one subtopic with a set of questions. The subtopics can be done by all students, or separate groups could be assigned to each subtopic.

This work might be done best as an out-of-class assignment and in pairs. Also, depending on the educational level and experience of students, instructors may need to provide some explanation and demonstration in class before assigning students to do their reviews out-of-class.

Students will be using questions relating to three key features—principles, planning cycle, and integrated curriculum—of the *California Preschool Curriculum Framework, Volume 2* to review other curricula. This will mean that they must have access to copies of curricula for early childhood that are available commercially or that they will be exploring programs to find these features in existing programs.



It is recommended that students engage with this key topic after they have become familiar with what is in the domains of the *California Preschool Curriculum Framework, Volume 2* because this key topic will require some critical thinking and reflection on the part of students.

As further support and preparation, some of the content of this key topic can be explored in more depth in other key topics in this instructional guide. The eight overarching principles are explored in Key Topic 2 of Unit 1 in this instructional guide. Opportunities to practice using the curriculum-planning cycle are provided in Key Topic 2 in this unit.

There is also a short exercise in this key topic for students to consider cognitive development, which is not developed as a domain in either the foundations or the framework.

If instructors have not used the exercise that introduces Unit 1 of this instructional guide, “Getting Ready for the Unit and Connecting to Experience,” instructors might find that useful here. It could be used as an introduction to this key topic. That exercise helps students develop a working definition of a framework, considers the eight overarching principles, the curriculum process, environments and materials, and interactions and strategies in that context.

Three handouts are provided with this key topic—one for each subtopic. Electronic versions of these handouts will be available when this instructional guide is online at <http://www.wested.org/facultyinitiative>.

Information Delivery

There are three subtopics in this key topic, and important information is embedded in the subtopics. Ensure that students are familiar with the introductory chapter of the *California Preschool Curriculum Framework, Volume 2*. It should be assigned reading before working through this key topic.

Active Learning

Subtopic 1: Using the Eight Overarching Principles as a Lens for Viewing Curricula



Slides 2-3

Getting it started

Bring students’ attention to pages 5–9 in the *California Preschool Curriculum Framework, Volume 2* that describe the eight overarching principles. If instructors want a fuller introduction to the principles, Key Topic 2 in Unit 1 of this instructional guide will help students explore the eight overarching principles in more depth. Explain to students that these eight overarching principles have been developed to emphasize curriculum for young children that is individually, culturally, and linguistically responsive.



Instructors might want to assign specific curricula or approve some that students know and might be using in their work. Using these overarching principles to review curricula can provide a way to see how a commercial curriculum or one that has been developed within a program puts these principles into practice. Students will be using these principles as they look through a commercially available curriculum to find examples of the principles.

There is a set of questions that follows, which can be used for reviewing curricula. Each overarching principle is addressed through a key question and one or two follow-up questions that might clarify and/or expand the inquiry.

These questions are available on Handout 1, included with this key topic, with space provided for notes and comments.



Slides 4-12

Keeping it going

These questions can be used as they are, or time could be spent in class expanding or clarifying them.

As they go through these questions, suggest that students keep in mind this question: In reviewing curriculum—either a published curriculum or one developed in my program— do I find ways in which these eight overarching principles are put into practice?

- **How in the curriculum are relationships built, supported, and maintained?** Between whom—children, teachers, families? Is there space that would support relationships? Is there time that would support teachers knowing children and families?
- **Do opportunities for learning occur in the context of play?** Are there times, materials, and spaces specifically for play?
- **Are routines, spaces, materials, and interactions designed to address integrated learning across domains?** Are the visual and performing arts, physical development, and health addressed together across many activities?
- **Is there intentional teaching in both planned learning experiences and attention to moment-to-moment teaching opportunities?** Are systems of assessment, documentation, reflection, and planning in place so that teachers work purposefully to guide children's developmental progress and learning?



- **How are family and community partnerships developed and maintained?** Are there both informal and systematic ways to exchange information with families? What connections to community groups exist?
- **How do teachers recognize and adapt to individual children?** Are there specific teaching strategies or professional supports that ensure this?
- **How are children’s cultures and languages respected?** Do learning materials and environments reflect home languages and cultures? How does regular communication between families and teachers happen?
- **Is there specific time allotted to the curriculum-planning process, so that teaching is enhanced through reflection and discussion?** Are there specific procedures and times for professionals to maintain the products of documentation, engage in individual reflection, and plan curriculum as a team?

Taking it further

Students can investigate these questions in a number of ways.

- They could interview a program director or teacher.
- A panel of directors or teachers from different programs could be invited to a class session, and students could record the panelists’ responses to these questions.
- The questions could be used for an observational assignment, with students recording concrete examples or descriptions of how each overarching principle is played out in practice.

Online Options

If students do interviews or observations, they could post their interview summaries or observation notes online. Students then could review all the interviews or notes and be prepared to discuss them in class or compile examples from them into a personal resource tool.

Putting it together

Ask students who may be currently working as teachers or as administrators how they could incorporate this principle-based review into their program planning and curriculum development.

Also ask students how they could communicate these overarching principles to families. To deepen the work regarding families and the eight principles, ask students to plan a family night to acquaint families with the principles.



Subtopic 2: Using the Curriculum-Planning Cycle as a Lens for Viewing Curricula



Slide 13

Getting it started

Before introducing students to a way to use the curriculum-planning cycle to review curricula, it will be important that students have read pages 27–34 in the *California Preschool Curriculum Framework, Volume 2*. It might also be helpful to develop some agreed-upon descriptions of the key parts of the cycle.

Information on these key parts can be found on the following pages in the *California Preschool Curriculum Framework, Volume 2*:

- Observation (p. 27)
- Documentation (p. 28)
- Reflection, discussion, and planning (pp. 29–30)
- Implementation (p. 31)



Slides 14-18

Keeping it going

Once they have a clear idea of how these are described in the curriculum framework, ask students to consider the set of five questions at the end of this active learning segment for reviewing curricula. Again, instructors might want to spend some time going through these questions with students and asking if there are additional clarifying or expanding questions they might want to ask.

As students consider these five questions, suggest that they keep in mind this overarching question: How are the components of the curriculum-planning cycle seen in the curriculum I am reviewing?

As in Subtopic 1 of this key topic, students can explore the five following questions in a number of ways.

- They could interview a program director or teacher.
- A panel of directors or teachers from different programs could be invited to a class session, and students could record the panelists' responses to these questions.
- The questions could be used for an observational assignment, with students recording concrete examples or descriptions of where they see these parts of the planning cycle played out in practice.



Here are the questions to use when looking for how the planning cycle is addressed in curricula, Handout 2, included with this key topic, provides these questions with room for notes.

- How is observation supported? Are there times available for teachers to carefully watch and listen?
- How is documentation supported? What processes are in place to develop documentation for each child? Are multiple means of documentation available and used? How are time and materials provided for maintaining documentation? How is family input gathered and included in documentation? How is documentation shared with families?
- What planned opportunities are in place for teachers to reflect, discuss their observations, and review their documentation?
- Is planning done based on reflection and discussion? Is documentation consulted when planning is done? How are family culture and language included in the planning process?
- How is curriculum adjusted based on observation, documentation, and reflection? Are intentional teaching strategies developed and implemented?

Note: Ensure that students are not viewing documentation on individual children without family permission. Additionally, suggest that students look at what the planning cycle procedures and systems are, not necessarily how they play out for any individual child.

Subtopic 3: Using the Domains of the California Preschool Curriculum Framework, Volume 2 as a Lens to View Integration Across Domains in Curricula



Slides 18-23

The *California Preschool Curriculum Framework, Volume 2* addresses the learning and development domains of performing and visual arts, physical development, and health. In addition, four domains of learning and development are addressed in the *California Preschool Curriculum Framework, Volume 1: Social-Emotional Development, Language and Literacy, English-Language Development, and Mathematics*. Many of the environments and materials and interactions and strategies in all these domains provide examples where students can see that they support development across domains.

As one way to begin this subtopic, instructors might review the domains in the *California Preschool Curriculum Framework*,



Volume 2 and ask students to look specifically for environments and materials and/or interactions and strategies that would support learning and development in more than one domain. This could be done as a review, if students have already explored the three domains, or as an extended assignment to be done out-of-class.

As students review other curricula, ask them to consider these questions regarding integrated curriculum that are also listed on Handout 3 of this key topic:

- Where is the need for integrated curriculum specifically addressed?
- How is dual language development addressed? As a way to get to know all children, what is available to be used in the planning process to gauge each child's current comprehension and use of English?
- Are there environments and materials designed to address multiple developmental domains? For example, are there books and writing materials in all areas? How do environments and materials reflect children's language, culture, and family life?
- Do environments and materials designed for specific domains show evidence that other domains are also considered? For example, does a book area contain books on healthy habits? Are there books in the home language(s) of children in the program?
- Are interactions and strategies used that cut across domains? For example, is dramatic play used during active outdoor time? Are songs or chants related to health used throughout the day?

Taking it further

The preceding questions might be hard to deal with in published curriculum, and exploring these questions might be more fruitful as an observational assignment, with students recording concrete examples or descriptions of where they see integrated curriculum played out in practice.

Online Options

Students could complete their reviews of curricula using the three lenses outside class and then post their reviews online. If instructors ask students to review different curricula, students will have the opportunity to learn about different curricula by reading their classmates' reviews.



Note: Integrated curriculum might also be seen on video that is available.

Reflection



Slide 24

The following questions can be addressed as a journaling exercise or as a class discussion:

- What stood out for you in this key topic?
- What new insights do you have?
- How will this influence your work with young children now or in the future?

Deeper Understanding



Slide 25-27

Integrating Cognitive Development Across the Domains

Cognitive development is a developmental domain that is considered important in many curricula for young children. The foundations and curriculum framework are organized by content that maps onto the California K-12 curriculum frameworks and educational standards, where there is no separate area of cognitive development. Therefore, it is not a separate domain in either the foundations or the curriculum framework. However, there are many developmental and learning processes that cut across domains in early childhood and are considered important to overall cognitive development.

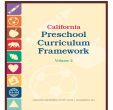
Ask students to address this issue by developing their own version of what a cognitive domain might look like in the curriculum framework. To do this, they will have to develop a list of what is considered cognitive development in other curricula and early childhood documents, including texts on child development.

Then ask them to review the substrands in the *California Preschool Curriculum Framework, Volume 2* and decide which might fit into a cognitive domain. Depending on their level of education and experience, students might go deeper into the challenge and look for environments and materials or interactions and strategies that could apply directly to cognitive development.



Looking For The Curriculum-Planning Cycle

Instructions: Look through your assigned curriculum and note examples of how the planning cycle is addressed by responding to the questions for each element of the planning cycle.



Curriculum reviewed:

Components of the Planning Cycle	Questions To Ask in Looking for How the Planning Cycle Is Described and Played Out in Other Curricula	Pages Where Examples Are Found	Notes
Observation	<p>How is observation supported?</p> <p>Are there times available for teachers to carefully watch and listen?</p>		
Documentation	<p>How is documentation supported?</p> <p>What processes are in place to develop documentation for each child?</p> <p>Are multiple means of documentation available and used?</p> <p>How are time and materials provided for maintaining documentation?</p> <p>How is family input gathered and included in documentation?</p> <p>How is documentation shared with families?</p>		

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 Handout 2 – Looking for the Curriculum-Planning Cycle



Components of the Planning Cycle	Questions To Ask in Looking for How the Planning Cycle Is Described and Played Out in Other Curricula	Pages Where Examples Are Found	Notes
Reflection, discussion, and planning	<p>What planned opportunities are in place for teachers to reflect, discuss their observations, and review their documentation?</p> <p>Is planning done based on reflection and discussion?</p> <p>Is documentation consulted when planning is done?</p> <p>How are family, culture, and language included in the planning process?</p>		
Implementation	<p>How is curriculum adjusted based on observation, documentation, and reflection?</p> <p>Are intentional teaching strategies developed and implemented?</p>		

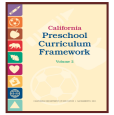


Looking For Integrated Curriculum Across Domains

Instructions: Look through your assigned curriculum and note examples of how the curriculum is integrated across different domains.

Curriculum reviewed:

Question To Ask in Looking for How Integrated Curriculum Is Described and How It Is Recommended to Be Implemented	Pages Where Examples Are Found	Notes
Where is the need for integrated curriculum specifically addressed?		
<p>How is dual language development addressed?</p> <p>As a way to get to know all children, what is available to be used in the planning process to gauge each child's current comprehension and use of English?</p>		



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 Handout 3 – Looking for Integrated Curriculum Across Domains



Question To Ask in Looking for How Integrated Curriculum Is Described and How It Is Recommended to Be Implemented	Pages Where Examples Are Found	Notes
<p>Are there environments and materials designed to address multiple developmental domains? For example, are there books and writing materials in all areas?</p> <p>How do environments and materials reflect children's language, culture, and family life?</p>		
<p>Do environments and materials designed for specific domains show evidence that other domains are also considered? For example, does a book area contain books on healthy habits?</p> <p>Are there books in the home language(s) of children in the program?</p>		
<p>Are interactions and strategies used that cut across domains? For example, is dramatic play used during active outdoor time?</p> <p>Are songs or chants related to health used throughout the day?</p>		