

# Unit 1 – Introduction to the Framework: Key Topic 3: Getting to Know the Curriculum-Planning Process

Introduction to the Framework:  
Key Topic 3 – Getting to Know the Curriculum-Planning  
Process

## Focus Statement

Students become acquainted with the curriculum-planning process and its components as described in Chapter 1 of the *California Preschool Curriculum Framework, Volume 3*.

## 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 learning experience. 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

- Class discussion
- Class presentation
- Creation of a visual representation
- Development of resource tool
- Interview
- Pairs or small groups
- Panel/guest speaker
- Short paper or report

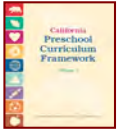
## California Early Childhood Educator Competency Areas to Consider

The Faculty Initiative Project will undertake a comprehensive process in the future to map the content of the instructional guides to the California Department of Education, Early



Education and Support 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 learning experiences.

- Child Development and Learning
- Culture, Diversity, and Equity
- Family and Community Engagement
- Dual-Language Development
- Observation, Screening, Assessment, and Documentation
- Special Needs and Inclusion
- Learning Environments and Curriculum
- Leadership in Early Childhood Education
- Professionalism
- Administration and Supervision



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## Before You Start

This key topic is designed to familiarize students with the curriculum-planning process that is described on pages 29–37 of the *California Preschool Curriculum Framework, Volume 3*. The active learning is intended to support students in furthering their understanding of the components of the curriculum-planning process: observe, document, plan, and implement. Reflection is the central link that ties these four components together. The importance of partnering with families throughout the process is also emphasized.

Although this key topic addresses the practices of observing, documenting, planning, implementing, and reflecting, it is not intended to be more than an introduction to these practices. However it will be important, as students work through the *California Preschool Curriculum Framework, Volume 3*, that they understand the recommended planning process that is presented in the framework.

Before asking students to begin the active learning experience, it is recommended that faculty become familiar with the graphic of the curriculum-planning process, located on page 31 of the *California Preschool Curriculum Framework, Volume 3* or as Handout 1 following this key topic. Also, this graphic can be found on slides 2 and 6 of the accompanying PowerPoint for this key topic. It is suggested that this graphic be reproduced on chart paper or projected on either paper or a whiteboard. Students will interact with the graphic by attaching definitions that they develop.

The “Getting it started” segment could be done by students individually online or as an out-of-class writing exercise and then brought to class for the remainder of the work.

Students can work in pairs or small groups. Since there is a limited number of topics to be assigned, there will likely be more than one pair or group working on the same topic. This can yield varying responses, but there should be room for discussion and guidance about those responses.

## Information Delivery

The following key concepts are suggested for this topic. It will be helpful to introduce these concepts before doing the active learning experience and to return to them frequently.



Slides 2-4

- The curriculum-planning process is a recurring one; there is always some part of the process engaged for individual children, small groups, and large groups.
- The graphic on page 31 of the *California Preschool Curriculum Framework, Volume 3* illustrates the process as a recurring cycle. This graphic is also available as Handout 1 accompanying this key topic.
- Reflection is the “glue” that connects the various components of the process.
- The components of the curriculum-planning process are implemented repeatedly in daily routines and activities and across environments, materials, and interactions.
- Documentation is a process as well as a product.

Students will be asked to read pages 29–37 of the *California Preschool Curriculum Framework, Volume 3*.

## Active Learning



Slide 5

### Getting it started

This key topic begins by asking students to review “The Curriculum-Planning Process” on pages 29–37 of the *California Preschool Curriculum Framework, Volume 3*. Then ask students to work in pairs or small groups to develop definitions—not examples—for the following components of the curriculum-planning process:

- Observing
- Documenting
- Planning
- Implementing

Some students may find it difficult to distinguish between definitions and examples, so it might take some discussion to clarify this. Also, some of these components have readily available definitions while others do not, so developing

definitions might require some extra effort for some groups. Make

### Online Options

Students individually develop definitions for the four components of the planning process outside of class and post their definitions online. Students then can review their classmates’ definitions to prepare for an instructor facilitated class discussion to come to agreement on a definition for each component.



sure each group has read through the text because some of these terms have more than one potential definition.

When the students have decided on their definitions, go through the components one by one by and ask for the definitions of each one. If more than one group is working on the same component, try to come to agreement on one definition.

### Keeping it going

When the class has agreed upon one definition for each component, ask a student to write the definition on a sheet of paper that is large enough for all to see. If an LCD projector is used, it is still recommended to write these definitions on large sheets of paper.



Slide 6

Reproduce a large version of the graphic on Handout 1 and/or page 31 of the *California Preschool Curriculum Framework, Volume 3* on a large sheet of paper on the wall or project the graphic onto the paper or a whiteboard. Attach or include the definitions for observing, documenting, planning, and implementing onto this larger graphic.

Review this expanded image of the planning process by reading it through with the students.

### Online Options

After agreement has been reached on the definitions, students could locate examples of reflection and post these online. If online-discussion capability is available for the course, faculty could facilitate a discussion about the ways reflection is helpful in moving from one component of the planning process to the next.

The next step is to ask students, still working in pairs or small groups, to find examples of reflection on pages 29–35. If time permits, ask them to find as many examples as they can.

Next ask students to discuss how reflection—and discussion based on reflection—can be helpful as they move through the planning process. For example, how is reflection helpful in going from observing to documenting or from documenting to planning? What does reflection add to each step of the process?

### Taking it further

Now ask students to read about partnering with families and making connections to families and communities on pages 35–37 of the *California Preschool Curriculum Framework, Volume 3*. Ask them to think about each component of the process and how they could partner with families in each component. Students can work in their



pairs or groups to generate three examples for each component. Add these examples to the graphic that has been developed.

If possible, make copies of the expanded graphic for students so they can have it available as a resource tool when going through the *California Preschool Curriculum Framework, Volume 3*.

### Online Options

If document sharing is available for the course, faculty could facilitate the development of a list of ways that families can be involved in each component of the planning process.

### Putting it together

To conclude the exploration of the curriculum-planning process, ask students to find examples of how this process is used in an early care and education program. There are different ways that students could do this:

- Students could bring samples of any documentation and planning forms that they are using or have used in preschool programs. They should also be prepared to share how the forms are used and if the program has any procedures or guidelines for observation, documentation, planning, and implementation.
- Students could interview a teacher about the curriculum-planning process and request samples of any forms that the teacher uses. Students would then present a summary of their interviews; these summaries could be class presentations or short written reports.
- A panel of early care and education practitioners could be invited to speak to the class. Faculty may choose to select the panelists themselves or ask students to identify and invite the panelists. It would be helpful to ask panelists to bring any forms that they regularly use in their programs. Students could generate questions for the panelists in advance, but encourage them to keep the questions focused on the curriculum-planning process as it is described in the *California Preschool Curriculum Framework, Volume 3*.

Whatever option is used, ask students to address the following questions:

- How and when are observations done?
- What are the systems for documentation?



Slide 7



Slide 8

- How is reflection supported and facilitated?
- How and when does planning occur? Who is involved?
- How does planning address individual children, child-initiated activities, small group activities, large group activities, and teacher-directed activities?
- How do observations and reflection influence daily routines?
- How are families involved in the planning process?

## Reflection



Slides 9-10

This first set of questions can be used as an individual reflection or a class discussion on the key topic:

- What stood out for you from this exploration of the curriculum-planning process?
- What was particularly interesting or engaging? What was concerning or confusing?
- What questions did this raise for you about using this curriculum-planning process in your teaching? Which component(s) do you feel you can do? Where would you like more support?
- What is one idea or strategy you learned about the curriculum-planning process that you will apply in your work with children and families?

This second set of questions is more general and can be used for individual reflection for this key topic and with the other key topics in this instructional guide.



Slides 11-12

- What are some ideas, concepts, or strategies that you learned from this class session?
- Which ones reinforced what you have already learned or experienced? Which ones were new or caused you to think differently about teaching preschool children and/or engaging their families?
- Why do you think the content of this class session was presented the way it was? How did this approach help you understand the content? What else would have helped?



- How will you decide what to apply from this class session in your work with preschool children and/or their families? What will you do to ensure you will implement what you have decided to use?

## Deeper Understanding

There are several frequently used early care and education curricula that also suggest a curriculum-planning process. Ask students to find one or two of these. If students are currently working in an early care and education program, be sure they include the planning process they use. This may be from a commercial curriculum used in the program or what has been developed within the program.

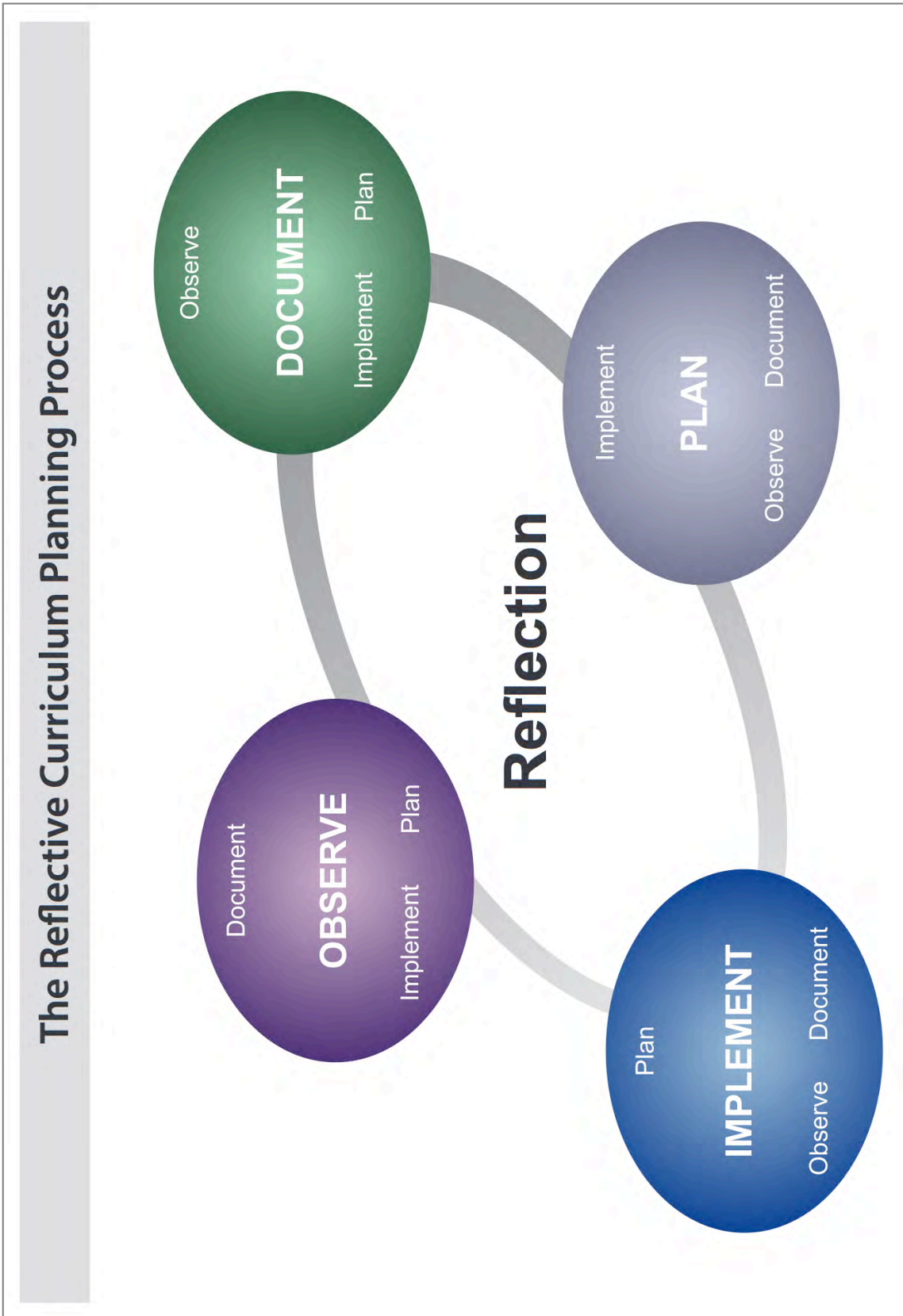
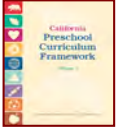
Ask students to compare the curriculum-planning process in the *California Preschool Curriculum Framework, Volume 3* to the process in each of these other curricula. The following questions could be used in the comparison:

### Online Options

Students could post descriptions of planning processes found in different curricula. After reviewing these descriptions, students could write a short paper that answers the four questions in the Deeper Understanding segment.

- What do you notice about the components? Where are they the same or different?
- What do you notice about the overall process or cycle? Is it the same or different?
- What do these similarities and differences say about the curriculum-planning process in early care and education?





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Introduction to the Framework  
Key Topic 3  
Handout 1 – The Reflective Curriculum Planning Process