



Unit 2 – History–Social Science: Key Topic 4: Universal Design, Individualizing, and Family Partnerships

Focus Statement

Students explore the concepts of universal design for learning, individualization, and partnerships with families as part of curriculum planning to support children’s learning in history and the social sciences.

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.

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

Instructional Methodologies

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



- Peer review and feedback
- Reflective discussion
- Role playing
- 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
- Relationships, Interactions, and Guidance
- Family and Community Engagement
- Dual-Language Development
- Special Needs and Inclusion
- Learning Environments and Curriculum
- Health, Safety, and Nutrition
- Leadership in Early Childhood Education
- Professionalism
- Administration and Supervision



Unit 2 – History–Social Science: Key Topic 4: Universal Design, Individualizing, and Family Partnerships

Before You Start

This key topic prompts students to consider the importance of ensuring that all children have access to the classroom experiences that support their learning of foundational history and social science concepts and skills. Universal design for learning, individualization, and partnering with families are ways that teachers can support this access.

By examining and reflecting on these three areas, students—as teachers—can address the many diverse characteristics that children bring to the preschool classroom such as their unique temperaments, interests, and abilities; cultural and linguistic backgrounds; family beliefs, values, and structures; socioeconomic backgrounds; and neighborhood and community environments, opportunities, and resources. Partnering with families is one way to learn about these characteristics. Practicing principles and strategies of universal design for learning and individualization is a way to plan curriculum that helps all children learn.

Universal design for learning, individualization, and partnering with families are each presented as a separate subtopic. The following considerations are provided for some of the active learning experiences in each one:

Subtopic 1: Universal Design. There are two suggested options for the learning experience for this first subtopic. The first approach is to have students prepare a presentation on the concept of universal design for learning after reviewing and discussing the concepts and examples in the history–social science domain of the *California Preschool Curriculum, Volume 3*. Faculty may wish to spread this learning experience over a few class sessions so that students have time to prepare their presentations.

The second approach to this subtopic is to invite guest speakers to share how they use universal design for learning in their programs. Suggestions for presenters include early childhood special education teachers, speech and language therapists, occupational therapists, assistive technology specialists, preschool teachers with experience in including children with disabilities in their classes, and parents or other family members of children with disabilities or special needs.

Subtopic 2: Individualization. In this subtopic, students are assigned a number of interactions and strategies to review for examples of individualization. It may be helpful to



use the table in Key Topic 3, “Getting to Know Interactions and Strategies that Support History–Social Science,” a summary of the number of interactions and strategies by substrand, in deciding the number of interactions and strategies per student.

This subtopic can also be made richer by asking students to address characteristics of children and families in their community. For example, there may be a significant number of families who regularly and/or fairly frequently relocate their residences such as families who are (1) engaged in seasonal work, (2) in the military, or (3) homeless or without permanent and adequate housing. There may be some strategies for individualizing that are very important to ensure that children in these families have opportunities for learning history and social science concepts and skills.

Subtopic 3: Family Partnerships. Two approaches are suggested for the active learning in this subtopic. The first approach has students role-playing ways that teachers can present some of the family engagement suggestions to families. If this approach is used, class time will need to be provided for the presentations and short discussions. With the second approach, students write summaries of how they would present the suggestions to families.

Note: The suggestions in subtopic 1 and subtopic 2 are for children who may need additional supports when planning intentional teaching strategies or materials, whether or not they have an Individualized Education Program (IEP). For any child with an IEP, the design and use of adaptations should be done in collaboration with the early childhood special educator or therapist working with the child and family. Consultation with the family and these specialists is especially important for children who may have more significant physical, sensory, and/or medical conditions.

The same active learning segments for these three subtopics are used in Key Topic 4 of the science domain. Slight modifications are made to reflect the specific content of each domain. This similarity across the two domains is done to allow instructors to use each key topic individually in the domain or to merge the subtopics across both domains.

Information Delivery

Background information on the diversity of California’s preschool children and families, universal design for learning, and partnering with families may provide an introduction to this key topic. Faculty may provide summary lectures or ask students to read the following material in the *California Preschool Curriculum Framework, Volume 3*:



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- California’s Preschool Children (pp. 3–5)
- Overarching principle: “Family and community partnerships create meaningful connections” (pp. 7–8)



- Overarching principle: “Individualization of learning includes all children” (p. 8)
- Overarching principle: “Responsiveness to culture and language supports children’s learning” (pp. 8–9)
- Universal Design for Learning (p. 14)
- “Partnering with families in curriculum planning” (p. 35)



Slides 5-8

For 2014 data of the diverse population of children and families in California, refer to the most recent California Children’s Report Card, which can be accessed at

http://www.childrennow.org/uploads/documents/2014_CA_Childrens_Report_Card.pdf.

Active Learning

Subtopic 1: Universal Design for Learning

Getting it started

The extent to which students are familiar with the concept of universal design for learning will impact how the instructor chooses to begin this subtopic. If students have experience with this concept, a review of the section on “Universal Design for Learning” on page 14 of the *California Preschool Curriculum Framework, Volume 3* may not be needed. If the concept is new or less familiar to most students, it will be helpful for students to read and discuss the section.



Slides 9-11

The *California Preschool Curriculum Framework, Volume 3* includes some examples of the three practices of universal design for learning: multiple means of representation, multiple means of expression, and multiple means of engagement. Ask students to consider the following examples from the curriculum framework and decide if each example demonstrates multiple means of representation, expression, or engagement:

- A teacher uses visual aids and suggests a child can use words or signs to join other children in play. (*California Preschool Curriculum Framework, Volume 3*, p. 62)
- When children are voting, provide different materials such as buttons or stickers to ensure that all children can actively participate. (*California Preschool Curriculum Framework, Volume 3*, pp. 73–74)



Slides 12-14

- Provide visual and auditory cues and prompts to help children remember rules and expectations that the children developed as a community. (*California Preschool Curriculum Framework, Volume 3, p. 76*)
- A teacher encourages children to use signs or gestures when talking about an activity the children enjoyed. (*California Preschool Curriculum Framework, Volume 3, p. 89*)
- Peers can help children with special needs by collaboratively drawing maps of their environment based on joint observations. Some children may need physical assistance in creating maps, or a peer could draw a map based on the ideas shared by the children. (*California Preschool Curriculum Framework, Volume 3, pp. 112–113*)
- Suggest that children explore an area in small groups instead of individually to accommodate children with visual or motor challenges and with differing skill levels. (*California Preschool Curriculum Framework, Volume 3, p. 115*)

Keeping it going

Ask students to form pairs or small groups and to choose a vignette. Instructors may wish to assign vignettes to the groups so that vignettes from the different strands or substrands are discussed. The table in the “Information Delivery” section of Unit 2, Key Topic 3 of this instructional guide has the number of vignettes for each substrand.

Explain to students that their task is to review their vignette and (1) identify any elements of universal design for learning that the teacher used and (2) think of other ways that universal design could be incorporated.

Online Options

Subtopic 1: Students can list their examples of universal design for learning in a document to be shared online and made available for the instructor and their classmates to review. The presentations could be limited to a visual representation that students could also share online (e.g., a short paper, photograph of a poster, PDF of a PowerPoint).

Taking it further

After students have identified different examples of multiple means of representation, expression, and engagement for their vignette, ask them to develop a presentation of the vignette and their ideas. The presentations can take any form the students choose. Examples



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could include role playing, creating a poster or PowerPoint, facilitating a discussion, or writing a short report. Encourage students to be creative and present the information in a way that is interesting and meaningful to them.

Putting it together

Provide time for the groups to share their presentations with the rest of the class. As each group presents, ask the other students to note two strengths of the presentation and one recommendation for improving it. These are to be given to the instructor and presenters for their review.

Conclude this subtopic by having a discussion on the following questions:



Slides 16-17

- What images, words, or phrases are going through your head?
- What did you find easy in identifying examples of universal design for learning in your vignette and including examples in your presentation? What was more challenging?
- What are some insights about universal design for learning that you learned from preparing your presentation? From your classmates' presentations?
- Where do you need more practice or support in applying universal design for learning in history and social science? How could you obtain these?

Another approach

In the *Instructional Guide for the California Preschool Curriculum Framework, Volumes 1 and 2*, another approach to the subtopic Universal Design for Learning is to have a guest speaker or panel discuss the application of the universal design for learning concepts in preschool programs. The details for having a speaker or panel are from the subtopic in the instructional guides for the first two volumes of the curriculum framework and are summarized here for reference.

Explain to students that a guest speaker or panelists will be discussing considerations when planning for children with disabilities or special needs and explaining how universal design for learning is applied in curriculum planning. This presentation is not intended as an in-depth exploration but as an introduction to some of the ways in which curriculum can be adapted to meet the needs of all children, including children with disabilities or special needs.



It would be helpful to provide the presenters with the segment on “Universal Design for Learning” from page 14 of the *California Preschool Curriculum Framework, Volume 3*. Ask them to address the importance of including children with special needs in all activities and learning experiences related to history and social sciences and to share examples of the three aspects of universal design for learning: multiple means of representation, multiple means of engagement, and multiple means of expression. If the students are not familiar with special education, ask the presenters to also provide a brief overview: referral, assessment, and Individualized Educational Program (IEP) process; service provision; and ways that the special education specialists and parents can partner with the preschool program teachers in planning and/or providing the adaptations for a child with a disability or special need.

Faculty may choose to have the class prepare some questions for the presenters or allow students to spontaneously ask questions during the presentation. Ask students to listen for examples of the three universal design for learning approaches that support all children’s participation in the history and social sciences learning experiences.

After the speakers have left, provide time for the class to reflect on the presentation through individual responses to or a class discussion on the following questions:



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- What information from the presenter(s) caught your attention or stood out for you?
- What ideas or strategies seemed familiar? Which ones were new?
- What are some key messages or different perspectives that you are taking away from this presentation?
- What supports do you need to more fully implement the universal design for learning concepts to ensure that all children in your program have access to the history and social science curriculum? What are some steps you can take to obtain these supports?

Subtopic 2: Individualization



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Getting it started

California’s children and families are very diverse in many ways. The section on “California’s Preschool Children” on pages 3–5 of the



California Preschool Curriculum Framework, Volume 3

describes some aspects of this diversity. Ask students to review this section and facilitate a class discussion on the key points. Also encourage any students who have experience in early care and education

programs to share some of the characteristics of the children and families in their programs. Remind students to use general terms and not identify any specific child or parent.

Online Options

Subtopic 2: If the class has online-discussion capability, faculty could facilitate a discussion on the diverse characteristics of children and families.



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Include in the discussion a review of the sixth overarching principle, “Individualization of learning includes all children,” which is found on page 8 of the *California Preschool Curriculum Framework, Volume 3*. Ask students to provide examples of each of the characteristics listed in this principle: “. . . temperament, family and cultural experiences, language experiences, personal strengths, interests, abilities, and dispositions . . .” Instructors may also include additional characteristics of the children and families in their community. It will help students in the next subtopic about partnering with families if these examples are recorded either by the students or by the instructor in a way that will make them available to students.

Keeping it going

Assign each student a set of interactions and strategies. The table in Key Topic 3, “Getting to Know Interactions and Strategies that Support History–Social Science,” is a summary of the number of interactions and strategies by substrand. This table may be helpful in assigning the interactions and strategies. The number of interactions and strategies per student will depend on the class size.

Online Options

Subtopic 2: Students could post online their examples of individualization for their assigned interactions and strategies for the instructor and their peers to review.

Ask students to individually review their assigned interactions and strategies and look for examples of individualization in that strategy. If none appear to be part of the strategy, ask students to think of one example of how they can individualize that strategy.



Taking it further

After students have completed their individual review, ask them to share and discuss their strategies and individualization examples with another student. What similarities or themes did they notice?

Online Options

Subtopic 2: If there is online-discussion capability, faculty could facilitate a discussion on the examples posted by the students. The questions in the “Putting it together” section could be used as individual discussion threads.

Putting it together

Conclude this subtopic by convening the class for a reflective discussion. The following questions can be used as a guide:



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- What did you notice when looking for examples of individualization in the interactions and strategies? What stood out for you?
- What individualization strategies do you feel most confident in being able to use? Which ones might be more difficult?
- Which individualization practices seem the most critical to support children’s learning in history and social sciences?
- What are three new individualization practices that you will use in your teaching of history and social sciences?

Subtopic 3: Family Partnerships

Getting it started

Ask students to read the fifth overarching principle “Family and community partnerships create meaningful connections” (*California Preschool Curriculum Framework, Volume 3*, pp. 7–8) and identify the key words and concepts that stand out for them. Next ask students to discuss what considerations regarding the diversity of families they should keep in mind when building partnerships with families. If students have not done Subtopic 2 of this key topic, it is suggested that they review the section “California’s Preschool Children” (pp. 3–5 of the *California Preschool Curriculum Framework, Volume 3*).

Keeping it going

Ask the class to form small groups and explain that each group is to write a short description of a family that has at least one preschool-aged child who is in an early care and education program. Students



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may draw on their experiences with families but should be careful to not include any details that could identify a specific child or family. Instructors may wish to provide some guidance to the groups so that the families represent some of the diversity in their communities and portray some of the characteristics described in the *California Preschool Curriculum Framework, Volume 3*.

Taking it further

After the students have completed their descriptions, each group is to exchange its family story with another group. Provide time for each group to read the description and ask the author group for any clarification.

Continue this subtopic by having students find and read the suggestions in the “Engaging Families” sections at the end of each strand in the history–social science domain chapter of the *California Preschool Curriculum Framework, Volume 3*. It may be helpful to provide a brief overview of the organizational structure of the chapter domains if they are not already familiar with the structure. The “Engaging Families” sections are also listed in the table of contents for each strand.

Online Options

Subtopic 3: Students could post their descriptions of their families online, and the instructor could then assign a family to specific students. The option for writing a summary of how a strategy is shared with the family could be used instead of the role-playing presentations in class.

Each group then chooses a suggestion and develops a short role-playing presentation that illustrates how to share that suggestion with their “family.” Faculty may choose to assign a strand to each group to ensure that a range of suggestions is selected.

Putting it together

The groups then do their role playing for the whole class. After each presentation, the group also shares any considerations and challenges they discussed while preparing their presentation. The other students can also ask questions, share observations, and contribute other ideas for using that suggestion with other families.

The following questions for individual or group reflection could be used to conclude this subtopic:

- What words or images caught your attention?



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- What approaches would you feel comfortable using? Which topic or substrand areas do you feel more confident in discussing with families? What concerns do you have?
- What are some new insights that are emerging for you as you think about engaging families in supporting their children's learning history and social science concepts and skills?
- What will you do differently in your communications and interactions with families?

Another approach

Instead of role playing, students could write summaries of how they would present a suggestion to their family. This could be done as a group or individually.

Online Options

Subtopic 3: The option for writing a summary of how a strategy is shared with the family could be used instead of the role-playing presentations in class.

Reflection

There are reflection questions suggested in the “Putting it together” section for each subtopic. The following set of questions is more general and has been presented for other key topics in this instructional guide.



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- 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

One of the suggestions for the Marketplace strand is that early care and education professionals be knowledgeable about community resources for families who may be experiencing financial crises or hardships. In the Culture and Diversity substrand of the Self and Society strand, the first two strategies encourage teachers to reflect



on their own attitudes, values, and approaches and to build understanding of others' experiences and caregiving beliefs and practices.

Ask students to identify a community resource that they could use to strengthen their knowledge and understanding of the children and families in their community and supports available for them. Ask students to interview a staff member from the agency and prepare a written summary of the information that includes the following elements:



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- Agency name, location, contact information, and Web site
- Name and role of person interviewed; length of time person has been with the agency
- Vision and mission of the organization
- History and primary funding sources
- Programs and services
- Strengths and current and future challenges
- Unique characteristics

Depending on the class size and the possible number of resources available in the community, instructors may ask students to identify the agency they selected and compile a list to minimize duplication before the interviews are done. If there are several duplicates, instructors may allow students to work in pairs or small groups or suggest other agencies.

Ask students to share their summaries with the other students so that each student has a directory of resources.