

Unit 4 – California Preschool Curriculum Framework as a Resource for Planning and Integrating Curriculum: Key Topic 4: Exploring Key Elements of the Curriculum Framework Across Domains

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Focus Statement

Students review the environments and materials and interactions and strategies in the nine domains of the three volumes of the *California Preschool Curriculum Framework* and identify ways that the environments and materials or interactions and strategies from one domain can support learning in one or more of the other domains.

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
- Practicum-Field Experience

Instructional Methodologies

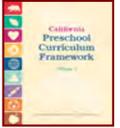
- Class discussion
- Development of a resource tool
- Jigsaw reading
- Pairs or small groups
- Panel/guest speaker
- Reflective discussion



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
- Leadership in Early Childhood Education
- Professionalism



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Before You Start

The *Preschool Curriculum Framework, Volume 3* completes the publication of the preschool curriculum framework for all nine preschool learning and development domains of California’s Early Learning and Development System. These nine domains parallel the nine domains of the preschool learning foundations. Volume 3 of the curriculum framework provides guidance in planning and implementing curriculum that supports children as they progress in their learning and development in the two domains of this volume—history—social science and science.

It will be important to have access to all three volumes of the curriculum framework so that students can use them as resources in responding to the questions and information presented in this key topic. These volumes can be downloaded from the Faculty Initiative Project Web site at <http://facultyinitiative.wested.org>.

This key topic can be used either as a unifying experience following work with other key topics in this instructional guide or in the guide for earlier volumes. It can also work well as an overall view of the curriculum framework.

The active learning in this key topic provides students with some processes and resources for working across all nine domains and becoming familiar with some key elements that are common to all domains. It is designed to familiarize students with the environments and materials and interactions and strategies that are presented in each of the nine domains.

For a complete list of recommended environments and materials for all nine domains, reference Appendix C in this instructional guide. Likewise, for a complete list of recommended interactions and strategies for all nine domains, reference Appendix D in this instructional guide.

Students will work individually, in pairs, or groups of three or four. Each student, pair, or group initially will be responsible for the environment and materials in one domain and for the interactions and strategies in one or more strands. Students will then work



with other students, which will give them opportunities to become familiar with these key elements across a few domains. They will gain an understanding of how to continue exploring these elements across domains using Appendix C or Appendix D in this instructional guide.

Organizing students in this key topic will take some forethought, and two tables are presented in the “Active Learning” section. One lists the number of suggested environments and materials for each domain, and the other table lists the number of interactions and strategies for each strand and domain. Determining grouping will require fitting the number of students to the number of domains or strands and then determining how to move students among groups. Some suggestions are provided in the “Getting it started” and “Keeping it going” segments.

To work with interactions and strategies, it is recommended that students be organized by strand, even though interactions and strategies are presented for each substrand. For either of these learning experiences, if faculty are printing environments and materials and interactions and strategies for each strand so that students can work with the printed versions, copying each domain in a different color might help keep students organized.

Key Topic 2 in Unit 7 of the Faculty Initiative Project’s *Instructional Guide for the California Preschool Curriculum Framework, Volume 1* provides an introduction to the framework in the context of the overall early learning and development system. This instructional guide is also available on the Faculty Initiative Project’s Web site. Before beginning this key topic about exploring key elements across domains, it might be helpful to review Key Topic 2, Unit 7 as an overview of how the curriculum framework fits into this system.

Information Delivery



Slides 2-3

Begin by developing an understanding of where the curriculum framework fits in California’s Early Learning and Development System. Remind students that there are nine learning and development domains in the system:

- Social-Emotional Development
- Language and Literacy
- English-Language Development
- Mathematics
- Visual and Performing Arts



- Physical Development
- Health
- History–Social Science
- Science

For each domain, there are learning foundations and a curriculum framework.



Slides 4-5

Remind students of the following key distinctions:

- The learning foundations are the **what**—goal-like statements that describe **what** children typically learn and develop with optimal learning opportunities and support.
- The curriculum framework is the **how**—guidance for **how** teachers can intentionally support children’s learning and development.

“. . . the curriculum framework does not prescribe activities that teachers are expected to follow. It is flexible and designed to foster respect for the diversity of preschool children, teachers, communities, and programs in California” (*California Preschool Curriculum Framework, Volume 1*, p. 32).



Slide 6

The curriculum framework contains two important elements for each domain:

- Environments and materials, which are presented for each domain
- Interactions and strategies, which are presented for substrands within each strand of each domain

The environments and materials and interactions and strategies are suggestions and recommendations that are presented as ways to support children’s learning and development. They are intended to support integration across curriculum domains, in recognition of the integrated nature of early development.

Let students know that they will have an opportunity to explore suggested curriculum approaches by looking closely at the environments and materials and at the interactions and strategies. They will be using the same process for these two explorations and



some of the same questions. This is intended to give them a consistent process of inquiry to use not only in this key topic but also whenever they approach the interactions and strategies and environments and materials in the framework.

Active Learning

Getting it started

Begin by letting students know that they will be working first with environments and materials. Depending on the number of students in the whole group, assign each student or pair of students to one domain. The following table lists the number of environments and materials for each domain. Faculty might want to assign more than one domain to students based on these numbers. Even though environments and materials are available in Appendix C, it is suggested that students locate them in the framework to gain understanding of how the framework is organized and to find the discussion for each of the suggested environments or materials.

The numbers in the following table are provided so that faculty can decide how to assign domains or strands so that they are distributed as evenly as possible among students.

Environments and Materials

Strand	Number of Environments and Materials and Publication Page Numbers	
Social-Emotional Development	14	<i>California Preschool Curriculum Framework, Volume 1, pp. 42–44</i>
Language and Literacy	16	<i>California Preschool Curriculum Framework, Volume 1, pp. 103–108</i>
English-Language Development	7	<i>California Preschool Curriculum Framework, Volume 1, pp.181–183</i>
Mathematics	6	<i>California Preschool Curriculum Framework, Volume 1, pp. 237–239</i>
Visual and Performing Arts	13	<i>California Preschool Curriculum Framework, Volume 2, pp. 45–48</i>
Physical Development	7	<i>California Preschool Curriculum Framework, Volume 2, pp. 136–137</i>
Health	7	<i>California Preschool Curriculum Framework, Volume 2, pp.229–</i>



Strand	Number of Environments and Materials and Publication Page Numbers	
	231	
History–Social Sciences	12	<i>California Preschool Curriculum Framework, Volume 3</i> , pp. 46–48
Science	20*	<i>California Preschool Curriculum Framework, Volume 3</i> , pp.142–147

* The science domain includes 20 suggestions in the “Environments and Materials” section of the *California Preschool Curriculum Framework, Volume 3* for both the physical and social environment. The physical environment has 13 suggested environments and materials and the social environment has 7 suggested environments and materials.

Give students time to use Appendix C to become familiar with the environments and materials in their domain. Suggest that they take notes, either hard copy or electronically, as they move through these domains and consider the following questions as they work:



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- Are there recommended environments and materials that you have seen in early care and education settings? Can you describe some examples of these? If not, ask your peers for examples during further discussions.
- What did you see within this domain that suggests an integrated curriculum?

Online Options

Students could post their responses to the two questions for their assigned domain. Then each student could choose the responses to another domain to answer the second set of questions about the integration of the environments and materials across those two domains.

If an online-discussion forum is available, faculty could facilitate a discussion based on the last four questions in the “Getting it started” segment.

Then ask each student to pair with a student who was assigned a different domain. If they have been working in pairs, assign two pairs with different domains to get together. Ask them to briefly look at the environments and materials in both domains and to answer these questions as they compare these two domains:



Slide 8

- Which suggested environments and materials have you seen examples of in early care and education settings?



- What in these two domains suggests ways to integrate environments and materials? That is, are there suggested environments and materials that would support early learning and development in both of these two domains?
- Are there some suggested environments and materials that seem relevant only to the domain in which they appear?
- What does this suggest about intentional planning of environments and materials?



Slide 9

Continue grouping students with different domains as much as possible. This might mean splitting up pairs so that individual students can meet with other students from more domains. This might work as a round robin, with one student for each domain staying in place and others circulating around to a certain number of or all other domains. This could also work with pairs if there are two pairs for each domain. Whenever they encounter a new domain, ask them to again consider the questions.

As they increase their exposure to more domains or when they come together as a whole group, facilitate a discussion with these questions:

- Where did you see strong similarities?
- Where did you see something that was really unique?
- What does this suggest about the integrated nature of early learning and development?
- Overall, what did you discover in this learning experience?



Slide 10

Keeping it going

Now tell students that they will be working with interactions and strategies, using the same process. There are many more interactions and strategies than environments and materials. Faculty might be able to use the same organization of students as they did with the environments and materials, or this might require a new way of organizing students.

To work with interactions and strategies, it is recommended that students work with strands, even though the interactions and strategies are presented for each substrand. Working with an entire strand will provide a cohesive approach for seeing integration across the strand and will help students see where interactions and



strategies can be supportive across the entire strand. The following table will help faculty decide how to assign the 34 strands to students. This will depend on the number of students in the class. It will work best if, as much as possible, any student has strands that are in one domain. Even though interactions and strategies are available in Appendix D, it is suggested that students use the table of contents for each volume of the framework to find the location of each strand and substrand. The interactions and strategies can be found within the pages of each substrand. This will give them more exposure to the organization of the framework and build their familiarity with it.

The numbers in the following table are provided so that faculty can decide how to assign domains or strands so that they are distributed as evenly as possible among students.

Interactions and Strategies

Domain and strand	Number of interactions and strategies
Domain: Social-Emotional Development (3 strands)	93
Strand: Self	45
Strand: Social Interactions	37
Strand: Relationships	11
Domain: Language and Literacy (3 strands)	74
Strand: Listening and Speaking	20
Strand: Reading	45
Strand: Writing	9
Domain: English-Language Development (4 strands)	56
Strand: Listening	11
Strand: Speaking	18
Strand: Reading	22



Domain and strand	Number of interactions and strategies
Strand: Writing	5
Domain: Mathematics (5 strands)	48
Strand: Number Sense	18
Strand: Algebra and Functions	10
Strand: Measurement	8
Strand: Geometry	9
Strand: Mathematical Reasoning	3
Domain: Visual and Performing Arts (4 strands)	79
Strand: Visual Art	14
Strand: Music	33
Strand: Drama	12
Strand: Dance	20
Domain: Physical Development (3 strands)	116
Strand: Fundamental Movement Skills	52
Strand: Perceptual Motor Skills and Movement Concepts	40
Strand: Active Physical Play	24
Domain: Health (3 strands)	59
Strand: Health Habits	29
Strand: Safety	10
Strand: Nutrition	20



Domain and strand		Number of interactions and strategies
Domain: History–Social Science (5 strands)		140
Strand:	Self and Society	29
Strand:	Becoming a Preschool Community Member (Civics)	39
Strand:	Sense of Time (History)	28
Strand:	Sense of Place (Geography and Ecology)	34
Strand:	Marketplace (Economics)	10
Domain: Science (4 strands)		91
Strand:	Scientific Inquiry	31
Strand:	Physical Sciences	16
Strand:	Life Sciences	30
Strand:	Earth Sciences	14

Give students time to use Appendix D to become familiar with the interactions and strategies in their strands. Ask them to consider the following questions as they do this:



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- Are there recommended interactions and strategies that you have seen in early care and education settings? Can you describe some examples of these? If not, ask your peers for examples during further discussions.
- What did you see in your assigned strand(s) that suggests an integrated curriculum?

Again ask each student to pair with a student who was assigned a different strand or set of strands. If they have been working in pairs, ask two pairs with different strands to get together and explore the interactions and strategies in both domains. As they compare these strands, ask them to consider the following additional questions:



Slide 12

- Are there suggested interactions and strategies that would support early learning and development in your assigned strand(s)?
- Are there some suggested interactions and strategies that seem relevant only to the strands in which they appear?
- What does this suggest about intentional planning of interactions and strategies? About looking for teachable moments?

Continue grouping students with different strands as much as possible. This might mean splitting up pairs so that individual students can meet with other students from more strands. This might work as a round robin, with one student for each strand or set of strands staying in place and others circulating around to explore as many other strands as possible. Whenever they encounter a new strand or set of strands, ask them to again consider the questions.

Putting it together

As they increase their exposure to more strands or when they come together as a whole group, facilitate a discussion with the following questions:



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- Where did you see strong similarities?
- Where did you see something that was really unique?
- What does this suggest about the integrated nature of early learning and development?
- What did you discover about the framework as a resource for curriculum planning?
- Overall, what did you discover in this learning experience?

Encourage students to see the environments and materials and interactions and strategies as a rich part of the framework that they can return to repeatedly for support and ideas. Ensure that students see that the framework is not a set of activities for teachers to follow but is a resource where they can find ideas and approaches that will support children in progressing toward achieving the foundations.

Taking it further

Remind students that one rationale for becoming familiar with the contents of the curriculum framework is to be able to use it as a resource for planning curriculum. Now that they have spent some



time becoming familiar with some of the content of each domain and with how the domains provide support for integrated curriculum, ask students to think of some ways that the framework could be used regularly for planning.

Ask them to think about these questions:



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- What would be some ways of incorporating the curriculum framework as a resource into the curriculum planning cycle of an early care and education setting?
- If any students are currently working in an early care and education setting, where in the planning process of the program could they bring in the framework?

Alternatively, some guest program directors or other staff of early care and education programs could be invited to a class session to discuss these questions and any others the students can generate.



Slides 15-16

- Is there a regular time for planning that could incorporate routine consulting of the curriculum framework?
- Are there times during program planning that specific domains could be incorporated into the reflection and discussion done by staff?
- Are there sessions regularly scheduled for professional development within the setting that could be devoted to features of the framework?
- Are there other ways that the framework could become a regular piece of curriculum planning, reflection, and discussion?

Reflection

After students have had an opportunity to look across domains with important elements of the framework, ask them to reflect on their experience with the following questions:



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- What stood out for you?
- What surprised you?
- Where did you feel most comfortable?
- Where did you feel most challenged?



- What does this suggest about your work in early care and education?
- What do you still want to learn about?
- How can you do that?

Deeper Understanding

Along with environments and materials and interactions and strategies, other elements in each domain in the framework are important to consider. One of these is the section in each domain of guiding principles for that domain. These principles are research-based and follow guidelines for developmentally appropriate practice. One way to continue developing students' understanding of the framework would be to bring their attention to these guiding principles. Students could develop their own resource to parallel the resource provided in Appendix E.

Ask them to develop their own lists of the guiding principles. Assign each domain to one or more students and ask them to provide a list for that domain. When they have done this, ask them to circulate as they did in the "Getting it started" and "Keeping it going" sections and for this exploration review the guiding principles across several domains. Again ask them to look for similarities and uniqueness for as many domains as they have time to share and review.



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One way to end this key topic would be to direct students' attention to the eight overarching principles that guided the development of the entire framework. These are contained in the introduction to each volume of the framework and provide an understanding of how these frameworks reflect important issues for early care and education in California.

When this exploration has been completed, instructors may choose to distribute Appendix E of this instructional guide for an overview of each domain's guiding principles and the eight overarching principles.