

Language and Literacy: Exploring Examples of the Language and Literacy Foundations

Strands:	<i>Listening & Speaking</i>	<i>Reading</i>	<i>Writing</i>
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GETTING READY

Instructional Component(s): Information Delivery; In-Class Activity; Out-of-Class Activity; Assessment

Strands: This activity can be used to deepen understanding of all strands.

Focus: Students explore the many ways that young children may demonstrate the knowledge and skills described in the language and literacy foundations.

AFTER PARTICIPATING IN THIS ACTIVITY

Students will demonstrate **knowledge** and **skills** that are consistent with an increased understanding and application of the concepts addressed in this activity.

Students will demonstrate an understanding of:

- Knowledge and skills described in the language and literacy domain of the PLF, V1, including strands, substrands, foundations, and examples of foundations (*Standards 1, 5, & 6*)*
- Preschool children’s skills in language and literacy as demonstrated in an early childhood setting (*Standards 1 & 5*)*
- Developmental progression of language and literacy skills in preschool children (*Standards 1 & 5*)*

Students will be able to:

- Identify and describe examples of preschool children demonstrating the skills and knowledge as described in the language and literacy domain of the PLF, V1 (*Standards 1, 5, & 6*)*
- Begin to differentiate between the skills of children who are “at around 48 months” and those who are “at around 60 months of age” (*Standards 1 & 5*)*

* See Appendix A

Language and Literacy: **Exploring Examples of the Language and Literacy Foundations**

Before you start

Before doing this activity, it would be helpful for the students to first become familiar with the language and literacy strands, substrands, and foundations. You may want to provide an overview or have the students do the activity titled “Piecing Together the Language and Literacy Domain Puzzle.”

Become familiar with the examples in the foundations and have some examples of your own ready to start the conversation. Video examples can also provide opportunities for students to observe and discuss examples of children’s language and literacy development. It is also important to help students understand that the examples provided in the *California Preschool Learning Foundations, Volume 1* (PLF, V1) and any examples you share are just examples and not criteria. Children will demonstrate the knowledge and skills described in the foundations in a wide variety of ways. No one behavior or skill is ever used as a measure of a child’s competence.

Getting it started

Make sure students understand that the focus of this activity is not to assess children’s development. The intent is to explore the language and literacy foundations and begin to recognize how children demonstrate their development of the skills and knowledge described in those foundations. You may want to explain that the examples were suggested by early childhood education practitioners during the development of the publication.

Spend some time examining the examples provided for each of the language and literacy foundations. Point out differences between the examples under “at around 48 months of age” and those under “at around 60 months of age.”

Keeping it going

Ask students to identify examples that they have observed in young children. Remind the students that their examples and those in the PLF, V1 are just some of the many varied ways that we expect to see children demonstrate these concepts and skills.

**Taking it
out of class**

Slide 2

To deepen students' understanding, have them do an observation activity in which they build ongoing *example banks* for the language and literacy foundations. Ask students to observe children in a preschool classroom. Provide them with a list of the language and literacy strands, substrands, and foundations. Ask students to look for children demonstrating specific observable behaviors (e.g., statements, actions, interactions, play) that are examples of a foundation. Students should record these examples in one or two sentences. There is a sample worksheet at the end of this activity for this purpose.

This activity could be done with on-site observations of 30 minutes in each of two areas of an early childhood setting. For example, one student could observe the block area and dramatic play area and observe each area for 30 minutes. To reinforce the idea that children demonstrate their language and literacy skills in many different ways and with all kinds of materials, you may want to make sure that a variety of classroom areas are covered. You may also want to assign specific strands or substrands to students.

Remind the students that, when they look for examples in classrooms in which they are working or with children they know, they are looking not for skill levels but just for examples of the foundations.

Students might be reluctant to judge whether what they see is appropriate for the “at around 48 months” or the “at around 60 months” foundation statements. Suggest that they write down what they see, bring the notes back to class, and be ready to talk about the observation and their questions.

Please note that while the foundation statements describe typical development for all children at two levels (i.e., “at around 48 months” and “at around 60 months of age”), the Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP) for preschool provides four developmental levels with which to observe and describe individual children's learning.

**Putting it
together**

Slides 3-4

Ask students to bring their lists of examples to class. Each student can write them out on strips of paper or list them on chart paper for the class to see. Or the examples could be posted online prior to class and then printed out for distribution to all students. Have students organize the examples so that they are displayed in relation to the strand and substrand they exemplify.

Give students time to walk around and review each other's examples.

Then have a class discussion based on questions such as the following:

- What stood out for you about all the examples?
- Were there some areas or activities where it was difficult to see examples of the language and literacy foundations? Were there some areas where it was easy?
- Were skills and behaviors in some strands or substrands easier to see than in others? Which ones? Why?
- What are the implications of these examples for ensuring that all areas of language and literacy are included in the ECE curriculum?

Since the focus here is not curriculum, keep responses general (e.g., the need to provide materials, the need to be intentional about planning, the importance of watching for teachable moments).

Be sure that the examples are collected and made available as a resource to students.

Another way

If students do not have access to classrooms, videos of young children in early childhood settings can also be used.

Assessment

Students' understanding of how children demonstrate knowledge and skills described in the language and literacy foundations can be assessed in the following ways:

- Have students draw a "T" down the middle of a sheet of paper and write "Muddiest" on one side and "Clearest" on the other side of the "T." Ask them to list five examples where it was difficult to understand how a knowledge or skill in a foundation could be observed in a child's behavior and five examples where it was clear.
- Ask students to write a one-page paper on the points that were more difficult to observe or understand when exploring the foundations and examples of children's behavior.

Language and Literacy Example Bank

Strand or Substrand	Observed Engagement with the Strand or Substrand

HANDOUT:
Exploring Examples of the LL Foundations

Exploring Examples of the Language and Literacy Foundations

Muddiest	Clearest

HANDOUT:
Exploring Examples of the LL Foundations