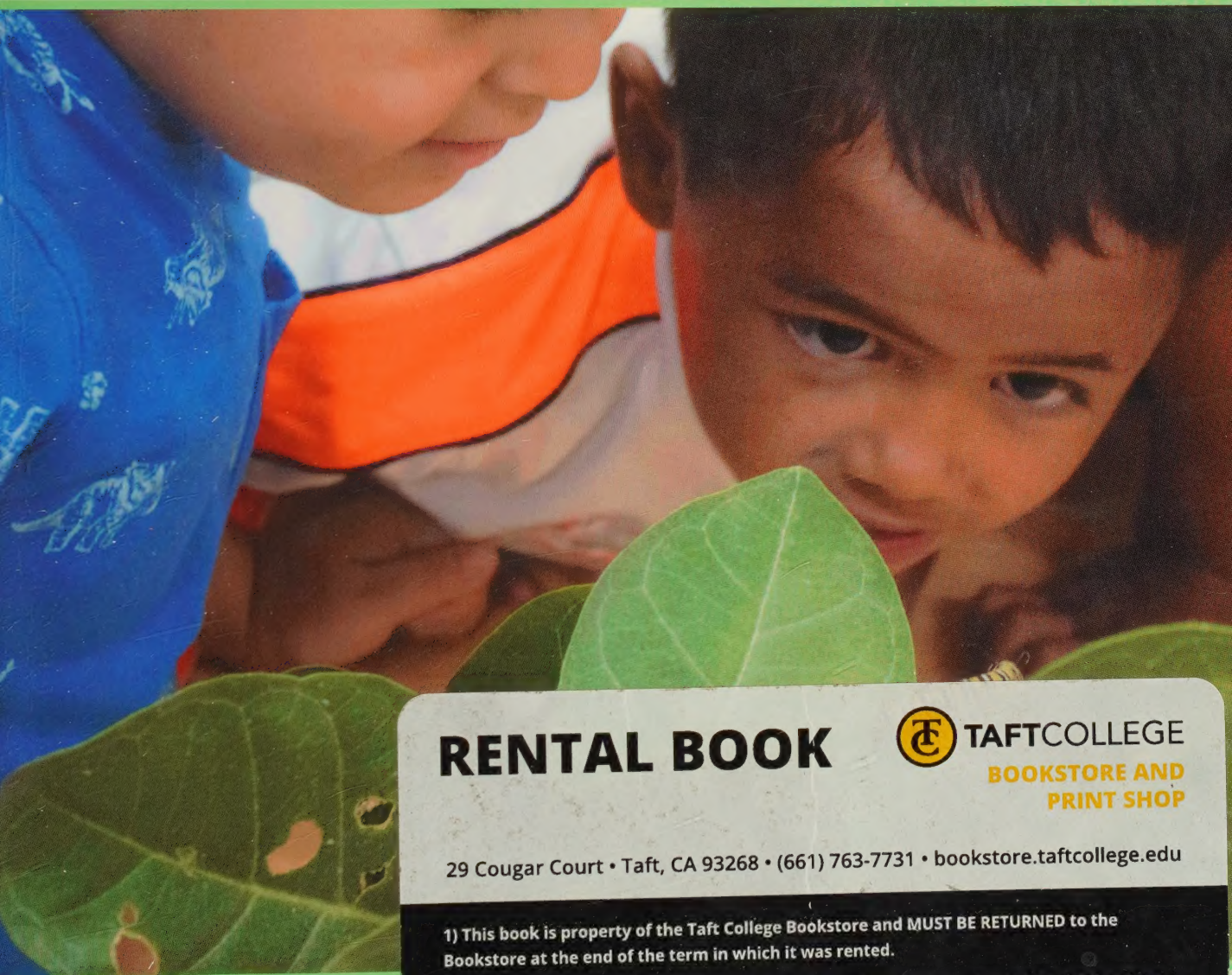


Meaningful Curriculum *for Young Children*

Eva Moravcik • Sherry Nolte



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Correlation Matrix of NAEYC® Standards for Early Childhood Professional Preparation Programs and Chapter Content

Standards	Key Elements of the Standards	Chapter and Topic
1: Promoting Child Development and Learning	1a: Knowing and understanding young children's characteristics and needs from birth through age 8.	1. Child Development, p. 12 2. Principles That Influence Physical Development Curriculum, p. 86 3. Understanding Large Motor Development, p. 91 4. Understanding Fine Motor Development, p. 129 5. Understanding Sensory Development, p. 158 6. Understanding Language Development, p. 193 7. Understanding Literacy Development, p. 229 8. Literature and Development, p. 270 9. Understanding Artistic Development, p. 313 10. Understanding Musical Development, p. 358 11. Development and Creative Movement?, p. 391 12. Inquire Curriculum—A Developmental Perspective, p. 418 13. Understanding Math Development, p. 427 14. Development and Science, p. 465 15. Understanding Development and Social Studies, p. 497
	1b: Knowing and understanding the multiple influences on development and learning	1. The Sources of Early Childhood Curriculum?, p. 7 2. What Teachers Need to Know to Plan Early Childhood Curriculum?, p. 12 3. Why Large Motor Curriculum?, p. 90 4. Why Fine Motor Curriculum?, p. 128 - Why Sensory Development Curriculum?, p. 158 5. Why Language?, p. 192 6. Why Literacy in Early Childhood?, p. 228 7. Why Literature?, p. 268 8. Why Art Curriculum?, p. 310 9. Why Music?, p. 354 10. Why Creative Movement?, p. 390 11. Why Math?, p. 326 12. Why Science?, p. 464 13. Why Social Studies?, p. 496
	1c: Using developmental knowledge to create healthy, respectful, supportive, and challenging learning environments for young children	1. An Environment for Large Motor Play, p. 104 2. An Environment for Fine Motor Learning, p. 136 3. An Environment for Sensory Learning, p. 167 4. An Environment for Language, p. 207 5. An Environment for Literacy, p. 241 6. An Environment for Literature, p. 281 7. An Environment for Visual Art, p. 324 8. An Environment for Music, p. 366 9. An Environment for Creative Movement, p. 398 10. An Environment for Math Learning, p. 441 11. An Environment for Science, p. 475 12. An Environment for Social Studies, p. 509
2: Building Family and Community Relationships	2a: Knowing about and understanding diverse family and community characteristics 2b: Supporting and engaging families and communities through respectful, reciprocal relationships 2c: Involving families and communities in their children's development and learning	1. The Sources of Early Childhood Curriculum—Family, Culture and Community, p. 11 2. Why Integrated Curriculum?, p. 58 3. Designing an Integrated Study, p. 65
3: Observing, Documenting, And Assessing To Support Young Children And Families	3a: Understanding the goals, benefits, and uses of assessment—including its use in development of appropriate goals, curriculum, and teaching strategies for young children 3b: Knowing about and using observation, documentation, and other appropriate assessment tools and approaches, including the use of technology in documentation, assessment and data collection. 3c: Understanding and practicing responsible assessment to promote positive outcomes for each child, including the use of assistive technology for children with disabilities. 3d: Knowing about assessment partnerships with families and with professional colleagues to build effective learning environments	1. Elements of a Plan, p. 23 2. Assess and Document Learning, p. 45 3. Designing an Integrated Study, p. 65 4. Assess the Study, p. 78 Activity Plans in Chapter 4–15 include recommended assessments.

Meaningful Curriculum

for Young Children

2nd EDITION

EVA MORAVCIK

Honolulu Community College

SHERRY NOLTE

Honolulu Community College

Editorial Director: Kevin Davis
Executive Portfolio Manager: Julie Peters
Managing Content Producer: Megan Moffo
Portfolio Management Assistant:
Maria Feliberty
Development Editor: Carolyn Schweitzer
Executive Product Marketing Manager:
Christopher Barry
Executive Field Marketing Manager:
Krista Clark

Manufacturing Buyer: Carol Melville
Cover Design: Carie Keller, Cenveo
Cover Art: Jeff Reese
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Who We Are

When we read a book, we like to know about the authors. We want to understand their experience, background, and point of view. We, the authors of this book, have different backgrounds and different life experiences, but we share very similar views about early childhood curriculum. We both have long held a strong commitment to programs for children that are nurturing and humane and support all aspects of their development.

Eva is a professor of early childhood education at Honolulu Community College. In addition to teaching college classes, her work includes daily contact with children, families, and college students at the Leeward Community College Children's Center. Much of *Meaningful Curriculum for Young Children* grows out of her 30-plus years of creating curriculum for young children and teaching teachers about it. Her daily work with children, families, staff, and college students provides her with grounding in the reality of life in a program for young children.

Sherry is recently retired from Honolulu Community College, where she taught early childhood education for more than 20 years. She continues to teach classes as an adjunct professor, serves as a consultant for early childhood programs, and develops training materials for schools and agencies.

We hope the words and images we share in this book communicate our excitement for, and love of, teaching young children. As you learn to design meaningful curriculum and share it with children, we are confident that you too will experience the joy and wonder that have sustained us in our teaching.

Preface

This book was written for you, a student studying to be an early childhood teacher. Our purpose is to help you develop knowledge of curriculum and an understanding about what makes learning experiences meaningful for young children. We want to share our conviction that young children are entitled to curriculum that has intellectual integrity and our belief that, at any age, real experiences are essential for real learning. We want to communicate our deeply held belief that early childhood curriculum should be a joyful experience for both children and their teachers. We are excited about sharing what we have learned about early childhood curriculum and have strived to create a textbook that will be engaging for you to read and that will provide you with many practical ideas.

The book's focus is on curriculum for children aged 3 through 5, though much is valid for both children in the primary grades and for 2-year-olds. If you are training to work with children under the age of 5, you will probably take one or two early childhood curriculum courses. *Meaningful Curriculum for Young Children* is designed for these courses. If you are training to be an elementary teacher, it is likely that you will take many elementary curriculum methods courses that touch lightly on curriculum for young children. You may be reading this text in a course designed to give you additional expertise. In either case, we assume that you know what young children are like, how they develop, and what constitutes an appropriate early childhood program for young children. If you do not have this background, you will find it useful to read a basic child development text and/or an early childhood foundations text.



Jeff Reese

New to This Edition

In this second edition of *Meaningful Curriculum for Young Children*, we have taken care to use a consistent organizing framework for each curriculum chapter, providing readers with an easy-to-follow structure which promotes understanding of each chapter's content. In addition, you will find the following:

- Updated content throughout the text
- Expanded discussion of curriculum for dual language learners
- New sections on play in each curriculum chapter
- **Some Things to Say**, a new feature that offer students ideas about words to use with children when discussing each curriculum area
- **Two-Year-Olds**, a new section in each curriculum chapter that discusses ways to apply the chapter's content in classrooms for twos
- Examples of **daily, weekly, and integrated plans** focused on a single area of study in each curriculum chapter; this allows students to understand meaningful topic-focused planning
- At the end of each chapter, there are suggestions for things to **Explore and Experience** related to the chapter content. These suggest ways that you can ensure that, like the children you teach, you too are learning from real experiences.

This edition is offered as an enhanced Pearson eText. If you are using this version of the book, you can access the following new features. (Note that these features are not included in 3rd party eTexts, such as VitalSource, Kindle, etc.)

- A digital **Glossary** that allows you to easily reference definitions for many of the key terms used in the text.
- Opportunities to **Assess Your Understanding** of the content of each major chapter section by completing a short, multiple-choice quiz available through hyperlinks embedded in each chapter. Students receive immediate feedback written by the authors about their responses to each question.
- A **Final Assessment** at the end of each chapter allows you to respond to questions that invite deeper reflection about and application of the chapter's content. Author feedback about appropriate content for each response is provided.
- Each chapter includes hyperlinks to **videos** that have been selected by the authors as a means of extending your learning about the chapter's focus.

The Approach of This Book

The cornerstone of this book and of our work with children is what we refer to as a *child-centered* approach to early childhood education. This approach has its roots in a long tradition of humanistic and progressive education and in the unique history and philosophy of early childhood education. Our ideas have been profoundly shaped by educators, psychologists, and philosophers who have advocated child-centered educational practice, including Friedrich Froebel, Maria Montessori, John Dewey, Lucy Sprague Mitchell, Erik Erikson, Lev Vygotsky, Jean Piaget, Abraham Maslow, Carl Rogers, Sylvia Ashton-Warner, John Holt, A. S. Neill, Barbara Biber, Howard Gardner, James L. Hymes, and Loris Malaguzzi.

We believe that curriculum is about children, not assessment, and that every child is worthy of our respect. We know that each child comes with strengths and that the most effective curriculum is built upon those strengths. We trust children to learn through their most natural activity, play, and the serious inquiry that is a part of play. We reaffirm the tenets of John Dewey, who said that school is not preparation for life, but *is* the life of the child. Finally, we are committed, along with Loris Malaguzzi and the educators of Reggio Emilia, to education in which there is “Nothing without joy!”



Jeff Reese

The Book's Structure and Features

Meaningful Curriculum for Young Children has five parts, each with an introduction and three chapters.

Part Structure

The first part, *Understanding Curriculum*, provides you with a brief background about early childhood curriculum, a chapter on planning, and a chapter on integrated curriculum. Each of the subsequent parts addresses curriculum in various chapters for the following domains:

- Physical development (large motor, fine motor, sensory)
- Communication (language, literacy, and literature)
- Creative arts (art, music, creative movement)
- Inquiry (math, science, and social studies)

Chapter Structure

Each of the curriculum chapters discusses:

- Why the subject area is important
- Children's development as related to the subject area
- The skills, concept, and elements of the subject area and the early learning standards that apply
- Strategies for teaching each subject area, including:
 - Promoting play that supports learning in the subject area
 - How to structure the learning environment
 - Creating a schedule
 - Your role in teaching
 - Typical activities that teach this subject area
- How to plan this subject area, including:
 - Typical objectives
 - Examples of plans (activity plans, weekly plans, and integrated study plans)
- Things to consider when teaching the subject area to children with special needs, 2-year-olds, or children in the primary grades

Appendix A provides you with forms that you can use for planning.

Features

FIGURE 9.3 Simple Literature Activity Plan

Activity: Comparing Donald Crews's Vehicle Books

- Objectives:**
- Recognize similarities between books.
 - Understand that a book is created by an author and illustrator
 - Understand that vehicles are machines that transport people and things from one place to another and that there are lots of different kinds of vehicles ("big idea")
- What you need:**
- Three Donald Crews's vehicle books: *Freight Train*; *School Bus*; and *Truck*
 - Poster paper with pictures of the covers of two of the books with "Same/Different" written below
 - Marking pen
- How to teach:**
- Show children two of the books and then read them
 - Put up the poster and ask, *How are the books the same and how are they different?*
 - Write children's ideas on the poster paper
 - Read what children said.
 - Show the third book and ask, *What can you guess about this book?*
 - Encourage children to activity time by asking them to say something about one of the books
- Assessment:**
- Name several similarities between books.
 - Say all books were created by Donald Crews.
 - Say all books are about vehicles

▲ SIMPLE ACTIVITY PLAN

Brief overview of a field-tested plan format, consisting of objectives, materials needed, how to teach, and how to assess children's learning and development.

FIGURE 9.5 Weekly Plan: Vehicles

Objective: To learn that vehicles are machines that transport people and things quickly from one place to another and that there are lots of different kinds of vehicles				
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Reading Story <i>Freight Train</i> Donald Crews	Reading/Listening/Pulling <i>Freight Train</i> Donald Crews	The Little Engine That Could Wally How	School Bus Donald Crews	Bus Stop Donald Crews
Outdoor Activity Balls and Hoops • Develop large motor coordination • Build a reputation to be physically active	Walk from Cider the Service Dog • Learn about dogs in everyday life • Learn about how people take care of their pets	Ballade in the Water Table • Develop the concept of boats as vehicles • Learn about boats and how they move	Water Table with Soap • Explore the physical properties of water • Develop sensory awareness and fine motor control	Bus Stop • Learn about the role of vehicles in everyday life • Understand the purpose of public transportation
Small Group 1 Examining a Car Purpose: To help children • Learn about a car, its parts, and what they are called • Learn about the role of vehicles in everyday life	Comparing Donald Crews' Vehicle Books • Develop an awareness of similarities and differences between books • Develop the ability to compare and contrast books	Reading: The Little Engine That Could • Develop an awareness of plot and characters in stories • Develop the ability to compare and contrast stories	City Bus Ride • Learn about public transportation • Learn about the role of vehicles in everyday life	Clip Book Ride • Learn about public transportation • Learn about the role of vehicles in everyday life
Small Group 2 What Vehicle Do You See? Purpose: To help children • Develop an awareness of vehicles in everyday life • Develop an awareness of story structure	Reading: Boat Books • Develop the concept of boats as vehicles • Develop an awareness of reading and books	Guided Book: Water Activity • To recognize and create patterns and become aware of relationships	City Bus Ride • Learn about public transportation • Learn about the role of vehicles in everyday life	Remembering a Golf Cart (With Ryan's Dad, Ron) • Learn about a car, its parts, and what they are called • Learn about the role of vehicles in everyday life
Indoor Special Activity Tissue Paper Collage Purpose: To help children • Develop the ability to express ideas through art media • Develop skill using collage techniques	Tissue Paper Collage • Develop the ability to express ideas through art media • Develop skill using collage techniques	Liquid Water Colors • Develop the ability to express ideas through art media • Develop skill using paint as a medium of expression	Making Smoothies (With the Program on a trip) • Develop appreciation for nutritious food • Learn to follow a simple recipe	Making Smoothies (With the Don Danvers are on a trip) • Develop appreciation for nutritious food • Learn to follow a simple recipe
Circle Time Let's Go! Let's Go! Purpose: To help children • Develop the ability to sing, listen, and express ideas through music and movement	Let's Go! Let's Go! • Develop the ability to sing, listen, and express ideas through music and movement	Let's Go! Let's Go! • Develop the ability to sing, listen, and express ideas through music and movement	Let's Go! Let's Go! • Develop the ability to sing, listen, and express ideas through music and movement	Let's Go! Let's Go! • Develop the ability to sing, listen, and express ideas through music and movement
Environment/Additional: Outdoor: Ride in cars, services in function. Table Games: Vehicle matching game. Truck puzzle. Discovery: The magazine.				
Evaluation/plan: Children especially enjoyed the bus trip. Next time try to have at least 4 additional group. Although we did plan it, we wrote a group story about the trip the following day and the children enjoyed it. We also had an additional day to share their experience with their families. The yellow boxes identify activities that promote understanding of literacy concepts and opportunities to use literacy skills.				

▲ WEEKLY PLAN

This 5-day calendar (for a week) is focused on an integrating topic and shows all the planned activities; those in the subject area are highlighted to illustrate how the content area is included in an overall weekly plan.

FIGURE 9.4 Detailed Language Activity Plan

Activity: Opposite Word Game

Description: a language activity that is a fill-in-the-blank and matching card game

- Who's it for?:** The *Ice Cream Cones*, ten children, 4-years-old, particularly Adrianna and Jackson
- Rationale:** Many of the *Ice Cream Cones*, particularly Adrianna and Jackson, have begun to use opposites in their speech and to talk about the idea of opposites. This activity will allow them to hear opposite pairs and receive coaching in identifying opposites.
- Objectives:** By participating in this activity, children will
- Use simple opposite word pairs correctly
 - Use the word not in appropriate contexts
- Standard:** Use language in a variety of ways

Materials/equipment	Space/time	Preparation/set-up
Twelve cards with pictures of concepts that have easily identifiable opposites, for example, an empty glass, a puppy under a table, a tall building, etc. Eric Carle book <i>Opposites</i>	About 15 minutes during small-group time	Make picture cards

Teaching

Introduction: to get children interested and help them know what to do

When children are settled, tell them you have a new word guessing game to play. Say something like "Yesterday at breakfast Adrianna and Jackson noticed that the oatmeal was hot and the milk was cold. These words are opposites, cold is the opposite of hot. Today we are going to play a game to try to name words that are opposite to each other."

Steps: to teach the objectives

- Hold up the picture of the tall building and say "This building is tall; it is not _____." (pause) The children will probably chime in with "short" or "little." "Right, this building is not short, it is tall. The opposite of tall is short."
- Model with a second picture. For example, hold up a picture of a steaming cup of cocoa and say "This cocoa is _____." (pause) Some children will say "hot" encourage them by saying "It is hot, it is not _____." The opposite of hot is cold.
- Allow each child in turn to select a card. Ask the child to hold the card up. Say the sentence with the pictured modifier e.g., "The car is in the garage, it is not _____." (pause) out of the garage.
- As children understand, they may be able to answer with sentences with limited or no coaching.
- Offer prompts as necessary so that everyone will be successful.
- After all children have had a turn, remind them that we used opposites.
- Read the book *Opposites* by Eric Carle, encouraging children to guess the opposites as you read the story.

Closure: to end the activity, consolidate learning, transition to the next activity

Excuse children individually by offering each an opposite to guess, for example, "Jackson: the opposite of top is _____." Okay, you may choose a center."

Plan for assessment

Objectives	If the objective is met children might . . .	How to document . . .
Use simple opposite words pairs correctly	Use the correct opposite word to correspond with the picture card Discuss opposites in their play and use them correctly	Anecdotal observations
Use the word not in appropriate contexts	Correctly fill in the blank in the word game Use the word not correctly in conversation	Anecdotal observations, written language transcripts or audio recording

EVALUATION: The children were interested in this activity and the pictures were effective in capturing their attention. Follow-up with a game where they use their bodies to show opposites.

▲ DETAILED ACTIVITY PLAN

A more detailed, field-tested plan format that

- Demonstrates how to plan for a specific group of children (WHO the plan is for)
- Explains the connection between what was observed and what was planned (the RATIONALE)
- Lays out OBJECTIVES for the activity related to the subject area
- Gives an example of a STATE STANDARD related to the activity and the objectives
- Identifies a "big idea" related to an integrated study topic that the activity helps to teach
- Lists what is needed and how to prepare for teaching (NEEDS)
- Describes TEACHING (a plan for an introduction, teaching steps, and closure)
- Demonstrates how to PLAN FOR ASSESSMENT (what to look for to assess if the objectives were met and how to document this)
- Gives an example of an EVALUATION (what a teacher might want to remember for next time)

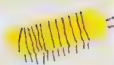
IN PRACTICE ►

These are specific ideas on how to implement this curriculum area with children in the classroom.

everyday

tion...

Think about the skills you use every day to communicate your thoughts and ideas to other people. Identify a simple message you have given today, such as, "The battery on my computer is low" or "Where do you want to eat tonight?" What skills did you need in order to convey this information to someone else? What skills did the other person need to understand your meaning?



IN PRACTICE ►

1. **Get close.** Crouch or sit at the child's eye level. It's easier to hear children's words when you are at their level and physically close to them.
2. **Pay attention.** Show your attention physically as well as verbally with eye contact, smiles, nods, a gentle hand on a shoulder or back. Focus on what the child is saying. Remember this is about the child, not about you.
3. **Listen.** This can be challenging in a room filled with active preschoolers! If you must handle another situation, tell the child you want to listen and will come back; then be sure you return at a calmer moment!
4. **Talk about what is happening.** Narrate what's happening like a "sportscaster." "Emma chose the two square blocks for the base of her structure and Marvie used rectangles." "It took a lot of sand for us to fill this bucket all the way to the top." This gives children opportunities to organize thoughts and ideas before they speak. Be careful to allow time for children to reflect and speak also.
5. **Respond to, clarify, and extend children's language.** This motivates children to continue talking. Clarify what children say, and build on or extend their language. Introduce vocabulary as well as more sophisticated language structures.
6. **Read nonverbal communication.** Notice and put into words what the child is feeling and thinking: "You're really happy." or "That's very exciting." or "It's a little scary."
7. **Don't hurry or interrupt.** If you don't understand, say, "Show me." "Tell me more about that."



REFLECTIONS

In each chapter, margin notes pose questions to encourage you to reflect and think more deeply about the subject area and its relationship to your own life and learning.

Table 5.9.2 Typical Objectives for Literature Curriculum

Younger Preschoolers (3- to 4-year-olds)	Older Preschoolers (4- to 5-year-olds)
- Understand that print is different from pictures. - Identify characters and main events in stories.	- Understand that print is read from left to right, top to bottom. - Recognize difference between fiction and informational books. - Understand that events in a story relate to the story. - Understand that books are created by people (authors, illustrators). - Name the parts of a book. - Recognize similarities between books.
- Attend to a book and follow a story being read to a group. - Develop and practice book-handling skills. - Act out a story with pictures or props. - Ask and answer questions about a book that was read aloud. - Tell one or two key events from a story.	- Retail key events from a well-known story, in the right order. - Answer questions about details of a story with specific information. - Make predictions based on information from the story. - Infer characters' feelings or intentions. - Summarize a story.
- Love books and reading as a pleasurable activity. - Look at books with pleasure. - Treasure books and read them with care. - Participate in positive ways during group storytimes. - Develop a disposition to go to books as a source of information. - Appreciate diverse styles of writing and illustration.	- Listen to books being read and stories told aloud by a teacher or school. - Hear rhythm and rhyme in stories and poems. - Hear and understand book language. - See and handle good literature appropriate to age and interests.

TYPICAL OBJECTIVES ►

In each of the last 12 chapters, there is a table of typical objectives designed to help you to pinpoint and clearly write objectives for your activity plans.

GLOSSARY

Many of the terms used in each chapter are defined in a digital glossary in the Pearson eText. This is designed to be a quick reference to help you consolidate understanding.



Watch this video that shows children engaged in a variety of planned physical development activities. How do the teachers support children's participation?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tBqh3eJuD8s>

◀ VIDEOS

Each chapter contains links to videos (in the Pearson eText) related to the content area. These offer examples of children learning, demonstrate master teachers teaching the subject matter, and/or provide additional information from subject-matter experts.

ASSESS YOUR LEARNING ▶

In the Pearson eText, digital assessments in a multiple-choice format are provided at the end of each major section of all chapters. You receive immediate feedback, written by the authors, about the correct answer, which can reinforce your learning.

✓ **Assess Your Learning 7.6:** Click here to assess your understanding of the concepts in this section.

✓ **A Final Assessment:** Click here to assess your understanding of this chapter.

◀ FINAL ASSESSMENT

At the end of each chapter, you can complete an assessment that helps you evaluate your understanding of the major points of the chapter. Questions are in a short-answer format and you receive immediate feedback about each answer.

What to Do Next



Read

Select one of the books or articles from the bibliography and read more about language development and curriculum.

Investigate

The following groups and organizations have websites that are helpful for creating meaningful language curriculum:

- **PBS Parents**, the Public Broadcasting Service, maintains a website with many types of resources for parents. The "Education" tab contains helpful information about reading and language development and appropriate activities.
- **Speaking of Speech** is an interactive forum for speech/language pathologists and teachers designed to improve communication skills in schools through the exchange of ideas, techniques, materials, lessons that work, sources for materials, and resource links.
- **Mama Lisa's World** is an online resource for songs, games, and activities for children from around the world.

Explore and Experience

Observe a program. For a morning, see how the staff structures the environment and program to support children's language learning. Notice both the play opportunities and the planned group activities. Look at the plans and see how the planning reflects what you observed.

Spend time with a master teacher. Observe a language activity. Interview the teacher and talk with him/her about planning for and providing language experiences to young children.

Observe language activities in two early childhood classrooms. Compare their similarities and differences. Reflect on which seems to best support children's learning, and why.

Observe a classroom where children speak more than one language. Notice the strategies that the teacher uses to include all the children. Notice the ways that DLLs communicate with the English-only-speaking peers and with others who speak their home language. If possible, ask the teacher about the ways she includes DLLs in her classroom.

Watch a movie in a language you don't know. Many DVDs have the option of listening to the movie in another language. Notice what you do to figure out what's going on and how it feels.

Create a Resource

Create a language materials file. Put together a file of activities to do with children to build language skills. Add to this file as you progress through your studies and your career.

Design and make a language learning material. For example, create a listening game, rhyming activity, a language comprehension game, etc. Share it with children and observe how they respond. For your portfolio, include a photograph of a child using the material and a reflection on what you learned about yourself, children, the learning materials, and teaching.

WHAT TO DO NEXT ▶

This section at the end of each chapter include resources for further reading, a list of organizations related to the content area, and real experiences designed to enhance your deeper understanding of concepts covered in the chapter as well as encourage you to practice new skills.

Instructor Supplements

The following instructor supplements to the textbook are available for download on www.pearsonhighered.com/educators. Simply enter the author, title, or ISBN, and select this textbook. Click on the “Resources” tab to view and download the available supplements detailed next.

Online Instructor’s Resource Manual

The Online Instructor’s Resource Manual (ISBN 0-13-444416-7) includes chapter overviews and objectives, lists of available PowerPoint® slides, presentation outlines, teaching suggestions for each chapter, and questions for discussion and analysis.

Online Test Bank and MyTest Test Bank

The Test Bank (ISBN 0-13-444418-3) provides a comprehensive and flexible assessment package. The computerized test bank software, TestGen (ISBN 0-13-444417-5), is a powerful assessment generation program that helps instructors easily create and print quizzes and exams. Questions and tests are authored online, allowing ultimate flexibility and the ability to efficiently create and print assessments, anytime, anywhere. The Pearson TestGen includes a rich library of assessment items that can be edited to fit your needs. Visit pearsonhighered.com to log in, register, or request access to Pearson TestGen.

Online PowerPoint Slides

The PowerPoint Slides (ISBN 0-13-444420-5) highlight key concepts and summarize text content. These guides are designed to provide structure to instructor presentations and give students an organized perspective on each chapter’s content.

Online Test Item Files in a Variety of Formats

Conversions of TestGen are available for a variety of learning management systems.

Acknowledgments

Creating a book is a long and arduous process. It starts with the seed of an idea. The authors plant the seed in the fertile ground of possibility and imagination. With a great deal of work and help from many people, it germinates and matures.

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Eva Moravcik

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PART 1

Understanding Curriculum

LUCY SPRAGUE MITCHELL

This book is written for you, a future or current teacher of young children. It concerns early childhood **curriculum** (what you teach) and **pedagogy** (how you teach). Our goal is to help you understand, plan, and implement meaningful and appropriate curriculum for young children.

As an early childhood teacher, you will be challenged to design engaging experiences that will result in children constructing an understanding of the world, developing the skills they need, and acquiring attitudes that will lead them to become caring and productive human beings. Nothing will so clearly distinguish you as a professional early childhood educator as your knowledge of what and how young children learn and your ability to help them learn in ways that preserve their zest for learning.

This first part of the book (Chapters 1, 2, and 3) is designed to set the stage for the parts that follow. It provides you with an introduction to early childhood curriculum and helps you learn how to plan.

In Chapter 1, *Curriculum That Engages Young Children*, we describe what is meant when we talk about curriculum in early childhood education and how it is distinct from curriculum for older children. We look at where early childhood curriculum has come from, discuss where it is today, and point to where it is going. We map out what you need to know and be able to do in order to plan curriculum, explain how curriculum is organized, and make explicit our point of view that:

- learning should be a playful, joyful, and meaningful experience for children.



- all areas of children's development are important.
- planned learning experiences need to reflect and be responsive to children's interests, needs, and learning styles.
- curriculum for young children is not a collection of trivial activities, but rather is an intentionally designed sequence of experiences that respects children as serious learners.
- children learn best when curriculum is integrated (i.e., organized around a topic of study).

Chapter 2, *Planning, Implementing, and Assessing Curriculum*, describes what planning means in programs for young children. We examine the different kinds of strategies that are used to teach young children and discuss why we choose particular strategies.



Jeff Reese

We provide examples of different kinds of plans and describe what they should include. We take you through a step-by-step process for writing useful, complete, and appropriate plans. Because we want you to continue writing plans once you leave the college classroom, we have included examples of simplified activity plans, weekly plans, and graphic illustrations of integrated curriculum. We also show you some ways to meaningfully assess and document children's learning.

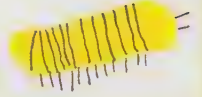
Finally, in Chapter 3, *Planning Integrated Curriculum*, we give you some background on integrated curriculum and explain why we feel it is the best way to organize the early childhood curriculum. We describe some models of integrated curriculum and show how they are similar to and different from one another. Finally, we provide you with criteria for selecting a topic for an integrated study and show how to design one.

This book reflects our values and beliefs about the way people become teachers. We also believe that:

- you as a learner are worthy of respect and come with unique skills and experiences that will help you to teach.
- like children, you must construct your own knowledge through active engagement.
- like children, you will learn best when you are playful, enthusiastic, joyful, and serious about learning.
- it is the job of the teacher to create curriculum for young children that is engaging, interesting, and worthwhile to both children and their teachers.

The work you are preparing to do is profoundly important to society as a whole and to the young children you will teach—they need and deserve a competent and caring teacher. We hope this book will help you to be that teacher.

Reflect on
your hopes
and dreams of
teaching . . .



Imagine yourself teaching a group of young children. What words describe the teacher you hope to be? Write them on a sheet of paper and put it up near where you work to remind you of your dreams. Add to or change them as you learn more about teaching.



Jeff Reese

*"I could not tell my mind from my body, and
I was like a little boat in a sea of
darkness, and I was alone."*

LEWIS CARROLL



Chapter one

CURRICULUM THAT ENGAGES YOUNG CHILDREN

Learning Outcomes

In this chapter, you will learn to:

1. Define curriculum and how early childhood curriculum reflects the ways young children learn.
2. Describe the origins of early childhood curriculum.
3. Explain what teachers need to know to plan early childhood curriculum.
4. Describe the different ways early childhood curriculum can be organized.
5. Identify the processes involved in designing curriculum.

From the moment they are born, children are learning. One of the most exciting and important things that you will do as an early childhood teacher is to create curriculum that fosters children's inborn curiosity and their eagerness to learn.

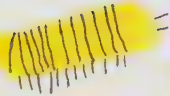
What Is Curriculum?

When they speak of **curriculum**, early childhood educators may have in mind different, but related, things. Some are thinking of something very broad—everything the child experiences both in and out of school. This can be called the **umbrella curriculum** (Colbert, 2003). Others are thinking of curriculum models, comprehensive educational approaches that combine theory and practice and

address the learning environment, teaching strategies, and teacher support along with curriculum content. The **High/Scope model** (Hohmann, Weikart, & Epstein, 2008), the **Montessori method**, the **Reggio Emilia Approach** (Edwards, Gandini, & Forman, 1998), **Waldorf Education**, and Bank Street College's **Developmental-Interaction Approach** (Nager & Shapiro, 2000) are examples of curriculum models. Still others, when they speak of curriculum, mean a purchased document or collection of prepared lessons that addresses either the whole early education program (e.g., the *Creative Curriculum*) or a content area (e.g., the *Breakthrough to Literacy* curriculum). These are typically referred to as **packaged** (or *commercial*) **curriculum**.

While it is worthwhile to understand the variety of ways that the term *curriculum* is used, this will not be particularly helpful to you in learning to design and implement curriculum for the young children with whom you work. In this book, we will focus on another view of curriculum—the planned curriculum. We define **planned curriculum** as curriculum designed by a teacher or team of teachers using what they know about early childhood subject matter and teaching strategies to intentionally design learning experiences in response to what they know and observe about children.

Reflect on the meaning of curriculum.



What does the word curriculum make you think of? What images come into your mind? How do you feel when you hear the word? Make note of your responses for later reference. At the end of your study of curriculum, come back and review your notes and see how your perspective has changed.

How does early childhood curriculum reflect the ways young children learn?

Whatever grade, age, or subject they teach, all teachers want their students to be enthusiastic, engaged learners. What makes good curriculum for young children different from curriculum for older children is that it reflects the ways that young children learn—ways that are significantly different from the way older children learn. Those of us who teach young children not only recognize these differences but treasure them. What is unique about the ways young children learn?

Young children learn through play and active exploration.

They learn through all of their senses. Unlike older children and adults who can memorize facts that are presented abstractly, young children need real experience with real things in order to understand them. Those of us who teach young children know this and base our curriculum on play and real experience.

Young children learn best when they have many direct experiences with the world around them. This involves taking children into the world of people and relationships or bringing these experiences to them. Real experience through trips, visitors, and real-world activities (e.g., cooking, caring for pets, setting the table, watering the garden) are essential for learning.

Young children learn as a whole. Their bodies, feelings, and minds must all be engaged. All of us learn better when we are rested, fed, interested, and happy. But young children cannot learn unless they are. We can house their bodies but we cannot teach them if we don't provide physical and emotional care. They need safety, comfort, and joy to learn. Those of us who teach young children make children's physical and emotional well-being our number one teaching task. As they say in the exemplary preschools in Reggio Emilia, Italy, we strive for "Nothing without joy."

Young children learn through repeated experience over time. Once or twice is not enough. Children need many opportunities to experience a concept or develop a skill. Fortunately, they are usually immensely patient. Those of us who teach young children allow them lots of time to learn and lots of chances to repeat experiences. This may be contrary to the strategies of some commercial curriculum guidebooks and the traditional curriculum of many schools, which place a premium on novelty. And it is quite different from the fast pace of today's society. However, it reflects what we know about children and how they learn.

Young children learn by reenacting what they have experienced. This is why dramatic play, blocks, language, and the arts are at the heart of the preschool and kindergarten curriculum. These are the ways that children transform what they have experienced into concepts they have learned.

Young children learn as individuals. Early childhood curriculum can't be "one size fits all." Young children need learning experiences that match their particular interests, learning styles, and needs. Those of us who teach young children provide diverse ways for children to learn. We don't use cookie-cutter lesson plans; after all, there are no cookie-cutter children.

Young children learn from relationships. Their interactions with their peers, their teachers, and their family members are more than pleasant social interludes. They are critical to learning. Young children need the important people in their lives (their teachers and their families) to communicate with one another and provide consistent support. They need opportunities to learn from other children. Those of us who teach young children understand that relationships are a vital part of the curriculum.

Young children learn best when home and school work together. Because young children first experience skills and concepts in their homes, early childhood teaching requires a partnership between the family and the teacher. Those of us who teach communicate with and involve families in the curriculum.



Jeff Reese

✓ **Assess Your Learning 1.1:** Click here to assess your understanding of the concepts in this section.

The Sources of Early Childhood Curriculum

All curriculum is based on a vision of society (i.e., what we wish society, and people, to be like), values, a philosophy, a particular view of learners and teachers, and the ways educators translate this vision into learning experiences. It can originate from three broad sources: (1) beliefs about what is worth knowing, (2) knowledge of learners and their development, and (3) knowledge of subject matter.

Curriculum is also a product of its time. Social and political forces influence educational values and practices. For example, in the United States in the early years of the 20th century, when many immigrants were arriving, a strong curricular emphasis was placed on the acquisition of the English language along with American culture and values. In the years following World War II, curriculum reflected the value that society placed on nuclear families. Today's curriculum mirrors the cultural diversity that is prevalent and more valued today than it was in the past. It echoes society's increasing concerns with young children's readiness for school, educational **standards**, technology, and the acquisition of basic content, especially literacy and math. Tomorrow's curriculum will address these and new concerns in ways that we cannot yet anticipate.

In the past, early childhood education stood somewhat apart from vacillating popular points of view regarding curriculum and pedagogy. Many of today's programs have their roots in what can be referred to as the **humanistic approach to education**—an approach that reflects concern for the potential of human beings. The creative thinkers who contributed to this tradition were concerned with issues that included respect for human dignity, the role of education in contributing to all aspects of children's development, the connection between mind and body, the importance of creativity, the value of play, the usefulness of observing children, and the important role of families in children's overall well-being. They also saw childhood as a valuable time in its own right, not just as a preparation for adulthood.

You can hear these views in the words of the historical founders of our field:

"The proper education of the young does not consist in stuffing their heads with a mass of words, sentences, and ideas dragged together out of various authors, but in opening up their understanding to the outer world, so that a living stream may flow from their own minds, just as leaves, flowers, and fruit spring from the bud on a tree."

John Amos Comenius,
Didactica Magna (The Great Didactic), 1638

"Play is the highest expression of human development in childhood for it alone is the free expression of what is in a child's soul."

Friedrich Froebel,
The Education of Man, 1885

While devoted deeply to the growth of ideas and concepts, you have similarly consistently shown that education must plan equally for physical, social, and emotional growth.

James Hymes,
speech to the National Association of Nursery Educators
(NANE), 1947

There is an "educational pendulum" that swings between emphasis on the nature and interests of the learner and emphasis on the subject matter to be taught. Each swing reflects a reaction of people to perceptions of the shortcomings of the current educational approach. The swinging pendulum of popular opinion has some important implications for you as an early childhood

Reflect on the curriculum of the schools you attended . . .

What was taught in the classrooms of your early years? What do you remember most about the curriculum? When were you motivated to learn more? Do any of these experiences influence you today? What are the implications of these experiences for you as an early childhood educator?

educator. One is that you must be aware that there will be ongoing shifts in accepted views of curriculum and teaching during your career.

There is greater pressure today than ever before for early childhood educators to address standards and demonstrate the effectiveness of their teaching. This offers new challenges, but as we change, we always try to remember the history of our field and keep our focus on meaningful learning and the development of “the whole child.” Our goal is to help you learn to design curriculum that reflects these historical views and is responsive to the new realities. As you develop your own teaching style, we hope that you will join the long line of educators who put children first.

Influences on Curriculum Decisions

As you think about curriculum for children, you will decide on the content to be taught, how to organize it, and how to present it. These decisions will be based on your values and beliefs about children and education (and those of the program in which you teach); your assessment of children and knowledge of their families, culture, and community; and your appraisal of what content is worthwhile for young children to learn.

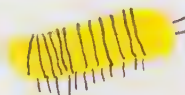
Values and Beliefs

What you teach and how you teach reflects your values for society. The children you teach today are potential doctors, politicians, caregivers, artists, teachers, parents—people who will make decisions and do work that will affect the lives of others (including your own). What do you want the people of the future to be like? What kinds of knowledge and skills will the children you teach need so they can be productive citizens in society both as it exists now and as it changes in the future? Your answers to these questions will help you to determine your **aims** as an educator—your mission.

What do you believe about how children learn and what they should be learning? Do you believe children are self-motivated and self-directed learners who will naturally choose what they need to learn? Do you believe that selecting what children will be taught is the responsibility of adults who have more experience and knowledge? Your beliefs about children’s motivation and ability to choose worthwhile learning experiences will have an influence on what you teach and on the ways you choose to teach it.

Early childhood educators typically believe in children’s inherent ability to learn. They believe that all areas of children’s development are important and that play, child-choice, and cooperative relationships are essential parts of the child’s educational experience. They value the individuality and dignity of children and families, and appreciate their culture and community. They also believe that adults have a responsibility to select rich and diverse educational experiences for children. In this book, we will try to give you the information and skills that you need to teach in ways that reflect these values.

Reflect on
the role of
education in
shaping the
future...



Think about what you want the world to be like in the future. What will people need to be like in order for the world you envision to exist? What do children need to learn and experience in school in order to become these people?



Jeff Reese

Knowledge of Children: Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP)

What you teach and how you teach is based on your knowledge of children; how they typically learn and grow and what you know about them as individuals. This knowledge enables you to plan for children at the appropriate level for their age and for their particular needs, backgrounds, and interests. We call this **developmentally appropriate practice (DAP)**.

The influential publication *Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs* (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009) from the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) presents a framework of principles and guidelines. It outlines practice that promotes young children's optimal learning and development in early childhood education and care settings. It is grounded both in the research in child development and in what is known about education effectiveness. The terms *developmentally appropriate practice* and its acronym DAP are widely used and accepted in early childhood education. However, they are less well known and less accepted in some primary school settings. The terminology may not be universally accepted, but the principles underlying DAP are important and practical to use throughout the early childhood years from birth to age 8.

The concept of developmentally appropriate practice was created in 1986 and has been revised several times to address the expanding knowledge base, issues of **diversity** (culture, families, special needs) and assessment, **intentionality**; and to affirm the value of play and joy in young children's learning.

What Does Developmentally Appropriate Practice Say?

There are three dimensions of developmentally appropriate practice:

- child development and learning,
- the strengths, interests, and needs of each individual child,
- the social and cultural contexts in which children live.

Knowledge of **child development and learning** refers to research-based information about age-related characteristics. This knowledge allows you to make general predictions about what experiences are likely to best promote children's learning and development. It also provides a framework from which you will prepare the learning environment and plan appropriate experiences that are likely to benefit all the children of a particular age and stage of development.

Knowing **the strengths, interests, and needs of each individual child** means learning about the specific children in your class. This has implications for the way you adapt and are responsive to each child's individual pattern and timing of growth as well as his or her unique personality and learning style. Both the curriculum and adults' interactions with children should be responsive to individual differences in interest, style, and ability.

Knowledge of **the social and cultural context in which children live** refers to the values, expectations, and behavioral and linguistic conventions that shape each child's life at home and in the community. Knowing this helps you to ensure that planned learning experiences are meaningful, relevant to, and respectful of children and their families (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009).

Effective teachers are intentional and thoughtful; this intentionality is a hallmark of developmentally appropriate practice. Teachers begin by thinking about what children of the age they teach are typically like. This knowledge provides a general guide for effective activities, routines, interactions, and curriculum. They then consider each child as an individual within the context of a specific

FIGURE 1.1 DAP in a Nutshell

In a nutshell, DAP means . . .

- **Individual appropriateness** Knowing and being attuned to children as individuals so you can provide experiences that are both challenging and achievable and use assessment methods that are likely to be valid.
- **Age/developmental appropriateness** Anticipating and responding to the age/developmental characteristics of children and using teaching practices and assessment based on knowledge—not assumptions—of how children learn and develop.
- **Cultural appropriateness** Being responsive to and considering what will make sense to a child given his or her linguistic and cultural background as well as interpreting/assessing a child's behavior in light of social and cultural context.
- **Intentionality** Continuously adjusting, changing, and planning for experiences that will promote children's learning and development.

family, community, culture, language, and social group. Finally, they consider the child's past experiences and current circumstances. When you do this, you will see children in your class *as they are* and you will be able to make curriculum decisions that are meaningful and developmentally appropriate for each of them. Figure 1.1 provides a summary of developmentally appropriate practice.



In this video you will see two developmentally appropriate kindergarten programs.

Watch 5:24–5:56 to see children playing with blocks and hear teachers talking about the value of blocks. Identify 2 concepts you see children exploring.

In segment 16:28–18:28, you can see a teacher presenting math concepts in a developmentally appropriate way. What part of her teaching is geared to the developmental characteristics of 5-year-olds?

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ah_vyPNGrDk

Family, Culture, and Community

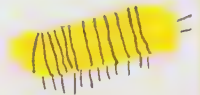
What you teach and the way you teach should be respectful and inclusive of children's families. Their families reflect the characteristics and values of their culture and community. As you plan curriculum, you might want to ask yourself: What do these families believe is important for children to learn? How can the families and their cultures serve as resources for curriculum? What contributions can the community make?

What's Worth Knowing?

Curriculum has little value if the content isn't worthwhile to the learner. What is worth knowing when you are a young child? Children want to know many things about the world in which they live. They want to know about themselves, about how to get along with others and care for their own needs, about their families and communities, and about the natural and physical aspects of their world. You can see this as you observe a 1-year-old's fascination with water, a 2-year-old's triumphant "Me do it!," a 3-year-old's obsession with trucks, a 4-year-old's passion for firefighters, or a 6-year-old's infatuation for horses.

When we ask our college students to reflect on what they wanted to know when they were young children, their memories are rich and sometimes surprising. They wanted to know about birth and death; the moon and the stars; where rainbows come from and where they go; the nature of God; what makes sand; divorce and conflict; power and authority; the workings of the

Reflect on something you wanted to know when you were a child . . .



Remember a time when you were a child and you really wanted to know something. What did you want to know about? Why was it important to you? What did you do to find out? What did you learn? How was this similar to or different from what you did in school?

plumbing and the workings of the mind; the structure of their bodies and the structure of a worm. With few exceptions, they found the answers outside of school.

Children want and need to know complex things about complex topics. But schools often limit curriculum for young children to simple facts to recite: shapes and colors, the alphabet, and numbers. We maintain that for curriculum to be *of worth* to young children it must be based on the genuine investigation of a topic that has intellectual significance—in other words, something that is real, that requires real study and thought. In this book, we will give you examples of such investigations drawn from real classrooms we have known and worked in.

✓ **Assess Your Learning 1.2:** Click here to assess your understanding of the concepts in this section.

What Teachers Need to Know to Plan Early Childhood Curriculum

You bring some basic knowledge and skills to your work as a teacher. You have physical skills; you know how to take care of yourself and relate to others; you can read, write, and compute; you know things about science and nature, the structure of society, and the arts. You know how to find out the answers to questions. These things will help you to teach—but you need to know more than these basics to be an early childhood educator.

You also need to have the attributes of an educated person—an inquiring mind, an appreciation for culture and the arts, an awareness of others, and an interest in the world around you. In your teaching you will draw on these things, along with specialized knowledge in child development and curriculum.

Child Development

Early childhood teachers need to know about young children and how they develop and learn in order to design and implement meaningful and appropriate learning experiences for them. They need to understand that all aspects of development are interdependent. This means that curriculum subjects are not distinct entities, but rather these are naturally interwoven in the child's exploration and play.

The 4-year-old class took a trip to the zoo yesterday. Today, Kurt, Shauna, Max, and Kauri go to the block area. Their teacher suggests that they might build the zoo. They create enclosures around the animals and make a path on which several dollhouse people are placed. Shauna picks up a zebra and puts it in with the lions. Kauri says, "NO! The lions will bite the zebras!" The two argue about the placement of the zebras. The teacher asks the children to think of some ways to put the lions and the zebras together so the zebras won't get hurt. The girls build a nearby enclosure for zebras. Kurt and Max create a wall of blocks that encircles the entire block area. Another child stumbles over it. Max and Kurt yell and the teacher asks, "What could you do so people would know that they should be more careful?" Max goes to the writing center and makes a sign that says ZU! STP! He tapes it to the wall and the teacher suggests that he tell the other children about the sign and what it means.

These children were engaged in a planned inquiry activity designed to help them build an awareness of a social studies concept (street signs are provided in communities to ensure public safety). But they were also engaged in a satisfying play experience during which they were building motor coordination, using language, developing social problem-solving abilities, and gaining literacy skills.

Your study of child development will inform your teaching. Your knowledge of the theories of Maslow will help you realize that children's basic needs must be met before they are able to engage with learning skills and concepts. You have learned about the theories of Piaget and know that children's thinking and learning differs from that of adults. You know they *construct* concepts when they are actively engaged in working and interacting with people and objects. So you will support their play. You have learned about the theories of Vygotsky and know that children's learning is shaped by their social experiences and by interactions with peers, older children, and adults. So you will be sure to provide *scaffolding* to help children to learn. You also will embrace the children's cultures and will invite their families to participate in activities in your program. You have learned about Gardner's multiple intelligences theory and know that each child has unique talents and strengths, so you will strive to identify these strengths and use them to plan effective ways to teach concepts and nurture potential.

Table 1.1 offers a review of how child development theory and what we know about how children learn informs the ways we plan and carry out appropriate curriculum.

You also need to understand how children's modes of learning change throughout the early childhood years. Your teaching should reflect the characteristics of the age and stage of development of the children you teach.

Try It Out!

Consider the vignette describing children creating a zoo in the block area. Think of three things a teacher could do to support the children's interest and expand their learning.



Watch this video to learn more about how young children learn. What do you notice about the ways the teachers in the video respond to the age and individuality of the children?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TLi0mvqIWik>

Early Childhood Curriculum

Good early childhood curriculum includes the opportunities for meaningful self-selected play experiences that you will provide for children in your program. It also includes the guided activities that you will implement with individual children and with groups to help them learn. The planned curriculum will address all domains of development (physical, cognitive, language, social, emotional) and at the same time help children develop understanding and skill in one or more subject areas (e.g., math, literature, art). Each subject area in the early childhood curriculum can contribute to all domains of the child's development, but can be seen as primarily emphasizing one or two areas. In this book, we will



Jeff Reese

TABLE 1.1 How Child Development Theory Informs Curriculum

Child Development Theory	Theorist	Implications for Curriculum Planning
Their needs for safety, security, and love are met	Abraham Maslow	Schedules are planned to meet children's physical and social needs
They have opportunities to be actively engaged with objects and people in order to create understanding	Jean Piaget	Real-life experiences are central to the focus of study Most activities are play based
They experience a variety of social interactions with peers, older children and adults	Lev Vygotsky	Activities are planned to encourage social interaction and problem solving Teachers scaffold children's learning; e.g., they offer the smallest amount of assistance possible in order for children to achieve tasks Families are welcomed into all aspects of the program
Their unique skills and talents are valued and they engage in experiences that employ these in a meaningful way	Howard Gardner	A variety of teaching strategies and types of activities are used to teach concepts and skills in each curriculum area

talk about subject areas in clusters that relate to each domain of development. But we keep in mind that subject matter is never neatly divided—children's experience of planned curriculum is always multifaceted.

It is important for you to understand curriculum areas (e.g., what constitutes the curriculum subject and why it is important) and young children's development in relation to the curriculum area (e.g., what you can expect children at a particular age to be able to do and understand). You also need to understand early childhood curriculum content (i.e., what we are trying to teach in each curriculum area). It is our intent that the following chapters will help you acquire this knowledge.

Early Learning Standards

We are living at a time when standards drive much of what we do in education. States' education departments, organizations of curriculum content specialists, and some nations have created standards that provide guidelines for selecting and evaluating curriculum. Teachers in K–12 programs in public schools and state-funded programs for 4-year-olds are almost universally required to address state standards in their teaching. Many must also address **Common Core standards** in mathematics and English language arts/literacy (ELA) that outline what a student should know and be able to do at the end of each grade. Thoughtfully constructed and well-written standards can help teachers

identify what content is most useful and important to students at particular ages and grades.

Every state in the United States and many nations also have **early learning standards** for preschool children. These standards reflect what early childhood educators believe is essential knowledge and skills for young children. When these standards are designed to reflect knowledge of how young children learn, they can help you in the complex task of designing curriculum.

Standards can be useful, but they can also be controversial. There is tension because early childhood educators have found that the ways in which children learn (holistically and self-paced, through integrated activities like play) are not compatible with standards that narrowly define what children should know and be able to do, or that focus only on the subject areas of literacy and math.

It is important to remember that there are many things that early learning standards do not address. Lilian Katz (2007) suggests that a more appropriate approach would be to look at *standards of experience*. Katz suggests that we should ask ourselves if young children have frequent opportunities to engage in many experiences, such as intellectual engagement, absorbing and challenging activities, taking initiative and accepting responsibilities, experiencing the satisfaction of overcoming obstacles and solving problems, and applying literacy and numeracy skills in purposeful ways.



Watch this video for an overview of the concerns about the use of standards in early childhood education from Lilian Katz and the organization *Defending the Early Years*. Do Katz's concerns seem valid to you? How does your experience as a student confirm or deny her ideas?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e53S8dnh0IM>

✓ **Assess Your Learning 1.3:** Click here to assess your understanding of the concepts in this section.

How Early Childhood Curriculum Is Organized

Curriculum in early childhood programs can be organized in different ways. You probably remember **subject-based curriculum** from your elementary school experience. This approach to curriculum focuses on one subject area at a time (math, science, reading) and is organized into discrete blocks of time. Subject-based organization is still typical of teaching in most elementary schools, but it is not the approach that we advocate in developmentally appropriate early childhood programs. In this book, we will focus on the **learner-centered** and **integrated approaches to curriculum** that we think are most effective for teaching young children.

Learner-Centered Organization

Learner-centered curriculum is based on the developmental stage, needs, and interests of children. When this approach to curriculum is used, teachers provide some preplanned activities and ensure that children have large blocks of time to play and explore in a planned environment. Teachers make changes in the environment in response to their observations of children.

Some educators believe that all learning experiences should be based on children's interests. They feel that imposing activities that originate from outside sources is counterproductive because children will fail to engage with the content. They plan activities that emerge from observations of children and are based on children's interests. For this reason, this type of organization is often called **emergent curriculum**.

A learner-centered organization is appropriate all or part of the time in early childhood classrooms. It is the best way to plan for infants and toddlers, and is appropriate for much of the curriculum for two-year-olds and young three-year-olds. It is also appropriate for older preschoolers, kindergartners, and primary-age children. However, because it is determined by what children bring to the educational experience, emergent curriculum alone may leave gaps in what is learned and may not be sufficient to provide intellectual challenge and stimulation as children get older.

Integrated Organization

Integrated organization refers to curriculum in which a topic of study provides a focus for the curriculum, serving as an umbrella for different developmental and subject areas. In an integrated study, children investigate a topic in depth over a period of time. The topic forms the hub for curriculum in many different subject areas. Children's interests or the teacher's ideas about what children would enjoy or benefit from can be sources of the topic. *Unit planning, thematic planning, integrated study, and project approach* are all forms of integrated organization. They are similar, but each has a somewhat different emphasis.

An integrated approach reflects the idea that children learn holistically. It is mindful of the idea of multiple intelligences—that is, that individuals learn best through their particular strengths or intelligences. Good integrated curriculum provides many different avenues for learning about and exploring a topic. A topic of study can be tailored to fit the learning styles of a group of children and also be made appropriate for the needs of individual children in the group. This is particularly important when you consider ways to include children with disabilities or those who are dual language learners.

Advocates of this approach believe that integrated organization is appropriate and effective, especially for children 4 years and older. For example, a preschool class we know was studying birds. The children had many real experiences with birds in the classroom, in the yard, in the forest, and at the zoo. They hatched eggs and raised quails, painted and drew birds, sang songs about birds, read about birds, played with lifelike models of birds, and created their own books about birds.

We have also seen the integrated approach used effectively with much younger children when the topic was carefully selected, with activities matched to their stage of development. For example, in a toddler classroom we know, the children's activities for several weeks were focused on water. Children *experienced* water in many forms—for washing, playing, drinking. It was a wonderful and appropriate exploration of the nature of water, quite different from a study of water in a kindergarten or 4-year-old class.

An integrated study of a topic contributes to children's growing awareness, skill, and understanding in many areas simultaneously. It provides opportunities for children to have many direct and meaningful experiences with the world. Used thoughtfully, it helps children to understand that learning is connected to life. For

these reasons, we think that integrated organization is the most effective way to plan curriculum for older preschool, kindergarten, or primary school children. In our experience, it also makes teaching more interesting, exciting, and satisfying.

✓ **Assess Your Learning 1.4:** Click here to assess your understanding of the concepts in this section.

The Process of Designing Curriculum

Young children are learning all the time and from all their experiences, both in and out of school. Much of what they learn comes through the routines, relationships, and incidental encounters they have with people, places, and objects. They learn through their own self-directed play. For very young children, relationships, learning environments, and routines *are* their curriculum; as children grow older, these continue to provide the foundation for a meaningful curriculum.

Because children are so interested in the world around them, the choices about the content of the curriculum you provide are almost infinite. Your choices must be thoughtful and appropriate for the children with whom you work. The question you must ask yourself is, “How, when, and in what ways do I want to participate in this natural process of children learning about the world?”

The first thing to do when designing curriculum is to observe your group of children carefully. Based on your observations, you can then begin to select content, identify objectives, and decide on teaching strategies. You can then plan and create an environment for this curriculum—organize space and time, select and develop materials. Then you can begin to interact with children in play and during planned activities to help them acquire knowledge, skills, and **dispositions** (tendencies to think, feel, or act in a particular way sometimes referred to as **attitudes** or **habits of mind**).

It is obvious when you talk to any children about their life in school that whatever the planned curriculum, it is the life of the classroom that is most important to the child—the quality of the snack, the length of time spent outdoors, the teacher, friends, and toys are more significant and memorable than the quality of the learning experiences. In fact, we know that these things are important even to adult learners.

Relationships, routines, and spontaneous play remain important activities throughout the early childhood years. As children get older, however, teachers can begin to teach specific concepts and to develop skills and attitudes in planned activities led by a teacher. They can also plan to teach through play in a planned learning environment.

There are many strategies for teaching every curriculum area, and there are an infinite number of activities that can interest children and support their learning. The art of teaching is putting the content, strategies and activities together in ways that are interesting to and effective for every learner. As you build these skills and practice them, you will learn to articulate to others how different activities and teaching methods contribute to children’s development and learning.

✓ **Assess Your Learning 1.5:** Click here to assess your understanding of the concepts in this section.

Young children learn by doing, observing, and interacting in play. As they organize knowledge and information acquired through play, they construct understanding. You will guide them on this voyage of discovery and help them to know about the world in which they live. As you do so, you support their natural curiosity, develop their love of learning, and help them to become the thinkers and problem solvers of the future.

There are many ways to organize curriculum to ensure that you provide a full range of appropriate activities for the children in your program. No single “right way” prescribes how to think about or teach a particular subject to young children, although some ways are “wrong” because they do not reflect what we know about how children learn.

Your choices about teaching are the way you touch the future. As you learn to be an early childhood educator, you will have opportunities to learn much more about curriculum. We created this chapter to give you an overview of curriculum for young children—a framework onto which you can add the practical details you will need to actually teach. We applaud you as you begin this adventure.

At the end of this and the rest of the chapters that follow, you will find:

- Suggestions for things you can do to continue to learn about the topics presented in the chapter.
- A final assessment.

What to Do Next



Read

Select one of the books or articles from the bibliography and read more about early childhood curriculum—its sources, foundational knowledge, and organization.

Investigate

Go online to find out more about early childhood curriculum. Here are a few websites to look at:

- **Defending the Early Years** is the website of a group of well-respected educators and advocates who seek to rally educators to take action on policies that affect the education of young children, in particular inappropriate standards, assessments, and classroom practices.
- **Community Playthings** is an educational equipment provider. Its website has many articles about play; some are written by notable early childhood educators and researchers
- **Early childhood professional organizations** have websites with articles, position statements, video links, and interest forums. While those of your own country directly address early childhood education in your nation, other countries also offer useful resources. Websites include *Asia-Pacific Regional Network for Early Childhood*, *Association for Childhood Education International (ACEI)* *Canadian Child Care*

Federation, *The Canadian Association for Young Children (CAYC)* *Early Childhood Association-India*, *Early Childhood Australia*, *Early Childhood Council* (New Zealand), *Early Education* (UK), *NAECCEM* (Malaysia), *the National Association for the Education of Young Children—USA (NAEYC)* *National Day Nurseries Association* (UK), *South African Congress for Early Childhood Development*, and *World Organisation for Early Childhood Education (OMEP)*.

- **The International Play Association (IPA)** is an international nongovernmental organization that provides a forum for exchange and action to protect, preserve, and promote the child's right to play as a fundamental human right.

Explore and Experience

Attend a conference, workshop, or seminar. put on by your local early child professional association, resource and referral organization, or early childhood club. Talk to more experienced educators about their views on early childhood curriculum.

Interview your grandparent or someone your grandparent's age. Ask this elder to tell you about his or her early education (preschool, kindergarten, or first grade). Consider how this is the same as or different from your experience and the experience of children today.

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Jeff Reese

There is no such thing as a free lunch.

WINSTON CHURCHILL



chapter two

PLANNING, IMPLEMENTING, AND ASSESSING CURRICULUM

Learning Outcomes

In this chapter, you will learn to:

1. Explain the purpose and elements of different kinds of plans.
2. Describe what teachers need to know before they plan.
3. Write activity or lesson plans.
4. Write weekly plans.

What is a plan? In everyday life, simply having a predetermined idea of what you are going to do is a plan (“I plan to go dancing this weekend”). But in working with young children, a plan is a written blueprint for teaching.

Learning about curriculum and learning about planning, teaching, and assessing children go hand in hand. You can’t plan until you understand what you’re going to teach. But we believe that you need to know how to create plans, how to implement them, and how to assess their effectiveness so you can practice what you are learning about curriculum. For this reason, we ask our students to practice writing and implementing plans as a part of the process of learning about curriculum. Our goal is to help you understand planning and to develop the ability to create useful, complete, and appropriate written plans. As you read and reflect on this chapter, we hope it helps you to develop the disposition to plan thoughtfully for your work with children.

Why Do Teachers Plan?

By failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail.

Benjamin Franklin

While no teacher writes plans for every moment of the day, virtually all teachers create some form of written plan for their work with children. Why? When you first start to teach, your reasons for having plans are much the same as your reasons for following a recipe when you cook—you want a good result! You want to know what you're doing and make sure you have everything you need. You plan in order to avoid unpleasant surprises. You plan as a guide for teaching.

As a student, Eva was hired as an assistant teacher in the campus childcare center. Every week, Kathy, the lead teacher, planned the curriculum and Eva assisted. Eva loved singing songs, reading stories, and playing with children. She had learned to write lesson plans in her college classes, but she didn't enjoy writing them. She thought they were phony, boring, and unresponsive to children. And they weren't very much like the weekly calendar that Kathy put up every week.

When Kathy went on a week's vacation, Eva was left in charge, with Jenny, the aide, to assist. Eva decided that she would not create any plans for the week; instead, she would follow the children's interests. They would have a great time!

Monday morning, Eva walked into the classroom a few minutes before the children arrived. She put out paints at the easel and filled the water table with soapy water. She looked at the art supplies and toys in the cupboards and pulled out a bunch of materials Kathy had never taken out before.

The children dove into the new materials. Soapy water in the water table was a big success, and soon soapy water soaked the carpet. There was glue, sequins, and glitter on the floor. No child was able to put together the new, hard puzzles—they left the pieces all mixed up and some fell under the table. By lunch, manipulative toys were strewn about the classroom, books lay on the floor, and the dishes, dolls, and clothes in the home area were all stuffed in the toy refrigerator. While Eva and Jenny picked up, a child painted on the wall. They had to skip story time and singing to clean up the mess.

This vignette describes an experience that one of the authors had when she did not plan during her first week of being the teacher in charge. In addition to guiding your teaching and avoiding disasters, you will write plans for other reasons: to make sure you have created learning experiences for the children that are responsive to them both as individuals and as a group—their strengths, interests, and needs; to share with families and colleagues; and to meet your professional obligations to address standards and program expectations.

What you plan and the amount of detail you write will vary with your program, training, experience, and personal style of teaching. But, because you are a teacher, you will create written plans.

Kinds of Plans

When early childhood educators use the word *plan*, they usually have one of these meanings in mind.

1. **Activity or lesson plan.** A detailed written outline for a specific learning activity is called an *activity plan* or *lesson plan*. College students learn to write

detailed activity/lesson plans as part of the process of learning to teach. In the real world, teachers write simplified versions of these college exercises. Preschool teachers typically write **activity plans** for teaching that requires careful sequencing. This reflects the individual and spontaneous nature of teaching children under age five. Most elementary and special educators write **lesson plans** for each of the subjects they teach each day reflecting both the more formal nature of schools for primary children and accountability requirements in publically funded programs.

2. **Weekly plan.** Regardless of whether they write detailed activity/lesson plans, most teachers write a *weekly plan*, a calendar of activities to be accomplished over the course of a week. Weekly plans are necessarily quite brief. Usually they include the names of activities and the time slot in which they will take place. They help you to visualize your week, anticipate what you will need, and communicate what will happen to others, but they don't include much detail about how the activities will be taught or why they have been chosen.
3. **Integrated study plan.** An outline of several weeks of activities, spanning several different content areas (subjects like math, art, or literacy) based on a topic of study is called an *integrated study*, a *unit plan*, or a *theme*. Like activity/lesson plans and weekly plans, they vary in length, detail, and format.

You will see examples of activity and weekly plans in this chapter.

Elements of a Plan

Whether you are drafting an integrated study, outlining a week, or detailing a specific activity, every written educational plan involves the same essential elements: **purpose** (why you are teaching), **content** (what you will teach), **methods** (how you will teach), and **assessment** (how you will know whether you achieved your purpose). But educational plans differ in the amount of specific detail they provide.

Purpose

Every plan has an educational **purpose**, something you are trying to accomplish. Statements of purpose can be called **goals**, **objectives**, or **outcomes**. Each term has a slightly different meaning and a distinction can be made between them.

Goals are broad statements of desired ends toward which teaching is directed (e.g., a goal of the early childhood curriculum is to help children express ideas creatively). Goals are generally not accomplished in a single activity. Goal statements are usually found in overall curriculum documents or in the preamble to an integrated study plan. They are not found in activity plans or in weekly plans.

A purpose that is specific and immediate (e.g., to teach the words to a song) is usually called an **objective** (sometimes a **learner outcome**). You may feel confused when you hear these words used interchangeably or if two of your professors or colleagues use different words. Just as you can refer to scarlet, crimson, or ruby to mean red, you can use the words objective, goal, or outcome to mean purpose. And being purposeful is the most important part of planning—not which word you use.



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Content

Because many adults believe that young children know little, possess few technical skills, play a great deal, and require much care from adults, they think that what we teach young children must be extraordinarily simple. However, young children are more capable than many believe; as Loris Malaguzzi, founder of the schools of Reggio Emilia, said, “the child is rich in resources, strong, and competent” (Edwards, Gandini, & Forman, 2011). Good early childhood curriculum content is similarly rich and complex. Understanding it requires intellect and attention. As an early childhood teacher, you will be a scholar whose field of expertise is how children learn. Of the six NAEYC standards for professional early childhood educators, three relate to understanding curriculum and how children learn. These are:

Standard 1: Promoting Child Development and Learning

Standard 3: Observing, Documenting and Assessing to Support Young Children and Families

Standard 5: Using Content Knowledge to Build Meaningful Curriculum

Methods

Many **strategies** or **methods** can be used to deliver curriculum content. One of the pleasures of teaching young children is that there are many different ways to teach. For example, to teach children that *A garden is a place that people create to grow plants*, you might take a trip to a botanical garden, create a garden on your playground, read story books featuring gardens, sing a song about planting flowers in a garden, create a garden with table blocks, make a terrarium, or paint a picture of a nearby garden. One of the challenges of teaching young children is selecting methods that both engage children and help them learn things that are meaningful about the world. Being able to do this requires knowledge of child development and sensitivity to children as individual learners—the core of what is known as *developmentally appropriate practice*.

Assessment

Assessment of what children have learned is also a part of planned curriculum. How will you know whether children have really learned what you tried to teach? In early childhood settings, especially with children from infancy through kindergarten, assessment is most often done by observing and analyzing what children say and do. Their actions, words, and the work they create (drawings, constructions, etc.) provide you with **evidence** of children’s acquisition of concepts, skills, and **dispositions** (habits of mind, or tendencies to behave in particular ways, such as curiosity). To document (make a record of) this evidence, teachers write **anecdotal records**, take photographs, make video and audio recordings, and collect **work samples**. Examples of several kinds of assessments are included in this chapter. Figure 2.1 shows an example of an anecdotal record; Figure 2.2 shows an annotated work sample; and Figure 2.3 shows an annotated photograph.

FIGURE 2.1 Example of an Anecdotal Record

Date: 10/18

Anela reached her hand toward Gabrielle at nap time. Gabrielle put her hand into Anela’s for just a few seconds. Then she put her blanket into Anela’s hand and said, “Here you can hold my blanket, your hand is cold.”

Comment: Makes conclusion based on observation.

FIGURE 2.2 Example of an Annotated Work Sample

Date: 10/21

Following a trip to a family home near Kahaluu stream, K. created this artwork. Note the images of crayfish to the right of the staircase leading down to the stream. Each has six legs and one has feelers. When questioned, K. explained that the round objects were rocks in the stream.

Comment: Demonstrates awareness of the features of animals as well as geographic awareness.



FIGURE 2.3 Example of an Annotated Photograph

Date: 02/08

After hearing a poem about a “hippo sandwich” (“How to make a hippo sandwich” by Shel Silverstein), H. drew and painted two pictures of “hippo sandwiches” (see work sample and photograph).

Comment: Expresses ideas through art.



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This kind of tangible evidence is called **documentation**. Part of the planning process involves thinking about which actions, words, or work will genuinely demonstrate children’s learning and what form of documentation will accurately capture it. In settings with older children, samples of writing, math, and other academic work also serve as evidence.

Purpose, content, methods, and assessment interact with one another. To achieve a particular purpose (e.g., to learn that gardens are created by people and to communicate what is known), you select the content and methods (visiting, then creating a garden and explaining the process). The methods will determine what kind of evidence will be available for you to analyze (e.g., the children’s pages from a class-made book about their garden). What you assess depends on your purpose. (Do the class-made book pages include descriptions or drawings of people creating gardens?)

✓ **Assess Your Learning 2.1:** Click here to assess your understanding of the concepts in this section.