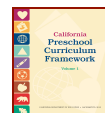




Unit 1: Introduction to the Framework

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



Focus Statement

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

Before You Start

This key topic is designed to acquaint students with the curriculum-planning process as described in Chapter 1 of the *California Preschool Curriculum Framework, Volume 1* (PCF, V1) on pages 19-24. It is intended to support students in furthering their understanding of the components of the process: observation and documentation, reflection and discussion, planning and implementation. The importance of partnering with families throughout this process is also emphasized.

This is not a deep introduction to the practice of observation or assessment or curriculum planning, though it addresses all of these. It will be important, as students work through the PCF, V1, that they understand the recommended planning process that is presented in the framework. Further use of the curriculum-planning process is described in Unit 7 as a way to integrate curriculum planning across developmental domains.

Before you ask students to begin the active learning exercises, it is recommended that you become familiar with the graphic on page 20 of the PCF, V1. You will need to use chart paper or some other large sheets to reproduce a version of that graphic on a wall. Students will then attach definitions that they develop. An LCD projector can be used to project the image as well. See slide 2 in the accompanying key topic PowerPoint.

The first part of this exercise (“Getting it started”) could be done by students individually out of class and then brought to class for the rest of the work.

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

Information Delivery



Slide 2

The following are key concepts for this topic:

- The curriculum-planning process is a recurring process; there is always some part of it that is engaged.
- The graphic on page 20 of the PCF, V1 illustrates the process as a recurring cycle. “Document” in that graphic refers to the process described in that box: observe, reflect, record.
- Documentation is a process as well as a product.

Active Learning



Slide 3

Getting it started

Have students work in pairs or small groups and ask them to use the text on pages 19-24 in the framework to develop definitions—not examples—for the following components of the curriculum planning process:

- Observation
- Documentation
- Reflection
- Planning
- Implementing
- Partnering with families
- Connecting to home and community

Some students find it difficult to distinguish between definitions and examples, so it might take some discussion to clarify this. Also, some of these components have readily available definitions while others do not, so developing definitions might require some extra effort for some groups. Make sure each group has read through the text because some of these terms have more than one potential definition.

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

Keeping it going

When you have one definition for each component, ask someone to write it out on a sheet that is large enough for all to see. This can also be done on a computer and shown with an LCD projector, if that equipment is available.

Assemble, on a wall or some space such as a whiteboard where all students can see it, a large version of the graphic on page 20 of the PCF, V1. Attach or include the definitions for observation, documentation, reflection, planning, and implementing onto this larger graphic. Review this expanded image of the planning process by reading through it with students.

Taking it further

Now ask students where in that process they could partner with families, according to the definition developed, and indicate that in the larger graphic. Then ask the same about connecting to home and community experiences and indicate that in the larger process also.

If possible, make copies of the expanded graphic for students so that they can have it available as they go through the PCF, V1.

Putting it together

Depending on the focus of your particular course or students, you could continue the work on this key topic by asking a few practicing professionals to take part in a panel discussion. The discussion could center on how this process functions in an ongoing program.

It might be helpful to ask participants to bring any planning forms that they use regularly in their programs.

Students can generate questions in advance, but try to keep the questions focused on the curriculum-planning process as it is described in the PCF, V1.

Here are some possible questions:

- How are observations recorded?
- How is reflection supported and facilitated?
- How and when does planning occur? Who is involved?
- How are families involved in the planning process?



Slide 4

Reflection

The following questions can be used to support reflection on this key topic. These can be done as a journaling exercise or as a class discussion.



Slide 5

- Were there any new insights in this key topic?
- How did this new information surprise you?
- What was familiar?
- How can you use this in your work now or in the future?
- What additional information would you like to know that relates to this key topic?
- How could you get that information?

Deeper Understanding

Students can have deeper experience with the curriculum process across domains in Unit 7 of this instructional guide in Key Topics 1 and 2. The following exercise can be used for students if you might not be using Unit 7 in your class or as a way to look ahead to Unit 7.

There are several frequently used early care and education curricula that also suggest a curriculum-planning process. Ask students to find one or two of these. If students are currently working in an early care and education program, be sure they include the planning process they use, either from a commercial curriculum they use or from what has been developed within their program. Ask them to compare the curriculum-planning process in the PCF, V1 to the process in each of these other curricula. The following questions could be used in the comparison:



Slide 6

- Are the components the same?
- Is the cycle the same?
- Where are there differences?
- What do these similarities and differences say about the curriculum-planning process in early care and education?