EXPLORING CALIFORNIA’S PRESCHOOL FOUNDATIONS IN LANGUAGE AND LITERACY: A TRAINING AND CURRICULUM GUIDE FOR PRESCHOOL TEACHERS

Crystal L. Shatara
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A Project

by

Crystal L. Shatara

Approved by:

__________________________________, Committee Chair
Zephaniah T. Davis, Ph.D.

____________________________
Date
Student: Crystal L. Shatara

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__________________________, Graduate Coordinator       ________________
Deidre B. Sessoms, Ph.D.        Date

Department of Teacher Education
Abstract

of

EXPLORING CALIFORNIA’S PRESCHOOL FOUNDATIONS IN LANGUAGE AND LITERACY: A TRAINING AND CURRICULUM GUIDE FOR PRESCHOOL TEACHERS

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Crystal L. Shatara

The purpose of this project was to recognize the need for professional development for preschool educators, while introducing the California Preschool Learning Foundations. This project describes what we know about Piagetian theory, recognizes the Reggio Emilia Approach as an application to that theory, and the importance of play in early childhood education. The result of the review of literature includes a workshop and training guide for preschool teachers introducing the California Preschool Foundations in Language and Literacy and incorporates an active learning approach.
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgments ........................................................................................................ v

Chapter

1. INTRODUCTION ................................................................................................. 1
   Statement of the Purpose of the Project ........................................................... 1
   Significance of the Project ............................................................................... 2
   Limitations of the Project ................................................................................. 3
   Definition of Terms .......................................................................................... 3

2. PROJECT BACKGROUND AND REVIEW OF LITERATURE ........................ 5
   The Need for Continuing Professional Development for Preschool Teachers ............................................................................................................. 5
   Early Childhood Development ....................................................................... 6
   The Reggio Approach of Early Childhood Instruction .................................. 15
   The Role of Play in Early Childhood Development and Learning ............ 19
   Summary ......................................................................................................... 26

3. METHOD ............................................................................................................ 28
   Audience ......................................................................................................... 28
   Curriculum ..................................................................................................... 28
   Procedure ....................................................................................................... 30

4. FINDINGS ........................................................................................................... 32
   Discussion of Literature Review .................................................................... 32
   Workshop and Curriculum Guide Discussion ............................................... 33

Appendix A. California Preschool Foundations Language and Literacy .......... 36
Appendix B. A Preschool Educators Guide to Teaching California’s Preschool Learning Foundations in Language and Literacy ......................... 40
Appendix C. Power Point Presentation for the Workshop Exploring California’s Preschool Foundations in Language and Literacy .......................... 56
References .................................................................................................................. 67
Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Since childhood, I knew I wanted to become a teacher, so I attended college, started working as a teacher’s aide, and worked my way up to a preschool teacher as I continued my education. When I became a preschool teacher, I had an Associate of Arts degree, which included 12 Early Childhood Education units; the minimum requirement to be a fully qualified preschool teacher in California. Being a fully qualified preschool teacher means that you can be left alone with no more than 12 children in some programs, but it does not assure that the preschool teacher is ready to prepare preschool children to undertake the California kindergarten standards. Therefore, workshops for current and future preschool teachers to introduce and underscore basic understanding of California’s preschool foundations in language and literacy are definitely advisable. Arguably, they are even necessary to enable preschool teachers to help students meet these standards. That is the problem. Furthermore, it is advisable also for such workshops to include ideas, projects, and activities preschool teachers can use in their classroom to ensure children gain the foundations they need to enter kindergarten.

Statement of the Purpose of the Project

The purpose of the project was to plan a workshop to prepare preschool educators with the basic understandings of California’s Preschool Learning Foundations in language and literacy, and to develop an interactive guide for modeling
ideas projects and activities for use in preschool classrooms to help children establish foundations for kindergarten. Creating a workshop and guide constitute professional development for preschool teachers.

**Significance of the Project**

There are many types of preschool programs including state preschools, Head Start, corporate and franchised centers, private, and home based preschools. Each of these programs have or should have a set of standards or foundations teachers use as a guide to direct children’s learning in preparation for kindergarten. Where do these programs get these standards? The California Department of Education (CDE) has issued a set of foundations available for educators of every type of preschool program. The state funded preschools will be required implement them fully, beginning in the 2011-2012 school year.

On January 22, 2008, State Superintendent of Public Instruction Jack O'Connell formally released the *California Preschool Learning Foundations, Volume 1*. Superintendent O'Connell stated that these foundations offer our early childhood educators a clear understanding of what our youngest learners should know before entering kindergarten. (California Department of Education, 2009, para. 1)

This project focuses on the core foundation of language and literacy and gives educators developmentally appropriate activities and teaching strategies to implement into their current preschool curriculum. The workshop will also serve as a community
for child development professionals to share their experiences teaching language and literacy foundations, and become a stepping stone for life-long partnerships in the child development community.

**Limitations of the Project**

The California Preschool Learning Foundations are a new phenomenon in the field of child development, and for now will only be required in state-funded preschools. For all of the other types of preschools who have their own curriculum and standards in place, why would they want to attend a workshop based on foundations released by the CDE? The CDE has released these Foundations for all preschool programs benefit. These workshops not only give an overview of the foundations in language and literacy, but also give educators teaching strategies and developmentally appropriate activities to use with their current curriculum.

**Definition of Terms**

**California Preschool Foundations**

California Department of Education (2009) describes the foundations in the following:

…*foundations* describe the knowledge, skills, and competencies that children typically attain at around 48 and 60 months of age when they participate in a high-quality preschool program and with adequate support. The foundations define "destination points" for where children are going (in terms of development) during this age range. They also help to inform practitioners
about children’s academic and social development so that decisions can be made to support children’s curriculum and growth. (para. 2)

**Developmentally Appropriate Activities**

Open ended activities that are meaningful to the child and explored in a variety of ways where the teacher can foster learning by asking meaningful open-ended questions.

**Preschool**

A setting in which three to five year olds learn in a variety of ways the basic framework of their future education, including language and literacy skills, mathematics, social-emotional development, science, etc.
Chapter 2

PROJECT BACKGROUND AND REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The purpose of this project was to prepare a workshop-training guide for preschool teachers on (a) how children in preschool actively learn, (b) why preschool is important for children, and (c) to examine California’s language and literacy foundations. Historically as the number of children attending preschool has increased, so has the focus on preschool education and kindergarten readiness. The percentage of three and four-year-olds enrolled in preschool programs has tripled since 1970 (Karoly & Bigelow, 2005). Parents, researchers and educators recognize the importance of preschool in children’s education today, and they tend to concur that improving it will enhance children’s opportunity to succeed in school.

This chapter presents research describing what we know about the need for continuing professional development for preschool teachers, and then what research tells about early childhood education. Next, it characterizes the Reggio Emelia approach to early childhood instruction an approach that applies Piagetian theory to a considerable extent. Finally, the literature review concludes with an explanation of the role of play in child development and learning.

The Need for Continuing Professional Development for Preschool Teachers

Articulation between preschool education and kindergarten is important because preschool students should have the foundations needed to enter kindergarten. Currently there are no courses in regional community colleges or professional
development workshops for preschools that teach educators how to prepare children for preschool using developmentally appropriate activities and California’s Preschool Learning Foundations in language and literacy. At this time however, there are many different programs available for children, each one using different educational philosophies of child development to teach preschool children. The California Preschool Foundations includes four areas: social-emotional development, language and literacy, English-language development, and mathematics. Yet, simply making them available to educators does not guarantee the developmental appropriateness of curricular instruction. Since the release of these foundations, the California Department of Education’s Child Development Division has and will continue to sponsor training seminars for educators. However, these seminars still do not teach educators how to teach the curriculum. Thus, the lack of articulation support currently available in the region undermines the implementation of the standards as directed in the mandate by California State Superintendent, Jack O’Connell (CDE, 2009).

**Early Childhood Development**

According to educational philosophers and theorists, children physically become capable of experiencing their world through stages of cognitive milestones. Jean Piaget born in Switzerland in 1896 popularized a theory of child development, widely accepted today. Piaget's children became the focus of his research and theory of child development. Bjorklund (2005) summarized his conclusions in the following statement.
Piaget was a stage theorist. . . Piaget did not view cognitive development as the gradual accretion of knowledge or skills. Rather, he viewed cognitive development as a series of transformations, with children's thinking going through a series of abrupt changes over relatively brief periods of time. (p. 79)

Piaget divided cognitive development into four major stages; sensorimotor, preoperations, concrete operations, and formal operations. According to the theory, children develop in these stages in a precise order and no stage may be skipped before moving onto the next because the cognitive capabilities inherent in each stage are collectively prerequisite foundations to each stage that follows. Briefly, the sensorimotor stage, which is the first stage, is from birth to two years of age, where intelligence is limited to a child's individual actions. Piaget believed children progress from an action based intelligence to a symbol-based intelligence, and that children view themselves as the center of the universe.

Although alternatives to this theory have been debated, it is the theory that forms the basis of the workshop-training guide because it is arguably still the dominant theory today. Consequently, a more detailed description of the Paigetian theory as it pertains to early childhood development and the requisite understandings for knowledgeable preschool teachers is described here. Particular emphasis is placed on sensorimotor and preoperational stages.
Sensorimotor Stage

Piaget further divided the sensorimotor stage into six smaller sub-stages. The first substage is the use of reflexes from birth to one month. “Piaget used the term reflex broadly, so that infant reflexes include not only obvious behaviors such as sucking and grasping but also more subtle behaviors such as eye movements, orientation to sound, and vocalization” (Bjorklund, 2005, p. 85). The second substage is primary circular reactions, which occur between 1 and 4 months. In this stage, infants use the reflexes from the first substage to acquire repetitive behavior. Piaget observed how his son, Laurent, learned how to suck his thumb. “The initial contact between Laurent's hand and his mouth was by chance. That is, babies don't start thinking, 'Gee, I'd like to suck my thumb, I wonder how I should go about it?'” (Bjorklund, 2005, p. 87). Once Laurent's hand was in his mouth he began sucking, and gradually attempted to recreate the process moving his arm, hand, finger, along with his mouth, until he was able to recreate the experience whenever he wanted. The process has been referred to as successive approximation.

Substage three is secondary circular reactions from four to eight months of age. Secondary circular reactions involve the same reflexes as the first two substages, however the reflexes involve understanding and operating on their environment and responding to it. Thus, they demonstrate increasing awareness beyond just themselves. An example of this reflex is a baby in a crib with a mobile.
While flailing her arms and legs, she hit the mobile, causing it to spin. She happened to be looking at the mobile, and its movement caught her attention. She suddenly stopped and stared intently at the moving object over her head. It ceased moving, and she began to shake her arms and legs, to squirm, and finally to cry. Again she hit the mobile, and again she froze and quieted, staring straight ahead at the wonderful event she had caused. (Bjorklund, 2005, p. 87)

Substage four is the coordination of secondary circular reactions typically occurring from from eight to twelve months of age. Such behavior is said to reflect cognitive hypothesis testing by the infant leading to refined sensorimotor development in conjunction with increasing environmental awareness. Both circumstantial and reasoned responses result in cognitive development through successive approximation. This process is described more fully in *The Yale Child Study Guide to Understanding Your Child* (Mayes & Cohen, 2002). Mayes and Cohen state that children develop fine motor skills in a predictable sequence with some variation due to temperament and environment. Environment plays a key role in motivation and the achievement of certain skills. A child who never sees their family write or draw will never associate writing or drawing with pleasure, however a child who has been exposed to reading storybooks with their family will learn to write letters. This substage is the same, as the third substage except the child intentionally wants the action to happen before it actually does. This is the first stage in which a child is able to set a goal and establish cause and effect.
Piaget believed children in substage four only understand something exists if they can see it. He referred to this as object permanence, which he defined as the “knowledge that objects have an existence in time and space independent of one's perception or action on those objects” (Bjorklund, 2005, p. 89). The first notion of object permanence is observed in the third substage, between four and eight months of age. For example, babies will try to retrieve a toy that is partially hidden under a blanket. Even though the child can only see part of it, they know the whole toy is under that blanket.

By substage 4 (approximately 8 to 12 months), infants can retrieve a completely hidden object. To do this they must be able to use one scheme (removing an obstacle) in the service of another (retrieving a desired object), which according to Piaget, is the major cognitive accomplishment of this substage. (Bjorklund, 2005, p. 90)

The fifth substage, tertiary circular reactions, occurs between 12 and 18 months of age. In this stage, children are able to begin problem solving within their environment. An example of this kind of problem solving is a child taking a square block and attempting to fit it into a different shaped hole. The child continues to try different shaped holes until they find the square hole. Children in this substage solve problems only by trial and error.

The sixth substage is the invention of new means through mental combinations, which occurs between 18 and 24 months. Characteristic of this
substage, children are able to process problem solving cognitively by mental trial and error; in their mind they do not have to physically solve a problem to find the solution. This is also referred to by Piaget as symbolic functioning, the ability to make one thing, such as a word or an object, stand for or represent something else.

**Preoperational Stage**

Piaget's next stage is the preoperational stage from two to seven years of age. In this stage, children continue to use symbols to process objects. Children drastically increase the amount of symbolic functioning they use during the early stages of the preoperational stage. One example is a two or three year old participating in dramatic play. “Toddlers often pretend to be people they are not (mommies, superheroes), and they may assume these roles with props (such as a shoe box or a stick) that symbolizes role-relevant objects (a baby's crib or a ray gun)” (Shaffer, 2005, p. 56). Piaget viewed pretend play as serious business because it promotes social, emotional, and intellectual development. In the absence of social business, the opportunity and motivation to act in ways that lead to learning in response is missing from children’s attention.

Becher & Wolfgang (1977) conducted a study to explore the relationship between the symbolic representation in dramatic play and art and the cognitive and reading readiness levels of kindergarten children (p. 378). The study included 79 kindergarten students from four classes in two schools. They defined symbolic functioning as “the ability to represent, via mental image, word or object, that which is not present” (Becher & Wolfgang, 1977, p. 377). The experimenter introduced a
collection of toys including people, animals, and furniture, and asked children to tell a story using the given toys. Twenty minutes were allotted for each child to complete the task, however if the children stopped playing they were prompted by the experimenter who told them, “Make the toys tell more of the story” (Becher & Wolfgang, 1977, p. 378). Dramatic play was assessed and coded based on the following criteria.

- **Level I- No Action (NA)** - The child fails to touch or move the toys.

- **Level II- Sensori-motor (SM)** - The child is primarily investigating the toys. He may be putting the toys into groups, cleaning the toys, bending the toys, pushing the toys, etc.

- **Level III- Construction (C)** - The child arranges two or more toys into a static product which can stand alone. The product must be recognizable enough to permit a noun description. Examples of construction include block buildings, placing a man on a horse, sitting a doll in a chair.

- **Level IV- Symbolic (S)** - The child must use toys with sufficient sensorimotor elaboration to permit a description of the symbolic meaning of her play. For example: a row of blocks pushed across the floor accompanied by a verbal “choo choo” is considered a symbolic representation of a train; a toy man picking up blocks and placing them in a pile is considered to be a symbolic representation of building or gathering.

- **Level V- Complex Symbolic (CS)** - The child must use toys with sufficient sensori-motor elaboration to permit a description of the symbolic
meaning of play. The child must sustain the play for less than three minutes and there must be a theme.

Level VI- Dramatic (D)-The child must use toys with sufficient sensorimotor elaboration to permit a statement of theme with a beginning and an end; and the play must last for three minutes or more. (p. 379)

During the next task, Goldilocks and the Three Bears was read to each class. Children were asked to draw a picture recalling the story, and drawings were collected and scored based on the use of recognizable symbols that were relevant to the story. Symbols included bears, bowls, beds, chairs, Goldilocks, etc. Standard testing procedures already used by the school district, were used to measure the children’s reading readiness levels. Children’s cognitive levels were assessed using a four-item standard conservation of number test, including checkers. Children were categorized as concrete-operational if they could correctly respond to all four items. If the child could not respond correctly, they were considered preoperational.

The results of this study were supportive of Piaget’s theory of symbolic functioning. The children who proved reading ready had also been categorized as concrete operational. On the other hand, preoperational children who did not show reading readiness, established the need to spend large amounts of time in symbolic functioning in dramatic play. Becher & Wolfgang (1977) suggested, “the continued need for dramatic play for young children because of the opportunities it provides for the advancement of symbolic representation” (p. 381).
One characteristic Piaget deduced about preoperational reasoning was the matter of egocentrism, or the fact that children view the world from their own perspective and are unable to examine the world from another person’s point of view. Piaget demonstrated this by first familiarizing children with an asymmetrical mountain scene and asking the subjects each what an observer would see as he gazed at the scene from a vantage point other than his own. Often three-to four-year-olds described that the other person would see exactly what they, the children, which Piaget interpreted as the child’s failure to consider the other’s divergent perspective.

Not everyone agrees with Piaget’s theory however, R. Peter Hobson (1982) for example, tested Piaget’s theory of egocentrism by testing 12 subjects within each of three groups: of four to five, five to six, and six to seven year-olds. In a portion of Hobson’s experiment, the subject and experimenter sat facing each other. The experimenter moved to the same side of the table as the subject and asked the subject to move a doll so the doll could see both of them. The experimenter then moved to the other side of the table sitting across from the subject and asked the subject to move the doll so it could see the experimenter. During the last task, the experimenter moved the doll to face the subject and then asked, what does the doll see now? The results of this research were conclusive in that all subjects correctly responded to the tasks. What does this research mean for Piaget’s theory of preoperational reasoning?

This study shows that children may be more capable than Piaget observed. The children in Hobson’s study were able to view the world through the dolls eyes, by
positioning the doll to see what the experimenter asked it to see. The difference between points of view taken by children might be less of a matter of abilities than one of attention. That is, if you focus a child’s attention to a point of view other than the one they presume, then you might shift their cognizance to it and, therefore subsequent processing of meaning.

The problem of controlling experiments to identify cognition is that, without full control, behavior is a fuzzy reflection of cognition. Never the less, Piaget’s description of children’s cognitive development constitutes a currently important frame of reference for making decisions about developmentally appropriate curriculum and instruction and preschoolers.

The Reggio Approach of Early Childhood Instruction

The Reggio Approach, an application of Piaget’s theory, also promotes emphasis on developing children’s symbolic functioning in its preschools through matching learning and instruction to what we know about their abilities and needs at that stage of development. Reggio Emilia is a town in Italy dedicated to enriching the lives and education of young children. Shortly after World War II strong initiatives pushed for better education and parent involvement in schools, which all lead to the beginning of Reggio Emilia preschools. In 1951 an educator named Bruno Ciari, formed the Movement of Cooperative Education.

Ciari and his followers believed that 'education should liberate childhood energy and capacities' (Edwards et al., 1993, p.16) and promote the
harmonious development of the whole child in communicative, social, and affective domains. Ciari encouraged educators to invite families and other citizens to participate in schools, to provide two teachers in each classroom of 20 children, to enable the staff to work collectively, and to attend carefully to the physical setting of the school (Cadwell, 1997, p. 4).

Reggio Emilia currently has 21 preschools and 13 infant—toddler centers serving more than 2,300 children between the ages of 3 months and 6 years old (Cadwell, 2003, p. 3). In Louise Boyd Cadwell's book *The Reggio Approach to Early Childhood Education Bringing Learning to Life* (2003), she describes many key points that are essential to the Reggio Approach.

**Role of the Child in the Reggio Approach**

In Reggio Emilia, the educators view children as protagonists, collaborators, and communicators. Children are viewed as protagonists, or leaders, as they construct their own learning, peaking their curiosity and interests in their own environment. Reggio Emilia emphasizes work in small groups. Children are viewed as collaborators as they focus on their relationships with peers, family, educators, and the world around them. Children in Reggio Emilia are communicators, communicating everything they know in many different ways.

This approach fosters children's intellectual development through a systemic focus on symbolic representation, including words, movement, drawing, painting, building, sculpture, shadow play, collage, dramatic play, and music,
which leads children to surprising levels of communication, symbolic skills and creativity (Edwards et al., 1993). (Cadwell, 2003, p. 4)

Children in Reggio Emilia are able to use many materials to communicate their understanding, curiosity, feelings, and imaginations of the world around them.

**Role of the Educator in the Reggio Approach**

Educators in Reggio Emilia view teachers as partners, nurturers, and guides. That is really less a distinction between Reggio teacher’s and other teacher’s ideals than another layer of affirmation. Teachers listen and observe children's interests and questions to foster learning based on their curiosity.

Teachers facilitate children's exploration of themes, work on short- and long—term projects, and guide experiences of joint, open—ended discovery and problem solving. Teachers are also researchers, working closely with other educators, reflecting on and interpreting their work with each other. The teacher's work and ideas are documented, much like the children's work. “The reflective processes that are embedded in using documentation as a tool support teachers in looking for children's strengths, ideas, theories, and learning strategies that allow adults to construct respectful learning groups [Gandini & Goldhaber 2001]. (Hughes, 2007, p. 55)

**Role of the Environment in the Reggio Approach**

In Reggio Emilia, the environment and parents also play key roles. The design and space of every inch of a Reggio school has meaning and purpose. The design of
the school and each classroom fosters learning by encouraging small group work and building relationships. Parent participation on site is an essential piece of the Reggio Approach. Parents not only contribute the children’s on site health and safety, but also provide teachers with different sets of skills and ideas to incorporate in each classroom.

Dr. Hatice Z. Inan (2009) conducted a study in an American laboratory preschool inspired by Reggio Emilia, asking, “How does the physical environment facilitate literacy education which is socially constructed and integrated into the daily life curriculum in the Reggio Emilia-inspired preschool?” (p. 2512). The participants of this study included 18 children, one program coordinator, two lead teachers, eight students teachers and the researcher. Spradley’s Grand Tour and Taxonomic Analysis were used in Inan’s research to examine the physical environment in relevance to emergent literacy, using the following nine domain specific criteria of a literacy-enriched environment.

- Environment is open and encourages mobility and continuity so that literacy occurs across spaces and time.
- Environment is multifunctional supporting an integrated curriculum.
- Environment is provocative, challenging and informative.
- Environment is responsive, not static.
- Essential qualities of the environment is socially constructed and co-created by teachers and children.
• Environment encourages self-initiative and hands-on experiences in literacy.
• Environment is a reflection of real life-life outside the classroom.
• Environment is set up both for group and individual work/play.
• Environment provides comfortable, safe and secure places enriched with adult guidance. (pp. 2513-2516)

Inan (2009) summarizes this study in a quote.

In the words of Lella Gandini (2002), the environment was the third teacher. It provided preschoolers a quality, thoughtfully arranged context in which they could engage with emergent literacy work in a meaningful and playful way. In the current study, examination of the environment (i.e., Grand Tour and the semantic relations in terms of the places for doing literacy) showed that the Reggio Emilia-inspired preschool environment is rich in print and facilitates literacy education in the preschool. (p. 2513)

The Role of Play in Early Childhood Development and Learning

The Piagetian theory and the Reggio Approach view play as a necessary piece of the learning process. Play is a vital part of a child's education. Both, parents and teachers, may walk into a preschool and see children playing with dough, building blocks, or participating in pretend play, and not realize that children are actively learning about their world. Singer and Revenson (1996) stated that each form of play has discrete benefits. For example motor skills are improved during practice or mastery play. Games with rules teach children turn-taking and sharing, and to accept
winning or losing with appropriate reactions. Make-believe games also teach sharing and turn-taking, while involving sensory motor skills, and a delay of gratification.

What do you find in the way of materials if you explore one of the many preschools in Reggio Emilia? You find freshly mixed tempera paint in many shades and tints in clear glass jars; big brushes, little brushes, flat and round brushes, paper of all colors and sizes, including many varieties of transparent and semitransparent clear and colored paper. You discover clay in many contexts and often in relation to other materials like wood, cardboard, wire, small bits of mirrors, colored glass, or shells. Other media can be uncovered in what are referred to in the Reggio Emilia preschools as natural materials and colors: leaves, seeds, cones, twigs, dried flower petals, and even different colored earth and sand. These natural materials are used to paint with and/or are arranged in collages.

Materials like these are put in a Reggio classroom at the child's level, where they are free to explore, create, and play. The freedom to play, as a form of learning, was also encouraged by Piaget who introduced the idea that children learn through exploration and active participation within their environment. Piaget believed that play was important because it fostered a child’s development of symbolic functioning and abstract thought. (Fraser, 2007) A classroom that would be set up to model Piagetian theory would give children a great deal of freedom. Like a Reggio classroom, teachers also set up the space for children to explore their environment (Tzuo, 2007). Working in an environment that promotes socialization is also important for a child's
development. Piaget’s conception of individual development showed a link between the development of operational thought and social interaction (Corbeil, 1999).

A study conducted by Chien et al. (2010) examined children’s engagement in a preschool classroom and gains in kindergarten readiness. Researchers observed 2,751 children across 11 states in 701 preschool programs. Four models of classroom engagement were used including free-play, individual instruction, group instruction and scaffolded learning.

The first model, free-play included child-directed activities of the child’s choosing, while the second model was mostly teacher-directed activities. This model was divided into two categories; individual and group instruction. Chien et al. (2010) defined individual time independent work in the classroom where each child might work on a worksheet or individual projects, while the teacher assists children. They also defined whole group instruction as teacher directed stories, songs or demonstrations. The fourth model emphasized scaffolding, the idea by which an adult or peer can assist children to understand a new concept by giving supporting information (Mooney, 2000).

Within the four models, researchers observed activity setting, preacademic engagements and teacher-child interactions. Children were assessed in kindergarten readiness in both the spring and fall using multiple assessments. Teacher reports were used to assess children’s speaking, listening, early reading, and early writing. Teachers evaluated children’s proficiency on a scale of one to five, one meaning not yet
proficient, and five being proficient. Scores were averaged from a nine-item questionnaire. The free-play model averaged 2.94, individual instruction averaged 3.15, and group instruction averaged 3.06, and scaffolded learning averaged 3.09. According to the teacher’s reports, individual instruction resulted in the most gains in language and literacy readiness. In fact, the individual instruction model made the most gains compared to all other groups. Results from this study suggested children would be better prepared for school if there were more quality instructional time with teachers and less free play without teacher guidance or scaffolding.

The Role of Play and Instruction

In order for educators to teach effectively, we must first understand how children learn. Music, art, dance, and dramatic play are just some of the things one might see in a preschool classroom. The underlying question is how do these activities prepare children for kindergarten? For centuries, researchers have studied how children understand their world and the objects around them. According to Jean Piaget (1997),

To know an object, to know an event, is not simply to look at it and make a mental copy, or image, of it. To know an object is to act on it. To know it is to modify, to transform the object, and to understand the process of this transformation, and as a consequence to understand the way the object is constructed. (p. 20)
Today we call this process active learning, “the direct and immediate experiencing of objects, people, ideas, and events” (Hohmann & Weikart, 1995, p. 16). According to this perspective or philosophy of pedagogy, children must be actively engaged with hands-on activities.

In an active learning setting, educators set up the environment to engage the students and support their curiosity; however, children are encouraged to explore their own interests. Educators in Reggio Emilia view teachers as partners, nurturers, and guides. Teachers listen and observe children's interests and questions to foster learning based on their curiosity. Teacher’s guide children by asking open-ended questions while they are actively engaged in an activity to open up dialogue between teacher and child but also between peers.

Both the Piagetian Theory and the Reggio Approach focus on symbolic play and hands on discovery as active learning. Research shows how playdough is used as an effective tool in an active learning environment. Swartz (2005) explains how playdough addresses early learning standards. For example when children play with playdough they enhance social-emotional development by conversing with their peers, taking turns, sharing; develop approaches to learning by problem solving; expression through dramatic play and art; language development by listening, understanding, speaking and communicating; science by observing changes, cause and effect: math skills by measuring, counting, making shapes, and observing size. Playdough also addresses literacy foundations by gaining print awareness when following a recipe,
and early writing. Although playdough is merely one example of how children can actively learn, there are endless opportunities to create an active learning environment.

**The High/Scope Preschool Comparison Study**

Schweinhart and Weikart (1997) studied the effects of 68 children, from ages 3 to 23, who participated in three preschool models including High/Scope, Direct Instruction, and traditional nursery school curriculum. The High/Scope curriculum, developed by Weikart, based on Piaget’s constructivist approach, models an active learning environment. Adults engaged children as they initiated their own activities. In the Direct Instruction curriculum, teachers led 20 minute small group, question and answer sessions in language, mathematics and reading. The only materials in this curriculum that stimulated learning was teacher’s guides and workbooks. (Schweinhart & Weikart, 2007) The nursery school curriculum, models a child-centered approach, which focused on social skills rather than intellectual skills. Children in this approach had the freedom to roam from activity to activity, which teachers had planned based on units, or themes (Schweinhart & Weikart, 2007, p. 120). By age, 23, no significant differences in literacy test scores, however there was a significant difference in arrest records between the three groups. Thirty-nine percent of the Direct Instruction group members had felony records compared to only 10% of the High/Scope group and 17% of the nursery school group.
The Role of Play and the Brain

Research of the human brain also looks at active learning by examining the link between movement and the brain. In Teaching with the Brain in Mind, Eric Jensen (2005) describes the brain and how it functions. The brain is divided into lobes: the occipital lobe’s primary responsibility is for vision, the temporal lobes for hearing, memory and language, the frontal lobe for judgment, creativity, problem solving, planning, and short term memory, and the parietal lobe for higher sensory and language functions. The limbic system is partially responsible for emotions, sleep, attention, sense of smell, hormones, and the production of many brain chemicals. The cerebellum, or “little brain”, is responsible for balance, posture, coordination, muscle movements, cognition, and emotions. The brain also has two types of cells: neurons and glial cells. “Neurons have a cell body, a tail-like extension called an axon, and branch like structures called dendrites. The junction between two connected neurons is called a synapse. . . Receiving neurons “talk back” to the neurons that are providing the information” (Jensen, 2005, p. 17). Therefore, learning is the act of making and strengthening connections between neurons.

What does this complex organ have to do with learning and movement in the classroom? The brain is constantly moving, making connections, changing and adapting, much like young children. When children engage in physical activity, they increase blood flow and oxygen to the brain (Jensen, 2005, p. 62). Jensen goes on to say, teachers that wish to promote optimal learning in their classrooms should...
integrate movement activities into daily curriculum. That is to say movement such as daily stretches, walks, dance, drama, and physical education, not just hands-on classroom activities, are needed to promote learning.

Summary

On January 22, 2008, State Superintendent of Public Instruction released the California Preschool Learning Foundations Volume 1 by the California Department of Education (CDE) to guide educators in understanding what preschool children should know before they enter kindergarten (CDE, 2009). According to the California Department of Education “the purpose of California's Preschool Learning Foundations is to provide the child development field with research-based competencies—knowledge and skills—that we can expect most children to exhibit in a quality program as they complete their first or second year of preschool” (para. 4). The California Preschool Learning Foundations (CPLF) consist of four components; social-emotional development, language and literacy, English-language development, and mathematics.

While the California Preschool curriculum standards are clear, how children learn through active involvement, and how that information can be used by teachers to create instruction and guidance in an active learning environment has been neglected by the state. Therefore, the literature review described along with evidence from theories from Jean Piaget practices and Reggio Emilia, along with evidence the High/Scope comparison study, and from brain based research. The literature review
also provided a glimpse of what an active learning environment would look like, and a summary of the California Preschool Learning Foundations.
Chapter 3

METHOD

This chapter describes the steps taken to create a workshop and interactive guide for preschool educators using California’s Preschool Learning Foundations through an active learning approach.

Audience

The purpose of this project is to create a workshop for current and future preschool teachers that will give them an opportunity to continue professional development and to learn more about CPLF for language and literacy. The workshop can be implemented in an on-site training for current programs, or incorporated into the undergraduate coursework that is required to work in a childcare or preschool facility. Although the direct audience for this workshop includes current and future preschool teachers, the ultimate audience is our students, who through this workshop and guide will be benefit educationally from the content.

Curriculum

The project includes a teacher’s guide based on the CPLF in Language and Literacy (see Appendix A). The guide also includes lessons that incorporate active learning of the CPLF (see Appendix B). Also included is a PowerPoint presentation to aid training through visual focus and modeling (see Appendix C).

The lessons included in the workshop are designed to foster an active learning environment for instilling the CPLF in Language and Literacy. The language and
literacy foundations are broken down into three categories: listening and speaking, reading, and writing. The project includes a sample of nine lessons, distributed within the three foundational focuses of learning. The lessons are written using the foundations for children at around 48 months of age, but include adaptations to the lessons to accommodate the developmental needs of children at around 60 months of age as well. All lessons follow the format of CPLF. The nine sample lessons distributed across the CPLF curriculum listed below.

**Listening and Speaking**

1.0 Language Use and Conventions

2.0 Vocabulary

3.0 Grammar

**Reading**

1.0 Concepts about Print

2.0 Phonological Awareness

3.0 Alphabets and Word/Print Recognition

4.0 Comprehension and Analysis of Age-Appropriate Text

5.0 Literacy Interest and Response

**Writing**

1.0 Writing Strategies
Procedure

In the workshop, participants are provided with a guide including curriculum incorporating active learning and CPLF. Each lesson includes learning objectives for the students, materials needed, facilitation guides, and adaptations for children 60 months of age. The format of the workshop is an active learning environment. The participants engage in the hands-on lessons provided, to enhance the understanding of how children learn through play.

The three-hour workshop is intended for current or future preschool teachers in an on-site preschool classroom and community college setting. The materials required to complete the lessons provided in the guide are available for participants use in the workshop, to complete hands on activities. The first portion of the workshop presents background knowledge to familiarize and activate awareness of the CPLF among the participants. The second portion of the workshop engages participants in models of hands on activities. The procedures enable participants to understand better how children learn in an active learning environments, and how to design them.

Participants are divided into groups to complete the lessons. Each group role plays each lesson and discusses what teachers can do to engage children concretely to meet the objectives. Role-playing the lessons will gives participants hands on experience to the roles a teacher may take on in active learning classrooms. Next groups and individuals present their experiences, responses, ideas, and questions to the whole class. A segment of the workshop is set aside for evaluations. The evaluation elicits
participants’ feedback to inform two concerns. One concern is to estimate the learning outcomes among the participants. Another is to learn how to improve the content and delivery of the workshop.
Chapter 4

FINDINGS

This project has presented research describing what we know about early childhood development with emphasis on the Piagetian Theory, a depiction of the Reggio Approach and an explanation of the role of play in child development and learning. With the knowledge of how children learn which the literature review presented, I was able to create a curriculum guide for preschool educators on California’s Preschool Learning Foundations in Language and Literacy.

Discussion of Literature Review

The first section of the literature review explored the Piagetian theory, and what we know about how children learn and develop in a serious of gradual stages, from sensorimotor to preoperational. An important point of the Piagetian theory is that children learn from real hands-on experiences. Carol Mooney (2000) describes

...children might be interested in how things grow. If a teacher reads them a finely illustrated book on how things grow, this instruction will increase the child’s knowledge base. But if the child has the opportunity to actually plant a garden at school, the process of digging, watering, observing, and actually experiencing growing things will help the child to construct a knowledge of growing things that he cannot ever achieve by merely looking at pictures. (p. 62)
The next section characterized the Reggio Approach as an application to Piagetian theory, describing the roles of children, educators, and the environment in a Reggio classroom. The Reggio Approach to children’s education paints a picture of how educators can successfully prepare students to explore their natural world in an active learning environment. Children in this environment are given the opportunity to plant a garden at school, and are not just given books with pictures of their world.

The last section describes evidence of the importance of play and a constructivist approach in an active learning setting while examining the High/Scope Preschool Comparison Study and the role of play and the brain. It is important in an active learning environment that materials like paint, playdough, and blocks are used as tools for children to represent and recall knowledge of their world. It is also vital that educators are engaged with the students, supporting their curiosity. It is easy for parents who may not understand how young children learn, to walk into a classroom and think their child plays all day. It is also easy for educators to become babysitters, instead of teachers, if they are not trained to properly engage students in active learning.

**Workshop and Curriculum Guide Discussion**

I have created a hands-on workshop and training guide incorporating the California Preschool Foundations in Language and Literacy and active learning. The workshop and guide are useful tools for preschool educators in need of professional development or who are adopting CPLF in their preschool program.
Limitations of the Project

In Chapter 1, I noted that CPLF would be required in state-funded preschools. Because it is not a requirement in most other preschools, many educators may not know what CPLF is or why it would be useful in their program. Do to possible lack of awareness concerning CPLF; there may be a lack of interest in the workshop I have created, even though active learning can be integrated into any program using existing foundations or skills preschoolers should acquire before kindergarten.

A second limitation is the California Preschool Instructional Network (CPIN), initiated by the California Department of Education currently provides professional development opportunities for preschool staff in eleven regions throughout California. Although I have not attended a workshop by CPIN, the PowerPoint presentations are available on their website (http://www.cpin.us/about.htm). The workshop from CPIN is similar to the one I created, in that it is three hours in length, includes an overview of the California Preschool Foundations and hands-on-activities to promote understanding. Significant differences include focus of the Language and Literacy Foundations, and tips to create an active learning environment. Looking at both workshops, it would be a recommendation to attend or view the CPIN information session prior to attending the workshop on Language and Literacy, because it gives a more generalized overview of how the foundations were created and how to use them. Although both workshops support CPLF, the workshop I have created can be used in conjunction with the workshop from CPIN.
Possibilities for Continued Development

After implementing the workshop, I will use the evaluation from participants to evaluate and assess any implications of the workshop. Since creating a workshop in Language and Literacy, I would be interested in continuing a series of workshops incorporating other preschool learning foundations. Volume 1 of CPLF includes social emotional development, English-language development and mathematics. Visual and performing arts, physical development, and health will be released in Volume 2 in 2011, and science and history/social science in Volume 3 is scheduled for release in 2012.
## California Preschool Learning Foundations
### Language and Literacy

### Listening and Speaking

#### 1.0 Language Use and Conventions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>At around 48 months of age</th>
<th>At around 60 months of age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1.1</strong> Use language to communicate with others in familiar social situations for a variety of basic purposes, including describing, requesting, commenting, acknowledging, greeting, and rejecting.</td>
<td><strong>1.1</strong> Use language to communicate with others in both familiar and unfamiliar social situations for a variety of basic and advanced purposes, including reasoning, predicting, problem-solving, and seeking new information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1.2</strong> Speak clearly enough to be understood by familiar adults and children.</td>
<td><strong>1.2</strong> Speak clearly enough to be understood by both familiar and unfamiliar adults and children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1.3</strong> Use accepted language and style during communication with familiar adults and children.</td>
<td><strong>1.3</strong> Use accepted language and style during communication with both familiar and unfamiliar adults and children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1.4</strong> Use language to construct short narratives that are real or fictional.</td>
<td><strong>1.4</strong> Use language to construct extended narratives that are real or fictional.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 2.0 Vocabulary

| **2.1** Understand and use accepted words for objects, actions, and attributes encountered frequently in both real and symbolic contexts. | **2.1** Understand and use an increasing variety and specificity of accepted words for objects, actions, and attributes encountered in both real and symbolic contexts. |
| **2.2** Understand and use accepted words for categories of objects encountered and used frequently in everyday life. | **2.2** Understand and use accepted words for categories of objects encountered in everyday life. |
| **2.3** Understand and use simple words that describe the relations between objects. | **2.3** Understand and use both simple and complex words that describe the relations between objects. |
3.0 Grammar

At around 48 months of age
3.1 Understand and use increasingly complex and longer sentences, including sentences that combine two phrases or two to three concepts to communicate ideas.

At around 60 months of age
3.1 Understand and use increasingly complex and longer sentences, including sentences that combine two to three phrases or three to four concepts to communicate ideas.

3.2 Understand and typically use age-appropriate grammar, including accepted word forms, such as subject-verb agreement, progressive tense, regular past tense, regular plurals, pronouns, and possessives.

3.2 Understand and typically use age-appropriate grammar, including accepted word forms, such as subject-verb agreement, progressive tense, regular and irregular past tense, regular and irregular plurals, pronouns, and possessives.

Reading

1.0 Concepts about Print

At around 48 months of age
1.1 Begin to display appropriate book-handling behaviors and begin to recognize print conventions.

At around 60 months of age
1.1 Display appropriate book-handling behaviors and knowledge of print conventions.

1.2 Recognize print as something that can be read.

1.2 Understand that print is something that is read and has specific meaning.

2.0 Phonological Awareness

2.1 Orally blend and delete words and syllables without the support of pictures or objects.

2.2 Orally blend the onsets, rimes, and phonemes of words and orally delete the onsets of words, with the support of pictures or objects.

3.0 Alphabets and Word/Print Recognition

At around 48 months of age
3.1 Recognize the first letter of own name.

At around 60 months of age
3.1 Recognize own name or other common words in print.

3.2 Match some letter names to their printed form.

3.2 Match more than half of uppercase letter names and more than half of lowercase letter names to their printed form.

3.3 Begin to recognize that letters have sounds.
4.0 Comprehension and Analysis of Age-Appropriate Text
4.1 Demonstrate knowledge of main characters or events in a familiar story (e.g., who, what, where) through answering questions (e.g., recall and simple inferencing), retelling, reenacting, or creating artwork.
4.2 Demonstrate knowledge from informational text through labeling, describing, playing, or creating artwork.
4.1 Demonstrate knowledge of details in a familiar story, including characters, events, and ordering of events through answering questions (particularly summarizing, predicting, and inferencing), retelling, reenacting, or creating artwork.
4.2 Use information from informational text in a variety of ways, including describing, relating, categorizing, or comparing and contrasting.

5.0 Literacy Interest and Response
5.1 Demonstrate enjoyment of literacy and literacy-related activities.
5.2 Engage in routines associated with literacy activities.
5.1 Demonstrate, with increasing independence, enjoyment of literacy and literacy-related activities.
5.2 Engage in more complex routines associated with literacy activities.

Writing

1.0 Writing Strategies
At around 48 months of age
1.1 Experiment with grasp and body position using a variety of drawing and writing tools.
1.2 Write using scribbles that are different from pictures.
1.3 Write marks to represent own name.
At around 60 months of age
1.1 Adjust grasp and body position for increased control in drawing and writing.
1.2 Write letters or letter-like shapes to represent words or ideas.
1.3 Write first name nearly, correctly.
APPENDIX B

A Preschool Educators Guide To
Teaching California’s Preschool Learning Foundations in Language and Literacy
Using an Active Learning Approach
Meeting Introduction

On January 22, 2008 State Superintendent of Public Instruction released the California Preschool Learning Foundations Volume 1 by the California Department of Education (CDE), giving educators a guide and understanding of what preschool children, at 48 and 60 months of age, should know before they enter kindergarten (CDE, 2009). According to the California Department of Education “the purpose of California's Preschool Learning Foundations is to provide the child development field with research-based competencies—knowledge and skills—that we can expect most children to exhibit in a quality program as they complete their first or second year of preschool”. The California Preschool Learning Foundations (CPLF) consist of four components; social-emotional development, language and literacy, English-language development, and mathematics.

This guide is to be used as an extension to the California Preschool Learning Foundations (CPLF) in Language and Literacy. The curriculum provided is an example of age-appropriate activities in an active learning setting. Each lesson is designed to follow the language and literacy foundations and is numbered according to the CPLF, for simplicity. The CPLF gives two sets of foundations, one for children at around 48 months of age and another for children at around 60 months of age. Each lesson lists those foundations as objectives and includes an adaptation to the lesson for older children.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agenda</th>
<th>Sample Lessons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Listening and Speaking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 1.0: Language Use and Conventions</td>
<td>Lesson 2.0: Vocabulary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 3.0: Grammar</td>
<td>Reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 4.0: Comprehension and Analysis of Age Appropriate Text</td>
<td>Writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 5.0: Literacy Interest and Response</td>
<td>Summary: How to Create an Active Learning Environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Agenda

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction to Workshop</td>
<td>9:00-9:15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California Preschool Learning Foundations</td>
<td>9:15-10:00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 1: Think, Pair, Share</td>
<td>10:00-10:30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Break</td>
<td>10:30-10:45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role Play and Discussion</td>
<td>10:45-11:15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>11:15-11:45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>11:45-12:00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Listening and Speaking

Think, Pair, Share

1.0 Language Use and Conventions

Objectives at around 48 months of age

1.1 Use language to communicate with others in familiar social situations for a variety of basic purposes, including describing, requesting, commenting, acknowledging, greeting, and rejecting.
1.2 Speak clearly enough to be understood by familiar adults and children.
1.3 Use accepted language and style during communication with familiar adults and children.
1.4 Use Language to construct short narratives that are real or fictional.

Objectives at around 60 months of age

1.1 Use language to communicate with others in both familiar and unfamiliar social situations for a variety of basic and advanced purposes, including reasoning, predicting, problem solving, and seeking new information.
1.2 Speak clearly enough to be understood by both familiar and unfamiliar adults and children.
1.3 Use accepted language and style during communication with both familiar and unfamiliar adults and children.
1.4 Use language to construct extended narratives that are real or fictional.

Materials

Notebook for teacher observations

Facilitation

1. Begin a meaningful conversation with the children. For example, it is Monday morning and the children are very interested in telling you what they did this weekend. Begin by telling them something meaningful about your weekend.
2. Next have children find a partner and face each other.
3. Have the children take turns telling each other about their weekend. Emphasize speaking slowly and clearly, and also taking turns.

Adaptation for 60 months of age

1. Have the children ask their partners a question about something they found interesting about that child’s weekend.
2. Allow enough time for the children to share what their partners did last weekend, with the rest of the class.
Animal Sorting
2.0 Vocabulary

Objectives at around 48 months of age
2.1 Understand and use accepted words for objects, actions, and attributes encountered frequently in both real and symbolic contexts.
2.2 Understand and use accepted words for categories of objects encountered and used frequently in everyday life.
2.3 Understand and use simple words that describe the relations between objects.

Objectives at around 60 months of age
2.1 Understand and use an increasing variety and specificity of accepted words for objects, actions, and attributes encountered in both real and symbolic contexts.
2.2 Understand and use accepted words for categories of objects encountered in everyday life.
2.3 Understand and use both simple and complex words that describe the relations between objects.

Materials
Farm and zoo animals
3 baskets or clear containers
Notebook for observations

Facilitation
1. Introduce one container filled with both farm and zoo animals combined.
2. Begin a conversation with the children by asking, “I wonder where cows live?”
3. Continue by asking questions as needed while the children separate the animals based on where they live, either the zoo or the farm.

Adaptation for 60 months of age
1. Create a Venn diagram. Ask children what the differences and similarities are between animals that live in the zoo or on a farm.
2. Gather more containers and sort animals further for example, by land or water, wings or feet, etc.
Dramatic Play: “When I was a baby I...”

3.0 Grammar

Objectives at around 48 months of age

3.1 Understand and use increasingly complex and longer sentences, including sentences that combine two phrases or two to three concepts to communicate ideas.

3.2 Understand and typically use age-appropriate grammar, including accepted word forms, such as subject verb agreement, progressive tense, regular past tense, regular plurals, pronouns, and possessives.

Objectives at around 60 months of age

3.1 Understand and use increasingly complex and longer sentences, including sentences that combine two to three phrases or three to four concepts to communicate ideas.

3.2 Understand and typically use age-appropriate grammar, including accepted word forms, such as subject-verb agreement, progressive tense, regular and irregular plurals, pronouns, and possessives.

Materials

Notebook for observations

Facilitation

1. Facilitate a small group discussion in the dramatic play area. Begin by asking questions like, “How did your mommy hold you when you were a baby?”, or “I wonder what you ate when you were a baby?”

2. Observe the children’s conversations, looking for the correct use of grammar, and use of longer sentences.

Adaptation for 60 months of age

1. Use a journal to dictate the children’s answers.

2. Continue a complex conversation using, “When I grow up I will…” instead of “When I was a baby…”

3. Continue to observe children’s grammar, use of longer sentences, and the ability to change from past to present tense.
**Reading**  
*Reader’s Chair*

1.0 Concepts about Print

**Objectives at around 48 months of age**
1.1 Begin to display appropriate book-handling behaviors and begin to recognize print conventions.
1.2 Recognize print as something that can be read

**Objectives at around 60 months of age**
1.1 Display appropriate book-handling behaviors and knowledge of print conventions.
1.2 Understand that print is something that is read and has specific meaning.

**Materials**  
A chair labeled Reader’s Chair, or decorated with the child’s name  
Books of the child’s choice or that have been previously read to the class  
Notebook for observations

**Facilitation**
1. Randomly choose one child at a time to “read” a story to the class.
2. Make observations, noting how the child holds the book, turns the pages, points to and recalls the title of the story.

**Adaptation for 60 months of age**
1. Continue observing the children’s ability to turn one page at a time, do they track the print with their finger as they “read” the page, do they say “the end” on the last page, do they ask what something says when they are pointing to a word?
**Syllable Band**

2.0 Phonological Awareness

Objectives at around 48 months of age
None- See Appendix

Objectives at around 60 months of age

2.1 Orally blend and delete words and syllables without the support of pictures or objects.

2.2 Orally blend the onsets, rimes, and phonemes of words and orally delete the onsets of words, with the support of pictures or objects.

Materials
Musical Instruments
Notebook for observations

Facilitation
1. Begin by introducing the instruments to the children, by playing beat and then they repeat it.
2. Tell the children you are going to play a word game with their instruments and see if they can match what you do. For example, say a child’s name (Mad-i-son) while hitting the triangle 3 times, once for each syllable. Continue with each child’s name.
3. Challenge the class further by making compound words, such as book-shelf, tooth-brush, etc. Continue to use the instruments to emphasize the word parts.
**Name Hunt**

3.0 Alphabetics and Word/Print Recognition

**Objectives at around 48 months of age**

3.1 Recognize the first letter of own name
3.2 Match some letter names to their printed form.

**Objectives at around 60 months of age**

3.1 Recognize own name or other common words in print.
3.2 Match more than half of uppercase letter names and more than half of lowercase letter names to their printed form.
3.3 Begin to recognize that letters have sounds.

**Materials**

White paper cut into 2” squares (1 for each child)
Sentence strips with each child’s name written on it and cut to size
Notebook for observations

**Facilitation**

1. On the 2” squares write the first letter of each child’s name.
2. Hide the sentence strips around the classroom before the children arrive.
3. Begin by holding up one letter at a time and ask the children “Whose name begins with…”
4. When each child has identified their letter tell them they are going on a name hunt.
5. Have the children search for their name, using the letter square to match their name.

**Adaptation for 60 months of age**

1. Have the children go on a name hunt without using the letter squares.
2. Give older children squares with the lowercase form of the first letter of their name, to see if they can match the uppercase letter to the lowercase letter.
Grouchy Ladybugs- A Class Story

4.0 Comprehension and Analysis of Age-Appropriate Text

Objectives at around 48 months of age

4.1 Demonstrate knowledge of main characters or events in a familiar story (e.g., who, what, where) through answering questions (e.g., recall and simple inferencing), retelling, reenacting, or creating artwork.

4.2 Demonstrate knowledge from informal text through labeling, describing, playing, or creating artwork.

Objectives at around 60 months of age

4.1 Demonstrate knowledge of details in a familiar story, including characters, events, and ordering of events through answering questions (particularly summarizing, predicting, and inferencing), retelling reenacting, or creating artwork.

4.2 Use information from informational text in a variety of ways, including describing, relating, categorizing, or comparing and contrasting.

Materials
Grouchy Ladybug by Eric Carle
Journal Paper (Lined on bottom half)
Markers, Crayons, Color Pencils

Facilitation

1. Begin by reading the story Grouchy Ladybug to the class during large group/circle time.
2. After you read the story, tell the children they get to make their own book about the grouchy ladybug.
3. Dictate each child’s version of the Grouchy Ladybug on the lined portion of the journal paper.
4. Allow the children to draw their favorite part of the story.
5. Compile the completed stories into a class book and display for families.

Adaptation for 60 months of age

1. Ask children open ended questions to recall details of the story.
2. Ask the children what the grouchy ladybug might have been feeling throughout the story.
Observation of Independent Reading

5.0 Literacy Interest and Response

Objectives at around 48 months of age
5.1 Demonstrate enjoyment of literacy and literacy-related activities.
5.2 Engage in routines associated with literacy activities.

Objectives at around 60 months of age
5.1 Demonstrate, with increasing independence, enjoyment of literacy, and literacy-related activities.
5.2 Engage in more complex routines associated with literacy activities.

Materials
Paper and writing materials in each center
Books in centers other than the quiet/library center
Notebook for observations

Facilitation
1. Observe children’s interest in literacy activities throughout the classroom.
   a. Examples may include; a sign in sheet in the pretend center so children can pretend to be the teacher and take attendance, books about insects in the science center, etc.
Writing

Writing Journals

1.0 Writing Strategies

Objectives at around 48 months of age
1.1 Experiment with grasp and body position using a variety of drawing and writing tools.
1.2 Write using scribbles that are different from pictures.
1.3 Write marks to represent own name.

Objectives at around 60 months of age
1.1 Adjust grasp and body position for increased control in drawing and writing.
1.2 Write letters or letter-like shapes to represent words or ideas.
1.3 Write first name nearly correctly.

Materials
Writing Journals- 1 for each child (Journals can be a collection of plain paper stapled together, store bought notebooks, or journal paper.)

Facilitation
1. Begin by introducing the journals to the class. Tell the children the journals are for writing something meaningful to them. They can use the journals to draw pictures and practice writing.
2. Have the children start using their journal by asking them to draw a picture.
3. Ask the children to tell you about their pictures and dictate what they describe.

Adaptation for 60 months of age
1. Leave a space between each line of dictation and let the children practice writing their letters, by copying what you wrote.
2. Verbally spell words for children to write on their own.
How to Create an Active Learning Environment

Classroom

- Arrange furniture to clearly define learning centers.
- Examples of centers include a block area, library corner, writing center, science center, math center, pretend center, and an art center.
- There should be enough materials in each center for the number of children allowed in the center at a time. For example if there are 3 children in the math center at a time, there should be 9 activity choices available in that center.
- Writing materials should be available to the children at all times, in each center.
- Label shelves with pictures and words. This will allow children independence in the classroom by giving them responsibility for taking items off the shelf and putting them away in the appropriate area.

Teacher’s Role

- The teacher’s role in an active learning setting is to guide the children’s interests by fostering meaningful experiences in the classroom.
- Ask open ended questions to enhance the children’s thinking process. For example, “I wonder what would happen if…”, or “Why do you think this happened.”
- Be flexible. Children may not be interested in curriculum you have planned. Teachers must be ready to change curriculum based on the children’s needs.
Child’s Role

- Children in an active learning environment are viewed as explorers, investigators, learners, communicators and teachers.

- Children should feel free to explore all learning centers each day.

Choosing Lessons

- An important implication of choosing lessons that foster active learning is time. Children should be able to engage in a lesson at will and finish the lesson at will. That is to say, there should not be a 30-minute time limit on an art activity and then the child must be done. Children should be free to come back and finish lessons they are actively engaged in.

- The lesson must be age-appropriate and challenging enough that the child will stay engaged and participate successfully. If the lesson is not challenging they may become bored and if the lesson is too challenging they may give up.
Evaluation

Do you have any comments, questions, recommendations for this workshop?

What are some limitations you might run into when implementing CPLF or active learning in your classroom?
APPENDIX C

Power Point Presentation for the Workshop Exploring California’s Preschool Foundations in Language and Literacy
Slide 1

TEACHING CALIFORNIA'S PRESCHOOL LEARNING FOUNDATIONS IN LANGUAGE AND LITERACY USING AN ACTIVE LEARNING APPROACH:

A GUIDE FOR PRESCHOOL EDUCATORS

Designed By
Crystal Shatara

Slide 2

AGENDA

- Introduction to Workshop 9:00-9:15
- California Preschool Learning Foundations 9:15-10:00
- Lesson 1: Think, Pair, Share 10:00-10:30
- Break 10:30-10:45
- Role Play and Discussion 10:45-11:15
- Presentations 11:15-11:45
- Evaluation 11:45-12:00
Slide 3

WORKSHOP OBJECTIVES
- To gain an understanding of California Preschool Learning Foundations
- To gain an understanding of the definition and characteristics of an active learning environment
- Create a foundation to incorporate CPLF and active learning into the classroom

Slide 4

CALIFORNIA PRESCHOOL LEARNING FOUNDATIONS
- Volume 1 was released January 22, 2008 by the California Department of Education
- This guide gives educators an understanding of what preschool children at 48 and 60 months of age should know before they enter kindergarten.
- CPLF includes foundations in four learning areas:
  - Social-Emotional Development
  - Language and Literacy
  - English-Language Development
  - Mathematics
LANGUANGE AND LITERACY

Language and Literacy foundations are broken down into three categories:

- Listening and Speaking
- Reading
- Writing

LISTENING AND SPEAKING

1.0 LANGUAGE USE AND CONVENTIONS

At around 6 months of age

1.1 Use language to communicate with other people to develop a sense of social relationship, including sharing and communicating简单。
1.2 Say: "Dada" and "Mama" by 6 months old。
1.3 Desire to listen and communicate with other people。
1.4 Communicate needs and opinions that are related to their needs.

At around 12 months of age

1.1 Use language to communicate with other people to develop a sense of social relationship, including sharing and communicating about a variety of events and emotions, including expressing desires, preferences, and asking for help。
1.2 Speak simple commands such as "Help" and "More"。
1.3 Use words to indicate simple emotions and intentions。
1.4 Use words to express simple ideas and emotions that are related to their needs.

By the end of the first year

1.1 Use language to communicate with other people to develop a sense of social relationship, including sharing and communicating about a variety of events and emotions, including expressing desires, preferences, and asking for help。
1.2 Speak complex commands such as "Help me", "Give me", and "Do that again"。
1.3 Use words to indicate a variety of emotions and intentions。
1.4 Use language to express a variety of ideas and emotions that are related to their needs.
Slide 7

LISTENING AND SPEAKING

2.0 VOCABULARY

1. At around 6 months of age

2.1 Understand and use commonly used words and phrases for objects, actions, and expressions of feelings.

2.2 Understand and use extended vocabulary in familiar settings and situations.

3. Understand and use extended vocabulary to describe the relationship between objects.

Slide 8

LISTENING AND SPEAKING

3.0 GRAMMAR

1. At around 6 months of age

2.1 Understand and use commonly used words and phrases for objects, actions, and expressions of feelings.

2.2 Understand and use extended vocabulary in familiar settings and situations.

3. Understand and use extended vocabulary to describe the relationship between objects.
Slide 9

READING
1.0 CONCEPTS ABOUT PRINT
At around 18 months of age
1.1 Begins to display appropriate book-handling behaviors and becomes interested in occupants-print conventions.
1.2 Understands that print is something that is read and has specific meaning.

Slide 10

READING
2.0 PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS
At around 60 months of age
2.1 Orally blend and delete words and syllables without the support of pictures or objects.
2.2 Orally blend the onsets, rimes, and phonemes of words and orally delete the onsets of words, with the support of pictures or objects.
Slide 11

READING
3.0 ALPHABETICS AND WORD/PRINT RECOGNITION

All children at months of age

5.1. Recognize the first letter of a word.
5.2. Match some letters to their printed form.
5.3. Recognize uppercase or other common symbols in print.
5.4. Make more than half of the letters in the words and names that build because letter shape is their printed form.
5.5. Begin to recognize that letters have sounds.

Slide 12

READING
4.0 COMPREHENSION AND ANALYSIS OF AGE-APPROPRIATE TEXT

All children at months of age

4.1. Demonstrate knowledge of main characters and events in a familiar story, e.g., who, what, where, when, why.
4.2. Ask simple questions about a story.
4.3. Know characters in a simple story.
4.4. Summarize a story.
4.5. Ask questions about a story.
4.6. Use information from a story to make a logical inference or a drawing.
4.7. Recognize and use words or phrases, including vocabulary, phonetic, or combining sounds.
4.8. Identify and use the roles of donors and other characters in stories.
**Slide 13**

**Reading**

5.0 Literacy Interest and Response

- At around 18 months of age
- At around 30 months of age

- Demonstrate enjoyment of literary and literacy-related activities
- Demonstrate with increasing independence engagement of literary and literacy-related activities
- Engage in more complex narrative or related literacy activities

**Slide 14**

**Writing**

1.0 Writing Strategies

- At around 18 months of age
- At around 30 months of age

1.1 Experiment with group and body position, using a variety of drawing and writing tools
1.2 Write using words that are different from pictures
1.3 Write words to represent own ideas
1.4 Write first names, industry, correctly
Slide 15

WHAT IS AN ACTIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT?

In an active learning setting, educators set up the environment to engage the students and support their curiosity, however children are encouraged to explore their own interests.

Slide 16

LESSON 1
LISTENING AND SPEAKING
THINK, PAIR, SHARE
LANGUAGE USE AND CONVENTIONS

Materials
- Notebook for teacher observations

Facilitation
- Begin a meaningful conversation with the children.
- For example, it is Monday morning and the children are very interested in telling you what they did this weekend. Begin by telling them something meaningful about your weekend.
- Next have children find a partner and face each other.
- Have the children take turns telling each other about their weekend. Emphasize speaking slowly and clearly, and also taking turns.
DISCUSSION

What can you do to engage children in concrete objectives?

LESSONS 2-9

- With a partner role play two lessons from the guide. One person is the teacher, the other the student.
- Study the objectives for the lessons.
- Discuss what you can do to engage children in concrete objectives.
- At the end of 30 minutes you will present your findings to the group.
EVALUATION

- Please write down any comments or suggestions you have about this workshop.
- What are some limitations you might run into when implementing CPLF or active learning in your classroom?
REFERENCES


