

Case Study

Standard 5: Application of Curriculum Frameworks in the Planning and Facilitation of Meaningful Learning Experiences

Case Study	Discussion and Resources
In this story, Analise navigates challenges and demonstrates components of Standard 5 Application of Curriculum Frameworks in the Planning and Facilitation of Meaningful Learning Experiences: • Candidates collaborate with families and professionals to use an evidence-based, developmentally appropriate, and culturally responsive early childhood curriculum addressing developmental and content domains. Candidates use curriculum frameworks to create and support universally designed, high-quality learning experiences in natural and inclusive environments that provide each child and family with equitable access and opportunities for learning and growth. Resources to support adult learning: • ECPC Curriculum Modules: Professional Standards • Resources You Can Use for Pre- and In-service Professional Development (DEC Website) • Supporting Explanations for Early Component	<i>The specific components of Application of Curriculum Frameworks in the Planning and Facilitation of Meaningful Learning Experiences are listed as bulleted items below. Highlight in the story when professionals navigate challenges and demonstrate these components. Reflect on your own and compare your findings with others in small groups.</i> Specific components include: • Collaborating with families and other professionals in identifying an evidence-based curriculum addressing developmental and content domains to design and facilitate meaningful and culturally responsive learning experiences that support the unique abilities and needs of all children and families. • Using their knowledge of early childhood curriculum frameworks, developmental and academic content knowledge, and related pedagogy to plan and ensure equitable access to universally designed, developmentally appropriate, and challenging learning experiences in natural and inclusive environments.

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Analise and Her Preschool Classroom Analise is a recent graduate of a blended program where she studied the importance of integrating the principles of early childhood special education (ECSE) and early childhood education together. During her program, she learned about federal legislation related to inclusion for young children with delays/disabilities. She also feels confident in her ability to design a quality, inclusive classroom that supports all children. She is assigned to be the ECSE in her first preschool classroom at Charles Elementary. This is Analise’s first position after graduation. She is nervous about her role and anxious to learn the expectations! The classroom includes 8 children with delays/disabilities and 11 children that were at risk for delays/disabilities and did not qualify for an Individualized Education Program (IEP). Most of the children had been in the three-year-old classroom in the same school the year before and had transitioned into Analise’s room.	It sounds like Analise has a good foundation from her graduate program related to integrating services and supports for children with and without a need for special education services. Do you feel as if you have a good understanding of EC and ECSE? Do you have a solid understanding of the federal legislation related to inclusion and/or can you describe the components of quality inclusion? • CONNECT modules and courses – Foundations of Inclusion • DEC/NAEYC Joint Position Statement on Early Childhood Inclusion (2009) • U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, U.S. Department of Education – Policy Statement on Inclusion of Children with Disabilities in Early Childhood Programs (2015)
Observation of Professionals Supporting Children During the first week of school, Analise learns that the early childhood teacher designs the daily curriculum, and she is responsible for supporting the child with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). She noticed that an Occupational Therapist (OT), Physical Therapist (PT), and Speech-Language Pathologist (SLP) entered the classroom several times during the week to support the children. In each case, these individuals pulled their assigned child out of daily activities and guided him or her to a corner of the room. The OT, PT, and SLP interacted with Analise to say hello and introduce themselves but did not try to include her in these interactions. After the first few days of school, Analise asked the early childhood (EC) teacher to sit down and chat. To gain an idea of the teacher’s past experiences with ECSE, she	Are you familiar with early childhood curriculum frameworks that can be used to create and support universally designed, high quality experiences in preschool classrooms, like Analise’s? Visit this site for resources to support your knowledge of curriculum: Head Start Early Childhood Curriculum Is Analise’s team working in support of one another? Are they working collaboratively to support all children? What type of teaming is occurring right now? How does teaming and collaboration occur in your setting? Are you familiar with terms such as disciplinary, cross-disciplinary, interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary, and transdisciplinary?

asked about the work of the past ECSE when she served in her role. The EC teacher shared that the ECSE, like the related professionals, pulled the children out of the daily activities to work independently on their goals. Rarely, did she interact with the EC teacher, if at all. The EC teacher noted that she felt her job was very different than the ECSE and that she, “didn’t need to address the goals of the children with IEPs” because that was Analise’s job. Analise listened to the teacher and was not sure how to respond. Frustrated, she thanked the teacher for the conversation and went home to reflect.	Which of these terms represents how Analise’s team interacts with one another? How do you currently collaborate with professionals from different disciplines? What barriers exist? The resources below explore and define these terms for you: • Multidisciplinary • Description and comparison of service delivery approaches • Transdisciplinary (also called Primary Service Provider) What do you think of the early childhood teacher’s response to Analise’s inquiry about the previous ECSE? What would you do if you were in this situation? How might you approach collaboration and teaming with the teacher? Is the teacher biased based on her past experiences? • NAEYC – Anti-bias resources
Analise’s Reflection During her reflection, Analise noted several key aspects of the classroom and its support staff. From what she had observed so far, it seemed as if the children with IEPs were expected to follow the daily activities and routines without individualized modifications. There were some strategies in place to support all children including a daily visual schedule, reminders about transitions, and stars placed on the carpet to orient the children to where they should sit during group time. She noticed; however, that the teacher struggled to engage some of the children during small and large groups. Some would get up and run away from the table and required constant redirection from the paraprofessionals. She could tell that the EC teacher followed a developmentally appropriate curriculum (i.e., Creative Curriculum) to guide her instruction, but there did not seem to be modifications in place to support the children with delays/disabilities.	Are you familiar with how to individualize modifications and supports for young children with delays/disabilities so they can participate in the curriculum? • STEMIE – A Guide to Adaptations • Head Start – Curriculum Modifications • Building Blocks for Teaching Preschoolers with Special Needs (Sandall & Schwartz, 2008) – Curriculum Modifications by Type Are you familiar with the term co-teaching? Have you had the opportunity to engage in co-teaching with others? Here’s a few resources to support your learning: • Virginia Department of Education’s Training & Technical Assistance Center – Co-teaching in Early Childhood: Sharing is Caring

Analise also was aware that the area where the school district was located had a large population of immigrant families from Iraq, Burma, Mexico, and other locations. There did not seem to be any cultural references in any aspect of the children's classroom/learning environment. She assumed that many of the caregivers of these children may not speak English or may require the support of an interpreter. She wondered how interpreter services were addressed.

Regarding aspects of quality and equitable inclusion, she believed that the type of support the children are currently receiving reflects the "pull-out" method of therapy. She had learned and observed, through her coursework and practicum experiences, how universal design for learning (UDL) was implemented, and how to support children by embedding strategies within natural daily environments. She had also worked hard to learn and use evidence-based interventions to support children within inclusive environments during her student teaching experience. Analise had been excited to have the opportunity to use these interventions. Now, she was unsure of how to proceed as her approach was very different from what she had observed. It seemed as if the standard in her classroom was to support children through non-contextual intervention. The therapists removed the children from their daily routines to work with them individually on goals.

Being a newer teacher, Analise did not want to overstep her role and she wanted to collaborate well with the other professionals on the team. Therefore, after reflecting, she decided to start by focusing on her role and responsibilities. She knew that the district had hired her for her expertise, and it was possible that the EC teacher in the classroom had just not worked with someone trained like her before.

- [Co-Teaching: An Illustration of the Complexity of Collaboration in Special Education \(Friend et al., 2010\)](#)

Some of the parents that Analise serves may need translation services. Acar & Blasco (2016) provide guidelines for collaborating with interpreters in EI/ECSE in [this article](#).

Are you familiar with how to support Dual Language Learners (DLLs) and their families?

- [Head Start – Welcoming and Supporting Dual Language Learners](#)
- [WIDA – The Early Years: Dual Language Learners](#)
- [Zero to Three – Taking Two Language to Preschool Supporting Children with are Dual Language Learners](#)
- [Head Start - Introducing the Dual Language Learners \(DLL\) Program Assessment \(DLLPA\)](#)

Are you familiar with how to embed cultural references in a student's classroom and learning environment?

- [NAEYC – Valuing Diversity: Developing a Deeper Understanding of All Young Children's Behavior](#)
- [Teaching Strategies – Diversity in the Preschool Classroom 8 Considerations to Avoid Cultural Clashes](#)
- [FPPT – Creating and Celebrating Diversity in Preschool Classrooms](#)
- [University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension – Cultural Diversity Resources](#)

The National Center for Cultural Competence has a variety of documents and self-paced learning activities to help improve our cultural and linguistic competence [National Center for Cultural Competence](#).

What resources are available through your professional association to address unconscious bias and support cultural responsiveness? [Resources for Cultural Responsiveness Training](#).

Are you familiar with Universal Design for Learning and how it is implemented in preschool settings?

	In Analise’s reflection, she identified that the teacher already had some universal supports in place. Can you identify what these were? • Providing Multiple Means of Action and Expression in the Early Childhood Classroom Through a Universal Design for Learning Framework article (Hovey, Gauvreau, & Lohmann, 2022) • Brookes – Enhancing Early Ed Classrooms with UDL • Beyond the Journal – Young Children on the Web: The Universal Design of Early Education • Technical Assistance and Training System (TATS) Rock Your Classroom: Evidence-based Practices for Early Childhood Classrooms
Analise’s Next Steps First, she decided she would spend some time reviewing the children’s Individualized Education Program (IEP) documents to determine what goals were identified. She determined that it may be helpful to conduct a home visit with the family to learn more about how these goals related to caregiver priorities and what supports the child may need at home. Instead of pulling the children out of the activities to work on these goals, she decided she would talk with the teacher and suggest opportunities to provide support within existing daily routines and activities (e.g., arrival, lunch time, free play, small groups). The teacher was frustrated by some of the children and their lack of participation, so it was possible that she might prefer this type of support, just that she had not experienced it before. She would also explore the Creative Curriculum to determine how she might support the children on her caseload in upcoming lessons the teacher had already planned. She felt her role was to determine how she could seamlessly embed herself within the day as support versus someone that was constantly pulling the children out of their daily routines. Analise decided to start with two children on her caseload, Max and Amir. Both boys had recently turned four years of age and were verified as having a developmental delay. Analise chose to use an Activity Based Intervention Embedding Schedule to create an outline of the children’s	The EI/ECSE Practice-based Standards (one of these standards is the focus for this case study) provide us with an understanding of the role and expectations of EI/ECSE providers. It may be helpful for Analise to explore and learn about the other professionals in her classroom to better understand the role and expectations of their practice. Explore the early childhood, physical therapy, speech therapy, and occupational therapy professional websites: • NAEYC – 10 Program Standards • NAEYC – Professional Standards and Competencies for Early Childhood Educators • APTA American Physical Therapy Association • AOTA American Occupational Therapy Association • ASHA American Speech-Language-Hearing Association Have you had the opportunity to embed strategies and supports into existing routines for young children? Here are few resources that can help you learn more: • Integrating Therapy into the Classroom (McWilliam & Scott, 2001) • Anita Zucker Center – Embedded Instruction for Early Learning • Head Start – Embedded Teaching and Learning in the Preschool Classroom • ECTA – Embedded Instruction

goals and activities. She chose to use the Embedding Schedule because it provided a space for her to document exactly what was expected of the staff during daily classroom activities. It also provided documentation of how many times the team planned to practice the skill. She had enjoyed using this structure during student teaching and was excited to have the opportunity to use the schedule she had practiced now as a certified teacher.

Max – Max’s goals focused on using one word to request items or activities, taking turns with peers. Max’s family spoke English primarily in the home.

Amir – Amir’s goals focused on participation during circle time, identifying colors, and shapes. Amir’s family was from Iran and spoke Kurdish primarily in the home. His family had recently resettled from Iran.

After taking a few days to observe the students, Analise identified that Max chose to play in the block and play-doh areas most of the time. There were also always peers present in those areas. She also noticed Amir usually sat in the back of the circle time area with a paraprofessional next to him. A few times when circle-time lasted 10 or more minutes, Amir got up and ran away from the area. He only had the opportunity to participate in group songs or activities as he was rarely chosen to lead the group. When asked about this, the teacher said that in the past she had tried to include him, and he would throw a tantrum when she gave him a demand...so she just gave up including him. Amir seemed to enjoy playing on the playground and the gym area more than any other activities. Analise has gathered some helpful assessment information that can be used to create the embedding schedule for Max and Amir. Additionally, Analise decides she wants to make it a priority to focus on learning more about the families of the children she is supporting. She knows that the family is a child’s first and most important teacher. Consistent communication and knowledge of the family’s cultural, linguistic, and social aspects are integral to providing meaningful learning experiences for young children with delay/disabilities.

- [Using Routines-Based Interventions in Early Childhood Special Education \(Jennings, Hanline, & Woods, 2012\)](#)

Activity-based Instruction Approach to Early Intervention is considered a framework that can be used to guide instruction for young children – Are you familiar with ABI? [Use this textbook to implement the ABI approach.](#)

Read this article to explore research conducted on embedded learning opportunities (ELOs) - [Early Childhood Special Education Teachers' Use of Embedded Learning Opportunities Within Classroom Routines and Activities \(Rahn, Coogle & Ottley, 2019\)](#)

[Read this literature review article](#) to learn about research studies that support the use of embedded instruction in early childhood special education (Rakap & Parlak-Rakap, 2011).

The ABI approach uses an - Embedding Schedule to support staff as they implement interventions within daily routines and activities. Learn more about how to use an Embedding Instructions by completing the [CONNECT Modules](#).

Do you have experiences leading small and large groups within inclusive settings? What challenges have you had? What strategies might you use to support children that are struggling to attend?

- [We Can All Participate! Adapting Circle Time for Children with Autism \(Barton et al., 2011\) article](#)
- [NAEYC – From Circle Time to Small Groups: Meeting Children’s Needs](#)
- [Evidence-Based Instructional Practices: Small Group Academic Instruction with Peer Modeling](#)

Have you supporting families that resettled in the United States? Resettlement is when an individual (and often their families) seeks asylum and permanent residence from the United States.

- [Here is an example of a Kurdish family resettling in the United States](#)

Additional Discussion Questions:

1. How might Analise's collaborate with and include the family in decisions regarding their child's IEP goals and curriculum decisions?
2. What are some ways that Analise can collaborate with her team to implement additional universally designed, equitable materials in the classroom?
3. In Analise's future conversations with the EC teacher, what topics might be helpful to discuss to utilize the existing curriculum but also integrate strategies to support goals for the children with delays/disabilities in the classroom?
4. What other information might it be helpful to know about Max and Amir and their families?

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