

LITERACY DEVELOPMENT IN THE EARLY YEARS

Helping Children Read and Write

EIGHTH EDITION

25
YEARS
IN
PRINT



LESLEY MANDEL MORROW

EIGHTH EDITION



Literacy Development in the Early Years

Helping Children Read and Write

Lesley Mandel Morrow

Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey

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To Mary and Milton; Frank; Stephanie and Douglas; James and Natalie, My very special parents and husband, my very special daughter and son-in-law, and my very special grandson and granddaughter.



*James and Natalie,
You light up my life*

About the Author



Lesley Mandel Morrow is a Distinguished Professor of Literacy at Rutgers University's Graduate School of Education, where she is Director of the Center for Literacy Development. She began her career as a classroom teacher, then became a reading specialist, and later received her Ph.D. from Fordham University in New York City. Her area of research deals with early literacy development and the organization and management of language arts programs. Her research is carried out with children and families from diverse backgrounds.

Dr. Morrow has more than 300 publications, including journal articles, book chapters, monographs, and books. She received Excellence in Research, Teaching, and Service Awards from Rutgers University. She was the recipient of the International Reading Association's Outstanding Teacher Educator of Reading Award and their William S. Gray Citation of Merit. She also received Fordham University's Alumni Award for Outstanding Achievement. In addition, Dr. Morrow has received numerous grants for research from the federal government and has served as a principal research investigator for the Center of English Language Arts, the National Reading Research Center, and the Center for Early Reading Achievement. She was an elected member of the Board of Directors and President of the International Reading Association (IRA), an organization of 60,000 educators from 100 countries. Dr. Morrow was elected into the Reading Hall of Fame and was president of the Hall of Fame as well. In 2010 she received the Literacy Research Association's Oscar Causey Award for research that has added knowledge and caused change in literacy practice. She is the extremely proud grandmother of James Ethan and Natalie Kate.

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Foreword

Literacy Development in the Early Years: Helping Children Read and Write was published in its first edition in 1989. With the publication of this 8th edition, it has now been in print for 25 years. New features were added to each of the previous editions, as they are in this new edition. In the eighth edition, material dealing with what was sound and good practice 25 years ago was retained, and other material was updated based on current research, policy, and practice. This book was one of the first on the topic of early literacy and has prevailed as one of the most utilized texts of its kind in the country.

The first edition of *Literacy Development in the Early Years* appeared when research on emergent literacy was just beginning to be implemented. We once thought that children learned to speak and listen during their early years and later learned to read and write at 6 and 7 years of age. We also believed that early childhood was a time to learn to read and the elementary grades were a time to read to learn. We now know that children begin to develop early forms of language and literacy ability concurrently and from the day they are born. We now know that learning to read and reading to learn go hand in hand. We have discovered that excellent strategies are good for all children at all ages. Excellent literacy instruction is created in literacy-rich environments in social contexts through immersion in literacy experiences, explicit instruction, practice, and modeling by teachers—all with constructive feedback. Lesley Mandel Morrow based her book on her own research as well as that of others and her practical experience as a classroom teacher, reading specialist, researcher, mother, and now grandmother. She took a look at historical theories and philosophies about how children learn. As time passed and policy changes in teaching reading were legislated, Morrow took these developments into account and shared this very important information. With these new laws came new challenges, especially in the area of testing. There is a great deal about assessment in this edition so that teachers can assess children's needs by doing a case study with all materials in this new volume.

English language learners (ELLs) make up a large portion of our school population. Morrow has added more material to the chapter dealing with diversity and has incorporated an ELL icon to indicate activities throughout the book that work particularly well with children who are English language learners. Morrow demonstrates the value of involving children in many types of language and literacy experiences. She provides insightful examples of children's approximations of writing and reading as she establishes the necessity of giving them unlimited opportunities to practice. Further, she illustrates the ways in which adults provide models, explicit instruction, and feedback for young learners as they attempt to read and write. Morrow takes a comprehensive perspective toward literacy instruction by selecting the best techniques based on sound learning theories, such as a constructivist model or problem-solving approach to more explicit instruction.

Children's literature plays an important role in Lesley Morrow's literacy environment. Literature serves as a model for language learning and provides

strong motivation for learning to read and write. It is a springboard for many literacy-related activities. Most important, literature is a way of knowing. It is shaped around story whether it is narrative or expository—a primary act of human minds. She is also aware that in early literacy development, materials designed for instructional purposes are necessary for skill development and to attain national, state, and local standards for literacy learning.

Lesley Morrow recognizes the importance of parents, siblings, grandparents, and other caregivers reading to children and enjoying books together. She shows how reading to babies influences their grasp of language and story patterns that serve them well as they learn to read and write. She illustrates how children learn concepts about print, book handling, and conventions of stories as they interact with books. She establishes that adults teach by example as they enjoy shared reading and shared writing with children. She shows the impact of having a literacy center in a classroom and the effects of storybook reading aloud by a teacher. She illustrates that when children know authors and illustrators as real people, they want to read their work and write in a manner similar to them. Morrow states that storytelling is similar to reading aloud in its impact on children. She also recognizes the necessity of skills that involve learning concepts about print and books. For example, children need to develop phonological and phonemic awareness, alphabetic principles, and phonics for reading success. They also must learn to construct meaning from text by learning strategies for comprehension. Speaking from her own experiences as a teacher, researcher, parent, and grandparent, Morrow charts a path that leads to successful literacy learning.

Lesley Mandel Morrow has taken a long view of literacy development in the early years, showing its historical roots. She also knows and draws on the research of today's leaders because she is a member of that research community. She succinctly summarizes language theories and relates current research to shape sound practices. She has conducted much of the original research herself, testimony to the fact that she can bridge the gap among theory, research, and practice. Her examples are anchored in real classroom experiences—her own and those of other teachers with whom she works collaboratively. The examples are authentic and add credibility to the content of this book.

Morrow spends a significant amount of time on organizing and managing language arts throughout the day. In case studies and outlines, she takes the reader step by step to show what exemplary literacy instruction looks like. This edition puts a great deal of emphasis on the use of technology in the early childhood literacy classroom, differentiated instruction, response to intervention, and content-area literacy instruction. Her book is filled with photographs, figures, and illustrations that take the reader into classrooms, and reproducible strategies for the classroom are sprinkled throughout the book. There are references for online video clips where students can see strategies come to life in the classroom.

Lesley Morrow's treatment of literacy development is on the cutting edge of current knowledge. She is well informed about her subject and makes connections among all aspects of literacy learning. She is a sensitive observer and writer, letting children and teachers speak for themselves through their work.

Dr. Morrow states that few children learn to love books by themselves. Someone must lure them into the wonderful world of the written word. She

shows us how to do that and enriches our lives and the lives of children through her work. Her contribution to the literacy development of children from birth through grade 3 is a lasting one.

Linda B. Gambrell, Ph.D.
Distinguished Professor of Education
Clemson University

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Preface

Literacy Development in the Early Years, Eighth Edition, is for teachers, reading specialists, administrators, students in teacher education programs, and parents. It is appropriate for graduate, undergraduate, and professional development courses in early literacy, and it complements texts on teaching reading in the elementary school, children's literature, child development, early childhood curriculum, and teaching language arts.

I wrote the book because of my special interest in literacy development in early childhood. I taught in preschool, kindergarten, and the primary grades; I was a reading specialist; and then I taught early childhood curriculum and literacy courses at the university level. My research has focused on instructional strategies in early literacy. Over the years, research in early literacy has generated new theory. It has implications for new instructional strategies and reinforces older practices based on little or no research to establish their validity. The book describes a program that nurtures literacy development from birth through third grade.

The ideas in the book are based on research. They have been tried and they have worked, but not all are appropriate for all teachers or all children. The good teacher functions most effectively with strategies he or she feels most comfortable with. The teacher needs to be a decision maker who thinks critically about the design of his or her literacy program and the selection of materials. Children come to school with diverse social, emotional, physical, and intellectual abilities and achievement levels. They have diverse cultural backgrounds, experiences, and exposures to literacy. All must be addressed appropriately.

Underlying this book is the merging of the art and the science of teaching. The science involves theories based on research findings that have generated instructional strategies. The book is also based on current standards for teaching literacy and current policy. Most of the book contains descriptions of strategies and steps for carrying them out. But the research does not necessarily take into account individual differences among teachers and children. The art of teaching concentrates on those human variables. This book provides a comprehensive and balanced approach to early literacy instruction. Constructivist ideas that involve problem-solving techniques are blended with explicit direct instructional approaches so that teachers can decide what works best for the children they teach. There is a strong emphasis on learning to read through the integration of reading, writing, listening, speaking, and viewing. There is also a strong emphasis on the integration of these literacy skills into content-area learning. Differentiation of instruction is a major theme. That theme suggests that teaching must be directed to the individual needs of every child and, in addition, there is a strong emphasis on the diverse nature of children.

The Introduction places you in an early childhood classroom immediately. Its purpose is to provide you with an exemplary model of excellent literacy instruction.

Chapter 1 provides a framework of theory, research, and policy from the past and present that has influenced strategies for developing early literacy.

Chapter 2 covers the important issues of assessment and provides you with concepts for authentic assessment, portfolio assessment, and standardized assessment. This chapter emphasizes how assessment must guide instruction and how they are connected. With this philosophy in mind, strategies for assessment are integrated into all chapters.

Chapter 3 is about the diversity in our classrooms. The chapter has been expanded because of the diverse nature of our children. There is an emphasis on English language learners (ELLs) in the chapter as well as discussion of special learning needs such as learning disabilities, physical disabilities, gifted children, and others. This chapter provides strategies for teaching children who are diverse in many ways. However, meeting the needs of these individuals is focused on throughout the book. An icon indicates that a particular strategy is important not only for native speakers but for English language learners as well.



Chapters 4 through 7 deal with oral language and vocabulary development, word analysis, comprehension, and writing. These chapters discuss theory and research—specifically, developmental trends, instructional strategies, and methods for assessment. The book views the development of literacy skills (reading, writing, oral language, listening, and viewing) as concurrent and interrelated; the development of one enhances the development of the others. Furthermore, the theories, stages, acquisition, and strategies associated with each are similar, and it is difficult to separate them entirely. To make the volume more readable, however, I have treated the various areas of literacy in different chapters.

Chapter 8 places a strong emphasis on motivation. This chapter focuses on how to deal with materials that are relevant in children's lives. It emphasizes the interrelatedness of the areas of literacy and describes how they can be integrated into the entire school day within content areas. There is an enhanced section on technology in literacy in early childhood and the importance of playful literacy. An important goal is to teach reading but also to create lifelong readers.

Chapter 9 provides the organization and management of the components presented in the book that are organized to create a successful program. The best strategies will fall apart if the school day is not organized well. Ways of scheduling the school day are discussed, as are how to organize whole-group, small-group, and individualized instruction. An area of extreme importance to teachers is how children can learn to work independently at centers while teachers instruct small groups to meet achievement needs. This is accomplished through differentiation of instruction.

Chapter 10 discusses the strong influence of the home on the development of literacy, especially in a child's earliest years. It discusses broad perspectives concerning family literacy, such as integrated home and school programs, intergenerational programs, and sensitivity to cultural differences to provide programs that are not intrusive but build on the strengths of the families being served.

Each chapter begins with expected outcomes to focus on while reading the text. Important vocabulary in the chapter is listed at the beginning of each chapter. The questions and vocabulary are followed by a vignette from the classroom, theory and research, and then practice and assessment. Each chap-

ter has multiple and reproducible strategies throughout. The chapters end with a summary that focuses on the expected outcomes with questions and activities for further study. There is also a quiz at the end of each chapter for students to use to test themselves. The appendices supplement the text with lists of materials that teachers use in carrying out a successful program to develop early literacy. Appendix E offers the instructor ideas for his or her college classroom. Key words dealing with early literacy development are defined in the glossary at the end of the book. An online Instructor's Resource Manual is also available.


What's New in the Eighth Edition

New features of the eighth edition include the following:

Pearson eText

- This edition is available for the first time as a Pearson eText*. The affordable, convenient, interactive version of this text includes tools to help navigate and understand important, current content. The Pearson eText* is available with a black and white, loose-leaf printed version of the text.

Features of the Pearson eText* include:

- Tools to take and share notes, highlight and bookmark chapter concepts, and search by keyword
 - Accessible from your computer, iPad and Android tablets with the Pearson eText app
 - More affordable than a traditional text book
 - Extended access upgrade is available
-  ■ Videos: These videos offer a glimpse at the real world of teaching. View interviews of experts and footage of teachers and administrators discussing and applying chapter concepts.

Throughout the Text

- The format of each chapter has changed and begins with Learning Outcomes. The major headings in the chapter are aligned to those outcomes. Each Chapter ends with a summary of the learning outcomes and a quiz for students to test themselves on chapter concepts.
- Activities and Questions: Each chapter includes questions that test students' knowledge of the content they have just read throughout the chapter.
- There is a strong emphasis on the new Common Core State Standards. When applicable a standard is written above a strategy. There is an emphasis on the use of informational text, integration of literacy throughout the curriculum, a look at close reading, and dealing with complex text.



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- More strategies than ever before are embedded within the book with vignettes for putting them into practice.
- A new Integrated Language Arts Unit in Appendix B about Animals uses Common Core State Standards in the content areas.
- Continued emphasis is placed on research and policy in early literacy development, including findings from the National Reading Panel, the National Early Literacy Panel, Preventing Reading Difficulties, Reading First, the Rand Report, the implications of the No Child Left Behind legislation, Race to the Top, and the Common Core State Standards.
- Updated photographs, as well as tables, and illustrations enhance the text.
- There are additional strategies for developing literacy in writing workshops, reading workshops, independent and partner reading, organizational methods, and comprehension development.
- Appendixes for children's literature, early literacy software, and multiple websites for teachers and children have been updated.
- There are additional assessment tools for carrying out a very complete case study of a child's abilities and needs in Literacy Development and an emphasis on assessment guided instruction.
- Emphasis is placed on school relevance and motivation.
- There is a strong emphasis on how to organize children with similar needs for small-group instruction.

Acknowledgments

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Photo credit: Lesley Morrow

Introduction

A Look at an Exemplary Language Arts Classroom

In this introduction, I describe an early childhood teacher and her students in the beginning of first grade. The purpose of this introduction is to give you an idea of what an exemplary early childhood classroom in which literacy is emphasized looks like. This will provide a framework for what you will read in the rest of the book. This introduction presents what you should know and be able to do after reading the book. By previewing this case study, you will have some background information about what is to come. In the description of this classroom, many critical components, materials, and routines of exemplary literacy instruction are discussed. **After completing the book, read this introduction again.**

Introduction to the Teacher and Students

Wendy Hayes has been teaching first grade for the past seven years. Recently, she completed a Master's degree, with a reading specialist certification. She teaches in a working-class community. She has twenty-two students in her class, including six Caucasian, five Asian American, seven African-American, and four Hispanic children. Twenty percent of Wendy's class speaks one of four languages at home: Spanish, Japanese, Hindi, or Mandarin Chinese. Twelve students are girls and ten are boys. There is a full-time aide assigned to one student who is physically disabled and uses a wheelchair.

Wendy's philosophy of teaching includes integration of the curriculum so that students can build connections between content areas. *She purposefully integrates literacy skill development in reading, writing, listening, speaking, and viewing with her social studies and science themes as much as possible.* Her small-group literacy instruction emphasizes her belief in differentiated instruction. In the small groups, she teaches skills in an explicit manner. Ms. Hayes uses both narrative and informational texts. She is spending more time on expository books than she has in the past since she recognizes that children gain background knowledge and vocabulary from this material. She is aware that people read a variety of informational texts such as how-to manuals, applications, instructions, recipes, and websites. Consequently, Ms. Hayes understands that children must be introduced to multiple genres at a young

age. She is working to embed appropriate goals from the Common Core Standards into her early literacy program.

Setting the Stage for Wendy's Teaching

Wendy's classroom is warm and inviting, with well-defined centers. The displays on the walls clearly reflect *the theme being studied*. They also show considerable evidence of the children's growing literacy development. The displays include charts that Wendy wrote with the children and samples of children's writing and artwork. Wendy has an easel with chart paper for the morning message, a calendar, a weather chart, a temperature graph, a helper chart, a daily schedule, a list of classroom rules, a pocket chart, and a word wall in the area where she teaches the whole group.

Wendy's largest center is the *literacy center*, which has a rug for independent reading and whole-class meetings. The area includes lots of space for storing books. One set of shelves holds books organized in two different ways. There are baskets of books leveled for difficulty coordinating with Wendy's small-group reading instruction. For example, students reading books in the green basket during small-group instruction know that these are the books they can read independently. Other shelves hold baskets organized by themes, such as dinosaurs, sports, and weather. Wendy rotates books in the baskets monthly. Colored stickers on the books and baskets assist students in returning them to the correct spot. Student-made class books and stories are displayed in another basket. Books about the current theme are on an open-faced shelf.

The literacy center has a felt board and felt characters, a magnetic board with magnetic characters, puppets, and props for storytelling. There is a rocking chair for the teacher and other adults to use to read to the class. The children use the rocking chair to read independently and to each other. The listening area in the literacy center has a CD player for listening to stories. There are manipulative materials for learning about print, which include magnetic letters, puzzle rhyme cards, and letter chunks on small tiles for making words. Wendy has an electronic white board for presenting lessons in word study and comprehension and activities for students to do on their own. Finally, she embeds the use of technology in her teaching with digital texts, accessing information from the Internet, and posting information on the class website. She and the children also create PowerPoint presentations and use programs that enhance literacy and engage children such as Animoto and Puppet Pals.

The *writing center* is an extension of the literacy center. There is a round table for small groups of children to meet with the teacher. Shelves hold many types of paper (lined and unlined), a stapler, markers, crayons, colored pencils, dictionaries, alphabet stamps, and ink stamp pads. A word wall in the writing center has the letters of the alphabet taped on horizontally. When the children learn a new word, it is written on a card and taped under the letter it begins with on the word wall. Children use the words when they need the spelling of a word or to practice reading. During instruction, children are asked to think of words that begin with the same letter and sound as a word on the word wall, or to think of words that rhyme with a word on the word wall. Wendy puts her students' names on the word wall. She also puts high-frequency sight words that her children are expected to learn.

Wendy's *science center* provides a home for the class guinea pig, rabbit, and hermit crab. Equipment in this center includes plants, magnets, magnifying glasses, and objects that sink or float. Materials are added to match the themes being studied, and there are always new hands-on experiments for students to complete.

The *dramatic play center* includes a table, chairs, and a bookshelf. Changes are made to the area to reflect the themes studied during the year. This center has been converted into a restaurant where children take orders and read menus. The restaurant helps with learning about multicultural food and customs. This year, the class had a restaurant that changed from Italian, to Chinese, Mexican, a Jewish deli, and Japanese. Dramatic-play settings also included a newspaper office, a post office, and a travel agency.

The *block center* includes wooden blocks of all sizes and shapes and other toys for construction, such as Legos. There are toy trucks, cars, trains, people, and animals in this area with labels designating where each toy goes. Also supplied are 5 × 8 cards and tape for labeling structures created by the children. There are signs written by children such as "Please Save" on buildings under construction and signs naming finished structures. Children sign their names on the labels.

Located near the sink is the *art center*, which contains an easel, table, and chairs. There are scissors, markers, crayons, and paper of many colors, types, and sizes. Collage materials such as cotton balls, doilies, foil, wallpaper, stickers, and paste are also included.

The *math center* contains math manipulatives for counting, adding, measuring, weighing, graphing, and distinguishing shapes. There are felt numbers to use on the felt board, magnetic numbers for magnetic boards, numbers to sequence in a pocket chart, and geometric shapes such as squares, triangles, cylinders, and rectangles.

The children sit at tables clustered together. In a quiet corner of the room, there is a round table that Wendy uses for small-group instruction. Shelves near the table have materials for small groups, such as letters of the alphabet, rhyming cards, leveled books, sentence strips, index cards, white boards, markers, and word-study games.

Center Management

Wendy uses her centers daily, since primary-grade children learn best when they are manipulating materials and collaborating. Wendy assigns centers at which the children work. After about 15 minutes, she rings a bell for children to change centers. To assure that all children get to all centers in a week, she makes a note of which centers children were at each day and they go to ones the next day that they did not visit the day before. The completed work from a center is placed in the basket labeled "Finished Work." At the end of each day, Wendy reviews completed work from the centers and assigns centers for the next day. Any incomplete work, or work that indicates a child needs help with a concept, is placed in the "Not Finished" folder. Time is allotted each day for completing unfinished work. After completing work at three centers, the students may choose other centers in which to work. Thus, the children have a combination of required activities in centers assigned by Wendy and self-selected activities in centers of their choice.

Assessing Students to Determine Instructional Needs

To provide instruction to meet the varied reading and writing levels of her students, Wendy spends considerable time assessing them with formal and informal measures. In September, January, and June, she assesses students' phonics knowledge, their ability to read sight words, vocabulary development, their reading comprehension, fluency, and writing ability. She plans instruction based on the needs she identifies. She also looks at daily performance samples. Wendy takes monthly running records for children who are reading and checks knowledge of Concepts about Books and Print (CBP) for those not yet reading. These assessments identify the types of errors that children make, the decoding strategies they use, and their comprehension and reading levels. A comparison of previous running records to new ones and CBP tests indicate student progress. Wendy writes anecdotal notes about child behavior that indicates achievement and what help is needed. She collects samples of children's writing, evaluates them, and places these in student portfolios. Wendy also observes students for social, emotional, and physical development.

Small-Group Reading Instruction

Wendy developed a schedule that allows her to work with small groups of children to develop reading skills. Using the collected assessment information, she places students with similar needs together for small-group instruction. As she works with children, she takes careful notes regarding progress in literacy and adjusts the members of her various groups as needed. While in small groups, Wendy provides skills instruction for the children. She works on phonics skills, comprehension, fluency, writing, and vocabulary development. Wendy currently has four small groups and meets with each group three to four times a week. On Fridays she meets again (this time individually) with struggling children.

Wendy's Daily Schedule

8:45 - When children arrive at school, they have a DO Now:

- Carry out their jobs
- Partner Read
- Make entries in their journals
- Complete unfinished work

9:00 to 9:15 - The group meets as a whole for the **Morning Meeting**:

- Morning greetings are shared
- The calendar and weather are discussed
- The schedule for the day is reviewed

9:15 to 10:00 - **Vocabulary Morning Meeting**

There is a vocabulary lesson to match the theme being studied. Vocabulary words from the theme are reviewed and some new ones added to the list. With a partner, the children create sentences with the new vocabulary. In this vocabulary period, grade-level vocabulary is also introduced.

10:00 to 10:20 - Comprehension Reading Workshop

The teacher does a read-aloud based on the theme being studied and does a mini-lesson to build comprehension using either an informational or narrative book dealing with the current theme. After the lesson, children select from a group of books the teacher has provided. They read with a partner to practice the skill taught. The teacher moves around the room and conferences with children about their reading, offering guidance when necessary. The class as a whole shares what each student learned from partner reading based on the comprehension skill taught in the read aloud.

10:20 to 11:10 - Small-Group Differentiated Reading Instruction and Center Activities**11:15 to 12:00 - Writing Workshop**

The teacher does a mini-skill lesson for the whole group focusing on one writing skill. The children write alone or with a partner to practice the skill. The teacher holds conferences with the children as they write. The children share their writing.

12:00 to 12:45 - Lunch and Indoor or Outdoor Play**12:45 to 1:15 Word Work****1:00 to 1:40 - Math**

1:40 to 2:15 - Theme-related activities in social studies or science in which reading and writing activities are purposefully embedded

2:15 - Creative arts, music, or gym (specials or classroom teacher—related to classroom theme studied and tied into literacy skills provided by the classroom teacher)

2:50 - WRAP UP: Read-aloud or silent reading

Sharing and reviewing the most important things learned that day

Planning for tomorrow

A Typical Day in Wendy's Classroom

Wendy and her students are studying dinosaurs. In her classroom, reading, writing, listening, speaking, and content-area subjects are integrated into the dinosaur theme. On Monday, she organizes activities for the week.

It is Monday morning and Wendy's room fills with quiet chatter as her students arrive. Classical music plays in the background as children complete their morning routines. Children move their name tags on the attendance board from the side labeled *Not Here* to *Here* and place their name stickers into the *Buy Lunch* or *Milk* can. Some children cluster around the easel, where Wendy has written the morning message and at the end included the question for the day. The message says, "Good morning, children. Today is Monday, April 3rd. We will have art today as our special. Our question for today is how many dinosaur names do you know? Write them in your journal and we will talk about it later."

Children check the helper chart for jobs such as feeding the animals, watering plants, and recording the temperature and day's weather on the weather graph. Wendy puts pictures next to each step to help with reading the chart. This is particularly useful for struggling readers and English Language Learners (ELL).

Students know it is Do Now time and write their *weekend news* in their journals. On other days of the week, they partner read three times and journal write one more time. Wendy greets each child as she circulates among the readers or writers. A two-minute warning bell rings, letting children know that it is time to gather on the rug for the morning meeting.

The Morning Meeting: Vocabulary Development

Wendy says, "Good morning," and the children repeat the greeting to each other and shake hands around the circle. Because they are beginning the new month of April, they echo read and then choral read a poem about the month that Wendy showed on the digital white board. She gives the children a paper copy of the poem to put in their Poem Books, along with other poems for each month.

Next, Wendy leads the class in reading the *morning message* together. She asked the children to look at the morning message and read it together. It said, "*Good morning, children. Today is Monday, April 3rd. We will have art today as our special. What dinosaurs did you write down? Can you tell me something about them?*" The morning message is used to develop vocabulary. They discussed the dinosaurs and Wendy brought pictures to show of them as they are mentioned. New dinosaur names were added to the themed word wall to continue vocabulary development.

Comprehension Reading Workshop: Comprehension Development and Independent Reading

Wendy has her class move to another portion of the room for Reading Workshop. She will do a read-aloud and comprehension mini-lesson. The book is an informational book about dinosaurs. They look through the pages together and decide what the book will be about. It seems it might be about plant-eating dinosaurs. Wendy tells them to listen for all the types of plants that the animals eat. She tells the children to compare characteristics of meat-eating dinosaurs they read about recently and the plant-eating dinosaurs she was going to read about today. The children have copies of the book and follow along as the teacher reads. After reading, they discuss the facts in the book and compare the meat eaters to the plant eaters.

After the discussion, children choose a book to read from a selection of dinosaur books. The books are about meat-eating dinosaurs and plant eaters. Children are to remember facts about the meat-eating dinosaurs and the plant-eating dinosaurs to compare. While they read with a partner, the teacher circulates and listens to readers. She offers assistance if needed. She may even conference with some who seem to need additional help.

After their partner reading, the class shares and compares facts together. They discuss the differences between plant-eating dinosaurs and meat-eating dinosaurs on a Venn diagram and discuss things they have in common.

Center Time

Wendy spends a few minutes reviewing the center activities and describing new ones placed in the centers for the exploration of dinosaurs. Centers have materials that are in place over a period of time, and they are enriched with activities that reflect the current theme and skills that need to be practiced. A description of what has been added to each center related to the dinosaur theme follows.

Writing Center: Dinosaur-bordered writing paper, dinosaur-shaped books, a dinosaur dictionary, a dinosaur-shaped poster with words about dinosaurs, pencils, crayons, colored pencils, markers

Literacy Center: Fiction and nonfiction dinosaur books, dinosaur books with accompanying CDs, a dinosaur vocabulary puzzle, a dinosaur concentration memory game, a teacher-made dinosaur lottery game

Computer Center: Games, information on different types of dinosaurs, and a video about fossils.

Science Center: Small skulls and old animal bones, along with a magnifying glass and rubber gloves to examine the bones and draw what they think the entire animal may have looked like; dinosaur pictures to sort into meat eaters and plant eaters; other pictures to be sorted into “walked on two feet” and “walked on four feet.” There are recording sheets for all activities.

Math Center: Measuring tools in a basket and sheets to record the measurement of various plaster bones of dinosaurs; dinosaur counters; little plastic dinosaurs in an estimation jar; a basket containing 50 little dinosaurs numbered from 1 to 50 to be put in sequential order.

Blocks Center: Toy dinosaurs, trees, bushes, and some dinosaur books

Art Center: Dinosaur stencils, dinosaur stamps, clay models of dinosaurs, and many pictures of dinosaurs to help students make their own sculptures.

Dramatic Play Center: The dramatic-play area is transformed into a paleontologist's office with chicken bones embedded in plaster of Paris, carving tools and small hammers to remove the bones, safety goggles, paper and pencils for labeling bones, trays to display them, dinosaur books, and posters of fossils and dinosaurs.

After Wendy reviews center activities, she assigns her students to centers. Activities that must be done are skills that students need practice in, such as matching pictures with letters to reinforce long and short vowel sounds. When they complete the *have-to* activities, children may select any center.

Small-Group Differentiated Reading Instruction

Center time allows the teacher to work with small groups and individuals while the children are working independently. Wendy's first group is reading a new book. She does a book walk to introduce the children to the difficult words and pictures. Wendy and the children talk about each page. During the book

walk, the students are asked to find particular vocabulary words that are new to them. They also discuss the names of the animals in the book. Wendy reads the story to the children first. Next, the children are asked to read the book orally at their own pace. As the group reads, Wendy notices that one student reads the book quickly without making any errors. Wendy makes a note to think about moving him to a more challenging reading group. After the children finish reading, Wendy asks everyone to turn to page eight. “I noticed that James read, ‘We saw the pot bear’ and then changed it to ‘polar bear,’ since he looked back at the letters and took into account the meaning of the sentence. He remembered that the words have to match the letters and what you read has to make sense.”

While the children were reading, Wendy did a running record on one child. She noted that this student read *tooth* instead of *teeth* and said *winds* instead of *wings*. Wendy will help this child pay more attention to the print when working with him.

Wendy’s next group is reading a different and more difficult book. This group is more advanced than the first. The group has worked with this book before; therefore, the lesson that Wendy will carry out will help her children become more independent readers. She will teach them how to figure out unknown words by using the meaning of a sentence and by looking at the letters in the words. They begin with a game called “Guess the Covered Word,” similar to an activity they used during the morning message. This time, the covered word in the sentence “I can *blank* fast” is the word *run*. The children are encouraged to select a word that makes sense in the sentence and then look at the letters in the word to see which is the correct word. Words generated for the missing word were *walk*, *eat*, *hop*, *sleep*, and *run*. The activity is repeated in other sentences throughout the book.

The next group is reading another book. In this lesson, Wendy *focuses* on teaching the children to look at ending sounds to figure out words. Wendy wrote, “I am go to the store” on the chart. She reads the sentence and the children quickly point out that it does not sound right. Joan writes a second sentence, “I am *going* to the store.” They identify the difference in the two sentences by pointing to the words *go* and *going*. Wendy reminds the children to look at the ends and beginnings of words when reading. They read the book with special attention to the word endings. After the first reading, she starts a discussion to demonstrate their ability to infer and asks them if they could think of another way to end the story.

A quick snack

For a snack there are dinosaur animal crackers and what Wendy refers to as “dinosaur juice.” Children read independently when finished with the snack.

Writing Workshop

The children gather for writing in the whole-class meeting area. Wendy prepares them for a school-wide activity. They will survey all students in the school to find out what their favorite dinosaurs are. Wendy does an interactive writing activity to draft a letter asking the teachers and children in other classrooms to participate. She begins by reviewing the format of a letter, which was introduced

during a previous unit on the post office. They discuss how to begin and end a letter. Using chart paper, Wendy asks the children to offer suggestions to start the letter and write the letter. The children and their teacher compose the text. Wendy types the letter and distributes it to each classroom. The original shared writing chart will be posted on the cafeteria door.

Next, Wendy introduces the writing activity for the week. The children will be writing informational texts about dinosaurs. They are each to select their favorite dinosaur and answer the following questions before they begin their writing:

What are the parts of your dinosaur? What does your dinosaur eat? Where did your dinosaur live? What else do you know about your dinosaur?

Each child selects a partner to work with and a dinosaur to study. Jamal and Damien chose a tyrannosaurus. Wendy has provided books for looking up information in the categories outlined and has identified website for children to review. Each child takes two sections of the book on which to write.

Through this initial activity, the children have learned that *brainstorming* is a crucial step in the writing process. Brainstorming helps children decide what they will write. On Tuesday, they will continue to browse through dinosaur books for information and start to draft. Children will write the facts collected into informational stories and illustrate them. When the activity is completed at the end of the week, children will share their informational dinosaur stories.

Lunch and Play

Lunch is in the cafeteria. After eating, if weather permits, the children play outside. If not, they play in the gym or their classroom.

Word Work

The school where Wendy teaches has a phonics program that makes sure children systematically learn the skills they need to read automatically and independent. This program includes many manipulative materials that engage children in building words using initial consonant blends and digraphs, and word families at the end. In addition to using the phonics program, Wendy always adds something that brings meaning to the lesson. For example, with the study of dinosaurs that are meat eaters and plant eaters, she points out that *meat* follows the rule she has taught that says *when two vowels go walking the first one does the talking*. She asks the children for other words with *ea* that follows that rule. Children mention *treat*, *seat*, and *beat*. They also look at the word *plant* to notice the blend at the beginning of the word. They think of other words that have the *pl* blend at the beginning such as *place*, *plot*, and *play*.

Math

There is a specific math curriculum that Wendy follows in her school. She also ties her math to her theme and literacy. Children are working on subtracting a one-digit number from a two-digit number. After working on the skill, she asks

the children to write a word problem that involves subtraction and dinosaurs. James wrote the following, “*Fifteen dinosaurs went for a walk in the forest. They were plant eaters and munching on plants along the way. Five of them at the end of the line got lost. How many dinosaurs were left in the big group.*”

Science: Theme Activity and Center Time

Wendy has planned a theme-related art activity. Everyone will contribute to a mural and construct a habitat environment for dinosaur sculptures the children will create with the art teacher. To introduce the mural and habitat activity, everyone listens as Wendy explains the details. Children talk about a piece of the mural they would like to work on, such as trees, vines, a cave, a river, or plants. Wendy writes the children’s names on a chart with the item they would like to draw with markers.

One-third of the students remain on the carpet to work on the mural. These children huddle around books depicting plants and trees from the time of the dinosaurs. Animated discussions take place as each child draws food, shelter, water, and other elements necessary to sustain dinosaur life. The rest of the children use this time to complete unfinished journal writing or center work. If they have completed all their work, they can select any center activity they wish. This is a playful time of the day when children build with blocks, play in the dramatic play area, do an art project, explore in the science area, or look at books. Students who did not get to work on the mural will have a chance another day during the week.

Art, Music, Gym

At this time of day, the class goes to a special teacher for art, music, or gym. Wendy has coordinated with these teachers about the current class theme so the art teacher is working on paper-mâché dinosaur sculptures with the children. The music teacher has found some great dinosaur songs and one about habitats as well. The gym teacher has thought of some movement activities to help the students walk like dinosaurs.

WRAP Up

At the end of the day, students gather in the meeting area for a read-aloud and a review of the day. Wendy has selected an informational book about dinosaurs. This book will provide children with more facts and vocabulary that they can use in their writing and for the mural habitat they are creating. Before she reads it, she points out some of the features of this informational book. There is a table of contents that includes each chapter and glossary of new words. There are labels on figures, captions describing pictures, headings introducing new topics, and new vocabulary written in a bolder and bigger print than the rest of the words. Wendy knows this book will introduce children to a topic not yet discussed in class: the differences between dinosaurs that were plant eaters and those that were meat eaters. After reading, Wendy helps children list the characteristics of plant-eating and meat-eating dinosaurs on an interactive writing chart. There were new dinosaur terms to learn, such as *armored plates*, *carnivore*, and *extinct*.

In another shared reading at the end of the next day, Wendy focused on finding facts in the informational text. When she read, she asked the children to listen for the facts about dinosaurs and the elements in the book that make it informational.

After reading, Wendy asked, “What elements made this book an informational story?”

Student 1: There aren’t characters that have a story to tell.

Student 2: It is about real things.

Student 3: You learn a lot of facts.

After the discussion, Wendy made a web that included the facts in the text. She drew a circle on a chart with the word *dinosaurs* written in the center. Then she drew lines radiating out from the center circle. Next, she drew smaller circles connected to each line radiating out from the larger circle. As children recalled facts about dinosaurs, Wendy wrote the words in one of the smaller circles. After writing the web, Wendy and the children read it: Dinosaurs: *Big, Scary, Vegetarians, Meat Eaters, Dangerous, Extinct*.

Wendy talked about how informational texts are also called *nonfiction* because everything is real instead of make-believe. One student raised her hand and said:

Student 1: I think the book is make-believe, because the pictures are drawings. If it was an informational book, there would be photographs that we take with cameras.

Student 2: But they can’t have real photographs because dinosaurs are dead, and they didn’t have photographs since they had no cameras when they were alive. We don’t have any more dinosaurs. What is that word, they are? Oh yeah, they are *extinct*.

The teacher gives each child a post-it to write the three most important things they learned. They put the post-its on a bulletin board and make a copy to bring home. This reinforces what was learned and lets parents know what was learned as the children share the post it with their families.

Tuesday: Learning More about Dinosaurs

Tuesday’s schedule is the same as Monday, but with new books and assignments. During the rest of the week, the children followed the same routines with morning messages, Vocabulary Development, Reading Workshop with a shared storybook readings, whole-group skills lessons, and reading practice. There is small-group instruction, center work, writing workshop, and theme-related activities in social studies, science math, art, music, and play.

Summary

Wendy’s classroom allows children to have the opportunity to explore and experiment while also receiving explicit instruction. They are expected to complete work assigned to them during small-group instruction or during

whole-group lessons. However, they also have choices in the selection of activities a few times during the day. A lot of information is introduced during whole- and small-group lessons, and information is repeated and reviewed all week long. Children's individual needs are met during small-group reading instruction, writing workshop, and center time. Reading and writing are integrated in content-area learning. Children in Wendy's classroom read and write all day long in all of the content areas. Her classroom is arranged so the children have access to varied materials and books. Most importantly, Wendy's children come into the classroom each day ready and excited to learn.

1

Foundations of Early Literacy Development

Surveying the Past to the Present

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- 1.1 Discuss the historical roots of early childhood education.
- 1.2 Discuss the evolution of theory and practice in early childhood education across the twentieth century.
- 1.3 Differentiate among constructivism, explicit instruction, and the balanced comprehensive approach to literacy instruction.
- 1.4 Describe the effects of evidence-based research, governmental policies, and legislation on early childhood literacy.

VOCABULARY

accommodation
assimilation
balanced comprehensive approach (BCA)
behaviorist learning perspective
child-centered curriculum (progressive education)
Common Core State Standards
constructivist perspective
emergent literacy
explicit instruction
integrated language arts
policy
reading readiness
research
scaffolding
schema
theory
whole-language instruction



Photo credit: Douglas Bushell



In this video, Dr. Lesley Morrow discusses literacy development: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c8A38PdipDc>

Sylvia Ashton Warner wrote in her book *Spinster* (1963) “What a dangerous activity reading is: teaching is. All this plastering of foreign stuff. Why plaster on at all when there’s so much inside already? So much locked in? If only I could draw it out and use it as working material. If I had a light enough touch, it would just come out under its own volcanic power.” What Sylvia-Ashton Warner said is true. The issue is how do we unlock what is inside the right way? Following is a vignette in which a Mom helps a child who has a lot locked inside and helps her daughter with a light touch do draw it out.

Four-year-old Natalie and her mother were in the mall and doing some errands. As they approached one store, Natalie said, “Look, Mommy, I can read those letters: T-A-R-G-E-T. Those letters spell Marshalls.” Natalie’s mother smiled and said, “That was great, Natalie. You got every letter right. Now I’ll read the sign for you; it says Target. This is another store like Marshalls. You did some good thinking when you tried to read that word since the stores look alike. Do you see any letters in the word Marshalls that you have in your name?” Natalie looked and then said, “I have an A and so does Marshalls, and I have an L.”

Not too long ago, we would have chuckled at Natalie’s remarks as cute but incorrect. Today, we realize that she is demonstrating a great deal of literacy knowledge that needs to be recognized. First, she knows what letters are, and she can identify the ones on the sign. Next, she knows that letters spell words. She knows that words are read and have meaning. Although she did not read the word correctly, she made an informed guess. Through utilizing background knowledge, Natalie was aware that this building was a department store. Even though she had never been to this one, she called it by a store name she was familiar with. She was using some of her literacy knowledge with an adult she knew was interested and would positively interact with her. Her mother offered encouraging reinforcement for what Natalie did know and support by modeling the correct response when she needed help. Her mother also continued the learning experience by asking Natalie if any of the letters in Marshalls were in her name.

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Babies begin to acquire information about literacy from the moment they are born. They continue to build their knowledge of oral language, reading, and writing as they grow. A great deal of attention must focus on literacy development in early childhood. Research demonstrates that teachers, parents, and administrators must view young children as having literacy skills even though the literacy demonstrated by them is not conventional like adults. Early literacy behaviors have implications for instructional practice and later reading success.

Like a child’s first words and first steps, learning to read and write should be exciting and rewarding. This book draws on research and blends it with theory, policy, and practice that have proved successful in developing literacy. It presents a program for developing children’s literacy from birth to 9 years. This book takes into account the joint position statement of the International Reading Association (IRA) and the National Association for the Education of Young Children entitled *Learning to Read and Write: Developmentally Appropriate Practices for Young Children* (1998) and the position statement by the IRA, *Literacy Development in the Preschool Years* (2006). It also considers the *National Reading Panel Report* (2000), *National Early Literacy Report* (National Center for Family Literacy, 2004), *Common Core State*

Standards (2011), and other works that will be documented throughout the chapters. The rationale for the book includes the following beliefs:

1. Literacy learning begins in infancy.
2. Families need to provide a literacy-rich environment and literacy experiences at home to help children acquire skills. Families need to be continuously involved in their children's literacy learning.
3. Teachers must be aware that children come to school with unique and varying degrees of prior knowledge about reading and writing.
4. Children need to develop reading and writing skills through experiences at school that build on their existing knowledge.
5. Literacy learning requires a supportive environment that builds positive feelings about self and literacy activities.
6. Literacy learning requires a school environment rich with accessible materials and varied experiences.
7. Teachers must serve as models for literacy behavior by scaffolding and demonstrating strategies to be learned.
8. During their literacy experiences, children should interact within a social context to share information and learn from one another.
9. Early reading and writing experiences are motivating when they are relevant and concrete; these activities should actively engage children.
10. Early reading and writing experiences need to provide systematic and explicit skill instruction.
11. A literacy development program should focus on experiences that integrate reading, writing, listening, speaking, and viewing within the language arts and in content areas such as music, art, social studies, science, and play.
12. Diversity in cultural and language backgrounds must be acknowledged and addressed in early literacy development.
13. Differences in literacy development will vary and are addressed with small-group and one-to-one differentiated instruction.
14. Struggling readers must be provided for with early intervention programs in addition to the regular literacy instruction.
15. Assessment of achievement should be frequent and match instruction, and multiple formats for evaluating a student's literacy development should be used.
16. Standards for early literacy grade-level benchmarks should be tied to instruction and assessment and used as a means for reaching goals for all children to read fluently by the end of third grade.
17. Instruction must be age appropriate for the development of children, with high and achievable expectations.
18. Programs should be research based. For example, the *National Reading Panel Report* (2000) provides us with research-based components in reading instruction to ensure success. These include phonological awareness, phonics, vocabulary development, comprehension, and fluency. Writing is also a necessary component. The *Report of the National Early Literacy Panel* (National Center for Family Literacy, 2004) also includes preschool literacy skill achievement markers.

This book incorporates the work of philosophers, educators, psychologists, and researchers who have described how young children learn and what they need to be taught. The book emphasizes that literacy development occurs in prepared, literacy-rich environments where planned experiences facilitate development in reading, writing, listening, speaking, and viewing in coordination with content-area subjects. Although some chapters concentrate on language, reading, or writing, an important concern at all times is the integration of all these literacy dimensions. In early childhood, literacy instruction should occur all day long. It should be explicit, embedded, and spontaneous.

Literacy development must focus on both learning and teaching. Teachers must explicitly instruct children while also encouraging them to be actively involved in collaborative learning experiences, using materials with which they can explore and experiment. A major focus of the book is to motivate children to view reading as a relevant act and associate it with pleasure. Children must understand that reading is a source of information that is valuable for them to learn to succeed in life. According to statistics from the U.S. Department of Education, Justice, and Health and research by Assel, Landry, Swank, and Gunnewig (2007), those who are functionally illiterate are likely to:

- Drop out of high school
- Have behavior and social problems that result in being incarcerated
- Be chronically ill
- Live in poverty
- Have children who will be illiterate

Alternatively, those who learn to read are likely to:

- Graduate from high school and possibly college
- Have strong social skills
- Enjoy a healthier life
- Earn a living to support themselves and a family
- Have children who are literate

Ninety percent of the children who are below grade level in reading at the beginning of fourth grade, although they can improve, will never reach grade level. Therefore the early childhood teacher has a tremendous responsibility.

The Historical Roots of Early Childhood Education Theory

Early childhood education is not a recent development. Since the 1700s, philosophers, theorists, psychologists, and educators have addressed appropriate educational practice for learning in early childhood. They address the issue of whether learning to read is a matter of nature or nurture, both of which have implications for early literacy instruction in contemporary education.

Rousseau—1712–1778

Born in Geneva in 1712, Jean-Jacques Rousseau became a philosopher, writer, and composer. In his work titled *Émile* (1762), Rousseau strongly



Photo credit: Jennifer Kamm

According to Pestalozzi, Froebel, Dewey, as well as other philosophers and theorists, learning in early childhood occurs when youngsters have the opportunity to explore, experiment, and play at real-life experiences.

recommended that a child's early education be natural. That is, children should only be asked to learn things for which they are developmentally ready. Rousseau advocated abandoning contrived instruction in favor of allowing children to grow and learn with the freedom to be themselves. He believed that education follows the child's own development and readiness for learning. According to Rousseau, children learn through curiosity. He believed that children have individual ways of learning and that formal instruction can interfere with development. Rousseau's philosophy suggests that the role of the educator is to use strategies that mesh with the child's readiness to learn and that require as little adult intervention as possible.

Pestalozzi—1746–1827

Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi (Rusk & Scotland, 1979) was influenced by Rousseau's natural learning ideas, but he added another dimension. He started his own school and developed principles for learning that combined natural elements with informal instruction. He found it unrealistic to expect children to learn completely on their own. Although Pestalozzi felt that children may be

able to teach themselves to read, he believed that it was necessary for teachers and parents to create the conditions in which the reading process grows. He suggested that children’s potential develops through sensory manipulative experiences, so he designed lessons that involved manipulating objects he called “gifts.” Children learned about them through touch, smell, language, size, and shape.

Froebel—1782–1852

Friedrich Wilhelm August Froebel was a German pedagogue and one of Pestalozzi’s students. Froebel also believed in the natural unfolding of a child; he followed Pestalozzi’s ideas by providing plans for instructing young children (Rusk & Scotland, 1979). Froebel is known for emphasizing the importance of play in learning. He specified that the benefits of playing to learn require adult guidance and direction and a planned environment. Froebel saw the teacher as a designer of playful activities and experiences that facilitate learning. He was the first educator to design a systematic curriculum for young children that included objects and materials. In handling and playing with these materials, children used psychomotor skills and learned about shape, color, size, measurement, and comparison. Many of Froebel’s strategies are used in early childhood classrooms today, such as circle time when the class sings songs and learns new ideas through discussion. He coined the term *kindergarten*, which means “children’s garden.” This illustrated his philosophy that, like seeds, children grow if they are tended to and cared for by the gardener, or teacher.

The Evolution of Twentieth-Century Theories and Practices

Out of the philosophies of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries evolved the theories and practices that defined early childhood education across the twentieth century. Even though the theories underpinning early childhood education in the twentieth century are, in many ways, in conversation with the theories from earlier centuries, the approaches in the twentieth century are more numerous and more varied.

Dewey—Progressive Education



John Dewey’s (1966) philosophy of early childhood education led to the concept of the **child-centered curriculum**, or *progressive education* as it was called. Dewey believed that curriculum should be built around the interests of children. He agreed with Froebel that children learn through play and in real-life settings. He maintained that social interactions encourage learning and that themes of interest to children, such as learning about dinosaurs, are the vehicles for learning information and skills. Dewey rejected the idea of teaching skills as ends unto themselves. He also believed that learning is maximized through integrating content areas.

Dewey significantly influenced programs in United States early childhood education. Classrooms reflecting Dewey’s ideas contained centers for different activities and content areas. Shelves in a “block corner” held various sizes and shapes of blocks, toy cars, trucks, and figures of people. An art area had

easels with paint, crayons, paste, scissors, construction paper, clay, and scraps of materials, such as fabric, Styrofoam, and pipe cleaners. The dramatic-play center looked like a kitchen, with a sink, oven, refrigerator, empty food boxes, table and chairs, telephone, mirror, dolls, and some clothing for dressing up. A science area revealed a water-play table, shells, interesting rocks, plants, a class animal, and magnets. The music area had a piano, rhythm instruments, and, at that time, a record player. There was a rug for children to sit on when they came to sing by the piano. One corner of the room had a shelf of children's literature and soft pillows to lie on when looking at books.

The day began as children entered the classroom and played with quiet toys. Then the teacher called them to circle time to talk about the weather and the calendar. The conversation soon focused on a topic in social studies or science—animals or community helpers, for instance—with perhaps a song in keeping with the theme. Circle time was commonly followed by a period of free play in which children could use the materials in the different areas of the room. There was minimal guidance during free play. A snack, sometimes followed by a rest period, was an integral part of the daily routine. The day might also include a special lesson in art, social studies, or science appropriate to the theme being studied. Outdoor play allowed children to run, climb, play in sandboxes, and use riding toys. The teacher read a story daily, and related it to a class theme.

Reading and mathematics were not taught formally or as isolated skills. Instead, the teacher might ask a child to count out enough cookies for all the children in the class, to name the date on the calendar, or to compare the sizes of different children. There were no workbooks or commercial reading materials. Teachers led some informal activities that could eventually lead to reading, but they did not explicitly teach children to read. The letters of the alphabet might be found strung across the wall, the days of the week pointed out on a calendar, children's names written on their cubbies, and other items in the room labeled with words. The goal was to accustom children to school routines and make them comfortable in this environment. The focus was on social, emotional, physical, and intellectual development of the children as a whole with minimal formal instruction in reading and writing.

Skinner—Behaviorism

At roughly the same time that Dewey was advocating progressive education, behaviorists were taking a different approach to learning. According to behaviorists, the outcome of learning is a permanent change in behavior that is caused by a response to an experience or stimulus (Slavin, 1997). Behaviorists suggest that we learn through imitation *and* association, and *through* conditioning, or a series of steps that are repeated so that the response becomes automatic. B. F. Skinner (1954) found that human learning was not automatic and unintentional; people operate on their environment to produce learning. Skinner's research demonstrated that positive reinforcement for a desired behavior increased the use of that behavior. Skills are acquired in a series of steps, small enough to avoid failure, with rewards at each level. A **behaviorist learning perspective** includes an organized program presented in a systematic and direct manner. Learning requires time on task, structure, routines, and practice. Behaviorist programs are skill based, with little time for social, emotional, or physical development; the main concern is the acquisition of

cognitive skills. The materials are rated according to difficulty and are often programmed sequential lessons. The programs provide objectives for learning and then a script for the teacher using direct instruction as demonstrated below (Engelmann & Bruner, 1969):

Teacher: sh, sh, sh: What sound is this?
Wait for Response: sh, sh, sh. Good.
Teacher: sh, sh, sh. Now you say sh.
Wait for Response: Yes, sh, sh. Good.

Some reading programs that use behaviorist methods are DISTAR: Direct Instruction System for Teaching Arithmetic and Reading (Engelmann & Bruner, 1969), Programmed Reading Series (Sullivan & Buchanan, 1963), and Success for All (Slavin, 1997).

Although behaviorism is often not viewed as child-friendly, there are ways to use the **explicit instruction** in an engaging manner. At the end of the chapter is a behavioristic child friendly lesson from the classroom that demonstrates the use of explicit instruction done well.

Montessori—Senses and Systems

Maria Montessori (1965) created a method of instruction that used the senses to promote learning. Her emphasis was not on the natural unfolding of the child, their interests, or play. Rather, she believed that children needed early, orderly, systematic training in order to master skills. Therefore, she created an environment supplied with materials for learning specific concepts to meet specific objectives. The use of the materials is modeled by the teacher, which the child imitates, providing the source for learning. Children educated themselves by using these manipulatives. The materials were self-correcting; therefore, the children could determine their errors and make corrections. All the materials in the classroom were stored in their own containers, on a particular shelf, and in order of difficulty. According to Montessori, the teacher is a guide who prepares an environment with materials designed to teach specific skills. These materials are attractive, sturdy, and have influenced manipulatives we use for learning today. In this systematic area of learning, children work with practical life materials first, which include activities such as buttoning clothes, pouring water, and scrubbing tables. There are precise steps to complete each task correctly.

The second area of learning is called sensorial. Through the five senses of touch, taste, smell, hearing, and sight, children learn about size, color, and shape by manipulating materials designed to teach these skills. The curriculum includes learning reading and math, which are taught using manipulative materials. In math, Montessori created bead clusters that teach counting, addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division. Early reading instruction includes learning the sounds of letters with the help of cards that have raised textured letters. Children trace the cards as they make the sound. Sight words are taught using real objects and pictures. Montessori's curriculum is based on behaviorist theory. Children's curiosity and exploration are of less concern than working with a material to achieve a goal. Play is not as important as work, because it takes away from the opportunity to achieve. Montessori promotes independent learning for children, with daily schedules that are systematic and organized.

Piaget—Cognitive Development



In this video, a Piagetian preschool curriculum, High Scope, is discussed: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dnGEu-HfC8w>

Jean Piaget's (Piaget & Inhelder, 1969) theory of cognitive development describes the intellectual capabilities of children at their different stages of cognitive development. The stages are as follows:

1. **Sensorimotor Period (0–2 years):** Thoughts are determined by sensory explorations as a baby hears, sees, tastes, and feels.
2. **Preoperational Period (2–7):** A child's language develops, and thinking is concrete. The child begins to organize his world.
3. **Concrete Operational Period (7–11):** The child begins his thought processes in the concrete and is able to eventually move into some abstract ideas.
4. **Formal Operations Period (11–adult):** This high level of thinking involves using language to deal with abstract thought.

Trying to involve children in abstract thinking experiences during the preoperational stages would be considered inappropriate. Piaget believed that a child acquires knowledge by interacting with the world. Educators who have applied his theories involve children in natural problem-solving situations

where they learn through assimilation and accommodation.

Assimilation means that the child incorporates new information into existing schemes. That is, she interprets new information in terms of information she has from the past. For example, when Michael saw a cat for the first time, he said, "Look at the dog, Mommy." Michael used what he knew about four-legged animals from his experience with dogs and applied it to the cat, an animal he had never seen. **Accommodation** requires changing existing schemes to incorporate new information. A child accommodates when a new situation is unfamiliar. In this situation, the child has to create a new response. Michael, for example, knows what dogs do and look like, such as bark and have four legs. When he perceived a cat to be a dog, he had



Photo credit: Jennifer Kamm

Piaget stressed that learning occurs when children interact with peers and adults in a social setting as they act on the environment.