

Professional Development Overview

Preservice Learning Objectives:

- **Reflective Practice:** Cultivate a habit of reflection on your beliefs, values, and practices in early childhood education, and demonstrate openness to new ideas, perspectives, and approaches.
- **Effective Communication Skills:** Demonstrate effective communication skills for interacting with young children, colleagues, and families.
- **Understanding Child Development:** Have a foundational understanding of the cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development of young children (ages 3-5).
- **Knowledge of Early Childhood Curriculum:** Be familiar with principles and practices of early childhood education, including curriculum development, age-appropriate activities, and learning theories relevant to young learners.
- **Cultural Competence:** Understand the importance of cultural responsiveness and inclusivity in early childhood education, and demonstrate respect for diverse perspectives, backgrounds, and experiences.

Understanding Goals/Objectives

- Teachers will recognize the importance of fostering higher-order and critical thinking in children aged 3-5.
- Teachers will develop strategies to integrate higher-order thinking skills into their interactions and activities with young learners.
- Teachers will create and implement age-appropriate inquiry-based experiences to promote critical thinking in early childhood.

Guiding Questions

- Why is it important to introduce higher-order and critical thinking at an early age?
- How can teachers engage young learners in activities that stimulate curiosity and inquiry?
- What strategies are effective in promoting higher-order thinking during everyday interactions with preschoolers?
- How can inquiry-based learning activities be adapted for children aged 3-5 to foster critical thinking?

Assessment/Demonstrations of Understanding

- Completion of reflective exercises after each session.
- Collaborative lesson plans created during Session 2 and Session 3.
- Group projects on creating age-appropriate lesson plans during Session 4.
- Demonstration of understanding through practical application in teachers' classrooms.
- Peer feedback and discussion during the Evaluation session.

Total Time (15 hours)

This unit will be implemented over five 3-hour sessions (Saturdays), or ten 90-minute midday sessions twice a week.

Key Materials:

Presentation slides, Art supplies for interactive activities, and Journals or notepads for reflection

Scope & Sequence

Session 1	<p>Theme/Topic: <i>Engage - Fostering Inquiry in Early Childhood</i></p> <p>Core Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Discussion on the importance of (HOTS), Higher Order thinking Skills in early childhood education ● Strategies for creating a classroom environment that supports curiosity ● Reflective exercises on the day's learning <p>Demonstration of Understanding: Planning for incorporating curiosity-building strategies in the classroom</p>
Session 2	<p>Theme/Topic: <i>Explore - Hands-On Exploration for Teachers and Children</i></p> <p>Core Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Discussion on the role of curiosity in critical thinking ● Designing simple inquiry activities suitable for 3–5-year-olds ● Collaborative lesson planning for incorporating inquiry-based activities <p>Demonstration of Understanding: Reflection on the day's exploration</p>
Session 3	<p>Theme/Topic: <i>Explain - Strategies for Everyday Interactions</i></p> <p>Core Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Explanation of simple and effective questioning techniques for young children ● Practice sessions for formulating open-ended questions during interactions ● Planning for integrating effective questioning and Bloom's Taxonomy in daily interactions <p>Demonstration of Understanding: Reflective exercises on the day's learning</p>
Session 4	<p>Theme/Topic: <i>Elaborate - Implementing Strategies in Practice</i></p> <p>Core Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Group projects to create and share age-appropriate lesson plans emphasizing HOTS ● Peer collaboration on refining and implementing play-based inquiry activities <p>Demonstration of Understanding: Developing individual action plans for continued development</p>
Session 5	<p>Theme/Topic: <i>Evaluate - Assessing Growth and Demonstrations of Understanding</i></p> <p>Core Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Teachers share experiences and insights from implementing strategies

- Peer feedback and support

Demonstration of Understanding: Teachers revise and finalize individual growth plans based on feedback

Session at a Glance

Session # 1

Objectives / Understanding Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understand the importance of curiosity in early childhood.• Identify strategies to spark curiosity in young learners.
Demonstrations of Understanding/ Assessments	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Participate in a group discussion on the significance of curiosity.• Engage in hands-on activities to stimulate curiosity.
Student Activities, Explorations, Experiments	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Curiosity-building group activities.<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Virtual scavenger hunt• Interactive Storytelling• Hands-on exploration of curiosity-inducing materials.
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Presentation slides• Journal or notepad for reflective exercises.• List of online resources for curiosity-building.

Session# 2

Objectives / Understanding Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explore components of critical thinking suitable for young children.• Design age-appropriate inquiry activities.
Demonstrations of Understanding/ Assessments	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Collaboratively design simple inquiry activities.• Share insights on the role of inquiry in critical thinking.

Student Activities, Explorations, Experiments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hands-on exploration of critical thinking components. • Designing and sharing simple inquiry activities.
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation slides • Problem-solving puzzles and games. • Sorting and categorization materials. • Pattern recognition tasks (e.g., picture cards). • Creative thinking exercises (e.g., brainstorming prompts). • Journal or notepad for reflective exercises.

Session # 3

Objectives / Understanding Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn effective questioning techniques for young children. • Understand how to integrate Bloom's Taxonomy in early childhood.
Demonstrations of Understanding/ Assessments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice formulating open-ended questions during interactions. • Collaborate on creating lesson plans with different cognitive levels.
Student Activities, Explorations, Experiments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role-playing effective questioning techniques. • Group activities on incorporating Bloom's Taxonomy in lesson planning.
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation slides • Role-playing scenarios • Communication games and exercises • Art supplies for interactive activities • Journals or notepads for reflection

Session # 4

Objectives / Understanding Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Elaborate on incorporating critical thinking into daily activities.• Facilitate play-based inquiry projects.
Demonstrations of Understanding/ Assessments	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Group projects to create and share lesson plans emphasizing HOTS.• Collaborate on guiding children through play-based inquiry projects.
Student Activities, Explorations, Experiments	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Implementing lesson plans in real time.• Facilitating and refining play-based inquiry activities.
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Whiteboard and markers• Handouts with key strategies• Case studies or scenarios• Reflection journals or notepads

Session # 5

Objectives / Understanding Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reflect on the implementation of strategies in classrooms.• Demonstrate understanding through practical application.
Demonstrations of Understanding/ Assessments	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Teachers present brief demonstrations of applied strategies.• Peer feedback and discussions on challenges and successes.
Student Activities, Explorations, Experiments	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reflective exercises on personal growth.• Peer observation and feedback on applied strategies.

Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Whiteboard and markers● Handouts with reflective prompts● Case studies or scenarios● Reflection journals or notepads
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