

## Reflection for INTASC Standards #8 & #9

### Prior Learning Assessment (Kindergarten)

This evidence is extensive evidence of my abilities to meet Standards # 8 and #9. This piece was a prior learning assessment of my understanding of how to develop a unit plan for a kindergarten class. This project was completed during the fall semester of 2008. In order to complete this lesson I had to establish a context setting for which the unit plan would be implemented including any resources that might be available in such a setting and develop a class schedule (*Conceptualization and Coordination.*) I also had to reflect on how the context setting would guide my planning and instruction as well as the philosophies I would use based on my research of curricular models (Standard #9.)

With each lesson it was necessary for me to establish an assessment of student learning. In addition, I elaborated on what assessment I would use to evaluate my effectiveness as the teacher (Standard #8, *Diagnosis and Integrative Interaction.*) I truly believe that effective and consistent evaluation of one's teaching, in light of student learning; can positively impact the classroom community. It is through self assessment that we are able to see where we are and where we need to go for both the students' and the educator's development.

# *The Wonder & Science of Seeds*

*A Theme Unit on the Life Cycle of Plants for the Kindergarten Classroom*



Created By: Carrie Elizabeth Reno

ED 338 Prior Learning Assessment

## **This unit plan is organized in the following manner**

- Unit 1 ~ This is the context, setting, and goals piece of the Unit Plan requirement
- Unit 2 & 3 ~ This section contains 5 Lesson plans for the unit with one model lesson plan
- Models ~ This piece is a statement of my philosophy and what models it flows from
- Matrix ~ A matrix of the curricular models and responses to the questions
- An assessment by my advisor of this unit is the final document

## Unit 1

**Class:** Half day five year old kindergarten class

**Guiding Questions:** What are seeds? How do they grow? Why do we need seed?

**Key Concepts:** Inquiry and Investigation

**Goals:** From the Omnibus Guidelines IV Scientific Thinking Kindergarten section

- Observes and describes characteristics, basic needs, and life cycles of living things.
- Seeks information through observation, exploration, and descriptive investigations.
- Forms explanations and communicates scientific information.
- Uses simple tools and equipment to extend the senses and gather data.

### Context

The following schedule is designed for my future classroom. I have designed the program based on my own experiences teaching preschool, childcare and education experiences with children ages 3-12, as well as the experiences I had in my ED 215 field placement, Mrs. Kannass's half day 4K classroom of Washington Elementary in Wauwatosa. I have chosen a full day Kindergarten program because the trend seems to be moving toward full day kindergarten. I have also researched the areas where I will most likely be teaching, in Fort Payne Alabama, or near Nashville Tennessee, each of those areas had a majority of schools with full day Kindergarten programs and half day 4K or junior kindergarten programs. This unit would be taught near the end of the school year when we can take advantage of the warmer weather and have multiple opportunities to include outdoor learning activities. I have also learned from the Fort Payne Alabama website ([www.ftpyne.k12.org](http://www.ftpyne.k12.org)) that each of the schools in that system has an interactive white board in every classroom. Because of this fact I have incorporated a lesson using the interactive whiteboard.

### Why I Selected This Theme

I selected the theme of seeds and their life cycles because I feel that it readily includes multiple subjects and skills. In order to be involved in science you have to experience language arts, you have to be able to describe what it is you have observed and why you have chosen to investigate in the manner

you are. Mathematics is also very much a part of science even at the kindergarten level. Concepts of size and shape are often used to describe or quantify objects or reactions. Social issues also come into play as you have to be considerate of another's values, and be able to work with those who may not share your same values.

Science also lends itself to the natural developmental needs of children in kindergarten. At this age they are eager to explore and learn about the world around them; they also have many ideas about how the world works and are willing to share those ideas with others. More importantly science is a subject area that I love! I think that The Science of Seeds is a great theme to include at the end of the year. It will be something that the students will be better prepared for as they will have more experience and have had some integration of these concepts throughout the year. Because it is a subject that I love and can get excited about it will help give me a much needed boost as the year draws to a close which will hopefully also give the students a boost of excitement and encourage them to continue to learn and grow.

### **Attending to Diversity Issues**

One of the best ways I believe I can attend to diversity issues is to have multiple opportunities in which parents, grandparents or guardians will feel encouraged to participate in the classroom activities and lessons. By having parent involvement we can have a more knowledgeable other about that particular child's unique culture, skills, or needs. Communication with the student's families is of the utmost importance to me. I will maintain communication through newsletters sent out *in advance* of new units as well as reserving time to meet with parents/guardians in the daily schedule.

I will also carefully consider the abilities that each student has along with any special needs when developing activities or lessons. Much information can be gained from student files as well as IEP's (if available.) If I am still having difficulty adapting a lesson for a student I will enlist the assistance of other teachers, a special education aid, or the child's parent/guardian for ideas. If there is no way to adapt the lesson to fit the need of the student I will have to seriously reconsider how appropriate it is for the class as a whole.

## **Activities**

**Health and Safety:** Before introducing the students to the various centers and activities we will do with seeds I will review the safety issues associated with seeds. We will not use the seeds in a way that may harm ourselves or others. It is not appropriate to place the seeds in your mouth, ear, nose or any other part of the body. Anyone who uses the seeds in a way that can hurt another will not be allowed to go to the centers where the seeds available to explore and use. Because this unit will be done at the end of the school year the students will have a better understanding of the classroom community expectations. Ideally it will be likely that I would not have to redirect or intervene for health and safety sakes very often if at all.

## **Centers**

**Sensory Table:** The sensory table will be filled with different kinds of seeds such as beans, corn, sunflower, pumpkin or other squash. There will be items the students can use to practice motor skills like scoops and sand spinners, as well as items that they can use to practice quantifying like measure spoons, cups, and balance scales. In addition I will have four sheets that name each of the seeds in the center with a picture of the plant they came from. This will make it possible for students to classify and sort the seeds. When the unit is over the remaining seeds can go home with students whose parents will let them plant them (less waste.)

**Science & Math center:** There will be seeds that the students can examine up close as well as the fruits, pods, or cones that they came from. Students will have an opportunity to explore the fruit and determine from which fruit the loose seeds came from. There will also be plenty of images of the life cycle of plants for the students to look at as well as plants in the various stages of development.

**Reading Nook:** We will have a variety of books for the students to read about seeds and plants. In addition they will be permitted to check these books out from our class library to share with their family at home. I can also include class books about seeds from previous years for the students to look at.

**Creation Station & Writers Spot:** There will be materials at the center with labels indicating if they came from plants. For example the paper would have a sticker (a picture of a seed much like the one on the cover) with the phrase “made from plants” on it. These stickers can be quickly and easily made using the computer. I would also have several garden magazines available for the students to create collages with or draw their own pictures of plants that grow from seeds. I could even display students work relating to seeds and plants to spark the creative imagination of others.

**Dramatic Play:** Again in this area I can place stickers on any item that was made from a seed. For example the play fruits and veggies could have the sticker because they represent items that we get from plants. I would also put a sticker on chairs, and tables and any other item made with wood. These stickers can even be placed on cotton clothing used in the dress up area to reiterate that there are many things that we use every day that we get from plants.

**Read-Alouds:** A Seed is a Promise and From Seed to Plant.

**Lesson Plans:** Five additional lesson plan and activity ideas are included under Unit Plan II tab.

**Write Alouds:** We will write what we learned about seeds at the end of each day on the L portion of the KWL chart that we will be filling in all week.

**Play Plans:** Play plans will be written before a student begins center exploration. Each student will have the opportunity to choose which center they would like to be at based on what centers are open. I will call students in a rotating fashion (the first few students on Monday will become the last few students Tuesday so that different children get first choice each day) to come and select the center they would like to work at. Then they will move to the activity tables where they will draw a picture of what they

plan on doing in the center they have chosen and write a brief story about it. These play plans will help the students learn about concepts of print through writing.

***Class Book:*** Throughout the week each child will finish the sentence on a book page “A seed is \_\_\_\_\_.” and draw a picture relating to what they think a seed is. These pages will be collected and bound together in a class book that each student will have a chance to take home to share with their friends and family.

***Home –to- School Connection:*** The students will each have a home-to-school folder in which they will place any notes home or work completed. I will also use a journal for any students who have special needs or require additional services; this will ensure communication between me, their parents/guardians, and any other professionals who work with that student. The Monday before the unit begins I will send a newsletter home to each family. Included in the newsletter will be request for parent volunteers. In addition I will ask for any items they can bring in through the week prior relating to seeds such as, fruits, seeds like dried lima beans, pinto beans, chick peas, lentils, corn, squash, or any other dried seed. I will also ask for items such as soil (fertilizer free and kid safe), mulch, and sand. If parents are willing they can also contribute clear plastic cups. Depending on how successful these kinds of requests have been in the past, I may need to make this request in the form of a sign-up sheet. In addition I can ask the parents to start looking around their homes and point out the different kinds of seeds and plants they have in their yard or in their neighborhood. Students will be welcome to share the things they learn about seeds in their neighborhood with the class.

### **Daily Schedule**

*These are approximate time frames in which our class will conduct the day's work. This schedule is subject to change for school functions or if the needs of the children change. If such changes should occur parents/guardians & students will be notified in advanced when at all possible.*

**6:45 am – 7:15 am** ~ Time in which I have reserved to connect with parents/guardians and associates regarding matters pertaining to my class or the school.

**7:15 am – 7:30 am** ~ Children arrive when they are permitted to enter the classroom they will complete a name ticket (to the best of their abilities) and find a quiet activity to play with before morning announcements.

**7:30 am – 8:15 am** ~ Morning announcements from the office and the pledge of allegiance. The morning story will be read as well as the morning message which will let the students know what to expect for the day. We will also go over jobs, calendar, and have a finger play and/or music and movement time.

**8:15 am – 9:15 am** ~ Children will have choice of the centers to explore during this time. We will also work with students individually, as needed, to conduct assessments, complete projects, or address any skills which they may need more experience. Students will also be encouraged to have their snacks and clean up the areas they were at before we move to the next activity.

**9:15 am – 10:15 am** ~ Story time and Learning activity

**10:15 am -11:30 am** ~ Weather permitting we will use this time for outdoor activities otherwise we will be doing large motor activities in class or in the gym.

**11:30 am – 12:00 p**~ Lunch

**12:00 p – 12:45 p** ~ Transition and quiet reading, writing, or table work.

**12:45 p – 1:30 p** ~ Learning activity II time

**1:30 p – 2:15 p** ~ Clean up time, day is done reflection at the carpet where students can share what they had done during the day with one another. We will also talk about what they can do when they leave school (i.e. stories to share with family and friends, who gets what info from their home-to-school folder and notebook), we will go over what we will do the following day and any other questions or concerns the students may have can be addressed at this time.

**2:15 p – 2:30 p** ~ Large motor time (get out the wiggles) we will do indoor activities or preferably outdoor recess if the weather permits, and fond farewells.



## Unit 2 & 3

### 5 Unit Lesson Plans

**Domain:** Language

**Activity Name:** What is a Seed?

**Objectives:**

Students will:

- Participate in the KWL chart by explaining what they know about a seed
- Participate in the KWL chart by sharing some thoughts or questions that they have about seeds and what more they want to know about the seed
- apply good listening skills while the book is being read
- Participate in the KWL chart by sharing some things that they know about seeds after the read aloud.

**Concepts/Content:**

Concepts of print will be taught in addition to communication skills taught through the read –aloud and KWL chart activity. The KWL chart will also be an effective tool for inquiry based instruction. Once the chart is filled in it can be continually referred to throughout the unit. In this way as a teacher can insure that the students are not only asking questions that can be investigated but also that the curriculum plan addresses those questions that they have.

**Materials:**

- Large paper to create a KWL chart large enough for the students to be able to read while seated at the reading rug.
- Merrill, C. (1973). *A seed is a promise*. New York, NY: Scholastic Inc.
- “Helicopters” or maple tree seeds, and “acorns” or seeds from an oak tree
- Lima beans that have been soaked in water overnight

**Procedures:**

I will begin the lesson by telling the students that we are going to be starting a new science investigation (at this time the students will have had multiple experiences with science investigations.) I will say that there is something that many people, especially farmers, are beginning to do as we start the spring season. I will ask the students “what are those farmers doing?” I’ll wait for responses and then if the students do not say something like “planting seeds” I will guide the students to the answer through additional questions. I will then begin writing on the KWL chart the question “What is a seed?” I will inform the students that this is our next science investigation and we will be working the next few days on answering the question.

I will then read the story using a read-aloud literacy approach. I will share with the students any thoughts, or questions that I may have while reading the story (this is also an effective inquiry-based learning approach.) I will also share with them maple tree seeds and acorns from an oak tree (these are mentioned about four pages into the book.) The book asks “Have you ever worn maple tree seeds on your nose? Or played tea party with the seeds of an oak tree?” Some students may not have had experiences doing these things and by bringing those seeds in I will be able to demonstrate for them how it is done. The students also may not understand what a maple tree seed is; they may call it a helicopter seed like I had done as a child. At the end of the story there is a great activity suggested, I would have a lima bean too that I had let soak overnight and cut it open to show the students what it looked like inside.

Once the story has been read I will ask the students if there is anything new that they have learned about seeds after hearing the story. These responses will be listed on the L or learning column of the KWL chart. I will congratulate them on asking such good questions and participating in one of the most important parts of our new unit, asking questions. I will also inform them that the questions they have will be questions that we will try to answer as we learn about seeds.

**Adaptations/Extensions:**

For students with hearing or visual issues I will have them sit closer to me. The book is fairly small and the illustrations may be difficult to see students with visual difficulties may need to sit in closer proximity to the book. I would also want to make sure those students with hearing impairments

are able to hear me while I am reading the story. In addition students with behavioral issues may also need to sit closer to another adult (me, an assistant/co teacher, or volunteer.) I may also want to use pair-share to help the students formulate ideas, thoughts, or questions to include on the KWL chart. Adaptations would very much depend on the particular abilities or needs of the students.

This book in particular has a great deal of information. It would be very possible to read the book with a different focus each time on the various concepts covered. A seed can only grow the same kind of plant that it came from. How seeds are formed in the flowers of some plants. How plants develop in the seed. As a class we could also create our own stories about seeds.

**Student Assessment:**

The KWL chart will be a good way to assess some of the students thought processes in addition to the responses given while reading the story. I will carefully consider who may need additional support through the unit as well as those students who may need additional challenges. Any will reflect back on the lesson and make note of any concerns and information about the students both as individuals and a class community.

**Teacher Assessment:**

I will carefully reflect on the performance of the students and how successful or not this lesson was. Information regarding the KWL chart, as well as observations made through the lesson will be reviewed to determine where to go with the next lessons. Where there any misconceptions that the students had regarding seed that will need to be addressed? What kinds of questions were they most interested in answering? I will also determine how effective was this lesson at meeting the needs of the students and the lesson plan goals by reviewing the observation/reflection notes and consulting with any assistant/co teachers or other professionals and adults that may have participated in the lesson.

**Domain:** Cognitive

**Activity Name:** Will Our Seed Keep Their Promise

**Objectives:**

The students will:

- reiterate/review appropriate ways of treating other people's property (i.e. others seedlings) an important concept in the experimentation process, we do not alter other peoples experiments.
- formulate or decide on a question about how seeds grow that they would like to answer
- follow steps of instruction for the experiment process
- share their own ideas, opinions, and or predictions about how there seeds will grow

**Concepts/Content:**

The scientific components to the lesson as the students try to determine what will make the seed grow best and what their predictions for the outcome of their experiment will be. Through this lesson the students will begin learning the basic skills they will need to conduct future inquiry-based activities and experiments.

**Materials:**

- soil
- sand
- water
- mulch
- paper towels
- scoops/shovels
- clear plastic cups
- tape and marker to label the cups with each student's name
- areas around the room that have sunlight for the plants to grow in
- an organizer for the children (or a volunteer) to record either in writing or through pictures the question they are trying to answer with the experiment and what they predict will happen with their seed
- fast growing seeds such as lima bean, or pinto bean seeds that have been soaked overnight
- It would also be very helpful to have classroom volunteers who can help record the questions students will answer and their predictions

**Procedures:**

At the group area I will remind the students about the seed that we had seen cut open and ask them “what was growing inside?” A plant was growing inside. I will tell them that we will be starting some experiments to find out what helps the seeds grow into plants. First though we will need to talk about something very important. I will ask the student if they think a seed is a living thing or a non-living thing. It is a living thing. I will ask them how they think we should treat a living thing like a seed that we want to grow into a plant and the plant that it grows into. At this point I would be looking for the students to respond in a way that would demonstrate their understanding of appropriate treatment of plants. I will also tell the students that they each will be getting a seed to grow into a plant in a cup for the experiment. I will then ask them how they should treat other people seeds. Should they dig them up? Should they poke at them? Should they pinch or tear off any part of another person’s plant? Should they dump them out? How would they feel if someone did something to hurt or harm their plant? Should we do anything that would make another person feel that way?

Once we have gone over how to properly treat and care for seedlings and other peoples seedlings we will then move to the activity tables where the children will get to choose from a variety of materials (sand, soil, mulch, even bits of paper towel) to put in the cup and try to get their plant to grow. The materials they use will also depend on the question they want to answer. I will have the student’s first look at the materials and try to think about what material they think that their seed would grow best in. They will then record on their organizer sheet (with pictures or with words) what question their experiment will answer and what they predict will happen to the seed. This is where volunteers would be helpful to have so that they can assist students who may not be physically able to scoop the materials into the cup or record their own information on the organizer. The students will then be asked to place the material they chose in the cup, put the seed in the cup on top of the material and take another handful of their chosen material to cover the seed. Because the seeds are planted in clear cups we may be able to also see the root system that they develop.

At the end of the lesson the students will place their seedlings in the designated growing spot and then assist each other in clean up. We will then gather at the carpet area and have students share (if they would like) what they did and what they think will happen to their seed. The students will be allowed to check on their seeds/plants throughout the week and record whether or not they gave it

water (also on the organizer.) I will also ask them again how we should treat the seeds/plants, recording their responses in a notebook or on a large paper to refer the students back to should there be any problems with how the seeds/plants are treated.

Each student will also record their findings at the end of the week on their organizer. Was their question answered by the experiment? Did their experiment support their prediction? What did they notice about the changes that happened during the past few days? I will help the students during center time with these questions and help them, if need be, record their responses. We can also take a picture of their plant to include with the report.

### **Adaptations & Extensions:**

There will be extra assistance provided to students who may need help with the physical, cognitive, or writing aspects of this lesson. It would be dependent on the student's abilities, and needs as to what adaptations are made. If a child has an IEP I will look to their IEP to determine what aspects of this lesson would be most appropriate for the student to participate in and what areas would be too complex or cause too many frustrations for the child. For those children who are advanced learners they will be expected to record each day what they observe in addition to whether or not they watered the seed/plant.

A natural extension of this lesson would be to have a garden plot at school that we could plant our seedlings and other seeds in to make observations about their growth. I would have to set up a plot in advance with the school's administrator, contact diggers hotline to insure there are no underground utilities that would be disturbed, and work with the building maintenance supervisor to establish the best location for the garden plot. A garden plot would be a great way to engage the students in the process of planting. This extension can also be done when we have the guest seed/plant expert speak to the students (see *Who Works With Plants and Seeds*.) They could help us arrange the garden and teach the students about other proper planting methods.

### **Student Assessment:**

I will use the organizers as a means of recording what the student's questions were and determine through observational notes taken while walking around the room if they are working to

answer those questions. I will also be able to look on each student's organizers to determine if they have made predictions about their plants. In addition I will take notes while walking around the room (I may also rely on the volunteers) about how well the students followed the planting direction. In some cases it may be easy to determine from their planted seed whether or not they accurately followed the directions. I will also make note if there is any mistreatment of the plants and if it is known who is responsible for the mistreatment I will address that student personally and with the student whose seed/plant was affected.

**Teacher Assessment:**

I will record and reflect how well I think the lesson is going and whether or not any adjustments or changes were made during the lesson. I will also evaluate the student's work and determine how effective the lesson and my instructions were at meeting the needs of the student's and the learning goals. The questions I will ask of myself are what about this lesson was most effective, and where can this lesson be improved?

**Domain:** Motor

**Activity Name:** The Life Cycle of a Seed

**Objectives:**

The students will to the best of their abilities

- demonstrate with their bodies effective use of movement to show the life cycle of a seed
  - Seed ~ Tight kinesphere
  - Sprout ~ Close kinesphere, changing level from low to medium
  - Plant ~ Large kinesphere, high level reaching to the sun/sky
- Listen to and follow directions given orally and demonstrated
- Demonstrate their understanding of what seeds need in order to grow soil, water, & sun.

**Concepts/Content:**

The concepts of movement, kinesphere & level, to demonstrate the growth of a seed will be taught and performed. In addition the concepts of a life cycle of a plant will be reviewed as well as what a seed needs in order to grow.

**Materials:**

- Gibbons, G. (1991). *From seed to plant*. New York: Holiday House
- A flower cut in half to show what the inside of the flower looks like and to point to the different parts in addition to the illustration.
- Life cycle of a seed poster (one that has been on display in the science & math center.)

**Procedures:**

I will gather the students to the carpet area where I will read the book *From Seed to Plant* by Gale Gibbons. I will use a read-aloud method to share the story with the students. I will stop along the way and share with the student's my thoughts through the book. When it comes to the part where the inside of a flower is described I will share with the students a flower that I have segmented to show the inside. I will compare the illustration to the actual flower as I read the different parts.

About ten pages in the book is where I will focus on the students using movement (pantomime) to mimic me as we explore what it would look like if we were a seeds and we were buried in the ground,



suddenly the ground is getting wet and something is happening to all of the seeds. We're starting to sprout and that sprout is slowly growing and growing until it pops out of the ground. Now it is starting to stretch out and up as it is growing until we are plants that are fully grown. I will then have the students sit back down as we finish the book. Once we have gone over the book I will review with the students the movement process of the seed life cycle this time asking them "okay we are now seeds. What needs to happen in order for us to grow?" I'll be looking for them to respond we need to be in the ground. "That's right seeds need to be in the ground to grow. Okay, here we are in the ground again, what will need to happen now, what else would we need to start growing?" Water. "Okay now we are slowly growing until we pop out of the ground. What else will we need to keep growing?" We need the sun.

**Adaptations:**

If students are physically unable to participate on the ground they may be able to show with other movement how a seed would grow. They may also be able to use puppets or point to pictures how the seeds would grow. In addition they can watch the other students and that may be enough to meet their needs according to their IEP. If a student has issues or concerns with group participation it may also be appropriate for them to observe the lesson taking place. I am thinking now of a student I knew with Autism Spectrum disorder. There were many times when we would have group work at the carpet and he would become overwhelmed. At that point he had a quiet spot that was away from all the action he could go to in order to just watch what was happening. If he felt comfortable participating he would re-join the group or he would sometimes follow the lesson from his safe spot. For students who are advanced they may be able to add additional steps like how a seed forms to the movement sequence.

**Student Assessment:**

I will observe the students as they move through the stages of seed to sprout to plant and determine if they are following directions or need additional assistance in understanding the instruction. I will also record whether or not the students were able to respond correctly about what a seed needs in order to grow. Because this lesson also has ties to theater arts and movement I will assess how effective the students were at using movement and maintaining control of their body's movements in comparison to previous similar lessons.

**Teacher Assessment:**

I will consider how well the students were able to complete this lesson and if they were able to learn the needs of a seed in order to grow. I will note any changes made or anything that I may have said that was difficult for the students to understand. Because this lesson also has ties to theater arts and movement I will assess how effective the students were at using movement and maintaining control of their bodies' movements.

**Domain:** Social

**Activity Name:** Who Works With Plants and Seeds

**Objectives:**

The students will

- As a group name some jobs where people work with seeds or plants
- Listen carefully to the guest speaker describe what they do with plants and what they are learning about how plants grow
- Ask questions about seeds and plants from a more experienced other
- Be able to describe some of the many ways we use plants and seeds that the guest speaker spoke about.
- 

**Concepts/Content:**

The children will learn about jobs people have working with plants and seeds. They will also learn of some of the many ways we use seeds and plants around the world.

**Materials:**

- A guest speaker who works with plants such as a farmer, a Horticultural expert, or someone who works in a green house. I will have outlined what the students have learned and what they can talk about when they come. I will also ask if they can bring any pictures to share with the students about the work they do with plants. This could even be a friend or a family member of someone in our classroom.
- A notebook for me to record my observations of the students and the questions that they ask.
- A reminder note to send home letting parents know that we will have a guest speaker and they are welcome as always to join our class for the lesson.

**Procedures:**

I will remind the students that we will use our best manners and follow the classroom community expectations because we have a very important guest with us today who will share more information about seeds and plants with us. I will ask the question to think about the kinds of jobs that people may have working with plants or seeds; they will then pair-share their thoughts with another student. I will then introduce our guest speaker and have the students try to guess what kind of a job

our guest speaker has. I will remain up front until the students have taken a few guesses and the guest speaker's job is revealed. I will then turn the class's attention to what the speaker will share with them. At that point I will move to the back of the room (or near a student/s that may have behavioral issues) so that I can record any observations I make while the guest is speaking. I will particularly note the kinds of questions the students may ask the speaker and what the responses were.

I will have the speaker focus on the type of work that they do with plants and seeds and who else benefits from their work. I will also have them share any information that they know about others who work with plants. After our guest has finished their presentation I will have them answer questions from students. When the lesson time comes to an end we will thank the guest for their time and sharing information with us. I will then ask the students to share with the class some of the things that they have learned from our guest speaker that we can add to our L column in our KWL chart.

#### **Adaptations & Extensions:**

In addition to sitting near student/s with behavioral concerns I will also give the students ample advanced notice that we will have a guest come to class to speak about seeds and plants. I can also review with the class prior to our guest's arrival some of the questions listed in the W, or want to know, column of the KWL chart. I will also ask if there are any other questions that they may want to ask a guest who works with plants and seeds. We will also talk about some of the jobs people may have that involves seeds and plants throughout the unit. This will ensure that the students have had prior knowledge about the kinds of jobs people have working with seeds and plants as well as remind them of questions that they have had during previous lessons in our unit.

During the day is done routine I can ask students again to review what they had learned from the guest speaker, or make note of the things they shared with the class in relation to the information they gained from the guest. Again a natural extension of this lesson would be to have the guest assist us with planting a garden.

#### **Student Assessment:**

Much of the assessment will involve the observations and recordings of the questions students have asked about seeds and plants or what the guest's job entails. I will also make note of student responses when they are asked what kinds of jobs people have that can include seeds or plants, as well

as ways in which we use seeds and plants that the guest spoke about. In addition this lesson will allow me to record how well the students used effective listening skills while the guest was speaking. From this information I can see how the student's listening skills are developing, how adept their inquiry skills are, and

**Teacher Assessment:**

I will carefully review student assessment observations to determine how effective the lesson was able to address the student's needs and the lesson goal's. I will also make note of any changes that were made during the lesson as well as any unexpected outcomes of the lesson plan. In addition I will review the experience with the guest speaker and any parents who were in attendance to get their feel of how the lesson went and any questions or concerns they may have in regards to the lessons effectiveness.

**Domain:** Aesthetic

**Activity Name:** Mosaic of Seeds

**Objectives:**

The students will

- create a mosaic picture using seeds to the best of their abilities
- describe what their picture is about and what it means to them
- respectfully listen as others briefly share their pictures with the class

**Concepts/Content:**

The concepts taught will be in the area of visual arts. The students will learn about mosaic works especially those that use seeds as the main medium such as the Corn Palace in South Dakota.

**Materials:**

- Pictures of mosaic work using seeds like the Corn Palace in South Dakota that I can use on the interactive white board
- Seeds that students have collected from their home and neighborhood in addition to the seeds we have used in the sensory table
- Card stock for the students to draw their picture on and glue seeds to
- glue
- bowls or containers to keep the seeds in

**Procedures:**

This lesson will be started as a group but one that the students can continue to work on through the unit studies or during quiet time. The students will be seated in the learning area and I will use the white board to show sample pictures of ways people have used seeds to create works of art. As we go through the pictures I can ask the students what they see. I can also ask the students to raise their hand if they see red, yellow, big, small, or any other descriptive terms I could use to describe the seeds. I would then have the students come to the board and circle or put a square or line under the seed they see. If I felt there were students who could also write words next to the seed they could add the word

big, or red. I could also have the students focus on beginning or ending sounds as well. This would add a literacy component to the lesson.

Once we have seen the sample pictures the students would be able to move to the activity tables where there will be materials set up for them to participate in the mosaic activity. I will first have the students draw a picture onto the card stock. Once they have drawn the picture they can begin to fill in the picture with the seeds that have been made available to them. Again this project can be completed over several class periods if need be but as the students complete their mosaic (and they have had a chance to dry) they can share their final piece with the students during the day is done reflection time. As each student shares their work I will make observational notes regarding what they have said and how the audience participated and listened to the speaker. As the mosaics are finished, these pictures can be displayed in the room or in the hall along with a description of our learning through the Wonder and Science of Seeds unit. I will also be able to take pictures of each child's mosaic and make note of what they felt the picture represented.

**Adaptations:**

My biggest concern with this lesson is that there may be students who come from cultures or backgrounds in which it is considered dishonorable to use food (some seeds that may be used) in such a manor. This is why it would be essential that inform the parents a week in advance, through the parent newsletter sent home also requesting items and volunteers, of the kinds of activities we will be doing with seeds to determine if anyone would be uncomfortable with using the seeds in such a manor. If this is the case I will need to ask what type of seed that they would be comfortable using and consider using these seeds in our sensory table as well.

In addition there may be students who do not possess the fine motor skills necessary to complete this project. This lesson however may be something that would address a component of their IEP. I will work with a student's parents/guardians as well as the special education instructor to determine how to best adapt this lesson for any students who may need additional assistance.

### **Student Assessment:**

Because I will be using the interactive white board I can save the work that the students do as a group and review the information along with my observational notes to determine some of the students understanding. I will also the pictures taken of each mosaic and the notes made about what the student felt it represented as work samples. These can be reviewed and compared to prior works to determine the amount of effort the students put into the project, the detail they used, and whether or not they performed to the best of their abilities.

### **Teacher Assessment:**

My greatest concern is how well this kind of lesson would work using the interactive white board. I will have to carefully review and reflect on this lesson to determine if the use of such technology helped or hindered the lesson. I will also need to determine if such an open ended completion approach fit in well with the class schedule and student's needs. My thought is that because the students will be allowed multiple times to complete the project and they will finish at their own rate they will be able to produce more detailed work and I will be able to also see how they sustain interest in the project. I also think it would work well for our schedule because there will be a staggering of students who will be prepared to share their work during our reflection time. In other words only a few students will be sharing their work at one time.

### **Model Lesson Plan Components**

My family and I will most likely be moving to the Fort Payne, Alabama area. With that in mind I developed this unit plan. This lesson was designed with the information that I obtained from the Fort Payne Alabama web site ([www.ftpyne.k12.org](http://www.ftpyne.k12.org)). From this site I not only learned that the classrooms in this district had interactive white boards, but also more information regarding the demographics of the school serving Kindergarten aged students (Wills Valley Elementary School.) I learned that 52% of the students are eligible for free meals, and 8% of the students are eligible for reduced meals. This information would indicate to me that many of the students come from households that may have financial struggles. This also added to my concern about how families might feel about seeds, which can be used as food or to make food, being used in the sensory table, and the mosaic lesson. I also learned



that 35% of the students are Hispanic, 6% are African-American, 59% are Caucasian, and 1% of the students are considered Migrant students. Of those students 52% are male and 48% are female. In addition the teacher to student ratio is 1:15.

I think that this unit reflects a great deal of information about me as a teacher. I feel that I am very aware of my role as a teacher and how I can fulfill that role. I have shown that I am particularly able to meet the expectations of the coordination piece of the Alverno College teacher abilities. I have shown a willingness to collaborate with others when planning for student learning by involvement of parent volunteers, other professionals, and guest speakers. I have also shown a willingness to assess myself as a teacher and what in particular I would assess myself on in each of the lessons. Communication is also strongly represented in this unit plan. I have thought of multiple ways in which I would use the environment for learning. I have also incorporated effective modes of media and technology. The KWL chart is an effective way for me to continually refer to throughout the unit plan. By reserving time at the end of each day for reflection we will be able to put this chart to full use. I have also taken the time to learn that the district I've planned this lesson for has interactive white boards available. I am very eager to use the lesson *Mosaic of Seeds* with an interactive white board. Finally, I truly feel that this unit as a whole clearly conveys my enthusiasm for science as well as teaching.

### **My Philosophy**

My philosophy of education encompasses a variety of curricular models. In that respect I am at an advantage because I would feel comfortable adjusting my approach to teaching based on what is required of me by the district I will teach in, or the administrators that will oversee me. There are many advantages as well as disadvantages to teaching within a single curricular model. For that reason I feel that it is also necessary to adjust my teaching approach based on the needs of my students as individuals and as a classroom community.

The major disadvantages involved in regards to teaching by a single curricular approach is that the approach may not be best suited to the meet the needs and goals of the student. It is my responsibility as a teacher to determine what a student knows, what they need to know, and how I can best teach them the skills necessary to gain the information they need to succeed as a student and as a person. There are many advantages that I can see involved with the various curricular models.

An advantage that I see with the Montessori model is a focus on self-help and social skills that students need to have not only to effectively participate in the classroom community but in their community where they live. I feel that any form of educational approach that overlooks the fact that Kindergarteners need to learn self-help and social skills is doing a grave disservice to the students and can actually cause them to lag in future development. I also like the focus on the student with regards to their environment furniture that is child-sized, the responsibility of the students to help care for their environment, and the use of materials that best suits the child's needs. A disadvantage I see however is that it would be difficult to create lessons within this framework that would also address national or state standards. Montessori also believed "Walls free from decoration also encourage imagination." (Walsh, 303.) Although it is true that some students may benefit from decoration-free walls, students with ADHD, those who are easily distracted, and even some students who may become overwhelmed by visual stimulus, I feel that there are many other students who would be encouraged by seeing their own work displayed. In addition print rich environments also encourage student's language development; this would include word walls, job charts, labels and other items that could also be considered decorative.

The High/Scope model of instruction also has some aspects to teaching that I can appreciate. As with the Montessori model, the High/Scope approach is structured and a routine is maintained for the benefit of the students. I also like the fact that "Each day includes a plan-do-review time, in which the children plan, carry out, and then reflect upon an activity of their own choosing." (High/Scope, Classroom Practices). I also like that the program can be used with the curriculum a school is already using. This would make it far easier to incorporate the methods into an existing program. The most important aspect of the High/Scope program is that the students determine what they will learn.

While the Waldorf curricular model has routines in place to help students succeed, just as the Montessori and High/Scope models, it is an "...educational approach known for large classes..." (Beem, 1.) I believe that it is not developmentally appropriate to have large class sizes in early childhood, and that student's benefit from lower teacher to student ratios. That said there are many aspects that I like about the Waldorf methods. I appreciate the fact that students are learning in such aesthetic ways, and that their spiritual self is acknowledged. I like that students are encouraged to be creative and that they learn through the arts in so many ways. I also like that there is a sense of freedom to take advantage of teachable moments, while still providing for routines and structures.

The aspect that I most like about the Reggio Emilia approach is that it blends nicely with my beliefs about maturation. I believe that students all need time to develop the skills that they need to be successful and that each student learns at a different rate. Most importantly I believe that all students can learn in a well planned, caring, and developmentally appropriate environment that are orchestrated by a well trained and caring professional. Yet another aspect I love about the Reggio Emilia approach is "...it includes the notion of supporting children and teachers in grasping the interconnectiveness of all living things and our responsibility to sustain life." (Wien, 7.) This notion is termed relationality. I am almost obsessed with trying to find a relationship in and among different ideas, events, or concepts. I have noticed that this aspect about myself has allowed me to find ways to construct my learning on previously learned information, which in turn has helped me to make very personal connections with what I am learning. I'm also drawn to this approach because it allows students to approximate their learning, in other words they are not expected to perform perfectly and they are measured by their own performances rather than others. This may not be an acceptable way of teaching for some administrators, and parents. They may wish that greater emphasis be placed on the student meeting standards and performing at a certain level consistently.

The final method is Direct Instruction and while I do not like the fact that it is a teacher-centered approach, it too has its advantages particularly when it comes to students with special needs. The curriculum is scripted and "...instruction undergoes careful evaluation before it is approved for inclusion in the program. Researchers evaluate everything from group size to teacher directions to methods of student response to achieve optimal effectiveness." (Hallahan, 208.) For this reason a teacher can be assured that the lessons are well researched. My concern in using this as my sole method of instruction is that not all students learn in the same way and this would limit the flexibility a teacher would normally have to make adjustments to account for different learners. I would however feel comfortable using this approach if I knew that it would be the best way for a particular student to learn, or a particular lesson to be taught.

As a preschool and child care teacher I saw firsthand how a program devoid of purpose or direction missed opportunities to help not only the students grow and learn but the teachers as well. At the time I had taught there was no clear goal or purpose in mind but to care for the students. Any focus on academics, such as teaching reading and writing skills, was considered developmentally inappropriate. I now know that students are very capable and eager to learn such skills at an early age,

in fact they thrive in situations where they are immersed in print (Cambourne, 1991.) As the Administrator and Director of a Preschool and Childcare center my first challenge was to re-write the handbook and parent policies. It was at this time that I collaborated with the teachers and staff to develop a mission statement we could all work with. I also made it a point to improve the education of the staff and offer more training opportunities. What I learned from these experiences is that you have to know what your resources are, and constantly re-evaluate yourself and the school to determine if the needs of the children are being met. You also have to know yourself and what you believe in order to remain strong enough to stand for it.

After describing the advantages and disadvantages of each of the curricular models I have learned something very important about my philosophy. My philosophy is something that is growing and developing over time. The more I learn the more I may be able to incorporate into the fabric of my beliefs. I have also become acutely aware that as a teacher I will constantly need to assess my teaching methods and how well I am meeting the needs of my students. I will need to be flexible enough to bend and not break as I continue to grow and develop as a professional. I must not let my beliefs stand in the way of a student. If I truly believe that all students can learn then I must find the best way to teach them. Children need to learn through play, to be free to explore their own interest, but their learning must be measurable and meet learning objectives we are working toward. I see my role as a teacher as an excavator of a student's prior knowledge and experience, a surveyor of their current learning and interests, and a draftsman of future potential. I am the curator of a community of learners, and must develop an environment that encourages lifelong learning. It will be work, but it will be work that is truly worthwhile. I am eager to meet my future students and cannot wait to be a part of their lives.

**Resources for Philosophy Statement and Matrix:**

Beem, E. (2001). The Waldorf way. [Electronic version] *The Boston Globe*. Retrieved October 12, 2008 from [http://www.whywaldorfworks.org/07\\_Community/srticles.asp](http://www.whywaldorfworks.org/07_Community/srticles.asp)

Cambourne, B., Turnbull, J. (1991). *Coping with chaos*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann Educational Books, Inc.

- Hallahan, D., Kauffman, J., Pullen, P. (2009). *Exceptional learners: An introduction to special education* (11<sup>th</sup> ed.). United States of America: Pearson.
- High/Scope: Classroom practices. (2008). Retrieved October 12, 2008, from <http://www.highscope.org/Content.asp?ContentId=425>
- Kostelnik, M., Soderman, A., Whiren, A. (2007). *Developmentally appropriate curriculum: Best practices in early childhood education* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Pearson Education Inc.
- Montessori, M. (1964). *The Montessori method* (A.E. George Trans.). Cambridge, Massachusetts: Robert Bentley, Inc.
- Waldorf Education. (n.d.) Retrieved October 12, 2008, from <http://www.awsna.org>
- Waldorf Answers: What studies have been done on Waldorf Education?. (n.d.) Retrieved October 13, 2008, from <http://www.waldorfanswers.org/Studies.htm>
- Walsh, B., Petty, K. (2007). Frequency of six early childhood education approaches: A ten year content analysis of Early Childhood Education Journal. [Electronic version]. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, Vol. 4, No. 5, 301-305.
- Wien, C. (2008). *Emergent curriculum in the primary classroom: Interpreting the Reggio Emilia approach in schools*. New York: Teachers College Press & Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Below is a copy of the curricular matrix I created to help clarify my understanding of various educational approaches. It was also a required component for the completion of this assignment.

	Montessori	High Scope	Waldorf	Reggio Emilia	Direct Instruction
What is the role of the teacher?	To provide an environment in which children are encouraged to learn at their own pace about the world around them.	To facilitate the students chosen learning and provide a means of assessment to determine the success of the learning. To ask questions that draw out a child's thoughts and ideas.	Also facilitates the learning and establishes an environment that is conducive with the aesthetic components of the curriculum.	To determine where the students are in their own learning, and scaffold the learning taking place to meet their needs.	The role of the teacher is to determine, based on scripted curriculum materials, & direct all the learning taking place.
What are the key goals for children?	That the children learn self help skills in addition to improving their problem solving capabilities.	The students take on an ownership of their learning and their environment and that they become reflective in the process. They become adept at solving problems and move toward independent thinking.	That the students spiritual needs are met in addition to their academic needs. The students learn and grow as whole beings.	The children approximate their learning and develop at their own natural pace.	That children master a concept before moving on to the next concept.

What are key elements of the learning environment?	The environment must be ordered with the children in mind. The size of the furniture must allow for the children to be able to use the furniture comfortably.	The environment is structured around interest centers that have been established by the teacher with the students interest in mind.	Objects found in nature are used to learn and create an aesthetically pleasing atmosphere. The environment is harmonious and assists in the creative process. The goal is for the environment to be as home-like as possible.	The environment is considered the third teacher. It is planned and organized in a way that will encourage student exploration. Materials are natural materials that children would encounter everyday. Some would say that the items are "junk" but to the students they are treasures.	The environment is organized and controlled to limit distractions as much as possible. The materials are chosen based on the research done determining what would be most effective for the learning taking place.
--	---	---	---	---	--

<p>What are the beliefs about how children learn?</p>	<p>Children learn about the world around them constantly and they will learn best with little interruption or prodding. Teachers may call attention to certain aspects but they must also be observant of what children are and are not ready to learn.</p>	<p>Children learn by planning what they will learn, doing what they have planned and reflecting on what it meant. The students also need to have structure and consistency so that they know what is expected of them and can plan for their learning.</p>	<p>Children learn through repetition, and with their whole selves. A child's spiritual learning is just as important as academic learning.</p>	<p>This method follows the constructivists beliefs in that children construct their learning based on previous experiences and current perspectives. All children can learn but they do so at their own pace.</p>	<p>The belief is that children must master skills in a sequential order and that prior learning helps develop new learning.</p>
<p>What evidence is there about the effectiveness of this model?</p>	<p>Much of Montessori's career focused on research. Her books outline how effective her approach was.</p>	<p>Perry School Project research indicates the students who went through the program were overall more successful in later years than those who did not. (Kostelnick, 24.)</p>	<p>Many studies have been conducted on the Waldorf system of education. A comprehensive list is available at <a href="http://www.waldorfanswers.org/Studies.htm">http://www.waldorfanswers.org/Studies.htm</a>.</p>	<p>Much of the constructivist research supports the work of Reggio Emilia (Wien, 2008.) In addition children's progress is documented through portfolios.</p>	<p>This model has been particularly effective for students with special needs or those who have learning disabilities.</p>

<p>What is distinctive about the daily program?</p>	<p>Constant observation by the teacher and an expectation that children can learn make this approach unique. There can often be children of multiple ages in one classroom. (Montessori, 1964.)</p>	<p>There is a great deal of focus on plan-do-review. The students are encouraged in their conversations as they attempt to solve problems (Kostelnick, 24.)</p>	<p>There are many kinesthetic experiences and learning through the arts. Children are encouraged in their creative pursuits. Larger class size is prevalent. Parents are also a part of the learning community.</p>	<p>Much of the learning takes place through the use of centers. There is a great deal of flexibility involved in the learning that is taking place. Standardized assessments are not advocated. (Kostelnick, 26 - 27.)</p>	<p>The learning that is taking place is very scripted and fast paced.</p>
---	---	---	---	--	---

Assessment of Prior Learning  
ED 338

Field work: A minimum of 32 hours of fieldwork with kindergarten children.  
Documentation of teaching experience within this setting.

*Documentation supplied by Rev. Gary Swanson re: Kids Korner programs. 25-30 hours a week. Responsibilities included childcare Worker, Preschool Teacher, and Program Director/Administrator.*

Unit Planning

Part One

- Guiding questions: *clearly stated, developmentally appropriate for kindergarten, focus on knowledge, application, and analysis*
- Key concepts: *inquiry and investigation-listed in this way on unit overview and expanded upon in specific lessons in a way that is appropriate for this content and age level*
- Goals: *drawn from Scientific Thinking section of Omnibus and then further specified for each lesson, i.e. "Forms explanations and communicates scientific information" as unit goal, specified in lesson as "explaining what they know about seeds" before and after hearing book and working with KWL chart or "describe ways we use plants and seeds" based on information from guest speaker*
- Daily schedule: *full day, very comprehensive, includes lunch, large motor, centers, outside time, individual time with teacher*
- Explanation of theme: *importance of science, why this time of year, connections to developmental domains and other curricular areas*
- Diversity: *family connections, individual abilities of children, jobs for men and women, similarities and differences of plants/seeds*
- Brief description of each activity: *sensory table, literature, writing opportunities, centers, play, communication with family*
- 

Part Two

Using the lesson plan format provided, write detailed lessons for five of the activities that are part of your unit. These lessons should represent different domains.

*Lesson plans illustrate a variety of hands-on instructional strategies and assessment modes that are directly related to objectives. Objectives are related to recognized standards, as listed in unit overview. Steps for instruction are*



*detailed and clear. Questions are planned out and represent varied levels of Bloom, e.g. What is a seed? Have you ever...? How should we treat seeds? What do we need to grow?;;; Each lesson included assessment, adaptations and extensions.*

#### Part Three - Model Lesson Plan

*Description analyzes the teaching environment and provides information that informs teaching decisions. You drew on the information that you had to analyze the teaching situation and the decisions you made. You demonstrated your understanding of the Alverno teacher abilities by describing ways in which you integrated their elements throughout your plans. Your unit and the specific plans are developmentally appropriate-they consider developmental, cultural, and individual needs.*

### **CURRICULAR MODELS**

#### Part One

Describe the beliefs that are consistent with the following models of early childhood education. This can be done in a narrative format, a chart or table, a map, or another format approved by me. Respond to each of the following questions.

- What is the role of the teacher?
- What are the key goals for children?
- What are key elements of the learning environment?
- What are the beliefs about how children learn?
- What evidence is there about the effectiveness of this model?
- What is distinctive about the daily program?

*You responded to each question for all five models by targeting the key points of distinction. You included significant research from sources directly related to the particular curricular model. It is clear that you understand the significant features of each model and how they relate to student learning.*

#### Part Two

Describe, in a two to three pages, your philosophy of early childhood education. Be clear about the models from which you draw your beliefs and cite at least two sources (APA format).

*Your philosophy statement accurately uses theoretical frameworks from the realm of education to interpret and analyze classroom practices and how they relate to student learning. It is well thought out and relates directly to both your research about curricular models and your teaching experience. Your paper demonstrates your ability to organize information. You communicated your values in relation to education and its purposes and how your values influence your instructional decisions. A possible portfolio piece. The matrix is clear and detailed, including all required information. Another possible portfolio piece.*

*Carrie,*

*You have met all of the criteria for the Assessment of Prior Learning for ED 338. Although I know you would make a great contribution to the class I am pleased that you were able to do this. We need to sign the paperwork before you register for spring. Good luck to you in your future education courses and in your move.*

*Kathy*