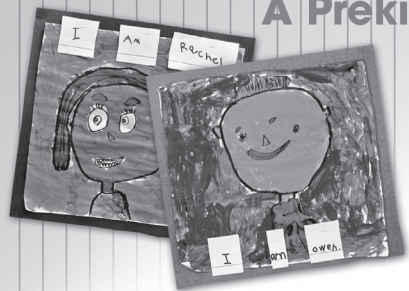


# Literacy Beginnings

A Prekindergarten Handbook



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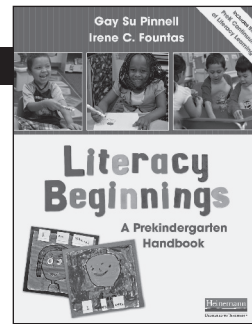
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# STUDY GUIDE



## Introduction

This guide for instructors, staff developers, literacy coaches, and study groups provides suggestions for a series of professional development or other study sessions based on the text *Literacy Beginnings: A Prekindergarten Handbook* (2011). The modules vary in length from one to three hours and may be combined in several all-day seminars or presented over a series of shorter periods. A time estimate is listed at the beginning of each module. The amount of time you spend will depend on how much interaction occurs between you and the other participants. You might wish to select only those topics of interest or to change the order of the modules.

*Literacy Beginnings* provides detailed information about instructional practices that educators can use to ensure literacy learning and the development of emerging readers and writers. The book also includes many practical resources, such as familiar children's songs, rhymes, poems, and related activities; theme-based text sets; inquiry projects; and generative lessons that support children in their discovery and exploration of language, reading, and writing. *Literacy Beginnings* focuses on prekindergarten, but it will be helpful also to teachers who are working with kindergartners.

## Resources

This guide makes use of *The Continuum of Literacy Learning*. If kindergarten teachers will be attending the professional development sessions, it is recommended that they have access to either *The Continuum of Literacy Learning, Grades PreK–8* or *The Continuum of Literacy Learning, Grades PreK–2*. If these texts are not available, you might have kindergarten teachers refer to the PreK continuum provided in *Literacy Beginnings* and modify the sessions as appropriate.

In addition, the following books and materials offer further in-depth reading and support:

Fountas, I.C. & G.S. Pinnell. 2006. *Teaching for Comprehending and Fluency: Thinking, Talking, and Writing About Reading, K–8*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

McCarrier, A.M., G.S. Pinnell & I.C. Fountas. 1999. *Interactive Writing: How Language & Literacy Come Together, K–2*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Pinnell, G.S. & I.C. Fountas. 2011. *The Continuum of Literacy Learning Teaching Library, Grades PreK–2*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

## Materials

The following kinds of supporting materials will be very beneficial:

### ■ Video clips of prekindergarten and kindergarten classrooms

It will be helpful to assemble a collection of DVDs showing teaching and learning in prekindergarten and kindergarten classrooms. Several modules suggest that you share video examples of a variety of literacy teaching and learning experiences. It is recommended that you tape and share examples from classrooms in your building. In addition, you can find many examples in *The Continuum of Literacy Learning Teaching Library, Grades PreK–2*.

### ■ Samples of children’s writing

It is powerful for teachers to analyze writing and drawing samples for evidence of children’s thinking and for evidence of their ability to represent sounds in words and to spell words. Gathering samples of children’s writing from the beginning, middle, and end of the year (for both prekindergartners and kindergartners) will provide good material for analysis. Writing samples are also available in *The Continuum of Literacy Learning Teaching Library*.

### ■ Examples of children’s literature

Select some picture books that have the potential to engage children and extend their thinking. You might choose to gather and organize your examples by referring to the expansive list of text sets included in Appendix B of *Literacy Beginnings*. For examples of text sets appropriate for kindergarten, please refer to the DVD included with *Teaching for Comprehending and Fluency*. That book also offers many suggestions for using interactive read-aloud to help children extend their thinking about texts.

### ■ Big books—enlarged versions of poems, rhymes, songs, and texts produced through interactive and shared writing

Appendix A in *Literacy Beginnings* provides an extensive list of nursery rhymes, songs, and poems that are appropriate for use with young children during shared reading. You may want to collect some of these texts and place them on chart paper so that teachers can see an appropriate layout in an enlarged version. Be sure to include pictures to support meaning. It will be helpful to gather examples of interactive and shared writing to show participants as well.

## MODULE 1

# *Growing Up Literate: Prekindergartens and Kindergartens for the Future Generation*

(Chapter 1)

*Estimated Time: Approximately 1½ hours\**

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The purpose of this module is to discuss the most effective ways of teaching and learning in prekindergarten and kindergarten classrooms today. Teachers will examine the importance of providing rich literacy experiences for young children, and they will define what is and what is not developmentally appropriate learning for these children. Participants will recognize how they can use the concept of the learning zone to assist a child's literacy learning. Finally, they will review the important role of play in prekindergarten and kindergarten classrooms.

\* If possible, ask participants to read Chapter 1 before convening this session. If prereading the chapter is not possible, please allow for a longer session so participants can read selected portions of the chapter. Many sections of Chapter 1 will help teachers understand the rationales and foundational theories that are the basis for the ideas presented in *Literacy Beginnings*.

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### **Materials to Gather Before the Session**

- Chart paper
- Markers
- Video of children playing in the classroom (optional)

### **Getting Started**

Share with participants the goals for this session:

- Discuss how today's prekindergarten and kindergarten classrooms surround children with print and with real reasons to read and write.
- Define what is developmentally appropriate literacy teaching and learning in prekindergarten and kindergarten.
- Understand what is meant by *the learning zone*.
- Recognize the importance of play in prekindergarten and kindergarten.
- Confirm that helping young children develop a foundation for literacy often requires skillful teaching.

Ask participants to read the last sentence in the first column of page 23: “The playtime and social training of traditional prekindergartens has not been replaced but rather infused with literacy.” Next, ask participants to reflect on and then jot down all the times and places in their classrooms where literacy is “infused” throughout the day. Share either as a whole group, with partners, or at table groups.

After participants have shared their lists, have them read over the bullets on pages 25–26 summarizing instructional practices recommended by the International Reading Association and the National Association for the Education of Young Children in their joint position statement. Discuss any recommendations that were not included in the teachers’ lists.

## Developmentally Appropriate Practice

If participants have not read the chapter ahead of time, ask them to read the introduction as well as the sections “The Emergent Reader and Writer” and “The Developmentally Appropriate Prekindergarten Classroom” on pages 23–25 at this time.

After reading or reviewing the sections, have table groups discuss the reading and then make a chart of what is and what is not developmentally appropriate practice according to the text. Their charts may look something like the one shown below.

Developmentally Appropriate Practice	Developmentally Inappropriate Practice
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children are encouraged to talk, observe, wonder, and explore their environment.</li> <li>• Oral language is used as the foundation for learning more about print.</li> <li>• Children are invited to have authentic, meaningful experiences with literacy.</li> <li>• Children have regular opportunities to express themselves on paper (drawing and writing).</li> <li>• Abundant play opportunities support children’s literacy learning.</li> <li>• The classroom contains a wide variety of environmental print.</li> <li>• Instruction in literacy learning is evident.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children spend time filling in worksheets.</li> <li>• Instruction is focused on repetitive drills.</li> <li>• Children’s opportunities for writing are focused on “correct spelling” and proper handwriting.</li> <li>• Few opportunities are provided for students to learn through authentic literacy experiences.</li> <li>• Play is limited and discouraged.</li> </ul>

After table groups finish their charts, have the whole group do a “gallery walk” to read one another’s charts. Discuss any conflicting ideas that may be listed on the various charts.

## **Finding Each Child's Learning Zone**

Next, have participants turn to Figure 1.1 on page 25 to begin a conversation on Vygotsky's theory of the zone of proximal development. If necessary, explain to teachers that the learning zone is where the teacher should target her instruction and assessment. Learning takes place when a child is able to link what he knows to new information and skills. Discuss the challenge of teaching within each child's learning zone.

If participants have not yet read the chapter, ask them to read in the second column of page 25 the example of how parents naturally work within their children's learning zones without even realizing it. After discussing this example, ask participants to think of an example or two when they have been able to support a child's development in the learning zone.

## **The Essential Role of Play in Learning**

Have participants create a chart that lists the values of play. This may be done with the whole group or in smaller groups if time permits. They may want to use pages 26–27 as a resource to support their thinking.

If possible, videotape a small group of children playing together in a prekindergarten or kindergarten classroom. You may want to videotape children playing together in a dramatic play area, a house corner, or a blocks center. Ask participants to analyze how this example of play provides children with opportunities to use and expand their language. Discuss other ways that the play may support the children's social, emotional, and intellectual development.

## **Wrap-up of the Session**

Ask participants to list:

- three ideas that were new to them or that confirmed their thinking
- two actions or strategies that they will try out in the classroom as a result of this session
- one question that they have after participating in this session

If time permits, ask participants to share what they plan to try in their classrooms.

## MODULE 2

# *Building a Community of Learners and an Organized, Engaging Environment for Learning*

(Chapters 2, 4, and 5 and Appendices K and O)

*Estimated Time: Approximately 2–3 hours*

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The purpose of this module is to help teachers think about the structures and routines that will help to create a community of learners. Teachers should strive to create communities in their classrooms that recreate the home and the world for literacy learning. The module also explores options for organizing the physical classroom as well as time allotments to support literacy learning and student independence.

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### **Materials to Gather Before the Session**

- Chart paper

### **Getting Started**

Share with participants the goals for this session:

- Explore the structures, routines, games, and instructional practices that help build a community of learners in the classroom.
- Consider what is honored in the school environment.
- Appreciate that management and order are important in helping children to develop self-regulation.
- Recognize that print is a meaningful part of the preschool environment.
- Understand that the environment is organized to promote both active learning and independence on the part of children.

Begin by asking participants to read the quote from Carol Copple and Sue Bredekamp at the beginning of Chapter 2 on page 29 in *Literacy Beginnings*:

Children learn and develop best when they are part of a community of learners—a community in which all participants consider and contribute to one another’s well being and learning.



Ask participants to jot down their thoughts about how they go about creating a community of learners among their prekindergarten or kindergarten children. Invite them to list all of the things they do that contribute to creating a sense of community among children.

Spend a few minutes sharing ideas. You may choose to have partners share with each other or with the whole group.

## Building a Community of Learners

Have participants work in groups of four to jigsaw read the following sections of Chapter 2 in *Literacy Beginnings*. After reading, members should be prepared to share important ideas as well as the routines and structures discussed in their section that help to build community in the classroom.

“Supporting Social Skills” (page 30)

“Creating Community” (page 30–31)

“Getting the Community Started” (page 31)

“Using Circle Games to Build Community” (pages 32 and 33) and “The Benefits of Creating Community” (page 32)

## Linking Literacy Learning in the Home, the Community, and School

Ask participants to think about opportunities that exist for nurturing language, literacy, and learning in the home, the community, and school. Have participants make a 2-column chart (home/community and school) and write up to ten items in each column. After they have listed several opportunities for learning in each column, ask them to circle those opportunities that appear in the home/community column as well as in the school column. Discuss the results.

Home/Community	School
<p>Picture books are read together and talked about.</p> <p>Children help parents cook dinner from a recipe.</p> <p>Child “writes” note to mother to remind her to buy candy at the store.</p>	<p>Picture books are read together, and opportunities are provided to talk about the books.</p> <p>Children prepare a classroom snack together.</p>

The point of this exercise is to help teachers think about whether they are providing authentic and meaningful experiences for literacy learning at school. Hopefully, authentic literacy experiences that happen at home and in the community are being replicated in the classroom. Help teachers think about the value of using materials and “stuff” from the real world (for example, menus from restaurants in your town and other real artifacts vs. items purchased at a school-supply store). Please make the point that the most ideal prekindergarten and kindergarten classrooms make the transition from home to school as seamless as possible. Teachers should be striving to recreate the home and community within the school.



## **Focusing on the Classroom Environment**

Ask participants to make a list of what they would expect to see in an ideal prekindergarten or kindergarten classroom.

Next, participants will share some of their ideas. You may choose to chart these ideas as a whole group or just ask participants to share out loud.

Point out that the things the participants included on their list are most likely the things they truly honor as being important to supporting young children's literacy learning. You may want to emphasize that the teacher's beliefs and values about literacy learning will influence what the community and the environment of the classroom look like.

Ask participants to read the introduction to Chapter 4 on page 41. Then ask each person to share with a partner the ideas from the introduction that are really important to her.

## **Tips for Organizing the Classroom**

Ask participants to review the tips for organizing and managing the classroom environment on page 44. Have them check off the tips that are already in place in their classroom. Next, ask them to select one or two tips that they will begin to implement in their classroom in the near future.

Remind participants to write down these goals in a safe place.

## **Physical Characteristics of a Literacy-Rich Prekindergarten Classroom**

Working at their tables or in groups, participants can divide up the different areas of the classroom that are discussed on pages 45–52.

Participants will read through the description of the area(s) and then look at the colored photos of the area(s) included in the text.

Participants will share how the organization of the area supports:

- literacy learning
- student independence

If there are kindergarten teachers in your session, ask them to consider how they might expand this area for kindergarten children.

## **Instructional Frameworks for Literacy Teaching and Learning**

For this section, ask participants to work in groups of four. Discuss how there are many ways to organize the school day, depending on the amount of time that teachers have with children. Chapter 5 does not attempt to describe every instructional context that teachers might use in a prekindergarten classroom. However, it does present an overall framework for literacy instruction so that teachers may see how activities can fit together and provide children with options. Emphasize that teachers will need to select elements, time allotments, and sequences to suit the needs of their children.

## Managing Activities

Have participants, in their groups, read the following sections and then jigsaw the important ideas that they gleaned from the reading:

“Reading Activities” (pages 60–61)

“Writing Activities” (pages 61–63)

“Phonemic Awareness, Phonics, and Word Study” (pages 63–64)

“Circle Time” (pages 64–65)

After participants have shared the important ideas of the readings, invite individuals to review Figure 5.1, “Essential Prekindergarten Learning Experiences,” on page 59. Then, ask participants to reflect on how this range of experiences has played itself out in their classroom or in the classrooms in their school. What modifications might they consider making to their schedules?

Finally, ask participants to review the suggested schedules provided on pages 66–69. Remind them that these are only a few possible schedules. Teachers will need to make modifications that work best for them.

## Communicating with Families

Depending on the needs of your participants, you may wish to review the ideas for communicating with families that are included at the end of Chapter 5. Have participants skim the outline for putting together a family newsletter (page 69) and Figure 5.6, “Example of a Weekly Newsletter” (page 70). You may choose to ask participants to share different ways that they have communicated effectively with families in the past.

## Wrap-up of the Session

Ask participants to choose one or two new goals for fostering community in their classrooms and creating an environment that promotes literacy learning. If time permits, have participants articulate their goal(s) to a partner or to the whole group.

## MODULE 3

# *Introduction to The Continuum of Literacy Learning, PreK*

(Chapter 26)

*Estimated Time: Approximately 1–1½ hours*

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The purpose of this module is to introduce participants to the purposes of the preK continuum and to provide a fast “walk-through” so that they understand how to find information. Use of the continuum will be interwoven through many of the other learning modules of this study guide.

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### **Materials to Gather Before the Session**

- Chart paper

### **Getting Started**

Explain to participants that Gay Su Pinnell and Irene C. Fountas created *The Continuum of Literacy Learning* to help teachers understand what the development of literacy learning may look like over time. The continuum was originally published for grades K–8 in 2007. With the recent emphasis placed on prekindergarten education in the United States, the authors saw the need to develop a preK continuum.

Let participants know that today’s session will focus on introducing them to the purposes and organization of the preK continuum. Emphasize that after this session’s introduction, participants will revisit and use the preK continuum in future professional development sessions.

Ask participants to open their *Literacy Beginnings* text to the list of bulleted questions on pages 228–29. Ask participants to skim through the questions frequently asked by prekindergarten teachers about literacy teaching to see if they may be wondering some of the same things.

Next, point out the last sentence in the section and read it aloud:

The continuum is designed to help you pin down the specifics of your expectations for language and literacy learning in prekindergarten.

Emphasize the big idea that the preK continuum will help participants select appropriate texts to use with children and that also it will help them choose specific goals to teach, support, and notice in their children’s literacy learning.

## Using the PreK Continuum with Three- and Four-Year-Olds

Have participants work in pairs to jigsaw read the sections on three-year-olds and four-year-olds on page 229. Partners should share the important ideas from their sections with one another.

## Organization of the PreK Continuum

Participants will work in groups of four to jigsaw read and share important ideas about the organization of the preK continuum.

Assign the following sections among group members:

“Interactive Read-Aloud and Shared and Performance Reading” (pages 229–30)

“Writing About Reading and Writing” (page 230)

“Oral, Visual, and Technological Communication” (page 230)

“Phonics, Spelling, and Word Study” and “A Note About Guided Reading” (page 230)

After groups have shared their sections, debrief to answer any questions.

## Interactive Read-Aloud and Literature Discussion; Shared and Performance Reading

Ask the whole group of participants to turn to the Interactive Read-Aloud and Literature Discussion continuum (pages 233–34) to see how it is organized. It is important for participants to notice that the continuum includes characteristics for selecting texts that are appropriate for prekindergartners and that it also includes the kinds of thinking they will want to support during interactive read-aloud. Mention to participants that they will explore the categories of thinking within, beyond, and about the text in a future module.

If time permits, ask the participants to skim the “Selecting Goals” section of the Interactive Read-Aloud and Literature Discussion continuum with children from their classrooms in mind. Discuss some of the goals that they are currently supporting as well as other ones that might be helpful to teach to children.

Point out that the Shared and Performance Reading continuum is organized in the same fashion as the Interactive Read-Aloud and Literature Discussion continuum.

## Writing About Reading

Ask participants to read the opening paragraph under “Selecting Genres and Forms” (page 237) and discuss the important ideas. Be sure to point out that the demonstration of writing should be kept very simple in prekindergarten. Participants should then skim the bullets under “Functional Writing,” “Narrative Writing,” and “Informational Writing.”

Next, have them turn to page 238 to notice how goals in the Writing About Reading continuum are organized also into the categories of thinking within, beyond, and about the text.

## Writing

All participants should read the introductory paragraph to the Writing continuum (page 239). Discuss the important ideas.

Next, ask participants to look through the Writing continuum with a partner to notice the following:

- How is the Writing continuum organized? Pay particular attention to the headings and sub-headings of the categories.
- Discuss how they might begin to use the Writing continuum.

Debrief the participants' observations as a whole group. Be sure to point out how each category of purpose and genre is divided further into "Understanding the Genre" and "Writing in the Genre." Discuss the implications for their teaching.

## Oral, Visual, and Technological Communication

Ask participants to skim through the goals in the Oral, Visual, and Technological Communication continuum (pages 245–46). Participants may wish to discuss any listed goals that they are currently teaching for and supporting with children.

## Phonics, Spelling, and Word Study

Explain to participants that the Phonics, Spelling, and Word Study continuum (pages 247–48) is arranged around nine areas of learning. Ask participants what they notice about these goals.

If it is not mentioned, you may want to point out how there are many goals listed under "Early Literacy Concepts," "Phonological Awareness," and "Letter Knowledge" at the prekindergarten level. If participants were to look at the Phonics, Spelling, and Word Study continuum for older grade levels, they would notice a shift in emphasis as children gain more proficiency in literacy learning. By second grade, most children will have control over these three areas of learning.

## Using the PreK Continuum to Plan For and Assess Teaching

Ask participants to read the section "Using the PreK Continuum" on pages 230–31. Invite them, in table groups, to discuss the various uses of the preK continuum.

Because this section includes many ideas for using the continuum, you may want to ask participants to design a graphic organizer entitled "Uses for the PreK Continuum" that explains pictorially the information covered in this section. This will help them synthesize the information.

Groups should post their graphic organizers.

## Wrap-up of the Session

To conclude this session, have participants do a "gallery walk" to view the graphic organizers that have been created. Ask participants to share the ways in which they will plan to use the preK continuum.

## MODULE 4

# *Oral Language: The Foundation for Learning*

(Chapters 6, 7, and 9 and Lessons 16–20 and 22 in Appendix D)

*Estimated Time: Approximately 2–3 hours*

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Oral language is key to learning across all areas of the prekindergarten and kindergarten curricula. Language learning involves putting words together in meaningful ways, recognizing the structure or grammar of the language, developing a strong oral vocabulary, and hearing the sounds in words. This module will focus on how teachers can support oral language learning, including the development of children’s speaking and listening vocabularies. This session will also explore literacy learning for children who are English language learners.

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### **Materials to Gather Before the Session**

- Video clip of a young child talking with an adult to show how adults naturally support children’s oral language attempts
- Chart paper
- Markers
- Materials for Lessons 16–20 and 22 in Appendix D for the learning stations
- Collection of everyday objects for Lesson 22 in Appendix D

### **Getting Started**

Invite participants to talk with a colleague about the following questions:

- How do children develop oral language?
- What role does oral language play in learning to read and write?
- What role does oral language play in your classroom?

You may choose to have the pairs share with the larger group and/or chart their responses about the role that oral language plays in learning to read and write.

Share the following key ideas about language learning from Section Two of *Literacy Beginnings*. Language learning involves . . .

- Putting words together in meaningful ways
- Learning the structure or grammar of the language
- Developing a strong oral vocabulary
- Learning to hear the sounds in words

Next, let participants know that you will be focusing on the following objectives with this session:

- The four kinds of talk that are essential for helping children use language to guide their own learning, converse with others, make plans, and play with words and sentences
- The conventions of language that children need to learn to communicate effectively
- Effective development of vocabulary in prekindergarten and kindergarten
- Supporting English language learners in the classroom

You may want to mention to participants that you will focus on how oral language plays an important role in developing children’s phonemic awareness in a future session.

## Observing Adults and Children Talking

Share the following quotes from Marie Clay’s *By Different Paths to Common Outcomes* (Portland, ME: Stenhouse Publishers, pp. 9, 10, 11):

The constructive work that children do with language before they get to school is astonishing enough, but even more amazing is the ease with which they do it and how, unthinkingly, adults do just the right things to make it possible. They talk with children.

Between one and five years children all over the world master the language of the community. . . . Children learn it all in conversations.

Then, share your video clip of a child talking with an adult. Ask participants, while they watch, to notice what the adult says or does in the video to facilitate the child’s talk. After viewing, discuss their observations.

Next, ask participants to talk about what the child in the video knows about language and conversation.

You will want to emphasize that the ways in which we respond to children’s attempts at talking will determine whether they will continue their efforts to communicate or will cease trying to make themselves understood. If applicable, point out how the adult in the video clip uses “I’m still listening” devices such as nonverbal gestures or sounds. Remind participants that adults should avoid asking questions that require only a yes or no answer when talking with young children.

## The Critical Role of Language in Learning

Ask participants to work in pairs (or in groups of four) to jigsaw read about the four kinds of talk that have been identified by Lauren B. Resnick and Catherine E. Snow as essential for language learning. All participants should read the introduction to Chapter 6 on pages 74–75. Then, the pairs or groups should divide up the four different kinds of talk. Ask participants to be prepared to share with their partners the big ideas from their section(s). They should also be prepared to share what the particular type of talk would look like and how it would sound in a classroom.

After participants have shared in small groups or pairs, ask them to share the big ideas that relate to the four kinds of talk. You may choose to chart these big ideas for the whole group.

Let participants know that they will be exploring some concrete ways to support children’s under-



standings of these four types of talk later on in this session.

## Conventions of Language

Because language is a social tool, children will need to learn the rules of conversation. Remind participants that children will need to have lots of practice learning and using the conventions of language and that these conventions will need to be developed over time.

Have participants read over the sixteen different rules of conversation listed on pages 79–80 in *Literacy Beginnings*. Then, divide up the rules of conversation among small groups of participants. Ask them to think about opportunities they might provide during the school day for children to learn about and apply the rules of conversation. Also ask them to think about how they will teach and support the use of these rules of conversation. Ask the groups to share their thinking on a chart like this one:

Rule of Conversation	How will you teach and/or support the use of this rule?	What are the opportunities to apply the rule of conversation during the school day?
Addressing people by name	We will play games to learn one another's names early in the school year. I will provide and use a name chart of class members. I will model calling children by name.	Children will always be asked to call one another by name. During sharing times, children will be asked to select classmates by using their names. Children will always be asked to refer to one another by name.

## Vocabulary Development

Ask participants to turn to page 88 of *Literacy Beginnings* and read through “Key Understandings to Think About” for Chapter 7. Next, ask them to read the introduction to Chapter 7 on pages 82–83, pick out a sentence that is most relevant to the children with whom they work, and be prepared to tell why. Discuss the selected sentences, either in pairs or as a whole group. Mention any other big ideas from the introduction that were not touched on by the group.

Next, break up the reading of the following four sections among participants at table groups, and have groups quickly discuss their sections:

- “Intentional Vocabulary Instruction”\*
- “The Contribution of Reading Aloud to Vocabulary Expansion”
- “Using Poetry to Expand Vocabulary”
- “Increasing Children’s Awareness of Words”

\*Mention to participants that Module 14 will be devoted to discussing the use of inquiry projects.

## Exploring Ways to Develop Language with Students—Learning Stations

Set up several “learning stations” for participants to explore. Each of the learning stations is based on a lesson featured in Appendix D of *Literacy Beginnings*. You will want to provide the materials that are required for the lessons. Participants may use the appendices of their text as a guide.

Have participants choose partners, and have pairs choose a learning station together. Ask participants to follow the directions at each station and be prepared to share some of their thoughts after the exploration.

If time permits, participants may visit more than one station. You may want to plan for 30 minutes for this section.

### Developing Language Through “Me” Boxes

- Read the lesson frame on pages 358–59.
- Discuss:
  - How will this ongoing activity support children in your classroom? Refer to the Oral, Visual, and Technological Communication continuum.
  - How might you modify this lesson to meet the needs of children in your classroom?
  - What will you need to do to prepare for this activity?

### Text Innovations

- Read the lesson frame on page 360.
- Look at some of the books or poems displayed and think of some of your favorite texts. You may also want to look at Appendices A and E in *Literacy Beginnings* for additional verses, rhymes, and book suggestions.
- Discuss:
  - How will this lesson support children in building oral language, understandings about reading, and understandings about writing? Look in the continuum to select goals to notice, teach, and support.
  - How might you modify the lesson to meet the needs of children in your classroom?
  - What will you need to do to prepare for this lesson?

### Storytelling

- Read the lesson frame on pages 361–62.
- Discuss:
  - What are the benefits of beginning storytelling with the use of a read-aloud text? What texts might you use?
  - How will having children tell their own stories benefit them?
  - How will this lesson support children in building oral language?
  - How will this lesson support their understandings about reading?
  - How will this lesson support their understandings about writing? (Be sure to refer to the Oral, Visual, and Technological Communication; Interactive Read-Aloud and Literature Discussion; Shared and Performance Reading; and Writing continua to select goals.)
  - What will you need to do to prepare for this lesson?

### Puppet Making

- Read the lesson frame on page 363.
- Discuss:
  - What are the benefits of using puppets in the classroom?
  - How will you support children as they tell and/or retell stories using the puppets?
  - How will this lesson support children in expanding their oral language? How will it support their understandings about reading and about writing? Refer to the continuum to think about goals for children in your classroom.
  - What modifications might you consider making to this lesson frame?
  - What will you need to do to prepare for this lesson?

### Play Corner

- Read the lesson frame on page 364. Refer to the theme suggestions for the play corner listed in Figure 4.21 on pages 53–54.
- Discuss:
  - What are the benefits of using the various play corner themes?
  - How will the play corner support children in expanding their oral language? How will it support their understandings about reading and about writing? Refer to the continuum to think about goals.
  - What books might you place in the play corner? (Consider the play themes, as well as books listed in Appendix E and your own collection of books.)
  - What role will you take to support high-quality play?
  - What will you need to do to prepare for this lesson?

### Descriptive Words

- Read the lesson frame on pages 366–67.
- Browse through the books provided, and take a look at the collection of objects provided.
- Discuss:
  - What words come to mind for you as you read and/or observe?
  - How will you work with children to elicit descriptive language?
  - How will this lesson support children in building oral language? How will it support their understandings about reading and about writing? Refer to the continuum to think about goals for oral communication, reading, and writing.
  - What modifications might you consider making to this lesson frame?
  - What will you need to do to prepare for this lesson?

## Supporting English Language Learners in the Prekindergarten Classroom

Share with participants the following ideas discussed in the introduction to Chapter 9\*:

- Whatever language children speak at home has been *learned*. They have learned:
  - A sound system and a body of meaningful words
  - The “rules” by which words are put into sentences
  - Expressions that make language interesting
- The structures and systems of different languages might vary significantly, but the *process* and even the sequence of learning language is much the same all over the world.

\*If time permits, you might ask participants to read the introduction to Chapter 9 and discuss it.

## Suggestions for Working with English Language Learners

Have participants read over Figure 9.1 on page 98 and “Key Understandings to Think About” on page 104. Ask participants to select and jot down the two most important suggestions for them to implement or refine when working with children who are English language learners. Have participants share with partners. You may want to collect the selections if you are responsible for coaching the participants.

## Wrap-up of the Session

To conclude this session, ask participants to record the following:

- Three ideas that are the result of new thinking for them
- Two goals that they will set for their teaching as a result of this session
- One question that they have about language learning

## MODULE 5

# *Learning to Read and Early Literacy Learning*

(Chapter 10)

*Estimated Time: Approximately 1 hour*

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A primary goal of prekindergarten and kindergarten is to help children see themselves as readers—whether they are reading conventionally or not. This module focuses on three critical areas of learning in prekindergarten: story awareness, language awareness, and print awareness.

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### **Materials to Gather Before the Session**

- Video recording of a child's early book experience of "play reading" and talking about the book he has read
- Texts appropriate for prekindergarten and kindergarten students (including some wordless picture books)

### **Getting Started**

Start by having participants talk about observations they have made of children in their class (or their own children) when they are being read to or when they "play read" for themselves. Talk together about what children may learn about early reading behaviors through the experience of simply having books read to them.

Discuss with the group how even very young children can respond to stories that are read to them.

Have participants jigsaw read the three sections of the chapter on story awareness, language awareness, and print awareness (pages 107–12). After reading, participants should share the big ideas of each section with their colleagues.

### **Three Important Areas of Literacy Learning**

Share the video with participants. Ask them to think about and take notes on the child's story awareness, language awareness, and print awareness.

Invite participants to consider the following questions while viewing:

- What do you notice about the child's "reading"?
- What does the child do well?
- What causes the child some uncertainty?

After viewing the video, discuss the participants' observations.

## Opportunities for Teaching Early Reading Behaviors

Have participants turn to the basic concepts of print listed on page 110 and to the “Early Literacy Concepts” section of the Phonics, Spelling, and Word Study continuum on page 247. Participants should read through the bullets and talk with a partner about the following questions:

- How do these behaviors support reading?
- Where might we have opportunities to teach children more about print awareness in our prekindergarten and kindergarten classrooms?

## Noticing How Texts Can Support Early Reading Behaviors

Distribute the children’s texts for participants to explore. Ask them to note the story, language, and illustrations in the text that will be highly engaging to children. Then, ask participants to think about how the texts might support children’s development of story awareness, language awareness, and print awareness.

Have participants share a few examples of texts, as well as their thinking about the texts’ engaging characteristics.

## Wrap-up of the Session

Conclude this module by having participants read the last paragraph on page 112.

Ask them to reflect on the “Key Understandings to Think About” on page 113 and to jot down what they will want to remember and apply to their teaching.

## Assignment

If possible, ask participants to read Chapter 14, “Learning to Read: Understanding the Reading Process,” in preparation for the next module.



## MODULE 6

# *Understanding the Reading Process: Systems of Strategic Actions*

(Chapter 14)

*Estimated Time: Approximately 1–1½ hours*

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Learning to read is a complex process. This module will support teachers in building an understanding of the reading process and of how the literacy that children experience in prekindergarten and kindergarten contributes to their long-term development as readers.

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### Materials to Gather Before the Session

- Chart paper
- Markers
- A video of an interactive read-aloud lesson that includes the discussion before, during, and after a text reading
- If available, kindergarten interactive read-aloud DVD clip “Ask Nicely” from *The Continuum of Literacy Learning Teaching Library*
- Copies of Figure 14.2, “Discussion During and After Reading *It’s a Secret! Aloud*,” with the Analysis column left blank
- Recording form for identifying systems of strategic actions

### Getting Started

Start by explaining to teachers that it is very important for them to understand the reading process, even though most children in prekindergarten will not be reading conventionally. Emphasize that the actions they take in the classroom contribute greatly to children’s future success in learning to read, as well as in learning to write.

Share this quote from *Literacy Beginnings*, page 135:

Reading is thinking. . . . Reading involves doing a great many complicated things at the same time. And, for most children beyond about grade one, it all happens silently, in the head! We can’t see or hear the thinking taking place, but we know it is going on, because the individual is reading the words and understanding the meaning.

Have participants turn to Figure 14.1, “Systems of Strategic Actions,” on page 137. Explain that the authors have organized the different kinds of thinking into three systems called thinking within the

text, thinking beyond the text, and thinking about the text. Then, help participants understand that when we talk about these systems together (happening simultaneously), we call it *systems of strategic actions*.

**Note to presenters:** If participants have not read Chapter 14 before the session, you will want to have them either jigsaw read or skim the text on pages 136–41 that explains thinking *within*, *beyond*, and *about* the text.

## Creating a Visual Representation

To demonstrate their understanding of the three systems, have participants work in small groups to create visual representations that explain the type of thinking that is required for each system of strategic actions. Provide colored markers and chart paper. After completion, participants can share their visual representations with the whole group.

## Applying the Systems of Strategic Actions

Have participants turn to the Interactive Read-Aloud and Literature Discussion continuum on page 234. Invite them to skim the goals for thinking *within*, *beyond*, and *about* the text to become familiar with them.

View an interactive read-aloud lesson. While participants are watching, have them identify the types of thinking that the children are using and that the teacher is supporting. Use the form provided to record participants' thinking.

If no video is available, have participants read Figure 14.2, "Discussion During and After Reading *It's a Secret! Aloud*" (see figure below).

Discussion During and After Reading <i>It's a Secret! Aloud</i>		
Speaker	Transcript	Analysis
<b>Teacher</b>	We are going to read a wonderful book called <i>It's a Secret!</i> by John Burningham. You know sometimes cats go out at night. The little girl in this story, Marie Elaine, wonders what her cat does when he goes out at night. We are going to find out what she thinks he might do.	
(reading)	"One evening in the summer, Marie Elaine came down to the kitchen to get a cold drink from the fridge. There, by the cat door, was Malcolm the cat, and he was all dressed up in fancy clothes and a hat."  It's getting exciting, isn't it? What are you thinking?	

(Continues)

(Continued)

Discussion During and After Reading <i>It's a Secret!</i> Aloud		
Speaker	Transcript	Analysis
<b>Nathan</b> <b>Dorie</b>	It's a magic cat. He is wearing clothes. Cats don't really do that.	
<b>Teacher</b>	We'll have to see what happens in this story. Maybe Marie Elaine will find out what Malcolm does when he goes out. <i>Continues to read until she comes to two pages where Malcolm helps Marie Elaine and Norman escape from dogs by climbing a crane. They go up to the rooftops where a party is going on.</i> They are having a lot of adventures, aren't they?	
<b>Ellie</b> <b>Kevin</b>	Where are they going? Maybe they're going to the sky.	
<b>Teacher</b>	Let's read and see. "Finally they arrived at the place on the rooftops where the party was about to start." You know on the top of some big buildings, the roof is flat and cats could walk around and play games on them. <i>[Turns the page.]</i> Wow! Look how dressed up all the cats are. <i>She reads the next two pages.</i> Are you thinking about how Marie Elaine and Norman are feeling?	
<b>Margaret</b> <b>Roman</b> <b>Kevin</b>	They're dancing and they're having fun. It's like a dream. Yeah, maybe she dreamed it.	
<b>Teacher</b>	It could be that. We'll finish the book and maybe we'll find out.	
	<i>Without interrupting the flow of the story, the teacher encourages a few short discussions and comments during the reading. These opportunities to notice and talk contribute to the discussion after reading, below.</i>	

(Continues)

(Continued)

Discussion During and After Reading <i>It's a Secret!</i> Aloud		
Speaker	Transcript	Analysis
<b>Teacher</b>	What are you thinking about the story?	
	<i>Several children comment that they liked the story.</i>	
<b>Teacher</b>	That's good. What did you like most about it, Ellie?	
<b>Ellie</b>	When they got little and all dressed up.	
<b>Marcus</b>	I liked it when they were dancing.	
<b>Michael</b>	And when they saw the queen.	
<b>Teacher</b>	I liked those parts too. What about the ending?	
<b>Ellie</b> <b>Marcus</b> <b>Ellie</b> <b>Kevin</b> <b>Roman</b>	She was happy because she knew the secret. It wasn't really the secret but she thinks it is. Because she dreamed it. Or maybe she just made it up. She couldn't get little like that in real life.	
<b>Teacher</b>	What do some of the rest of you think? Was she dreaming it or imagining it?	
	<i>Children are uncertain and offer several opinions.</i>	
<b>Teacher</b>	We don't really know, do we? But it was a good story. When did you know it was going to be something like a dream or imagination?	
<b>Roman</b> <b>Kevin</b> <b>Ellie</b>	When she got tiny and dressed up. No, when they got away from the dogs. When they danced.	

(Continues)

(Continued)

Discussion During and After Reading <i>It's a Secret!</i> Aloud		
Speaker	Transcript	Analysis
<b>Teacher</b>	All those things told us that it was going to be a make-believe story like a dream or imagination. You are good noticers. Let's look at this page [ <i>shows the first picture of the cat dressed up</i> ].	
<b>Kevin</b>	That's when the cat got to be like magic.	
<b>Teacher</b>	And I noticed something at the end. [ <i>Turns to the last page.</i> ]	
<b>Roman</b> <b>Ellie</b>	He's just a cat again. But she knows the secret.	

After viewing or reading, discuss participants' observations of different systems of thinking.

## Implications for Teaching

Talk to participants about how the systems of strategic actions seem pretty complicated. Assure the teachers that they do not have to worry about directly teaching these types of thinking in prekindergarten. Rather, if they think about the demands of the texts themselves and then get children into meaningful conversations about the texts, children will automatically begin to think in these more complex ways.

Have participants read through the bulleted suggestions for stimulating conversation on page 142.

Ask them to share some of the suggestions that they will begin to use in their own discussions of texts with children.

## Wrap-up of the Session

Wrap up the session by having the teachers reflect and set goals for their teaching based on the work in this module.

**Systems of Strategic Actions for Processing Written Texts: Observational Notes**

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ Dates Recorded \_\_\_\_\_ Context: LD \_\_\_\_\_ SR \_\_\_\_\_ GR \_\_\_\_\_ IR \_\_\_\_\_

**Systems of Strategic Actions for Processing Written Texts**

**Observational Notes**

Observational Notes	Strategic Actions for Sustaining Reading	Strategic Actions for Expanding Thinking	Observational Notes
	<p><b>Solving Words</b></p> <p>Using a range of strategies to take words apart and understand what words mean.</p>	<p><b>Predicting</b></p> <p>Using what is known to think about what will follow while reading continuous text.</p>	
	<p><b>Monitoring and Correcting</b></p> <p>Checking on whether reading sounds right, looks right, and makes sense and working to solve problems.</p>	<p><b>Making Connections</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• personal</li> <li>• world</li> <li>• text</li> </ul> <p>Searching for and using connections to knowledge gained through their personal experiences, learning about the world, and reading other texts.</p>	
	<p><b>Searching for and Using Information</b></p> <p>Searching for and using all kinds of information in a text.</p>	<p><b>Inferring</b></p> <p>Going beyond the literal meaning of a text to think about what is not stated but is implied by the writer.</p>	
	<p><b>Summarizing</b></p> <p>Putting together and remembering important information and disregarding irrelevant information while reading.</p>	<p><b>Synthesizing</b></p> <p>Putting together information from the text and from the reader's own background knowledge in order to create new understandings.</p>	
	<p><b>Maintaining Fluency</b></p> <p>Integrating sources of information in a smoothly operating process that results in expressive, phrased reading.</p>	<p><b>Analyzing</b></p> <p>Examining elements of a text to know more about how it is constructed and noticing aspects of the writer's craft.</p>	
	<p><b>Adjusting</b></p> <p>Reading in different ways as appropriate to purpose for reading and type of text.</p>	<p><b>Critiquing</b></p> <p>Evaluating a text based on the reader's personal, world, or text knowledge and thinking critically about the ideas in it.</p>	

## MODULE 7

# *Using Interactive Read-Aloud to Support Emergent Readers*

(Chapters 11 and 22 and Appendices B, D, and E)

*Estimated Time: Approximately 2 hours*

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Reading aloud to prekindergarten and kindergarten children is the best way to teach them the purposes and benefits of reading. It expands their vocabularies, helps them understand sentence structure, and increases their background knowledge. This module will discuss the values of interactive read-aloud as an instructional approach; guide teachers through analyzing text characteristics to support book selection; explain the teaching routines of interactive read-aloud; and give teachers the opportunity to plan an interactive read-aloud session. Text sets will also be discussed.

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### **Materials to Gather Before the Session**

- A variety of texts appropriate for reading aloud to prekindergarten and kindergarten children (try to provide a balance of fiction and nonfiction texts; you may wish to display these texts around the room to create an attractive and inviting display.)
- Text analysis form
- Stick-on notes for planning an interactive read-aloud
- An example of an interactive read-aloud (either a taped lesson or one that you plan to do with participants)

### **Getting Started**

“Reading aloud to students is not a luxury but a necessity. We consider reading aloud to be an essential foundation of a good language and literacy program. Reading aloud supports learning in every other area. It is a way of nourishing the intellect of your students, expanding background, vocabulary, and language, developing an appreciation for inquiry, and creating a literary community in your classroom.” *Teaching for Comprehending and Fluency*, page 215.

Ask participants to respond to the quote, taking into consideration the benefits they see in reading aloud to children in prekindergarten and kindergarten classrooms.

Share with participants the goals for this session listed in the module description above.



## Values of Interactive Read-Aloud

Share the following values and benefits of interactive read-aloud with participants:

- Teaches children to love books
- Engages children in conversation about their thinking and “noticings”
- Exposes children to book language
- Introduces new vocabulary
- Provides exciting new information
- Engages children with intriguing and beautiful illustrations

Next, ask participants to think about what kinds of opportunities children in their classrooms have to hear wonderful stories and texts read aloud. Also ask participants to think about how many times a day they facilitate interactions between children and texts. Point out that the authors recommend that children be read to at least three times a day, if at all possible.

## Viewing an Interactive Read-Aloud

If participants did not have a chance to view an interactive read-aloud during Module 6, plan to show one now—either from your own collection or the kindergarten example, “Ask Nicely,” from *The Continuum of Literacy Learning Teaching Library*. As an alternative, you may want to plan an interactive read-aloud with participants as students and you as their teacher.

After the viewing (or the model lesson), ask participants to share their thoughts on what they observed. Ask them to talk about the role that conversation played during the interactive read-aloud.

## Selecting Texts to Read Aloud

Have teachers skim the section “Selecting Texts to Read Aloud” on page 115. Then, have them refer to the Interactive Read-Aloud and Literature Discussion continuum on page 233. Point out that it is very helpful to think about these ten categories of text characteristics when selecting books to read with young children.

Next, have participants read the descriptions of characteristics of text on page 117. After they read, clarify any questions regarding the different characteristics.

**Note to presenters:** Occasionally there is some confusion about the difference between *content* and *themes and ideas*. If so, clarify these terms for participants.

Point out that none of these text characteristics by itself makes a text appropriate or inappropriate. Teachers must think about all of the characteristics in relation to the texts they are considering.

## Analyzing a Text

Ask participants to select a text they might use with children. Distribute the text analysis form. Using the form and their professional resources, participants will complete a text analysis on the selected text.

After completing the form, participants can share their findings with a partner. As they share, have them consider these questions:

- How did the analysis help you to think more in-depth about the text?
- In what areas will you need to provide some support for children to comprehend the text?

## Planning an Interactive Read-Aloud

Have participants turn to page 119 in *Literacy Beginnings* and read about the steps of interactive read-aloud. They will also want to look at the interactive read-aloud framework (Appendix D, Lesson 2, on page 336) for reference.

Ask participants to plan an interactive read-aloud session using the text that they analyzed earlier.

To help them select goals to teach for and support, remind participants to look at the Interactive Read-Aloud and Literature Discussion continuum for their grade level.

Suggest that participants refer to Figure 11.4, “Book Activities,” on page 122 to help them think about related book activities they might plan.

When participants are finished, select a few of them to share their read-aloud plans with the entire group.

## Exploring Text Sets

Explain to participants that in addition to planning opening remarks and stopping points to foster intentional conversation, teachers will also want to think about organizing some of the texts they read into “text sets.” Text sets are groups of books placed together in an intentional sequence. They allow teachers and children to explore specific themes of interest. Text sets may be arranged in a variety of ways including by genre, theme, topic, or author.

Give participants a few minutes to peruse the suggested text sets listed in Appendix B on page 272. They might also browse the list of books in Appendix E (pages 383–400).

## Observing and Assessing Reading Behaviors

Share with participants that observation is the best way to assess young children’s growth in understanding reading behaviors. Observation and assessment (both formal and informal) should be ongoing. The best way to note what a child understands is to observe and talk with the child and listen to what she says. Remind participants to use the Interactive Read-Aloud and Literature Discussion continuum as a guide for what to look for, remembering that the goals described are for children just prior to entering kindergarten.

Next, direct participants to review the section “Interactive Read-Aloud” on page 209 in *Literacy Beginnings*. Have them review the set of eight questions teachers might use to systematically assess children’s understanding of texts as they move through the prekindergarten year.

## **Wrap-up of the Session**

Ask participants to turn to “Key Understandings to Think About” for Chapter 11 on page 124. After reviewing the understandings, ask participants to jot down a few things they will want to remember and try out from today’s session.

## MODULE 8

# *Using Shared and Independent Reading to Develop Early Reading Behaviors*

(Chapters 12, 13, and 22, Appendix A, and Lessons 1 and 10 in Appendix D)

***Estimated Time: Approximately 1 hour***

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Shared reading is a way to help young children begin to see themselves as readers. Through shared reading, children experience many aspects of the reading process before they can read. This module defines *shared reading* and explains how teachers can use it to teach early reading behaviors. Participants will also consider how to select appropriate texts for shared reading and learn about the routines of the instructional approach. The module ends with consideration of how to assess children's understanding of the reading process during shared reading.

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### **Materials to Gather Before the Session**

- DVD or videotape of a shared reading lesson (if available, the shared reading DVD from *The Continuum of Literacy Learning Teaching Library*)
- Big books; enlarged poems, rhymes, and songs; texts produced through interactive and shared writing (optional)

### **Getting Started**

Start the session by viewing a video of a shared reading session with a group of children. You might show a video of your own teaching, or you may prefer to show the prekindergarten (*Spots, Feathers, and Curly Tails*) or kindergarten (*Here Are My Eyes*) shared reading DVD clips from *The Continuum of Literacy Learning Teaching Library*. There is also an example of shared reading on the video DVD from Fountas & Pinnell's *Teaching for Comprehending and Fluency, K-8: Thinking, Talking, and Writing About Reading* that you may choose to use.

Ask participants to observe closely and to think about the text that is being used. Assign half of the participants to take notes on what the teacher says and does. The other half of the participants should take notes on what the children say and do.

After viewing the video, have participants share their observations and debrief.

You may choose to have participants compare and contrast shared reading with interactive read-aloud using a Venn diagram or other graphic organizer. Ask participants to think about how the instructional approaches are both alike and different. Discuss their thinking.

## Learning the Routines of Shared Reading

Ask participants to read over the shared reading instructional frame in Appendix D, Lesson 1, on page 334 in *Literacy Beginnings*. Also refer them to Figure 12.1, “Shared Reading Routines,” on page 127 and Figure 12.2, “Steps for Shared Reading of Poems,” on page 128. Ask participants to relate these reading routines to what they observed earlier in the video.

If time permits, direct participants to Appendix D, Lesson 10 (page 348), to explore the framework for constructing a class big book of songs and poems.

## Selecting Texts for Shared Reading

Next, consider the ten text characteristics in relation to selecting texts for shared reading. Have participants read over the bulleted list of examples of text considerations on page 126, and also have them refer to the text characteristics specified in the Shared and Performance Reading continuum on page 235. Note that teachers will want to evaluate the items under “Book and Print Features” carefully when selecting texts for shared reading.

If time permits, have teachers look at a variety of texts to evaluate them for use during shared reading. Sometimes it is helpful for teachers to see some big books that are good for shared reading and some that are more like oversized read-alouds so that they understand the difference.

Next, point out to participants that Appendix A contains a variety of nursery rhymes, songs, and poems to consider using for shared reading.

## Developing Early Reading Behaviors: Using Precise Language During Shared Reading

Ask all participants to skim the introduction to Chapter 13 on pages 131–32 in *Literacy Beginnings*.

Have participants jigsaw read the remaining sections of the chapter: “Reading Left to Right/Returning to Left”; “Establishing Voice-Print Match”; “Monitoring Voice-Print Match”; and “Learning How Print Works.” Then, invite participants to share. Remind them to include the suggested language to support emergent readers that is provided in the text.

Conclude this section of the module by asking, “How will this chapter help you think more carefully about your teaching of language?” Encourage participants to discuss the importance of recognizing the particular meanings of *teaching*, *prompting*, and *reinforcing*.

## Assessing Student Understanding During Shared Reading

Have participants turn to the suggestions for observing a child’s reading behaviors during shared reading (page 209) and during independent reading (page 210). Remind participants that these are reading behaviors that you may expect to see after the child has had many shared reading experiences. It is suggested that these observations be performed three or four times a year. They will help teachers plan for instruction and allow them to be very specific when discussing children’s literacy learning with parents and guardians.

## Wrap-up of the Session

Have participants turn to the nine tips listed under “Making Shared Reading Successful” on page 129 in *Literacy Beginnings*. Ask them to read through the list and then to set goals for how they will use shared reading with children in their classrooms. What will they want to remember and implement from this session?

## MODULE 9

# *Understanding Early Writing Behaviors to Connect Early Writing and Reading*

(Chapters 15 and 18)

*Estimated Time: Approximately 1 hour*

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The purpose of this module is to help teachers think about how writing and reading are closely connected processes. Participants will also gain an understanding of how children's early attempts at writing help children learn about literacy and show teachers what they are noticing and learning.

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### **Materials to Gather Before the Session**

- Writing samples (optional)

### **Getting Started**

Begin this session by sharing the following thoughts from Marie Clay in *How Very Young Children Explore Writing* (page 10):

- Young children do not know many concepts about writing when they first try to write.
- Each step forward takes great effort.
- They begin by working at scribbling and making marks with some sort of writing tool on any paper given.
- Before long children seem to do, or understand, one or two of the following:
  - They scribble.
  - They find a shape in the scribble and repeat it over and over.
  - They vary the size and shape of their marks.
  - A letter appears and is repeated.
  - Some letters have a "right side up," but some letters don't.
  - You can say, or name, a letter.
  - Letters can make a pattern.
  - People call the patterns words.
  - The order of marks in the pattern is important.

- You can find words in your “talk,” too.
- The order of words in the message is important.

Ask participants to think about the children in their own classrooms in relation to the understandings about writing on this list. Which do they notice children doing and/or understanding? If time permits, ask participants to talk about the kinds of opportunities that children currently have to explore and learn about writing in their classrooms.

## Early Writing Behaviors

Now, ask participants to work in groups of four to jigsaw read on pages 149–50 about four important principles of writing (*recurring, directional, inventory, and contrastive*) that pertain to prekindergartners. After reading, participants can share the big ideas of the principle they read about with the group.

If possible, gather a variety of writing samples from students in your school building that demonstrate each of these four principles in action. Ask teachers to look for and identify the different principles as evidenced in the children’s writing.

If you do not have writing samples available, use the following examples from pages 149–52 in *Literacy Beginnings*:

- Matthew’s approximations of the letters in his name, Figure 15.1
- Elizabeth’s writing, Figure 15.2
- Anthony’s drawing and name, Figure 15.3
- All the words Ashley knows, Figure 15.4
- Ashley’s M & Ms and Skittles pages, Figure 15.5
- Matthew’s response to his mother’s note, Figure 15.6
- Elliott’s thank-you note, Figure 15.7
- Iris’ note to the Tooth Fairy, Figure 15.8

Ask participants to discuss how the four principles play themselves out in these examples.

## Twelve Early Writing Competencies

Now, explain that you will turn participants’ attention toward twelve elements of writing in which children will need to develop proficiency eventually. Please emphasize that not all prekindergartners will develop proficiency across all twelve elements.

Ask participants in groups of four, to divide the twelve elements within each group. Each person should skim his three elements and share the big ideas mentioned in each.

Then, ask participants to look through the children’s writing samples featured on colored pages M–P (between pages 226 and 227) of *Literacy Beginnings* to find examples that demonstrate understanding of the early writing competencies that they read about.



## **The Reading-Writing Connection**

Next, invite participants to think about how writing and reading are closely connected processes. Talk together about how readers have to recognize letters and words and reconstruct the language and meaning that the writer intended. Conversely, writers have to compose ideas and then map them out in written language to make their meanings clear to readers. For young children, learning in one area helps learning in the other.

Mention to participants that in the next module, you will focus on how teachers can demonstrate and involve children in the writing process through shared and interactive writing.

## **Wrap-up of the Session**

Spend the last portion of the session having participants read the section “The Contribution of Writing to Reading” on page 180. Ask participants to discuss how the reading and writing connections and competencies are being (or will be) fostered in their classrooms.

If time permits, have the group brainstorm a list of potential ways to support writing for real-life purposes in the classroom.

## MODULE 10

# *Teaching That Supports Early Writing Behaviors: Using Shared Writing, Interactive Writing, and Bookmaking*

(Chapters 16, 17, and 23, and Lesson 11 in Appendix D)

*Estimated Time: Approximately 2–2½ hour*

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This module focuses on how the use of shared writing and interactive writing, along with independent writing and drawing, can provide children with opportunities to try things out as writers. All aspects of writing can be demonstrated through shared writing and interactive writing. As children experience writing with this high level of support, they will want to start writing for themselves.

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This module will explore how prekindergarten children can do a great deal of drawing and talking about their lives and about their reading. Also, the module will look at how bookmaking is an important activity for young children, as well as how specific teacher language can support young writers as they expand their knowledge about writing during independent writing, shared writing, and interactive writing.

### **Materials to Gather Before the Session**

- Video clip(s) of a shared or interactive writing lesson, either your own or one from *The Continuum of Literacy Learning Teaching Library, PreK–2*
- Video clips of individual children drawing and writing independently (if possible, with copies of the child's drawing/writing sample for participants)
- One or two read-aloud texts that participants typically use with their students (provided by participants)

### **Getting Started**

Begin by asking participants to reflect on the kinds of writing that are currently supported in their classrooms. Have them look at their daily schedules to ask themselves the following questions:

- In what kinds of writing do children participate during the course of a week?
- How often do the children participate in these different types of writing experiences?

Discuss together the importance of providing a variety of daily writing opportunities in the prekindergarten classroom. Share with participants that most writing for prekindergartners is generated through very simple shared or interactive writing or independent drawing and writing. Children should be exposed to a variety of genres and forms, including narrative, informational, poetic, and functional writing.

## Exploring Shared Writing and Interactive Writing

You will want to provide a brief overview of the processes of shared writing and interactive writing, noting the benefits of these activities. Use the group's familiarity with these two kinds of writing to determine how much time you will need to discuss them. If participants have had little prior experience with shared writing and interactive writing, you may choose to have them read the section "Shared and Interactive Writing" on pages 156–59. This reading could be done at the beginning of the session or as homework in preparation for this module.

## Viewing a Shared Writing or Interactive Writing Lesson

Before they view the lesson, ask participants to turn to the Writing continuum for either preK or kindergarten and to look at the material under "Selecting Purpose and Genre." Have them scan the bullets for the genre featured in the video lesson before viewing that teaching segment.

Next, ask participants to scan the bullets under the headings "Craft," "Conventions," and "Writing Process" to consider potential writing behaviors and understandings that the teacher may support or teach throughout the lesson.

You will also want to have participants familiarize themselves with the organization of the Phonics, Spelling, and Word Study continuum if they have not done so in previous professional development sessions. Participants will observe the integration of this continuum throughout the shared writing or interactive writing teaching segment.

Divide participants into two groups.

- Ask one group to record behaviors of the children and specific actions of the teacher that relate to the writing continuum.
  - What do the children seem to understand about writing?
  - What is the teacher conveying to them about writing through this interactive writing lesson?
- The other group should record behaviors of the children and specific actions of the teacher that relate to children's understanding of phonics, spelling, and word study concepts.
  - What do the children seem to understand about the different areas of the Phonics, Spelling, and Word Study continuum?
  - How is the teacher supporting or explicitly teaching for these behaviors and understandings?

## Using Language to Support Early Writing Behaviors

Review Figure 17.1 on page 171 to help participants think about the different levels of support that teachers may provide to children through three teaching interactions—teaching, prompting, and reinforcing. Then, have participants think back to what they observed in the video clip. Discuss specific examples when they observed the teacher teaching, prompting, or reinforcing. If necessary, you may wish to watch the video clip again or to provide another clip to watch for this activity.

Tell participants that Chapter 17 provides many helpful examples of language that will support children in developing understandings of how writing “works.”

Divide participants into seven groups.

- Invite each group to read one of the seven sections on pages 171–73 and discuss the big ideas.
- You may want to ask each group to chart its section’s big ideas, as well as samples of helpful language for teachers.
- Have each group share.

## The Value of Bookmaking in the Prekindergarten Classroom

Talk to participants about how prekindergarten children need opportunities to make books. Making books has great potential for helping children to become writers. Emphasize that the term *making books* is very important, because young children often think making books is much more doable than writing books.

Share the following quote from Katie Wood Ray and Matt Glover’s book *Already Ready: Nurturing Writers in Prekindergarten and Kindergarten*, reprinted on page 163 of *Literacy Beginnings*:

Children who make picture books are engaging in complex thinking about writing as a process.

Ask participants to review “Bookmaking” (Appendix D, Lesson 11) on pages 349–50. Then, have them read through the suggestions for implementing bookmaking in prekindergarten on pages 164–68. If some participants already use bookmaking in their classrooms, ask them to share ideas that have been helpful for them.

Next, ask participants to record some goals for themselves around bookmaking. What will they need to do to get started with bookmaking, or what might they need to do to enhance the bookmaking that is already occurring in their classrooms?

If possible, show the lesson on bookmaking included on the writing workshop DVD in *The Continuum of Literacy Learning Teaching Library, PreK–2*.

## Observing and Analyzing Children’s Early Writing Behaviors

Point out that Chapter 23 begins with a quote from Katie Wood Ray:

The main assessment question that guides us is, “What does this piece of writing show me the child knows about writing?”

Discuss with participants how young children’s writing samples by themselves frequently don’t reveal all of the thinking children are doing as they write. We have to watch young writers produce their early writing attempts in order to assess all that they understand about writing and the writing process.

- Ask participants to turn to pages 213 and 214 in *Literacy Beginnings*. Have them read over Figures 23.2 and 23.3 and think about the evidence of learning that they might observe while watching young children draw and write.

- Distribute the writing samples featured in the video clip of a young child drawing and writing and/or making a book. Ask participants to analyze the writing samples, using applicable questions from “Observing a Child Drawing and Writing Independently” and “Observing a Child Make a Book,” and to record their thinking.
- Next, view the video clip. Again, participants should use either Figure 23.2 or 23.3 as a guide for their observations. Ask them to record their observations.
- After viewing the video clip, discuss what evidence of literacy learning participants noticed. Finally, ask participants to look in the Writing continuum and to think about what behaviors and understandings the child might need to learn next in relation to purpose, genre, craft, conventions, and the writing process.

## Using Mentor Texts to Write About Reading

Ask participants to skim the section “Using Mentor Texts to Help Children Draw and Write” on page 174. Discuss the big ideas of this section together. Be sure to have participants consider the implications of these big ideas on their own literacy instruction with young children.

Ask participants to use the Writing About Reading continuum and the read-aloud text that they brought to the session to plan a possible shared writing or interactive writing experience for their students. Participants should select a possible genre and form for the writing and goal(s) to notice, teach, and support.

As time permits, ask participants to share their thinking.

## Wrap-up of the Session

End this module by asking participants to select one goal for using shared writing or interactive writing and one goal for supporting independent drawing and writing with children in their classrooms. Schedule a follow-up meeting to discuss the results, or spend a few minutes at the beginning of your next professional development session to check in with one another about how things are going with the determined goals.

## MODULE 11

# *Phonemic Awareness and Phonics: The Sounds of Language*

(Chapters 8 and 24 and Appendices A, D, and E)

*Estimated Time: Approximately 1 hour*

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The purpose of this module is to help teachers think about teaching phonemic awareness to help children notice and play with the sounds in words. This module will review several key terms that are associated with children’s early understandings about the sounds of language. They are important for teachers to understand. The module will explore a variety of ways to help children become aware of the sounds of language in the classroom. The goal is to keep the learning playful and enjoyable during reading, writing, and oral language activities.

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### **Materials to Gather Before the Session**

- Index cards with key terms and definitions (one term or definition per card) for word-matching activity
- Collection of books that support language and word play
- Collection of poetry books suitable for prekindergarten and kindergarten
- Picture cards for activities described on pages 92–95, including those for clapping syllables and picture sorting. You will also want to provide some picture cards that begin with the same sound.

### **Getting Started**

Begin this session by sharing the Marie Clay quote that is featured at the beginning of Chapter 8:

Phonemic awareness is necessary for success in learning to read and write.

Explain that this module will help participants explore many ways to actively engage children in learning about the sounds of language. Let participants know that there are several key terms that are associated with children’s early understandings of the sounds of language—and that it is easy to confuse them. Explain that they can review these terms together by playing a quick game.

Distribute an index card to each participant that contains one of the following terms or its definition. The definitions can be found on page 90 of *Literacy Beginnings*.

- phoneme
- phonemic awareness
- phonological awareness
- alphabetic principle
- phonics
- onset
- rime
- blending
- segmenting
- manipulating

Check to make sure that participants have matched each term to its definition correctly.

## Understanding Phonological Awareness

Ask participants to look at the goals for phonological awareness in the Phonics, Spelling, and Word Study continuum for prekindergarten or kindergarten. Which behaviors and understandings do they currently notice, teach, and support with children? Discuss.

Next, ask them to share how they currently support children in taking on these goals.

After participants discuss how they support phonological awareness, share the following list of ways that children may become aware of the sounds of language:

- books that contain language and word play
- rhymes
- songs, chants
- poems
- tongue twisters
- clapping syllables
- picture sorting
- shared reading
- interactive writing
- oral games

Let participants know that they will be spending most of this session actively exploring these ways of helping children become aware of the sounds of language.

**Phonemes**

**Phonemic awareness**

**Phonological awareness**

**Alphabetic principle**

**Phonics**



The individual sound you can hear in words. For example, *cat* and *like* both have three sounds. You can hear them in sequence if you say the word slowly.

The ability to hear the individual phonemes (sounds) in words.

The ability to hear syllables, rhymes, and individual sounds. Phonemic awareness is part of phonological awareness.

Understanding that letters in written words represent sounds in oral language.

Knowing letter-sound relationships, or the sounds represented by the symbols.

**Onset and rime**

**Blending**

**Segmenting**

**Manipulating**

These terms refer to parts of words. The onset is the opening or the first part of a word of one syllable (*black, car, pat, cake*). The rime is the rest of the word (*black, car, pat, cake*).

Putting together the sounds (*c-a-t/cat, m-ake/make*).

Saying the individual sounds or parts that form a word (*c-a-t, m-ake*).

Adding or taking away (deleting) a sound in a word (*it/fit, l-ake/ake*).

## Books That Involve Language and Word Play

Gather a collection of books that support language and word play. You may want to reference Appendix E of *Literacy Beginnings* (pages 383–400) as well as your own collection. Give participants time to select a few texts and read through them. Then, ask them to consider the following questions and ideas and be prepared to share their thinking.

- How might you use this text in your classroom?
- What parts would children be invited to join in on?

Select goals for this read-aloud from the Phonics, Spelling, and Word Study continuum and the Oral, Visual, and Technological Communication continuum to select goals to help children learn more about the sounds of language.

You may want to have participants chart their thinking. The charts could be combined into a list to be distributed to teachers for future use.

Now, have participants consider some poems, chants, rhymes, or songs that they might use with children in their classrooms. Ask them to read through some of the poetry books provided as well as the material in Appendix A, pages 251–71.

Give the following directions to participants:

- Choose a poem, song, chant, or rhyme that you might use in your classroom.
- Discuss these questions:
  - Will you have a chart to display the text, or will you orally teach the children the text? Why?
  - Are there specific parts for which the children will join in, or will they learn the entire text?
  - How will you help the children think about the meaning of the poem, song, chant, or rhyme?
- Look at the goals listed in the Phonics, Spelling, and Word Study continuum and in the Oral, Visual, and Technological Communication continuum. How will this experience with a poem, song, chant, or rhyme support children in learning more about language?

## Role-Playing Oral Games

Ask participants to review the activities and games on pages 92–95 of *Literacy Beginnings*. Also have them look at the lesson frames for Oral Games and Phonemes and for Picture Sort on pages 355–57.

After participants have had a chance to review the pages, have them select one or two activities that they would like to try with children in their classrooms. Ask them to be prepared to explain why they selected the activities.

Next, ask them to look at the Phonics, Spelling, and Word Study continuum and the Oral, Visual, and Technological Communication continuum. Encourage teachers to explain how each activity will support children in learning more about language.

Participants should then plan how they will introduce the activity or game to children in their classrooms. Ask them to jot down the specific language that they will use.

Finally, participants role-play their activity at table groups.

Debrief the experience as a whole group.

## **Observing for Evidence of Sound, Letter, and Word Knowledge**

Ask participants to read the opening paragraph of Chapter 24 and “Assessing Awareness of Sounds” on pages 216–17. Emphasize that though teachers should not expect complete knowledge of sounds by the end of prekindergarten, it is valuable for teachers to know how each child’s literacy knowledge is growing.

Next, ask participants to read through Figure 24.1, “Evidence of Sound Awareness,” on page 217. Ask them to think about which of these behaviors they see children able to demonstrate. You may also want to discuss whether there are any additional understandings about sound awareness that they feel are important for their prekindergartners or kindergartners.

## **Wrap-up of the Session**

Share this quote from Resnick and Snow’s *Speaking and Listening for Preschool Through Third Grade* (2008):

Literacy begins not with reading and writing, but with young children’s earliest attempts to make sense of and experiment with spoken words.

Have participants jot down one or two ways in which they will engage children in learning about the sounds of language.

## **Assignment**

If your next professional development session will focus on Module 12, “Learning About Sounds, Letters, and Words,” ask participants to read the introduction to Chapter 19 and the sections “Learning to Look at Letters” and “Letter Learning” on pages 184–86 in preparation for the session.

## MODULE 12

### *Learning About Sounds, Letters, and Words*

(Chapters 19, 21, and 24 and Lessons 7, 8, and 23–29 in Appendix D)

***Estimated Time: Approximately 1½ hours***

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This module focuses on how letter learning is an essential part of the process of becoming literate, and it provides teachers with many practical ways to best support children in learning about sounds, letters, and words. Chapter 19 in *Literacy Beginnings* helps us think about how children need to see letters in many different contexts and how children need specific instruction on learning how to look at letters. Through a wide variety of authentic literacy experiences, children will see letters in meaningful places every day.

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#### **Materials to Gather Before the Session**

Materials to support exploration of the various lesson frames for learning about letters may include:

- Magnetic and/or foam letters
- Example of a letter chart
- Collection of alphabet books
- Samples of letter books
- Letter cards
- Follow the Path game
- Lotto game

#### **Getting Started**

Begin the session by asking participants to review “Key Understandings to Think About” on page 193.

If participants have read pages 184–86 in preparation for this session, begin a discussion of the reading with the following prompts. If you were not able to assign the reading ahead of this session, provide ample time for participants to read the section thoroughly.

- Talk about ideas that were new learning for you or that affirmed previous understandings.
- Share any ideas that are causing you uncertainty at this time.

The idea of *not* teaching a letter a week may be very new thinking for some participants. Be sure to have a supportive and thoughtful discussion on how this teaching practice has severe limitations, using the text as a guide. Let participants know that they will be exploring a variety of ways to help

children learn about letters in more authentic and meaningful ways.

Also, remind participants that children will be learning a great deal about letters and words during shared reading and shared and interactive writing. These activities help children notice and use letters that are embedded in meaningful text.

## Supporting Children as They Learn About Letters

Tell participants that there are many practical and engaging ways to help children learn about letters included in *Literacy Beginnings*. Let them know that you are going to provide them with time to explore several of the activities. Then, invite them to review the following material:

- “Tactile Experiences with Letters,” “Letter Charts,” “Alphabet Books,” and “Letter Books” on pages 186–90
- Lesson frames for Lessons 7 and 8 (pages 343–45) and for Lessons 23–29 (pages 368–75)
- “Card and Board Games” on pages 202–4

You may choose to set up the different lesson frames and activities as learning stations. If possible, provide examples of the different materials, games, and activities.

After taking some time to review the wide variety of experiences, participants should choose one or two of the lesson frames or activities to examine in depth. Participants should consider the following questions:

- Why is this activity appropriate for children in my classroom at this point in time?
- What will children learn about letters? What new understandings will they learn about reading? About writing?
- Will I need to modify this lesson in any way for children?

Encourage participants to refer to the Phonics, Spelling, and Word Study continuum, the Shared and Performance Reading continuum, and the Writing continuum to select goals.

Provide time for participants to share the activities and lesson frames they have explored. You may choose to have them share in pairs, table groups, or with the whole group depending on your time limitations.

## Supporting Children as They Learn About Words

Discuss the following ideas with participants about word learning:

- Learning about words can happen naturally as children experience shared writing and interactive writing and as they expand their language through stories.
- Working on words in isolation before kindergarten is not recommended.
- Prekindergartners will often begin to notice words in the environmental print around them.
- If children are immersed in literacy, they will inevitably begin to take on some new words.
- Children will want to learn their own names as well as those of friends and family members.

- Children will notice words (such as *go*, *no*, *can*, *like*, and *the*) that appear often in their reading or writing.

## Helping Children Notice Words

Ask participants to review the suggestions for helping children notice and locate words on page 192 in *Literacy Beginnings*. Ask them to discuss when and how they might use the suggested language.

If *The Fountas & Pinnell Prompting Guide Part 1* is available to participants, you may choose to ask them to locate language that will help them teach, prompt, and/or reinforce children's attempts to locate words in text.

## Assessing Awareness of Sounds and Letters

Review the questions provided in Figure 24.2 on page 217 to help participants think about the letter learning of children. Ask participants to think about and discuss how they might use these questions to assess children's literacy learning and to share the information with parents and guardians.

Also ask participants to review the questions under "Evidence of Word Understanding" in Figure 24.3. When and how might they use these questions for observational purposes?

## Wrap-up of the Session

Ask participants to jot down the ways that their teaching of learning about sounds, letters, and words will change as a result of this professional development session. Ask participants to share if time allows.



## MODULE 13

# *Using Names to Learn About Sounds, Letters, and Words*

(Chapter 20 and Lessons 30–34 in Appendix D)

*Estimated Time: Approximately 1–1½ hours*

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The most important word to a young child is most likely his own name. This module will explore many different ways to use children’s names in the classroom to help them learn about print.

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### **Materials to Gather Before the Session**

- Name puzzles for each participant that feature symbols in place of the actual letters in their names (directions below under “Name Puzzles”)
- *The Continuum of Literacy Learning Teaching Library* Phonics, Spelling, and Word Study DVD
- Sample name chart using the first names of participants in your group

### **Getting Started**

Start the session by sharing this quote from page 12 of Fountas & Pinnell’s *Guided Reading: Good First Teaching for All Children*:

The most important word a child learns is likely to be her name.  
(M. Adams 1990; M. M. Clay 1991a)

Tell participants that this session will focus on Chapter 20 of *Literacy Beginnings* and how we can use children’s names in the classroom to help them learn about print. Explain that you will be sharing several ways to use children’s names as well as discussing how children may start to use their names as resources to learn more about literacy.

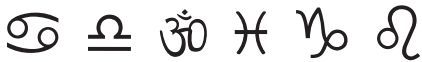
Ask participants to begin today’s work together by sharing the different places in their classrooms where one would see children’s names being used or displayed. Chart those places as participants share.

Next, ask the group to share some of the ways in which they have used children’s names to teach children about print, and chart this list of ideas. Explain to participants that this is meant to be a quick brainstorming session to create a list of ways in which they are currently using names. They will have time later in the session to share specific details with one another regarding any ideas that might be valuable to their peers.

## Name Puzzles

Tell the group that name puzzles are one way to help children use their own names to learn about letters. In order for the group to experience what it is like for a young child to begin to recognize and learn her own name, provide each participant with her own name puzzle.

Create a name puzzle for each participant by following the directions on page 379 of *Literacy Beginnings*, using symbols that will be hard for participants to remember in place of the actual letters in their names. You may choose to copy those below or create your own. The point is for participants to understand how challenging it can be for young children to place letters in sequence.



Provide the following directions to the participants:

1. Open your name envelope.
2. Build your name from left to write by matching what is on the envelope.
3. Check your name, letter by letter.
4. Study your name. Build it from memory.
5. Independently, jot down:
  - Your thoughts on this experience
  - What children learn from working with name puzzles

Have them share their reactions to this experience and what children might learn.

If the phonics, spelling, and word study DVD from *The Continuum of Literacy Learning Teaching Library* is available, show participants a video clip of children working with their name puzzles. (You may choose to show one of your own videos.) After this viewing, discuss what the children were learning from working with the name puzzles. Also talk about what the teacher was learning about the children's understandings.

Be sure to point out that specific directions for making and using name puzzles are included on pages 198–99 and 379 of *Literacy Beginnings*.

## Name Charts

Ask participants to review the information about name charts on pages 195–96 and page 377. After they have done so, ask teachers to talk about how they might begin or expand their use of name charts in the classroom. Be sure to talk together about how the teacher in the video clip linked the name chart to what her children knew about letters from their working with their names during interactive writing.

If possible, share a video clip that shows a name chart being used in the classroom. Be sure to provide time for teachers to share ways in which they have successfully used name charts in their classrooms.

Use the name chart you created using the group members' first names. Ask participants to think about what they notice about their names and what we can learn about words from our names. Participants will notice a wide variety of things ranging from how many names begin with particular first letters to various spelling patterns and letter sounds. Then, discuss how a similar experience would be valuable for prekindergartners and kindergartners.

## Learning About Print from Names

Discuss how there are many concepts about print and literacy that children can learn through the use of their names. Ask participants to turn to page 195 and read through the list of ways that children may begin to use their names as a resource.

Next, ask participants to think about additional concepts that children may learn from their names. Participants should refer to the Phonics, Spelling, and Word Study continuum to support their thinking.

To give participants an opportunity to discover other ways that names can be used to help children learn about print, have them form groups to explore these sections of Chapter 20 and lessons in Appendix D:

- "Poems and Children's Names" (page 197) and "Name Poems" (page 378)
- "Simple Sentences About Children's Lives" (page 198)
- "Cut-Up Sentences with Children's Names" (page 198)
- "Tissue Paper Names" (page 376)
- "Making Names Using Tactile Materials" (page 380)

Tell participants that each group should read through the description of the activity or experience. Then, they should be able to share and discuss their responses to the following questions:

- What literacy concepts might children learn from this experience?
- How will you introduce this experience to children?
- How might you modify this experience for the children in your classroom?

If time is limited, you may choose to let participants read through the various experiences and discuss with a partner instead of working in small groups.

## Wrap-up of the Session

Revisit the chart that lists the ways in which participants use names in the classroom. If anyone has additional ideas that they could share about how they use names, ask them to do so now.

To conclude the session, ask participants to choose one or two new ways they will use children's names as a resource in their classrooms. You may wish to add these ideas to your chart.

## MODULE 14

# *Engaging Children in Inquiry*

(Chapter 3, Appendix C, and Lesson 35 in Appendix D)

*Estimated Time: Approximately 1 hour*

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This module will look at how teachers can promote constructive learning through inquiry. Teaching young children ways to “learn how to learn” is key in prekindergarten and kindergarten classrooms. As young children develop the processes of learning constructively, they are expanding the capability of their brains.

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This module will discuss the meaning of teaching through inquiry, including how teachers can provide many opportunities for constructive learning in the classroom. The module will also explore the inquiry project frame and the variety of suggested inquiry projects that are included in Appendix C.

### **Materials to Gather Before the Session**

- Inquiry Project Plan Sheet (provided in module)

### **Getting Started**

Start this session by having participants think about their classroom environments. Invite them to draw a map or to imagine a mental sketch of their classrooms. Then, ask them to place an X in all of the areas of the classroom where they see children excited to learn—locations where children are engaged in activities in which they construct meaning for themselves.

Make the point that learning is not simply transferring knowledge from one person to another. Let participants know that Chapter 3 of *Literacy Beginnings* and this module focus on the following ideas and goals:

- Construction is at the heart of meaningful learning.
- Children must learn how to learn.
- School should be perceived as a place for exploration and discovery.
- Young children should have opportunities to represent their constructed understandings through talk, drawing, and emergent writing.

Then, have participants read “Engaging the Learner in Constructing Knowledge” on page 36. Talk together about what the authors mean by saying that “language is a self-extending system.” Discuss how learning language helps children learn how to learn.

## Defining and Exploring Inquiry

Together, brainstorm a list of what participants think of when they hear the word inquiry. You may want to chart the list of responses or use an online tool (such as Wordle™ at [wordle.net](http://wordle.net)) to make a word map of their responses. Compare their responses to some of the following ideas about inquiry presented in *Literacy Beginnings*:

- Seeking to learn by asking
- Seeking information by questioning
- “A kind of focused play you do when pursuing a topic of interest” (pg. 37)
- “To seek information and wonder more, trying to understand, yet keeping possibilities open” (pg. 37)

Explain to participants that they will soon explore how children can experience constructive learning through inquiry when teachers set up focused study projects to guide them in this process.

Have participants read the section “Two Types of Inquiry” from page 37 through the first paragraph on page 39. Discuss together how information seeking and wondering are similar and how they are different. Point out to participants that they are interrelated and that one may lead to the other.

Ask participants to review Figure 3.2, “Inquiry Process” (page 37), and Figure 3.4, “Inquiry” (page 39). Invite participants to describe some of their own experiences with inquiry—both inside and outside the classroom. Explain that *Literacy Beginnings* will help them think about how they might structure the learning in their classroom to help children engage in inquiry.

Next, have participants turn to Lesson 35 in Appendix D (page 381) and look over a framework for beginning an inquiry project with children.

Then, explain that teachers can use the following lesson plan framework to plan an inquiry project.

## Planning An Inquiry Project

Have participants work together in pairs. Direct them to think about a possible topic or question for an inquiry project that would appeal to children in their classrooms.

Invite participants to look through a range of possible inquiry topics in Appendix C of *Literacy Beginnings* (pages 289–332).

Using the Inquiry Project Plan Sheet provided below, participants can begin to prepare for an inquiry project.

If possible, provide participants with access to the Internet to find online resources that would link to the inquiry project and additional book titles that would be helpful. Participants may want to use a search engine to find “virtual field trips.” Point out that many museums, zoos, and aquariums also provide virtual field trips or live webcams that link to their offerings.

## Inquiry Project Plan Sheet

What object(s) will invite children to notice and wonder?

What question, problem, or topic will interest children?

How will children explore and investigate this question, problem, or topic?

What resources can children use during inquiry?

- Books:
  
- Magazines:
  
- Websites:
  
- Field Trips:
  
- Guest Speakers/Experts:
  
- Other Materials:

What literacy activities will help children share what they learn?

After participants have had an adequate amount of time to explore and plan, provide time to share. This may be done by having pairs share what they have discovered, or by asking a few pairs to share their plans with the whole group.

### **Wrap-up of the Session**

Ask participants to scan the bulleted list of suggestions for making the most of inquiry projects on page 289.

Next, have participants share one thing that they will try to apply to their own teaching from today's session on inquiry.

## MODULE 15

# *Systematic Assessment: An End-of-Prekindergarten Checkup*

(Chapter 25 and Appendices L, M, and N)

***Estimated Time: Approximately 1 hour***

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Chapter 25 provides a few simple systematic assessments that teachers and schools may use to document children’s growth in literacy learning at the end of prekindergarten. The assessments also provide kindergarten teachers with some specific information on each child that will help them continue to build on each child’s literacy learning. Any strengths or partial understandings noted on the assessments give kindergarten teachers a place to start.

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Please emphasize that the amount of knowledge that children acquire is less important than the development of joyful, confident children who have had satisfying, exciting experiences with literacy learning in prekindergarten.

This module will acquaint participants with the four suggested end-of-year formal assessments and suggestions for collecting drawing and writing samples.

### **Materials to Gather Before the Session**

- A videotape of yourself or a colleague who is experienced with the formal assessments administering the four assessments to a child (optional)
- Copies of Letter Recognition Sheet (Appendix L), Initial Sounds Picture Cards (Appendix M), and Rhyming Cards (Appendix N) on cardstock for each participant
- Assessment forms included with this module, two per participant
- Folder and/or plastic bags for each participant to store assessment materials (optional)
- Scissors for each participant
- Blank paper for the Concepts About Print Interview and the Word Writing Assessment

### **Getting Started**

Start with this quote from Marie Clay:

Teachers have to observe closely, holding their own prior assumptions in limbo, and find out where individual children are before embarking on new learning.

Remind participants that the most appropriate way to assess their prekindergartners’ growing lit-



eracy knowledge is through careful observation of and interactions with the children. However, it may be helpful to formally document literacy learning. Chapter 25 offers four formal assessments and suggestions for collecting work samples for use at the end of the prekindergarten year. Let participants know that they will be practicing the administration of these four assessments today.

Ask participants to read the introduction to Chapter 25 on pages 220–21. Then, discuss the big ideas as a whole group.

## Letter Recognition

Invite participants to read the section “Letter Recognition” on page 221, noting especially the directions for administering the Letter Recognition Assessment.

If you have access to a video of this task being administered, show it now. Answer any questions that participants may have.

Distribute the Letter Recognition Sheets and Assessment Forms.

Have participants work in pairs to practice administering the assessment to one another, recording the responses on the Letter Recognition Assessment Form. If possible, you may want to consider arranging to have some older prekindergartners or kindergartners available for participants to practice with.

## Phonological Awareness: Initial Sounds

Ask participants to read the paragraphs under “Phonological Awareness” and “Initial Sounds” on page 222, noting especially the directions for administering the Initial Sounds Assessment. Emphasize that the teacher should select a few pairs of picture cards to use. Children may become overwhelmed if the teacher lays out too many cards at once.

Show the video of this task being administered if you have one. Answer any questions participants may have after viewing the video.

Distribute the Initial Sounds Picture Cards, and have participants cut them apart. Also, hand out the Initial Sounds Assessment Form included with this module.

Have participants work in pairs to practice administering the Initial Sounds Assessment to one another.

## Phonological Awareness: Rhyming Words

Have participants read the section “Rhyming Words” on page 223, noting especially the directions for administering the Rhyming Words Assessment. Remind teachers to follow the procedures below:

1. Show two picture cards that rhyme, say the words, and tell the children, “These words sound the same at the end—*bee/tree*.”
2. Review and tell the names of the pictures to the child.
3. Have the child find two pictures that rhyme.
4. Repeat with a few pairs of pictures from the set.

Again, remind participants that they do not need to use all of the pairs of pictures that rhyme.

If you have made a video of this task being administered, show it to participants. After the viewing, ask participants to share what they noticed.

Distribute the Rhyming Cards, and have participants cut them apart and store them. Also distribute the Rhyming Words Assessment Form.

Have participants work in pairs to practice administering the Rhyming Words Assessment to one another.

## **Concepts About Print Interview**

Let participants know that this assessment may take the most practice to administer successfully. Have them read the directions for administering the Concepts About Print Interview Assessment on page 224. Emphasize that teachers will need to write the sentence with a good amount of space between the words. Also, they should not put a line underneath the child's name when they write it on a piece of paper.

Remind participants to read the sentence once while pointing under the words. Then they should read it a second time.

Show the video of the administration of the Concepts About Print Interview if you have one. After the viewing, ask participants to share what they noticed.

Distribute blank paper and the assessment form for this task.

Have participants work in pairs to practice administering the Concepts About Print Interview Assessment to one another. Discuss together any difficulties or thoughts people may have about administering this task.

## **Word Writing**

Invite participants to read the material under "Word Writing" on pages 224–25, noting especially the directions and rationales for administering the Word Writing Assessment.

During a discussion of this material, draw participants' attention to the specific language a teacher might use with the child, such as "What did you write there?"

Point out that after the child finishes the word writing, the teacher records what his attempts said. Note that this would not be done with the child present.

If you videotaped the administration of this task, share it now with your colleagues.

There is no need for teachers to practice this task. But they may find it helpful to write out the directions on an index card or sheet of paper for future reference.

## **Writing and Drawing Samples**

Have participants read the brief discussion on the collection of writing and drawing samples on page 225. Point out that it is most helpful to collect these samples over a long period of time to document what the child is attending to in writing and to show writing development over time.

## **Wrap-up of the Session**

Have participants read “Key Understandings to Think About” on page 226. Answer any remaining questions that the teachers have.

If appropriate, discuss as a group which assessments you will consider administering to the children in your own prekindergarten classroom at the end of the school year. You may also need to talk about how the information will be shared with kindergarten teachers in the future.

Ask each participant to reflect on how they will organize themselves to administer these assessments.

## **Assignment**

Encourage participants to practice administering the assessments to one or two children near the end of their prekindergarten program.

### Phonological Awareness Assessments

#### Initial Sounds Assessment:

	Matching → or record substitution
b /b/	
h /h/	
d /d/	
m /m/	
c /k/	
f /f/	
l /l/	
p /p/	
<b>Total</b>	

#### Rhyming Words Assessment:

	Scoring → or record substitution
bee/tree	
fish/dish	
fan/van	
box/socks	
star/car	
rose/nose	
pen/hen	
bat/hat	
crown/clown	
ring/swing	
<b>Total</b>	

**Concepts About Print Interview — Individual Record**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

	Prompt/Question	Accurate Response	Check
1	Show me your name.	Points to his/her name.	
2	Show me the first letter in your name.	Points the first letter of the name.	
3	Show me the last letter in your name.	Points to the last letter of the name.	
4	Show me <i>I</i> .	Points to the word <i>I</i> .	
5	Show me the letter <i>s</i> .	Points to a letter <i>s</i> .	
6	Show me the word <i>can</i> .	Points to the word <i>can</i> .	
7	Where do I start reading?	Points to the beginning of the sentence.	
8	What is this? ( <i>Point to a period.</i> )	Child responds with one of the following: <i>period, stop, full stop</i>	
		<b>Total Points</b>	

## Letter Recognition Assessment—**Class Record**

### Uppercase and Lowercase Letter Recognition Assessment—Class Record

Name	Identified 0–10 Uppercase Letters	Identified 11–15 Uppercase Letters	Identified 16–26 Uppercase Letters	Identified 0–10 Lowercase Letters	Identified 11–15 Lowercase Letters	Identified 16–26 Lowercase Letters
1.						
2.						
3.						
4.						
5.						
6.						
7.						
8.						
9.						
10.						
11.						
12.						
13.						
14.						
15.						
16.						
17.						
18.						
19.						
20.						
21.						
22.						
23.						
24.						
25.						
26.						
27.						
28.						

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# Letter Recognition Assessment—Individual Record

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Directions: Use Uppercase and Lowercase Letter Recognition Sheets. Slide a card under each letter and ask the child to read it. Check (✓) accurate responses and note substitutions. Calculate number of letters known (as well as total score). Note unknown letters. Evaluate substitutions to determine features to which children are attending.

Letter	Accurate	Substitution or Confusion
H		
E		
M		
T		
I		
P		
Q		
U		
O		
C		
W		
B		
X		
V		
J		
S		
G		
N		
Y		
K		
Z		
R		
A		
F		
L		
D		
Score		

Letter	Accurate	Substitution or Confusion
h		
e		
m		
t		
i		
p		
q		
u		
o		
c		
w		
b		
x		
v		
j		
s		
g		
n		
y		
k		
z		
r		
a		
f		
l		
d		
Score		

Unknown Letters	Substitutions	Total Score for All Letters

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