

THE PROJECT APPROACH

FOR ALL LEARNERS



A Hands-On Guide

for Inclusive Early
Childhood Classrooms

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Foreword by Susan A. Fowler

The Project Approach for All Learners

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by

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About the Authors

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Dr. Beneke's educational background and research focus on the potential of the Project Approach to support high-quality inclusion in early childhood education. Professor Beneke's interests are inspired by the many years she spent teaching in inclusive classrooms, administering early childhood education programs, providing professional development to teachers in the field, and studying curriculum and instruction as well as special education. She is committed to responsive teaching that engages the interest and motivation of all learners in early childhood settings.

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Throughout her career, Dr. Ostrosky has been involved in research and dissemination on the inclusion of children with disabilities, social-emotional competence, and challenging behavior. Professor Ostrosky is a former editor of *Young Exceptional Children (YEC)* and is the co-editor of several *YEC* monographs. She coauthored *The Making Friends Program: Supporting Acceptance in Your K-2 Classroom* (Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co., 2016), which supports the acceptance of individuals with disabilities.

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Dr. Katz is an international leader in early childhood education who played a major role in bringing project work to the attention of U.S. teachers. She taught at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign for more than 3 decades and directed the ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education (ERIC/EECE) for more than 30 years. Professor Katz has lectured in all 50 states and in 43 countries. Dr. Katz has authored more than 150 publications, and she founded two journals: *Early Childhood Research Quarterly* and *Early Childhood Research & Practice*.

Preface



Some teachers in early childhood classrooms struggle to find ways to engage each and every child in interesting, motivating, and educational ways. When one considers the broad diversity of abilities that might be present in a preschool classroom, the task of engaging every child can be especially daunting. Imagine having students who range in age from 3 to 5 years old, whose home language might not be English, and who have a variety of strengths (including some children who are reading chapter books, some who can speak three languages, and some who have advanced numeracy skills) and weaknesses (including some children who have limited social skills, some who have speech delays, and some who have significant fine and gross motor disabilities). The addition of the Project Approach to early childhood curricula can help achieve the goal of engaging each and every child because, through project work, teachers identify a topic of potentially high interest to their particular group of students and they facilitate an in-depth study of the topic through firsthand investigation and research.

Although teachers may be enthusiastic about using the Project Approach, they sometimes struggle to implement it with fidelity, in part because they are not sure how to do it. In addition, in our research, we found that some teachers did not believe the Project Approach was appropriate for children with disabilities because they thought that it was not structured enough or might not provide enough opportunities for children to work on areas where they lacked skills. We wrote this book to provide a practical tool that will help teachers understand *how* to implement the three phases of the Project Approach. The book also highlights research demonstrating how effective the approach is for children with disabilities and their peers in inclusive classrooms. Finally, it offers strategies for supporting children's successful inclusion in project work.

Each chapter begins with a vignette that cues readers in to the content that is covered in that chapter. Likewise, the chapters include real-life examples of projects that were conducted through the Illinois Early Learning Project. The book features three main projects, the Dog Project, the Garden Project, and the Library Project, each of which is explored through a discussion of their implementation process, samples of their planning tools, and visuals including photographs and children's drawings. Readers can learn more about the projects discussed in this book by visiting the Illinois Early Learning Project web site at <https://illinoisearlylearning.org/resources/pa/projects/>.

To further aid in educators' implementation of the Project Approach, the Implementation Checklist is the centerpiece of the book; it is referenced frequently throughout the book as readers come to understand its purpose and how to use it. Readers are also provided with concrete examples of how other early childhood teachers have used the checklist in their search to become skillful Project Approach implementers. The content of Chapters 3, 4, and 5 parallels the items on the checklist. Appendix A includes completed Implementation Checklists for the Dog Project, the Garden Project, and the Library Project. Educators can use these samples to guide their own use of the implementation tool.

Appendix B features training activities and discussion questions to further support educators' understanding of project work and their ability to implement it in their own classrooms. The sets of activities are aligned with the chapter content and might be implemented by educators with their peers, by an administrator, by a group of educators, or by a trainer

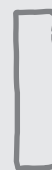


in a professional development session. Finally, the book's online resources include downloadable forms, PowerPoints, and video examples. The videos, which are referenced throughout the book, illustrate strategies being implemented by a real teacher in the classroom and serve to bring key concepts to life. References to videos are called out in the text by a "play" icon, which also appears next to this paragraph.

Each coauthor brings a unique perspective to this book. Lilian Katz has been a champion of emergent curriculum for young children throughout her career. *Engaging Children's Minds: The Project Approach* (Katz & Chard, 1989) sparked a renewed interest in project work in the United States and around the world. Michaelene Ostrosky has spent her career focused on the inclusion of young children in early childhood settings, studying and writing about methods for supporting the social development and friendships of children with and without disabilities. As a classroom teacher, Sallee Beneke was struck by the potential of the Project Approach to support learners with a wide range of abilities. During her doctoral studies in special education at the University of Illinois, Sallee immersed herself in exploring the potential of the Project Approach to support the development of *all* young children in inclusive classrooms. This search to blend the Project Approach and inclusive education brought Lilian, Micki, and Sallee together, and one outcome from this collaboration is this book. We hope that you benefit from our collaboration and, in turn, that many children with a range of abilities benefit as you implement project work in early childhood settings in ways that interest, motivate, and educate all of the young minds whom you teach.

REFERENCE

Katz, L. G., & Chard, S. C. (1989). *Engaging children's minds: The Project Approach*. Stamford, CT: Ablex.



Getting Started With the Project Approach

Ms. Carly watched with interest as a group of preschool children from Ms. Tamara's class worked on constructing a semi-truck using cardboard boxes and found objects. She was amazed at their persistence and was especially impressed by the participation of children at varying developmental levels. Everyone seemed to have a way to help. Alex, a child on the autism spectrum, was busily working on taping boxes together alongside two other children. Ms. Carly knew this construction was the result of a project in which the children were engaged. She wished she knew how to get a project going in her own class. She had been to a workshop on the Project Approach once and had attempted to get a project started, but it had fizzled out soon after it began. The children just did not seem interested in pursuing it. Ms. Carly wished she knew more about how to begin and sustain project work. She wanted to foster the level of inclusion she observed among the children in Ms. Tamara's class, but she did not know where to turn for support.

This chapter includes an overview of the Project Approach and introduces the Project Approach Implementation Checklist that is at the heart of this guide. The 52-item checklist is designed to support teachers who are new to implementing the Project Approach by prompting them to include important elements of the approach in each of the three major phases of a project. For teachers who already have experience implementing the Project Approach, the suggestions and examples provided here can help ensure implementation with fidelity. Our collective experiences have shown that when project work is not implemented correctly, teachers, like Ms. Carly, often struggle. We also provide an overview of the goals teachers can set and reach when they implement the Project Approach and explore the potential of the Project Approach as a context for universal design for learning. Finally, the chapter closes with an examination of the evidence base for the Project Approach and a brief overview of its historical roots.

GETTING TO KNOW THE PROJECT APPROACH

Many teachers have heard of the Project Approach, but they often have only a vague idea of what it entails. They may have misunderstandings or misperceptions about the goals of project work or how projects work. For example, they may believe the goal of a project is to come up with an amazing product, such as a mural or a three-dimensional construction, or they may think it is necessary to have transportation to a field site in order to do a project. In this guide, we clarify these misperceptions.

What Is the Project Approach?

Young children are naturally curious, and the Project Approach is a way of teaching that capitalizes on this common trait. In project work, the teacher identifies a topic of potentially high interest to the children in the class and facilitates an in-depth study of the topic through firsthand investigation and research. Essentially, the teacher strengthens children's interest in a topic by involving them in project work.

As they engage in project work, children learn about how the world around them works and develop confidence in their ability to figure things out.

As they engage in project work, children learn about how the world around them works and develop confidence in their ability to figure things out. They learn how to work collaboratively with their peers, as they seek and find answers to their questions. They gradually develop confidence in their own abilities and build perseverance. Rather than focusing predominantly on academic achievement, the Project

Approach strengthens children's intellectual dispositions, such as analyzing, predicting, hypothesizing, and explaining, and the skills involved in each of these dispositions.

Three phases provide a framework for inquiry-based learning, which is at the heart of project work. In Phase I, teachers introduce the topic and provide the children with opportunities to share what they already know about it through activities such as storytelling, dramatic play, and drawing. Teachers identify aspects of the topic that the children are curious to learn more about. In Phase II, teachers provide the children with activities that allow them to satisfy their curiosity, such as interviews with guest experts, field trips, experiments, and examinations of artifacts. When the children have satisfied their curiosity, teachers introduce Phase III, which provides opportunities for children to reflect on and share what they have learned and experienced.

Although children need instruction in certain skills and subjects (e.g., counting, naming colors, tying shoes), their development is strengthened when they are provided

with experiences that encourage their intellectual capabilities. Notably, project work can be incorporated into an existing curriculum, although it does not typically constitute the entire curriculum. For younger children, project work is typically woven into the fabric of the daily schedule. For example, new materials or concepts might be introduced at circle time, opportunities to investigate or represent new understanding might be incorporated into choice time, and opportunities to reflect on or summarize what has been learned might be a focus of class discussions. Academic skills in numeracy, literacy, and social-emotional competence can be reinforced within project work.

The content of projects varies depending on the topic a particular group of children and their teacher are interested in investigating and children's strengths and needs. The Project Approach provides a context that supports the abilities of *all* children, including children with special needs (Beneke & Ostrosky, 2015). It provides opportunities for children to use their strengths and build new knowledge and skills.

The Project Approach provides a context that supports the abilities of *all* children, including children with special needs. It provides opportunities for children to use their strengths and build new knowledge and skills.

Project Approach Implementation Checklist

This book offers support to new implementers of the Project Approach and to those already familiar with the approach. A teacher who is new to the Project Approach can read the book in its entirety and follow along on the checklist, whereas experienced teachers may simply choose to review a section of the book referred to in the checklist. The 52-item Project Approach Implementation Checklist (or "Implementation Checklist") is included as this chapter's appendix. It contains items focusing on the three phases of projects, which we refer to as Phases I, II, and III. Chapters 3, 4, and 5 correspond to the sequence of the items in the Implementation Checklist and provide in-depth explanations and examples for each item listed.

The items in the Implementation Checklist were originally developed by Sallee Beneke (the first author of this book) as part of her dissertation research to assist teachers in inclusive early childhood classrooms who were attempting to implement the Project Approach but did not have a mentor or coach available on a daily basis to support their implementation (Beneke & Ostrosky, 2015). The teachers used the checklist as a source of ideas for implementation and as a basis for discussion with each other and with Dr. Beneke during weekly meetings.

Educators can use the Implementation Checklist to support their implementation of the Project Approach. Before beginning a project, educators should review the items in the Phase I section. They can use it to stimulate ideas and make notes about possible Phase I activities in the blank spaces in the right-hand column. As educators implement the project, they should revisit the checklist regularly to record how each checklist item was implemented over the course of the project. It is helpful to include dates because they can be used later to document the development of the project. For each checklist item, educators should record Yes, No, or N/A (not applicable) to indicate whether or not that checklist item was met. It can be helpful to review the activities that have been implemented with a coach, mentor, or teaching partner(s) as a basis for discussing what has gone well, what has been challenging, and what might be next steps in implementing the Project Approach.

A teacher does not have to implement every item on the checklist to engage children in the Project Approach because not every aspect of project work is used in every project. For example, a project on babies might begin spontaneously with a child's announcement that his mother is expecting. Therefore, there is no need for the teacher to plan an introduction to the topic. Or, in a project on farms, a teacher might want to arrange a field trip to a farm, but in a project on worms, fieldwork can be done right on the school or center playground. However, the more items that are implemented, the more likely it is that the project will be successful during each phase. Checklist items were initially developed by Dr. Beneke, with input from the other authors of this book, based on their many years of experience implementing the Project Approach, training others to use the checklist, and working in a variety of early childhood settings. Revisions to the checklist were based on the collective wisdom of the authors and many colleagues who have implemented and coached others on the Project Approach. Numerous teachers who are experts in the approach reviewed and commented on the checklist before it was finalized. The coauthors of this guide provided input into the development of checklist items. The Implementation Checklist is included as this chapter's appendix. Three sample completed checklists can be found in Appendix A.

Importance of Fidelity of Implementation

Fidelity of implementation is defined as “the implementation of a practice or program as intended by the researchers or developers” (IRIS Center, 2018a, p. 1). As educators who have written about, trained others in implementation of, and conducted research on the Project Approach for many years, the authors of this book believe that if implemented with fidelity, project work can effectively help teachers to reach their goals in inclusive early childhood classrooms. However, monitoring and measuring how an intervention is implemented are important for evaluating its outcomes (Harn, Damico, & Stoolmiller, 2017). The Implementation Checklist, in combination with this guide, can help teachers monitor how they implement the Project Approach and help them connect their implementation to child outcomes in a way that reflects progress toward achievement of their teaching goals.

THE PROJECT APPROACH AND TEACHING GOALS

What is important for a young child to learn? What will help a child succeed and live a life in which he or she feels fulfilled and satisfied? The goals of teachers who implement the Project Approach go beyond satisfaction of requirements for age- or grade-level standards. Their goals are for children to become curious, purposeful, thoughtful, collaborative learners who know how to learn more and who can communicate their findings with others. To achieve this goal, teachers need to provide opportunities for children to develop the understanding, skills, dispositions, and feelings that will help them successfully use this knowledge. Teachers can do this most effectively by providing children with opportunities for hands-on learning. However, teachers may encounter challenges to implementing the Project Approach and may need support to overcome these challenges.

Knowledge, Understanding, and Skills

Children rely not only on what they know about a project topic, but also on what they understand about how and when to use that knowledge, how that knowledge connects

to other aspects of their lives, and the skills they need to successfully engage in project work. However, children often memorize discrete facts and recite them without fully understanding their significance. For example, a child might learn in a textbook that the bread he sees in the grocery store comes from the bakery. However, that does not mean that he understands *how* the bread comes from the bakery. In a project focused on the bakery, the teacher's goal is to help children acquire not just *knowledge* about the bakery, but also an *understanding* of the many aspects of what goes on inside it. In such a project, the children might:

- Interview the baker
- Visit the bakery
- Sketch aspects of the bakery that catch their interest
- Observe the ingredients and watch them being mixed and then baked into loaves
- Notice the uniforms various bakery workers wear and what they do in their jobs
- Watch as the bread is loaded onto a truck for delivery to the grocery store
- Observe customers exchanging money for baked goods at the cash register

After discussing what they saw on their trip to the bakery, the teacher might invite the children to suggest what they would like to make to show what they learned on their trip. With the teacher's support, the children might decide to construct their own bakery in the dramatic play area in their classroom, which could include a large oven constructed from cardboard boxes and other art materials, a check-out area with cash registers, and uniforms. With the teacher's support, the children might also measure and mix ingredients, knead dough, and bake their own loaves of bread. Finally, they might dictate and illustrate a report that tells the story of a loaf of bread, and they might survey their families to find out where they buy their bread or what types of bread they buy.

Children who have been involved in this type of learning experience can develop a deep understanding about how the bakery works, and in the course of acquiring this understanding, they may use many skills (e.g., wondering, asking questions, counting, comparing, measuring, noticing, describing, drawing, pretending, labeling, cutting, taping). A learning experience in which children can fully satisfy their curiosity helps them develop confidence in their own ability to figure out how the world around them works. They feel engaged with the learning process and are motivated to figure out how many other elements of their world work.

Dispositions and Feelings

Strengthening positive dispositions and discouraging negative dispositions are important goals for all teachers. A disposition is a habit of mind or "a tendency to exhibit frequently, consciously, and voluntarily a pattern of behavior that is directed to a broad goal" (Katz, 1993, p. 2). Dispositions are important as educational goals because they impact the likelihood that a child will make effective use of the knowledge, understanding, or skills that he or she has learned. For example, a child might have the disposition to be curious, persistent, and a risk-taker, which could positively affect the chances that the child will apply what he or she has been taught. If the child was a member of the class that was investigating the bakery, he or she might offer questions,

make predictions, and volunteer to help peers with the class construction. However, the disposition to be short-tempered, argumentative, or impatient might have the opposite effect. A child with these dispositions might not gain as much from the project on the bakery because the child might be preoccupied with his or her own negative feelings. Part of the teacher's role is to encourage and nurture positive dispositions.

Project work can have a positive impact on children's feelings about themselves as learners. Children who feel confident in their own ability to figure things out are more likely to take risks and tackle challenging problems (Dweck, Walton, & Cohen, 2014).

The teacher's goal is to ensure that children feel that their opinions and ideas are valued and respected by others and that they will value and respect the opinions and ideas of others.

The teacher's goals for a child are that the child will feel that his or her opinions and ideas are valued and respected by others and that the child will value and respect the opinions and ideas of others. The child will feel that he or she has something to offer to other children and to adults and that he or she has something to gain from them as well. The child will begin to develop the expectation that learning is a lifelong way of being and that there is always something new to learn.

Standards of Experience and Hands-On Learning

Educators and the population in general typically discuss educational goals in terms of standards. In particular, various educational authorities and responsible governmental agencies tend to develop, promote, and require standards of learning. Yet, as this book explores, it is more developmentally and educationally appropriate to develop an agreement on the standards of the experiences we believe children should have. For example, children should have many experiences with learning-related skills, such as taking responsibility, working cooperatively with others, working independently, and organizing materials (Katz, 2012; McClelland, Acock, & Morrison, 2006). The Project Approach includes standards of experiences, such as developing questions about relevant topics, working hard to seek answers to those questions, and spending thoughtful and strong energies to find ways to explain, share, and demonstrate those questions and the answers to them.

These experiences in project work are obtained through direct hands-on investigation and representation. Children learn answers to their questions by examining artifacts with all their senses (e.g., kneading dough, smelling it, watching it rise), by looking closely to identify details to draw and use in pretend play, by exploring how things work through hypothesizing, and by experimenting to answer questions. Classrooms in which children learn through child-initiated experiences have been found to promote later academic success (Marcon, 2002).

Challenges to Meeting Teaching Goals Through the Project Approach

Teachers in U.S. schools often struggle with the tension between implementing what they know to be best practices or developmentally appropriate methods of teaching and the expectations of the school system for which they work. This dualism may be particularly true for early childhood educators whose preservice training often includes an emphasis on responsive teaching and early development. For example, Blank, Damjanovic, Peixoto da Silva, and Weber (2014) found that teachers who were initiating the Project Approach as a new practice in their schools felt uncomfortable

because they were teaching in a way that was different from the status quo. Blank et al. (2014) found that teachers' success in implementing the approach hinged on the presence of professional learning communities because the teachers needed space to communicate problems, brainstorm ideas, and consider various initiatives with others. Professional learning communities provide teachers with opportunities "to learn deeply with colleagues about an identified topic, to develop shared meaning, and identify shared purposes related to the topic" (Hord, 2009, p. 40). For more information on professional learning communities in early childhood education, see *Reflecting in Communities of Practice: A Workbook for Early Childhood Educators* by Curtis, Lebo, Cividanes, and Carter (2013).

In addition, before they can fully comprehend the potential of the Project Approach to support young children and help them learn, teachers need to be able to support the dynamic *processes* of the project (e.g., questioning, predicting, representing) (Clark, 2006). The process of questioning involves encouraging children to articulate what they want to find out about the topic. In situations where children are not able to articulate these questions, it is up to teachers to determine what the children are curious about based on observations of children's play. Teachers can involve children in the process of predicting answers to their questions throughout the project. Then, through investigation, children can determine whether their predictions were accurate. The process of representing also takes place throughout the project. Similarly, project work provides a context for individual children and groups of children to represent their understanding of the project through the arts (e.g., drawing, dramatizing, storytelling, singing). In our experience, teachers often want to implement projects, but they struggle with *how* to implement the processes that support good project work. We have found that the further situated a teacher's current practices and beliefs about curriculum are from the project work, the more difficult it is for the teacher to make a full transition to that approach without support. Teachers may attend a 1- or 2-day training on the Project Approach, but they typically do not have the professional development resources or support needed to help them guide the development of a project. The Implementation Checklist featured in this book provides vital assistance in this regard.

The Project Approach Implementation Checklist featured in this book provides vital assistance in professional development.

THE PROJECT APPROACH AND UNIVERSAL DESIGN FOR LEARNING

Young children come to school with a wide variety of interests and "abilities to see, hear, attend, write, read, count, understand English, transition from one activity to another, manage physical tasks, care for their own needs, engage in learning activities, and remember" (Beneke & Ostrosky, 2016, p. 1403). These interests and abilities are influenced by their previous experiences. In the past, when children's abilities were not considered typical for their age, children were grouped by ability or label with the intention of providing them with an education that would best meet their special educational needs. However, the inclusion of children with disabilities in classrooms with their typically developing peers is considered recommended practice for all children. Universal design for learning (UDL) is one way to ensure all children in inclusive settings have access to the learning environments, educational routines and activities, and general education curriculum (Division for Early Childhood & National Association

for the Education of Young Children, 2009). UDL is a scientifically valid framework for guiding educational practice that:

(A) provides flexibility in the ways information is presented, in the ways students respond or demonstrate knowledge and skills, and in the ways students are engaged; and

(B) reduces barriers in instruction, provides appropriate accommodations, supports and challenges, and maintains high achievement expectations for all students, including students with disabilities and students who are limited English proficient. (Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008 [PL 89-329])

The National Center on Universal Design for Learning (2017) promotes three overarching principles that guide implementation of UDL: multiple means of engagement, multiple means of representation, and multiple means of action and expression. (For more information on UDL, see the CAST web site at <http://www.cast.org/our-work/about-udl.html>.)

Potential of the Project Approach to Support Diverse Learners

Instead of starting with a one-size-fits-all curriculum and then making adjustments to accommodate learners based on their labels, UDL requires teachers to plan goals, methods, materials, and assessments that provide *all* learners with equal access to the curriculum from the beginning. The goal is to address learning challenges that act as barriers to full participation. The Project Approach has the potential

The Project Approach is a good fit with UDL because, in project work, teachers plan based on the interests, knowledge, skills, and abilities of each individual child in their classrooms from the very beginning.

to provide a UDL. The Project Approach is a good fit with UDL because, in project work, teachers plan based on the interests, knowledge, skills, and abilities of each individual child in their classrooms from the very beginning. One of the strengths of the Project Approach is the potential to provide opportunities for children to use their strengths to participate at the level that best fits their abilities and interests through multiple means of engagement, multiple means of representation, and multiple means of action and expression.

The term *multiple means of engagement* refers to “how learners get engaged and stay motivated. How they are challenged, excited, or interested. These are affective dimensions” (National Center on Universal Design for Learning, 2014). The Project Approach provides for engagement in many ways. The topic of a project is based on the interests of the children in the class, and once the project is underway, the direction of the project follows the interests of the children as they continue to evolve. The long-term nature of project work is helpful in this regard. It allows skillful teachers to carefully observe and respond to individual as well as group interests over time. It allows children to become experts on the topic of study and provides children with disabilities with more opportunities to consider the roles associated with the topic. For example, this knowledge can help children who do not typically engage in dramatic play join in pretend play with other children.

Teachers can facilitate children’s engagement in ongoing activities by exploring each child’s interests and experiences with their families, adding topic-related artifacts to the environment, asking children questions about and pointing out attributes of topic-related artifacts, prompting and acknowledging children’s participation in project exploration, and featuring each child’s contributions and/or work in an ongoing documentation display about the project (see the Garden Project and the Dog Project featured in Chapters 3, 4, and 5).

The term *multiple means of representation* refers to “how we gather facts and categorize what we see, hear, and read” (National Center on Universal Design for Learning, 2014). Projects provide many opportunities for children to learn about the topic under investigation in different ways. Over time, teachers plan and provide sources of information through firsthand exploration, child-friendly reference materials, props for dramatic play, images, discussion, field trips, and visits from guest experts. Teachers can support children in representing their experiences by simplifying or making materials and experiences more complex to support individual learners. They can add topic-related images to dramatic play or block areas, place topic-related tools in the discovery area, and add topic-related artifacts to the classroom for firsthand investigation.

The term *multiple means of action and expression* refers to “how we organize and express our ideas” (National Center on Universal Design for Learning, 2014). In project work, children have many ways to express their growing understanding about the topic across all three phases of the project. They can dictate, paint, draw, sing, pretend, and work on individual and group constructions to communicate their growing understanding about the topic under study.

Teachers can support children in expressing their ideas by helping children notice important attributes of topic-related objects or experiences that they can record, pairing a child with a more competent peer who can help with expressing ideas, providing accessible open-ended media for expression, helping children with limited verbal ability to participate in dictating lists or webbing by describing their interests, and placing topic-related objects in dramatic play and block areas to spark dramatic play. Teachers observe children closely to determine which supports are most effective for which children.

Potential of the Project Approach to Support Dual Language Learners

Dual language learners (DLLs) are children learning two (or more) languages at the same time, as well as children learning a second language while continuing to develop their first (or home) language (Office of Head Start, 2008). Developing two languages during the early childhood years can help children acquire “executive function abilities, such as working memory, impulse control, attention to relevant versus irrelevant task cues, and mental or cognitive flexibility, as well as improved language skills” (Espinosa, 2013, p. 5). However, the time it takes to process input in two languages may cause some DLLs to be a little slower at word retrieval (Espinosa, 2013). Increasing numbers of DLLs now attend preschool programs, and research has shown that attending a high-quality preschool can close gaps in achievement. To support the language acquisition of DLLs, it is effective for teachers to “intentionally activate knowledge and concepts in the home language and then explicitly help the child transfer this knowledge to the new language” (Espinosa, 2015, p. 80). The long-term nature of project work allows teachers many opportunities to help DLLs acquire vocabulary in their home and school languages in a meaningful context.

The long-term nature of project work allows teachers many opportunities to help DLLs acquire vocabulary in their home and school languages in a meaningful context.

Experts agree that the following strategies support DLLs: knowing students’ families and their home contexts, developing positive relationships with each child, relating learning experiences to what children already know and can do, teaching vocabulary,

engaging in informal conversations, and teaching skills and facts in meaningful contexts. Each of these strategies is well supported by the Project Approach.

Children's language is inextricably bound with their cultural experiences. The families of DLLs come from a variety of countries, and expectations about how their children will learn and use English are likely to be influenced by cultural experiences in the country of origin. In addition, two families from the same culture are not identical; they will have varying expectations, strengths, and needs. It is important for teachers to get to know and develop relationships with the families of their DLLs. Project work can help with this because families can be consulted about children's interests to help identify useful topics for projects. Families can act as a resource to advise teachers and help in the development of culturally relevant projects. The long-term nature of a project allows teachers time to communicate with families about the project topic. An interpreter or family member who speaks English can help teachers establish and maintain communication about the project.

Project work helps teachers develop positive relationships with individual DLLs, because projects take place in socially and emotionally supportive classroom environments. Project work facilitates friendly, one-on-one conversations between teachers and their students, allowing teachers opportunities to show interest in students' ideas, experiences, and feelings related to the project topic and project experiences.

The three phases of the Project Approach naturally lead to an understanding of what children already know and can do. In Phase I, children communicate what they already know about the topic and represent their knowledge through discussions, dramatic play, and a variety of the arts. Children continue to communicate about and represent their understanding of the topic as the project proceeds through Phase II and culminates in Phase III. This ongoing process gives teachers many opportunities to observe DLLs closely and plan instruction related to what each child is beginning to understand. Teachers can use their insights about children's skills and understanding to plan small group experiences with children who can stimulate each other's language development.

Learning new vocabulary takes place naturally in project work, as children discover new information about the project topic. Whenever possible, teachers should express new vocabulary words in the DLLs' home language so that the acquisition of knowledge is supported. At the same time, as DLLs acquire English vocabulary, they bring their expressive vocabulary into line with their receptive vocabulary (August, Carlo, Dressler, & Snow, 2005). Teachers of DLLs need to *intentionally* and *continually* support bilingualism (Prieto, 2009), and ongoing communication efforts about the project under study are perfect for this purpose. Teachers also can use pictorial cognate charts that feature an image of a project-related object along with the written name of the object in both languages. Cognates are words in two languages that share the same meaning and have similar spelling and pronunciation (e.g., the English word *circle* and the Spanish word *circuló*). In addition, teachers can use a combination of facial expressions, gestures, real-life objects, and pictures to support children's understanding of new vocabulary (Figueras-Daniel & Barnett, 2013).

The primary way in which children develop language at school is through informal teacher-child and child-child conversations (Dickinson & Porche, 2011). Teachers can take advantage of the many informal conversations that take place as children represent and discuss their ideas and experiences during project work to prompt child-child conversations and to reinforce vocabulary in teacher-child conversations.

Young children, including DLLs, are more motivated and engaged when their learning experiences are meaningful. In research on parents' perceptions of the impact of project work on their second-grade children, Souto-Manning and Lee (2005) found

that the parents believed that “projects allowed those students who spoke English as a second language to participate in the classroom activities in a personally meaningful manner” (p. 14). Selecting topics for investigation that are familiar to DLLs and that the DLLs can investigate firsthand is likely to provide a context for meaningful learning. Espinosa (2015) recommends that teachers select three to four picture books related to the project topic as anchor texts to use repetitively to foster development of a particular concept and related vocabulary. For example, in a project on hats, the teacher might use *Caps for Sale* (Slobodkina, 1968) and *I Want My Hat Back* (Klassen, 2012) as anchor texts.

EVIDENCE BASE FOR THE PROJECT APPROACH

Evidence of the impact of the Project Approach has grown in the recent years. The evidence includes both formal research studies (Beneke & Ostrosky, 2009, 2015; Chun, Hertzog, Gaffney, & Dymond, 2011; Mitchell, Foulger, Wetzel, & Rathkey, 2009; Souto-Manning & Lee, 2005) and reports from teachers on their experiences (Baldwin, Adams, & Kelly, 2009; Burns & Lewis, 2016; Griebeling, Elgas, & Konerman, 2015; Lickey & Powers, 2011; Maple, 2005; McCormick & Twitchell, 2017; Yuen, 2009). The following section summarizes key research on the Project Approach.

Impact on Children’s Engagement With Learning Content

Our research revealed that teachers believed the Project Approach increased the interest, motivation, and attention span of diverse learners in their classrooms (Beneke & Ostrosky, 2009). We conducted pre- and posttraining interviews with seven preschool teachers who attended professional development sessions on the Project Approach. Some teachers reported that children’s increased engagement led to a reduced need for guidance techniques to manage challenging behavior. Interview data also showed that teachers felt that children were “highly engaged in project work with peers” (Beneke & Ostrosky, 2015, p. 364), which they attributed to the way elements of project activities, such as drawing and surveying to collect and record information related to the project topic, contributed to children’s engagement (Beneke & Ostrosky, 2015).

Learning Standards

Researchers have found that project work supports children in meeting grade-level learning standards (Souto-Manning & Lee, 2005), especially when planning is negotiated between students and teachers (Mitchell et al., 2009). Researchers also determined that learning standards were met most effectively when teachers integrated the standards with the children’s interests (Mitchell et al., 2009). Mitchell et al. (2009) suggest that a teacher’s fluency (i.e., knowledge and familiarity) with the standards is key to connecting the standards and the students’ interests and that teachers need to “shift their ideas about planning to embrace co-creating and participating in the learning context *with* children” (p. 345).

Several experienced project implementers share the belief that the Project Approach provides a powerful influence on helping young children master content. For example, over the course of a 4-month preschool Skyscraper Project, teachers “recognized and responded to the mathematics that emerged in the children’s play and built on and extended their understandings” (McCormick & Twitchell, 2017, p. 347). The Skyscraper Project arose from teachers’ observation of their students’ spontaneous play and exploration with blocks. During this project, children investigated and

constructed skyscrapers. Teachers believed they were able to teach mathematics content so effectively to the children because the project was “connected to their play, interests, and everyday activity of building” (McCormick & Twitchell, 2017, p. 347). Teachers in a Hong Kong kindergarten class shifted from thematic teaching to project work and found that their project on shoes created a reason for children to “quantify information as they gathered it and to represent quantities with numerals” (Yuen, 2009, p. 29). During the Shoe Project, these kindergartners collected and classified more than 70 pairs of shoes. This project “provided children with reasons to classify and sort, to develop categories for things so they could think about it” (Yuen, 2009, p. 29). Veteran project implementers also shared that “children crave the opportunity to solve math problems related to questions or dilemmas of importance to them” (Burns & Lewis, 2016, p. 143).

Across the phases of a long-term project, children are motivated to take advantage of many opportunities for developing language arts skills. For example, in the Shoe Project, kindergarten children began to represent concepts through drawing and early writing. They were motivated to read “signs, pamphlets, or books to find information and answers to the questions generated in the project” (Yuen, 2009, p. 29). Technical vocabulary expands as children develop “a zeal for word collection and pride in being able to convey new scientific language and vocabulary when writing or speaking on a project discovery” (Burns & Lewis, 2016, p. 143). Writing and book making were important components of a negotiated first-grade project on animal biomes (Mitchell et al., 2009), and children’s books about construction provided valuable information about construction and physics in the Skyscraper Project (e.g., a triangle is the strongest shape) (McCormick & Twitchell, 2017).

Teacher and researcher reports indicate that mastery of science content is supported in project work. For example, in the project on biomes, first graders demonstrated investigating and modeling scientific testing, organizing and analyzing data, and communicating results of investigations (Mitchell et al., 2009). Students involved in a project on animals that lived on the school grounds observed habitats, took notes, and drew pictures of animals. They interviewed a naturalist and constructed animal habitats. Their teacher helped them to come up with initial questions and engaged them in continuous conversations about what they were learning, and this led to more questions (Souto-Manning & Lee, 2005). Teachers can evaluate the potential of topics to support children’s science learning by using their initial questions about the topic (e.g., “Why do the worms come on the playground when it rains?”) as a prompt for them to conduct research about the topic (Baldwin et al., 2009).

Social studies content for young children is covered in a way that is deeper and more meaningful through project work than through formal lessons. For example, one teacher explained that his goal for the kindergarten and first-grade children in a 9-week project on mail was not really for the children to memorize all the parts of the post office, but rather for them to learn “how to be empirical, strive for accuracy, and work cooperatively” (Maple, 2005, p. 137). He wanted them to learn:

How to observe people, places, things, and events to become active participants in a group that had a common goal and support each other in their search for knowledge and truth. I hoped for them to become citizens of our classroom and school community. (Maple, 2005, p. 137)

This teacher’s words reflect his desire to help his children learn how to figure out the world around them and to appreciate the part that people with different occupations play in the quality of their lives.

Project work also provides many opportunities for service learning (Chun et al., 2011; Maple, 2005). For example, as part of a project on water, children in a mixed-age

class of 5- to 7-year-olds raised money to help victims of a tsunami in Asia. Researchers found that the children understood the concept of helping others and acquired a model of service through participation in the project (Chun et al., 2011).

The evidence base for the Project Approach has grown in recent years. Research reveals that the Project Approach can increase interest, motivation, and the attention span of diverse learners. The Project Approach has been found to support children in meeting learning standards in the content areas of math, language arts, and social studies and to support children's participation in service learning.

Parent Support for Project Work

In a case study, Souto-Manning and Lee (2005) found that parents of children who had been involved in long-term project work believed it 1) increased motivation, 2) built a sense of community among learners, 3) used children's strengths, and 4) improved academic achievement. Yuen (2009) held parent-teacher meetings over the course of the implementation of her first project. She reported that, at first, the parents of her students were "anxious and lacked confidence in their children's abilities" (p. 30). However, by the end of the project, all 12 parents believed the children had benefited from the project (p. 31). Parents felt the project enhanced their conversations with their children and increased their confidence in dealing with their children's teachers.

Support for Diverse Learners

This guide uses the term *diverse learners* to include children with special needs, children with challenging behaviors, children from environments that put them at risk for academic failure, and DLLs. Teachers and researchers believe that the Project Approach has the potential to support diverse learners in a variety of ways. They believe that individualized education programs and individualized family service plan goals can be met through meaningful naturalistic opportunities provided by projects (Griebling et al., 2015; Harte, 2010; Lickey & Powers, 2011). For example, teachers who implemented their first projects in inclusive classrooms reported that project work increased their ability to include diverse learners in class activities. Analysis of interview data showed that project work 1) increased the interest, motivation, and attention span of their students; 2) provided more opportunities to adapt classroom activities for children with a range of abilities; 3) reduced the need for guidance techniques; and 4) supported academic and social development (Beneke & Ostrosky, 2009). In addition, interview and observational data indicated that project work had a positive impact on children's play levels (i.e., adult-child, onlooker, solitary, parallel, associative, and cooperative) and language (Beneke & Ostrosky, 2015).

Warash, Curtis, Hursh, and Tucci (2008) pointed out that teachers can do project work and also use behavioral approaches in their classrooms. "It is not an either/or issue, but rather an issue that calls for converging theories and teaching methods" (Warash et al., 2008, p. 446). The Project Approach is not the whole curriculum. It can be complementary to direct instruction and to specific strategies that support children with special needs, especially when it helps "children acquire knowledge and skills that allow them to successfully learn from their everyday environment" (Warash et al., 2008, p. 447). For example, Griebling et al. (2015) focused on three children who were involved in a project on trees. One child, a 5-year-old named Joy, received support in the classroom from a "team of specialists, including speech, occupational, and physical therapists who

addressed specific IEP [individualized education program] goals for encouraging communication, social interaction, and cognitive development” (Griebeling et al., 2015, p. 7). Joy became actively engaged in the project on trees. She was motivated to communicate about aspects of the project, drew pictures related to the project, and engaged enthusiastically with and learned from a small group of peers. Project work emphasizes children’s strengths rather than their deficits, which may be a key reason that it supports diverse learners. Having multiple opportunities over time to participate in activities that help learners understand the project may be another reason for its appeal to meet the needs of students with a range of abilities (Beneke & Ostrosky, 2015; Griebeling et al., 2015). The Project Approach provides a flexible and rich context for *all* learners, including children identified as gifted (Burns & Lewis, 2016).

The Project Approach is not the whole curriculum. It can be complementary to direct instruction and to specific strategies that support children with special needs.

HISTORICAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE PROJECT APPROACH

Although some believe that the Project Approach began with the publication of *Engaging Children’s Minds* (Katz & Chard, 1989), it actually has roots in the work of John Dewey and others from over a century ago. Understanding the historical and theoretical background of the Project Approach provides a valuable vantage point as teachers begin to implement the approach in their own classrooms.

Roots of Project Work in the United States

After the Civil War, many Americans were concerned “about increased industrialization, about a political system that was ineffective, and about what was happening to American society and its children” (Lascarides & Hinitz, 2011, p. 215). Out of this concern, a movement led by social workers, psychologists, and economists, called the *progressive movement*, developed. A major emphasis of the progressive movement was on children and education because children were viewed as the hope for the future. This emphasis led to the progressive education movement.

John Dewey was a leader in the progressive education movement. He was interested in how children learn and championed educational reform aimed at connecting school with the real world and using investigation of real-life topics to drive students’ interest in learning and integrating academic skills. Dewey was concerned that, due to industrialization, children were no longer learning about how the world worked through firsthand experience. He believed that the child’s role in the educational model of the times was too passive and that, to improve the quality of education, schools should provide the firsthand experiences that had naturally been a part of children’s lives in an agrarian society in the past. Dewey believed that the community formed by students and teachers within a school would contribute to the betterment of society as a whole (Dewey, 1899).

Dewey emphasized the connection between knowing and doing through hands-on exploration, which reflects the constructivist influence of Jean Piaget. Piaget believed that teachers learn about the meaning children make of their experiences by observing them interact with the environment and their peers and by asking them open-ended questions. He reasoned that educators could use the information they gather in this way to plan better learning experiences.

While at the University of Chicago (1894 to 1904), Dewey established a laboratory school, which began with 15 students and grew incrementally over the 7 years that

it existed. Dewey worked with the staff to develop a curriculum that reflected his philosophical beliefs by helping children integrate the practical application of academic content with learning about the world in which they lived. In explaining this curriculum, he stated:

The material is not presented as lessons, as something to be learned, but rather as something to be taken up into the child's own experience, through his own activities, in weaving, cooking, shop work, modeling, dramatic play, conversation, discussion, story-telling, etc. . . . The aim, then, is not for the child to go to school as a place apart, but rather in the school so to recapitulate typical phases of his experience outside of school, as to enlarge, enrich, and gradually formulate it. (Dewey, 1899, pp. 98–99)

Although Dewey's laboratory school lasted a relatively short time, it affected the thinking of many educators for years to come.

Dewey left the University of Chicago for a position at Teacher's College at Columbia, which became the "intellectual crossroads of the [progressive] movement" (Cremin, 1964, pp. 175–176). There, Dewey enjoyed a long professional career and published several books about education, including *How We Think* (Dewey, 1910) and *Democracy and Education* (Dewey, 1916). In *How We Think*, Dewey emphasized that routine and random exercises on trivial topics would destroy children's curiosity and that to avoid this, the teacher's role was to support children's curiosity by keeping "alive the sacred spark of wonder and to fan the flame that already glows" (Dewey, 1910, p. 34). In *Democracy and Education*, Dewey focused on the potential of the school to improve society by educating children of all social classes to become socially aware citizens who know how to solve unanticipated problems that the future in an industrialized society might bring. Dewey believed that curious, thoughtful, and intentional problem solvers would be more likely to reach their fullest potential and would therefore improve society (Dewey, 1916).

Dewey's thinking influenced many of his students and colleagues, including William Heard Kilpatrick. Described by Dewey as "the best [student] I ever had" (Kilpatrick, 1909), Kilpatrick studied under Dewey at Columbia. After graduating, Kilpatrick also became a professor at Teacher's College at Columbia and went on to popularize Dewey's educational theories (Beineke, 1998; Cremin, 1964). Kilpatrick was less philosophical than Dewey and more interested in thinking about how Dewey's theories could be translated into a curriculum that would effectively engage children in learning.

In 1918, Kilpatrick published an essay called *The Project Method* in which he explained that Americans desired "that education be considered as life itself and not as mere preparation for later living" (p. 6) and that the process of education is "wholehearted purposeful activity proceeding in a social environment" (p. 4). He theorized that children who approach a task in a wholehearted, purposeful way are more motivated and will ultimately learn more and be more satisfied with the learning experience than children who are coerced into participating in the same task. At the center of this activity was "the project."

Kilpatrick had high expectations for the impact of project work on children, but to achieve this impact, he believed that the teacher must stimulate and educate children's interests. He saw the teacher as a guide who had the "special duty and opportunity" to help children widen their interests and achievement (Kilpatrick, 1918, p. 12). He believed that project work would have a positive impact on children's moral character and consideration for the welfare of others in a group, and he believed that engaging in project work would develop the habits of "give and take" (Kilpatrick, 1918, p. 13).

In Kilpatrick's view, the teacher's goal was to strengthen children's ability to work independently, but that did not mean that the teacher took a laissez-faire approach

to teaching. A skillful teacher would not be a slave to the whim of the child, but would guide children in learning to make independent judgments. “The teacher’s success—if we believe in democracy—will consist in gradually eliminating himself or herself from the success of the procedure” (Kilpatrick, 1918, p. 13). Kilpatrick (1918) described four types of projects, and he advocated for the first type “where the purpose is to embody some idea or plan in external form, such as building a boat, writing a letter, presenting a play” (p. 16). The other three types of projects involved enjoying an aesthetic experience, solving a problem, or acquiring some knowledge or skill. In Kilpatrick’s view, children would likely engage in all four types of projects as they followed their interests to their conclusion.

By the 1950s, the progressive education movement had lost much of its momentum due to the impact of two world wars, the Great Depression, changes in American society, the Cold War, and the fragmentation of its members. By the 1960s, the emphasis in education had shifted from fostering the social, emotional, physical, and intellectual development of the young child to promoting cognitive development or teaching basic academic skills (Spodek & Saracho, 2003).

Project-Based Learning in Reggio Emilia, Italy

While interest in Dewey’s ideas declined in the United States, it emerged and blossomed across the sea in Europe, particularly in Britain. However, the best-known site for the lasting development of these ideas is to be found today in Reggio Emilia, Italy. There, Loris Malaguzzi and other educators who guided the development of a city-funded system of infant–toddler and preschool centers were inspired by Dewey, along with Piaget, Vygotsky, Hawkins, Bruner, and Gardner (Gandini, 2008). Over the course of more than 50 years, these centers have evolved to become an international focus of inspiration, discourse, and reflection among visiting educators about what they can do to improve the quality of their own early childhood programs and about what is possible in inclusive early childhood education.

After World War II, many Italian families were eager to make a change from the church-controlled preschools that had flourished under fascism. For a short time following the war, there were spontaneous attempts in some Italian cities to establish parent-run preschools. The earliest preschools in Reggio Emilia began in this way (Edwards, Gandini, & Forman, 2012). Loris Malaguzzi, who would become the leader of the Reggio Emilia early childhood centers, was involved from the start (Barazzoni, 2000).

Malaguzzi’s pedagogical leadership was grounded in Dewey’s philosophic and theoretical ideas (Lindsay, 2015). According to Malaguzzi, Reggio schools do not have a preplanned curriculum with units and subunits. “Instead, every year each school delineates a series of related projects, some short-range and some long” (Gandini, 2012, p. 61). The teachers then follow the interests of the children related to these identified themes. The adult’s role is to intervene as little as possible. Instead, adults observe and document the children closely, work together to respond by setting up situations that support the children’s motivation and learning across the domains of development, and help children meet their goals. They use “flexible planning in which initial hypotheses are made about classroom work” (Edwards et al., 2012, p. 380) but are modified in response to ongoing development in the children’s work. Reflection and discussion of carefully prepared documentation of children’s learning contribute to this planning. Their philosophy reflects Dewey’s belief that “good teaching involves continual learning on the part of the teacher” (Tennenbaum, 1951, p. viii).

The educators of the municipal preschools in Reggio Emilia have not rested on their laurels. They continue to push the boundaries of what is recommended practice through study, observation, and discussion. Much has been written about the excellent and seamless system of early childhood education demonstrated in these schools. For more information on Reggio Emilia, see *The Hundred Languages of Children* (Edwards et al., 2012).

The Emergence of the Project Approach

In 1989, Lilian Katz and Sylvia Chard published the first edition of *Engaging Children's Minds: The Project Approach*, a book that sparked renewed interest in project work and proved to be a major influence on early childhood teacher education (Rothenberg, 2000). This was around the same time that American educators were beginning to hear about Reggio Emilia:

When U.S. early educators first began to hear about Reggio Emilia in the late 1980s, they were immersed in a growing debate about the nature of early childhood as distinct from that of formal elementary schooling. Amid renewed interest in the "Project Approach" (Katz & Chard, 1989), Reggio Emilia's practices resonated with the premises and promise of progressive education. (New, 2007, p. 9)

Katz and Chard provided a framework that could support teachers who wanted to move toward a more child-centered, responsive approach to teaching through long-term projects that would capitalize on children's interests and motivation. The Project Approach "refers to a way of teaching and learning as well as the content of what is taught and learned" (Katz & Chard, 1989, p. 3).

The Project Approach, as outlined by Katz and Chard (1989), and the project work that teachers do in what has come to be called the Reggio Approach, are similar in many ways, because they both stem from a rethinking of early education following experiences of teaching in Europe during World War II. Both are attempts to support hands-on learning by young children that capitalizes on their interests and motivation in a meaningful topic of study. Both emphasize the potential for individualized instruction as a group of children engage in project work with a teacher as a guide. The Project Approach and the project work that is part of the Reggio Approach have much in common, although they differ with regard to topic selection. Topics studied by children in Reggio (e.g., friendship, angels, dinosaurs) are sometimes too abstract to meet the criteria established by Katz and Chard. As readers learn more about selecting topics for projects through Chapter 3 of this book, this difference will become clearer.

CONCLUSION

This chapter introduced the Project Approach, the Project Approach Implementation Checklist, and the relationship of the Project Approach to teaching goals. It also described the potential of the Project Approach to provide learning experiences that can support diverse learners, including DLLs. Finally, the chapter highlighted the evidence base for the Project Approach and the historical and theoretical roots of the approach. This background is important as novice implementers begin project work in their classrooms or as veteran implementers seek to strengthen their project work. Chapter 2 explores the role of the teacher as researcher and introduces two projects that will be followed in depth through the three phases of project work.

“This book ensures that project work will continue to flourish in the inclusive early childhood education classrooms of the future. The ideas are powerful, the theory developed, the practice researched and clearly explained: this book should be available for all teachers who care about engaging young children in powerful and personalized learning.”

—Sylvia C. Chard, Ph.D., Professor Emeritus, University of Alberta, Canada

“What a wonderful resource to use in introducing the Project Approach, as well as a reference for teachers deeply invested in the model. This book clearly provides practitioner examples of varied project work that engages all learners, taking into account the individual needs of the children within a classroom.”

—Meredith Burton, M.A., President of the South Carolina Association for the Education of Young Children (SCAEYC),
Director of Furman University Child Development Center; a Project Approach program

A proven and popular teaching method, the Project Approach engages the natural curiosity of children through in-depth investigations of topics that capture their interest. *The Project Approach for All Learners* is a guidebook that helps you use this child-centered approach to reach and teach learners of all backgrounds and abilities in your early childhood classroom.

Developed by a team of experts that includes Project Approach leader Lilian G. Katz, this book is your roadmap to implementing project-based learning in inclusive early childhood classrooms. You'll discover how to support diverse groups of students as they study topics that fascinate them, play detective with peers to find answers to questions, and show what they've learned in interesting and creative ways. You'll also get start-to-finish guidance on how to apply the Project Approach, including the Project Approach Implementation Checklist that supports its use, a complete package of training materials, and examples of successful projects from inclusive classrooms.

LEARN HOW TO

- Use the Project Approach in combination with universal design for learning (UDL) strategies
- Choose a compelling project topic that encourages hands-on learning in inclusive settings
- Teach children effective strategies for investigating a topic and conducting research
- Build on children's natural motivation by actively engaging and listening to them
- Make the most of each child's individual strengths and expertise during project work
- Support children in representing their learning through displays and presentations

Includes a complete package of training and implementation materials!

Master each step of the Project Approach with the comprehensive package of **online supplementary materials**, which include

- **38 video clips** that illustrate key strategies
- **22 PowerPoint presentations** on important elements of the Project Approach
- **Six sets of training materials** for educators and practitioners to use individually or in professional development sessions
- **The Project Approach Implementation Checklist**

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