



Supporting High Quality Inclusion: The Project Approach

Sallee Beneke & Michaelene M. Ostrosky
October 12, 2021

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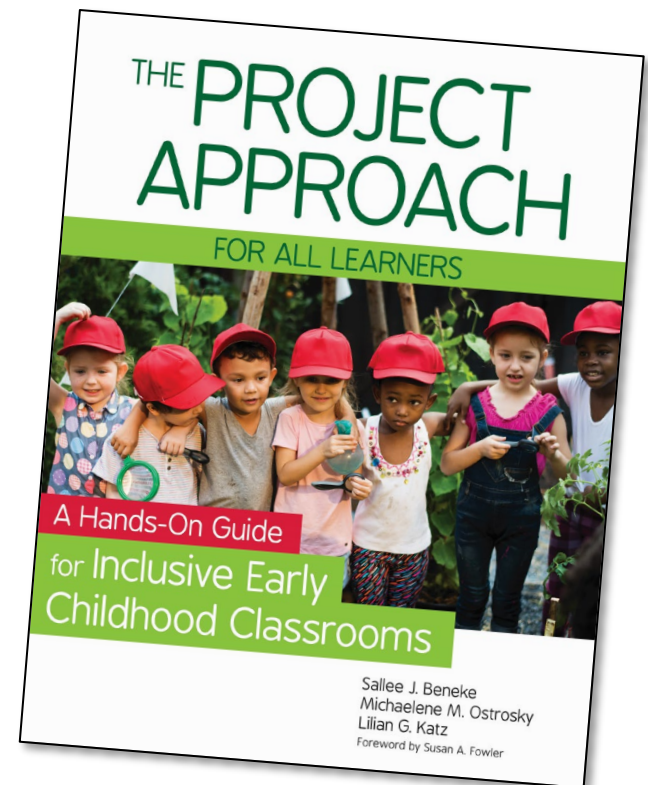
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The Project Approach for All Learners: A Hands-On Guide for Inclusive Early Childhood Classrooms

The go-to guide for implementing the Project Approach, a child-centered approach to reach and teach all learners in your early childhood classroom—regardless of background or ability.

bpub.fyi/Project-Approach

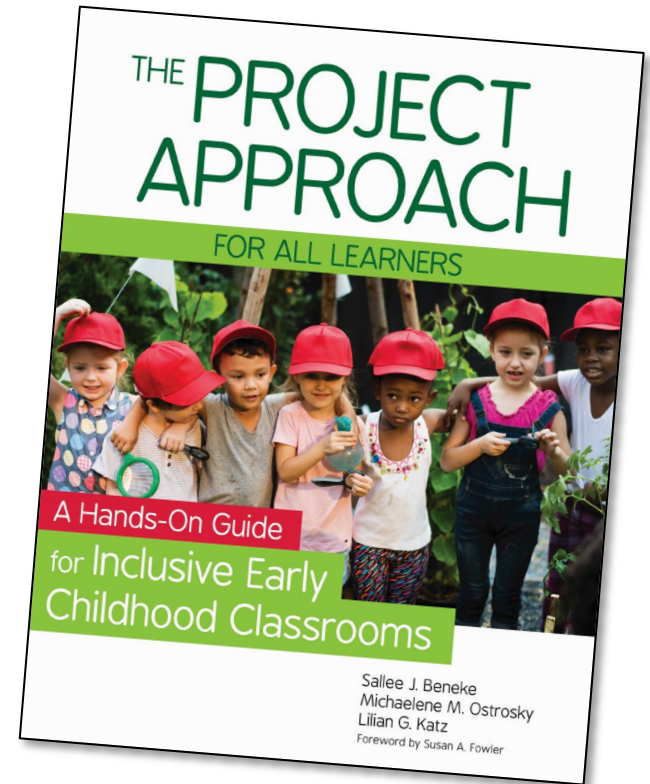


Book Giveaway

We're giving away a FREE copy of

The Project Approach for All Learners

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Topics for Today

Identify Phases and Key Features

Project versus Theme

Project Approach & Diverse Learners

Review Resources

What We Know: Inclusion

- Research shows that inclusion benefits *all* children
- We need curriculum approaches that support *all* learners in inclusive classrooms
- Practitioners do not feel well prepared and want PD
- Supports for fidelity of implementation are needed

What is a Project?

An in-depth investigation of a topic worth learning more about, usually undertaken by a group of children within a class.



- An **approach** to teaching
- Facilitates in-depth study of high interest topic
 - Children investigate **first-hand**
 - Children are **researchers** and collect data
- Capitalizes on children's **natural curiosity**

What is the Goal of Project Work?

The goal of a project is to learn more about a topic rather than to find answers to questions posed by a teacher.

Knowledge Versus Understanding

- Children who learn facts in isolation may:
 - Memorize and soon forget
 - Lack interest in further learning
 - Not connect facts with prior learning



Building Understanding



Project Work & Understanding

- Children who do project work are more likely to:
 - Understand **how** things work
 - Understand the **implications** of new information
 - Make **connections** with prior learning
 - Want to **learn more**
 - Know some strategies for **learning** more information
 - Know some strategies for **analyzing** new information



Phase

1

Phase

2

Phase

3

Phase 1: Children's Work

- Select a topic to investigate (with teacher).
- Discuss what they know about the topic.
- Represent what they already know.
- Dictate questions they want to answer.
- Predict answers they might find.

Phase 2: Investigation is Underway

- Preparing for field work
- Field work
- Research
- Guest Experts
- Representing what has been learned

Phase 3: Children's Work

- Comparing what they knew with what they now know.
- Deciding how to share what they learned.
- Helping teachers create displays and constructions to share findings.
- inviting guests to a presentation about their project.

Knowledge

- Strengthens children's interest in learning
- Children learn how their world works
- Children develop confidence in their own ability to figure things out





Skills

- Many opportunities for children to **apply** skills
- Opportunities to use **strengths** to benefit the group

Dispositions

- Children learn to work collaboratively with peers
- Children develop confidence in their abilities
- Strengthens disposition to persist
- Strengthens **intellectual** dispositions



Feelings



- Project work allows children to use their strengths
- There is something for everyone to do in project work
- Children feel pride in their accomplishments
- Children feel a sense of belonging

What might be the potential impact of the Project Approach on a teacher's ability to teach children with disabilities?

Fidelity of Implementation

- Fidelity of implementation is defined as “the implementation of a practice or program as intended by the researchers or developers” (The IRIS Center, 2014, p. 1).

How Can I Learn the Project Approach?

CHAPTER 1 APPENDIX

Project Approach Implementation Checklist

Phase I		
	Record Yes, No, or N/A	Record notes about the activities and dates that you implemented these items
1. Select a topic based on children's interests, district curriculum, or an unexpected event (e.g., topics of conversations among children, unexpected event such as a new baby, or a neighborhood construction project).		
2. Select a topic that meets the criteria for a topic.		
3. Generate a teacher topic web with co-teacher(s).		

Use the Checklist for Your Own Professional Development

- Source of **ideas** for implementation
- Basis for discussion with **colleagues**
- Basis for discussion with a **mentor or coach**

Topics: Thematic vs. Project

Thematic Unit	Project
Abstract – a concept	Concrete- a thing or group of things
Not tangible	Tangible- can be touched, measured, drawn, acted out
Preplanned- Themes often develop sequentially	Emerges from child's experiences and interest

Identifying a Good Topic

Thematic Unit	Project
Nutrition	Bread
Transportation	Boats
Friendship	Mail
Manners	Restaurants

How Do I Pull a Topic From a Theme?

- Look for aspects that can be:
 - Touched
 - Counted
 - Measured
 - Discussed
 - Researched
 - Represented in a variety of ways (e.g., dramatic play, drawing, and/or construction)

Consider Children's Interests

- Children are **motivated** to learn about interesting topics
- Consider topics of casual teacher/child **conversation**
- **Actively** observe, listen to, and reflect on child/child conversation
- Talk with or survey **family members**

Twelve Criteria for Topic Selection

- Directly Observable
- Within Most Students' Experience
- Field Site & Experts are Available
- First-hand Investigation is Feasible
- Good Potential for Representation
- Parents Can Become Involved
- Sensitive to Culture
- Potentially Interesting to Many Children
- Related to Curriculum Goals & Standards
- Provides Opportunities to Apply Basic Skills
- Not Too Narrow, Not Too Broad
- It is Interesting to the Teacher

The Younger the Child...

- Select topic **close** to child's immediate environment
- Topic that child can observe **again and again**
- Consider topics in classroom, on school grounds, within short walking distance

Topic Selection for Children with Limited Language Abilities

- **Observe** play behaviors
- Families of DLLs can help identify topics related to **home culture**
- Families can **program** topic-related vocabulary into Augmentative and Alternative Communication devices so child can participate in discussion
- **Scaffold** discussion

Implement **project-based** learning in **inclusive** early classrooms

Includes a complete package of training
and implementation materials!

- Project Approach Implementation Checklist
- 38 video clips
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THE PROJECT APPROACH

FOR ALL LEARNERS



A Hands-On Guide
for Inclusive Early
Childhood Classrooms

Sallee J. Beneke
Michaelene M. Ostrosky
Lilian G. Katz
Foreword by Susan A. Fowler

<https://illinoisearlylearning.org/pa/>



English
Spanish - español

TIP SHEETS VIDEOS & PODCASTS STANDARDS & GUIDELINES BLOGS LEARN MORE PROJECT APPROACH

Project Approach

The Illinois Early Learning Project provides support, resources, and information for teachers, specialists, administrators, and trainers interested in the implementation of the Project Approach in classrooms for preschool children.



A project is an in-depth investigation of a topic undertaken by a class, a group of children, or an individual child in an early childhood classroom or at home.

The Project Approach...

- is a method of teaching in which an in-depth study of a particular topic is conducted by a child or a group of children.
- is incorporated into the curriculum but does not always constitute the entire curriculum.
- helps young children meet the Illinois Early Learning and Development Standards.

What's New?



The Squirrel Project

09/13/2021



Voting Project

08/30/2021

We invite you to [join our Facebook group](#) and discuss best practices for carrying out project work with young children.

Project Guides



Project Examples



Lesson Planning in the Context of Projects



Project Approach Tip Sheets



Blog: Perspectives on the Project Approach



Project Resources



The Legacy of Lilian Katz



Questions and Comments



Thanks for Joining Us!

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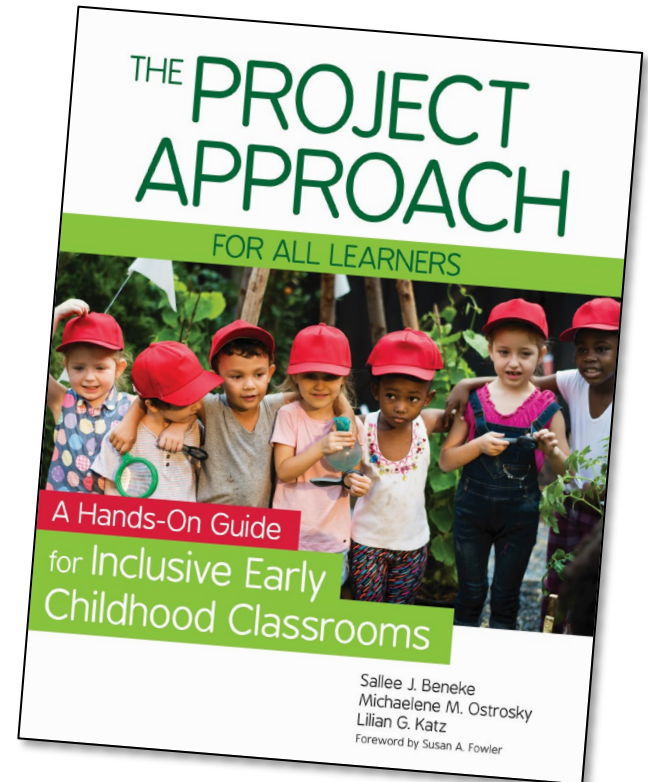
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