



*Strengthening TK  
Curriculum  
Through Project Based Learning*

*Presented by Debra Weller*

*CUSD Bathgate Elementary, Mission Viejo, CA*

[dwteller@cox.net](mailto:dwteller@cox.net)

# Project Based Learning

## 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning Skills

- Creativity
- Critical Thinking
- Communication
- Collaboration

## Quotes from Dr. Lillian Katz: *Engaging Children's Minds*

"It is an approach to education which involves exploring and investigating a topic in depth which validates a child's need for inquiry, observation and reflection.."

"The children are active participants in the learning through taking initiative, planning, developing and assessing their own work."

" A project is not just a theme. It is research about a topic involving children's ideas, questions, theories, predictions and interests."

"The children decide, argue, explain, predict findings, hypothesize, check facts, initiate and report findings."

## General Guidelines

It can be on going as part of a unit of learning.

It can be incorporated into learning centers.

It can be a school wide unit of study.

The teacher is a facilitator soliciting oral language and thought from the children and then engaging the children in the process by providing resources and experiences.

The children are fully engaged in critical thinking.

Topics are chosen from the world that is familiar to the children to create a meaningful, connecting curriculum.

## Storytelling Activities and Extensions

Not all stories need to be turned into formal lessons. Stories should be told just for enjoyment, as an introduction to oral language skills and to enhance vocabulary development. When you choose a story, break it down into applications for vocabulary development, essential questions, themes and cross curricular connections. For an extended version of ideas, go to [www.californiakindergartenassociation.org](http://www.californiakindergartenassociation.org) for my complete research paper: *Stories, The Cornerstone of Literacy*. The National Storytelling Network's web site [www.storynet.org](http://www.storynet.org) also has many suggestions for lessons.

1. Sequence the story with story charts, maps, story webs and flannel board.
2. List the important parts of the plot of the story. Have children identify and discuss why it is important.
3. Story board the story on chart paper. Children contribute ideas and drawing.
4. Have children draw pictures of the sequence of the story.
5. Create media presentation for the story with clay, collage or puppets.
6. Analyze the story- look for similarities, difference, themes, feelings, etc.
7. Retell the story in a round robin telling.
8. Have the children role play the characters with mime, puppets, mask or costumes.
9. Place characters in new situations and retell a new version of the story.
10. Children retell the story to partners.

### Make a Story Stick

Create a story stick from a 12" dowel or natural stick. Decorate it with feathers, leather, ribbons and beads. The story stick or story stone has it origins with Native American and African cultures. The person holding the stick is the storyteller. Only the storyteller has permission to speak. The others present are only story listeners. When the storyteller is finished, he may pass the stick to the next teller.

### Applications:

1. Have children sit in a circle. Pass the stick and each child shares what has happened to them over the weekend, at recess, feelings, fears, etc.
2. Re-telling of a story- The teacher reads or tells a story to the class. The class forms a story circle, the stick is passed. Each teller tells a portion of the story and passes the stick.
3. New version of a story-the story stick is passed as the class recreates a story, changing the characters or adding repetitive phrases, etc. This is a great time to record the story and play it back to the class. Then the children can go to their desk and draw a picture of the story and make a class book.
4. Collaborative groups; Have several sticks available for groups of three to four students. Students are given stories to tell in a small group or they create stories to complement an area of study.
5. Story creation- A child or teacher starts a story and each person add something new to the story as the stick is passed.
6. Class discussions- Assign a curriculum topic. Children pass the stick in small groups or as a whole class discussion.

### Other Activities:

1. Assign children partners and have them share a personal story with each other. Give them two minutes to share a personal story with each other. Return to the large group and children have to share their partner's story before the group.
2. Each child chooses a story to learn. In collaborative groups, the children tell their stories in a round robin fashion so that each child has a telling opportunity.
3. Have a storytelling festival and invite the families.
4. Invite senior citizens from the community to come and tell their life memories to the children.

Standards Used in this presentation:

Mathematics

Domain: Counting and Cardinality:

Cluster: Know number names and count the sequence Standard :K.CC.3

Cluster: Count to know the number of objects Standard: K.CC.4

Domain: Operations and Algebraic Thinking:

Cluster: Understand addition as putting together and adding to, and understand subtraction as taking from.

Standard: KOA.2, K.OA.4

Language and Literacy:

Reading Standards for Literature Craft and Structure

Reading Standards for Informational Text

Reading Standards; Foundational Skills, Phonological Awareness

Reading Standards for Literature

Listening and Speaking

Visual and Performing Arts:

Creative Expression

Skills. Process, Materials, and Tools

Physical Education

Creative Expression, Movement Concepts, Locomotor Movement

Science:

Physical Science-Students know water can be a liquid or a solid and it can change from one form to another

Life Science- Students know how to identify the major structure of plants and animals

Students know how to observe and describe similarities and differences in the appearance of plants and animals.

Earth Science- Students know changes in weather occur from day to day and across seasons, affecting Earth and its inhabitants.

Water Song: copyright Debra Weller 2014

There is a liquid we all know and water is it's name-o

W-A-T-E-R, W-A-T-E-R, W-A-T-E-R ( use paper plate letters for students to hold)

And water is it's name-o

Song; Thunder Booming (to the tune of Are you Sleeping?) copyright- Debra Weller 2014

Thunder Booming

Thunder Booming

Raindrops falling

Raindrops falling

Thunder Booming

Thunder Booming

Raindrops falling

Raindrops falling

Lightning flashing

Lightning flashing

Raindrops falling

Raindrops falling

Lightning flashing

Lightning flashing

Raindrops falling

Raindrops falling

Chant Adapted from The Mailbox  
For shapes:  
(Square, Square) is the shape I see  
If you have a (square) please show it to me  
Stand up and turn around  
Show your (square) and then sit down.

For letters or numbers-  
A /a/ is the letter I see  
If you have an A /a/ please show it to me  
Stand up and turn around  
Show your A /a/ and then sit down.

I'll plant a little seed in the dark, dark ground ( traditional fingerplay)  
I'll plant a little seed in the dark, dark, ground  
Out comes the yellow sun  
Big and round  
Down comes the cool rain  
Soft and slow  
Up comes the little seed  
Grow, grow grow!

Water Cycle Song- ( Where's is Thumbkin) copyright Debra Weller 2014  
Evaporation  
Condensation  
Precipitation  
Rain, snow and sleet  
This is the Water Cycle  
This is the Water Cycle  
Helping the earth  
Helping the earth

Transition songs: ( Tune Are you sleeping?) adapted by Debra Weller copyright 2014  
Time to clean up  
Time to clean up  
Put things away  
Put things away  
Come sit on the carpet  
Come sit on the carpet  
Ready to learn  
Ready to learn  
(To the tune of Did you feed my cow?) adapted by Debra Weller copyright 2014  
Are you sitting on the floor?  
Yes, Mam  
Is your bottom on the rug?  
Yes Mam  
How are you sitting?

Legs criss-crossed  
Where are your hands?  
In my lap  
Are you quiet now?  
Yes Mam  
Sh! Sh! Sh!

At School (from Positively Kindergarten)  
At school, we have three rules  
First finish your work each day  
Second, put your things away  
Third, let me hear you say  
Don't bug your buddy!  
Don't bug your buddy!