Chapter 18 Notes

I. Introduction
   a. Classroom materials and objects promote language skills in many ways
      i. Provide the reality behind words and ideas
      ii. Provide the child with opportunities for sensory exploration
         1. Increases children’s knowledge of relationships and ability to identify the things around them
      iii. Materials capture attention, motivate play, and build communication skills
      iv. Familiar and favorite materials can be enjoyed over and over, with the child deciding how much time to devote to them
      v. Many materials isolate one language and perceptual skill, allowing it to be practiced and accomplished
   b. In language arts centers, related instructional materials are located in one convenient area
      i. Stocking, supervision, and maintenance of materials, furnishings, and equipment are easily accomplished
      ii. Classroom can be a place to grow, expand, test ideas, and predict outcomes of questions
         1. A prepared environment provides successful experiences for all children in a climate in which ideas and creative learning flourish
   c. A limited body of knowledge exists regarding how the physical features and equipment of a literacy-based classroom enhance learning
      i. Preliminary study examining the impact of literacy-enriched play areas (ones with meaningful print) found preschool children spontaneously used almost twice as much print in their play
         1. Teachers are urged to experiment and creatively design language arts centers and other play centers and monitor the effect of the room and its furnishings on children’s language arts skills
   d. Suggestions for print-rich environments
      i. Label all area signs with pictures and words
      ii. Label all shelving units and containers
      iii. Label everything in the classroom as you find connections to current curriculum (doors, windows, tables, lights, and so on)
      iv. Post a picture of the children’s daily routine
      v. Create a message board or daily newsletter where teachers can relate messages to children and vice versa
      vi. Create a place where children can sign in and out daily
      vii. Create a question for the day in print and discuss it
      viii. Use name cards that children select and put in slot pockets, if an area holds only a certain number of children
      ix. Make classroom games that include print and symbols.
x. Have a helper chart
xi. Have a pocket attendance chart
xii. Design graphs with children’s names
xiii. In housekeeping areas include cookbooks, phone books, recipe
books, menus, and newspapers
xiv. Make lists with children concerning the functional use of print

II. Language Arts Center
   a. Every inch of floor and wall space of a language arts center is used
   b. A language center has three main functions:
      i. Provides looking and listening activities for children
      ii. Gives children an area for hands-on experiences with
           communication-developing materials
      iii. Provides a place to store materials
   c. Ideal area has comfortable, soft furnishings with ample work space,
      proper lighting, and screening to block out other areas of active
      classrooms
      i. Teachers make centers cozy and inviting with pillows, a covered
         crib mattress, or a bean bag chair or two
         1. The area can become a place of refuge for the child who
            needs to get away from the bustle of the group and a
            nice place for the teacher to spend some time with
            children individually
   d. Language arts centers should be quiet places that are separated from
      the more vigorous activities of the average playroom
      i. General-Use Materials
         1. One or more child-size tables and a few chairs shelving
            dividers or screens soft-cushioned rocker, easy chair, or
            couch
         2. Soft pillows
         3. Crawl-into hideaways, lined with carpet or fabric
         4. Individual work space or study spots
         5. Audiovisuals and electrical outlets
         6. Book racks that display book covers
         7. Chalkboard
         8. Storage cabinets
         9. Flannel board
        10. Pocket chart
        11. Children’s file box
        12. Bookcase
        13. Bulletin board
        14. Carpet, rug, or soft floor covering
        15. Chart stand or wall-mounted wing clamps
        16. Wastebasket
   ii. Writing and Prewriting Materials
      1. Paper (scratch, lined, newsprint, and typing paper in a
         variety of sizes) table file or index cards
2. Paper storage shelf writing tools (crayons, nontoxic washable felt markers, and soft pencils in handy contact-covered containers) primary typewriter small, sturdy typewriter table or desk
3. Word boxes
4. Picture dictionary
5. Wall-displayed alphabet guides
6. Cutouts of colorful alphabet letters
7. Tabletop chalkboards with chalk
8. Blank book skeletons
9. Scissors
10. Tape
11. Erasers
12. Alphabet letter stamps and ink pads
13. Tracing envelopes, patterns, wipe-off cloth
14. Chart paper
15. Magnet board with alphabet letters
16. Hole punch yarn write-on, wipe-off boards
17. Stick-on notes
18. Notepads
19. Pencil sharpener
20. Envelopes baskets, desk trays, and flat boxes
21. Stationery brass paper fasteners set of printscript strips with attending children’s and staff’s names
22. Stickers
23. Glue sticks
24. Stencils

iii. Reading and Prereading Materials
1. Books (including child-made examples)
2. Book and audiovisual combinations (readalongs)
3. Cutouts of favorite story characters rebus story charts
4. Alphabetized children’s names chart.

iv. Speech Materials
1. Puppets and puppet theaters flannel board sets
2. Language games

v. Audiovisual Equipment
1. Overhead projector
2. Record, tape, or CD/DVD player; headsets; and jacks
3. Story records language master, recording cards
4. Picture files
5. Television screen and VCR
6. Computer and printer
7. Video camera
8. Digital camera
9. Adults usually supervise use of audiovisual equipment in a language center, and a number of the simpler
machines can be operated by children after a brief training period
  a. Tape recorders, CD/DVD players, and headsets require careful introduction by the teacher

III. The Teacher’s Role in Language Centers
  a. Teachers are congenial, interested companions for the children
     i. Sharing books
     ii. Helping them with projects
     iii. Recording their dictation
     iv. Playing and demonstrating language games
     v. Making words, word lists, signs, or charts
     vi. Helping children use the center’s equipment
  b. Teachers slip in and out as needed and monitor equipment use
     i. Vigorous or noisy play is diverted to other room areas or outside yard areas
     ii. Children who have been given clear introductions to a language center’s materials and clear statements concerning expectations in use of the center’s furnishings may need little help
        1. May be necessary, however, to set rules for the number of children who can use a language center at a given time
  c. Teacher explains new materials that are to become part of the center’s collection
     i. The materials are demonstrated before they are made available to the children
  d. Posting children’s work on the center bulletin board and planning chalkboard activities and printing messages that may catch the children’s attention motivate interest in and use of the center
     i. Plants and occasional fresh flowers in vases add a pleasant touch
     ii. To help children use equipment, materials, and machines on their own, teachers have become inventive, using step-by-step picture charts posted above or near materials
     iii. Color-coded dots make buttons or dials stand out
     iv. Some centers control machine use by giving training sessions in which children obtain “licenses”
        1. Children without licenses need to have adult companions
  e. Teacher may want to make read-along recordings to accompany favorite books
     i. Popularity of read-alongs cannot be denied, nor can the educational benefits
     ii. Children who use read-alongs are learning word recognition as well as some of the more advanced reading skills
     iii. For fun and pleasure, the lure of read-alongs makes them another gateway into the world of books
iv. Teachers should consider the following when making recordings:

1. Narrator’s pacing is important
   a. Cannot be too fast, or the child trying to follow along will be lost
   b. If it is too slow, the child will become bored

2. Inflection and tone of the voice are also vital
   a. Narrator cannot be condescending or patronizing
   b. Neither should there be an attempt to “act out” the story and run the risk of making the story secondary to the performance

3. Teacher needs to estimate audience attention span and use a pleasant page-turning signal

v. With story recordings, either on tape or CD (with or without a story visual), the child is usually a passive listener rather than an active, responsive participant

1. Some commercial manufacturers and teachers have cleverly designed interactive features, but these (though enjoyable and educational) usually cannot match what is possible with a “live” book reading experience and are a second-best activity

IV. Housekeeping and Block Areas

a. Educators emphasize the importance of housekeeping and block areas, both of which encourage large amounts of social interaction and the use of more mature, complex language

b. High levels of dramatic play interaction are also encouraged in theme (unit) centers

c. Teachers design spacious, well-defined, well-stocked (theme-related) partitioned room areas for block play and dramatic play

V. Displays and Bulletin Boards

a. Interesting eye-level wall and bulletin board displays capture the children’s attention and promote discussion

   i. Displaying children’s work (with children’s permission), names, and themes based on their interests increases their feelings of accomplishment and their sense of pride in their classroom

   ii. Displays that involve active child participation are suggested

      1. Many can be designed to change daily or weekly

b. Printscript is used on bulletin boards with objects, pictures, or patterns

   i. Book pockets, picture hooks, 1/4-inch elastic attached to clothespins, and sticky bulletin board strips allow pieces to be added and removed

VI. Chalkboard Activities

a. Tracing templates and colored chalk

   i. Using a sharp tool, teacher cuts large plastic coffee can lids into a variety of patterns
ii. Suspend the patterns on cord (or elastic with clothespins) over the chalkboard

b. Pattern games
   i. Draw Figure 18–9 on the chalkboard
   ii. Ask the children what shape comes next in the pattern
   iii. Then draw Figure 18–10 and see whether the children can make a line path from the dog to the doghouse

VII. Audiovisual Equipment
   a. Budgets often determine the availability of audiovisual materials in a center
      i. Care of equipment and awareness of operating procedures are important
      ii. Special fund-raising projects, rental agreements, borrowing arrangements, or donations have secured audiovisuals for some programs
      iii. Machine's instruction manual should be studied for the proper care and maintenance necessary for efficient use
   b. Audiovisual equipment that enriches a center’s language arts program activities:
      i. Camera (Including Polaroid and VideoCameras)
         1. Can be used to provide images and photos that are useful in speaking activities, displays, and games
      ii. Projector and Screens
         1. Common home, school, field trip, and community scenes can be discussed, written about (experience stories), or used for storytelling
      iii. Lite-bord™
         1. Special display board that uses nontoxic erasable crayons for making colorful drawings and words that glow
      iv. Video Cameras
         1. Children enjoy being recorded while displaying and explaining their creations
         2. Has multiple uses
      v. Overhead Projectors, Screens, and Transparencies
         1. Stories with silhouettes or numerous transparency activities can be designed
         2. Small patterns and alphabet letters can be enlarged and copied by teachers for a variety of uses
         3. McDonald and Simons suggest drawing or placing images on the screen while storytelling or reading poetry
         4. Meier recommends supplying children with overhead projector sheets, or other kinds of plastic sheets, so that they can project their images and words onto a large screen
            a. Some, but not all, picture books work well with this instructional technique
b. If text and illustration appear on the same page, this type of sharing is recommended
c. Teachers may have limited access to equipment used to make transparencies, but if available, the author strongly recommends this type of alternative storybook reading
d. Illustrations can be enlarged and enjoyed
e. Text appears giant-sized

vi. Opaque Projector
   1. Pages of picture books can be projected on wall areas to offer a new way to read books
   2. Guessing games are also possible
   3. Characters from picture books can become life-size companions
c. Listening center equipment
   i. Headsets accommodating up to eight children at one time adapt to cassette, CD, and record players
      1. Volume control is set on the jack box
   ii. CD Players
      1. Most centers have this piece of equipment
      2. Commercial suppliers of story CDs are plentiful
   iii. Digital Camera
      1. Classroom photographs can be displayed on the computer, and prints can be made for display
      2. Photo printers are available from many manufacturers
   iv. Digital Camcorder
      1. Classroom action photography can be displayed on television sets and computers, or prints can be made
v. Pocket Wall Charts with Stands
   1. This handy teacher's aid displays alphabet letters, words, sentences, shapes, pictures, colors, names, and so on
   2. Easy to use
   3. Teachers prefer see-through pocket styles (these can be teacher-made)
vii. Big Book Storage Rack
   1. See-through individual hanging bags can be used for big books and oversized materials
   2. This visual solves the problem of storing large items
viii. Computer
1. Besides computer use with software programs and use as a word processor, the computer has become a versatile piece of equipment

ix. Tape Recorders
1. Still a popular audiovisual aid that is used in early childhood centers
2. Tape recorder opens up many activity ideas
3. Suggestions for language development activities with tape recorders:
   a. Record children’s comments about their artwork or project
      i. “Tell me about . . .” is a good starter
      ii. Put the tape and artwork together in the language center so that it is available for the children’s use
   b. Let the children record their comments about a group of plastic cars, human figures, animals, and so on, after they arrange them as they wish
      i. Have children discuss photographs or magazine pictures
   c. Record a child’s comments about a piece of fruit that she has selected from a basket of mixed fruit
   d. Record a “reporter’s” account of a recent field trip
   e. Gather a group of common items, such as a mirror, comb, brush, and toothbrush
      i. Let the child describe how these items are used
   f. Record a child’s description of peeling an orange or making a sandwich with common spreads and fillings
   g. Record a child’s comments about her block structures
      i. Take a Polaroid photo and make both tape and photo available in the listening and looking area

x. Television Sets and VCRs
1. Can be purchased as separate units or as combined machines
2. Children’s classic literature is available
3. Local video rental stores and public libraries stock a variety of titles
4. Active discussion of what is viewed is recommended

xi. Discussion or Study Prints
1. Collection of large posters, photographs, mounted magazine pictures, and life-size book characters can be used in activities
2. Visuals can increase child verbalization and serve as creative "jumping off" spots

d. The use of picture files
   i. Picture files consisting of collections of drawings and photographs are made available to children in classroom language centers
      1. Teachers find they are invaluable motivators for many language-related child activities
      2. Magazine photos and photos showing classroom scenes or attending children are popular with children
      3. Images can be rotated and used to supplement a present course of study
   ii. It is a good idea to start with enlarged photographs of each child and staff (affix to a firm backing)
      1. Resources for pictures include coloring books, shape books, inexpensive children's books, calendars, catalogs, trade journals, travel folders, and toy advertisements
   iii. Suggested activities include:
      1. Writing captions
      2. Storytelling from a series of pictures
      3. Giving names to animal pictures
      4. Finding hidden objects
      5. Categorizing pictures
      6. Finding objects that have alphabet letters printed on them
      7. Putting illustrations in a sequence and telling a story
      8. Matching pictures with related objects
      9. Finding alphabet letters in signs
      10. Identifying logos or outdoor signs from familiar fast-food restaurants or other local businesses
      11. Singing or creating a song to go with a picture
      12. Rhyming with pictures
      13. Finding things of the same shape, color, and category
      14. Classifying pictures by season
      15. Making a sound to fit a picture
      16. Writing a letter to someone shown in a picture
      17. Finding an object in the classroom that looks like something in a picture
      18. Choosing a favorite from a picture collection of food or other objects
      19. Labeling everything in a picture
      20. Finding things that start with the same alphabet letter sound
      21. Making an alphabet book as a group project or promoting each child's creation of an individual alphabet book

e. Technology and literacy learning
i. What do early childhood educators believe concerning the use of technology?
   1. Most will agree that machines, whether computers or other audiovisuals, can teach, support, assist, motivate, and be used for the practice and application of literacy skills
   2. Technology cannot “be the teacher of literacy,” but it can be a useful tool in assessing and tracking children’s literacy skill development

ii. More academic research is necessary to help educators and families understand how both school and home electronic media affect the informal learning of young children
   1. Some manufacturers and associations such as Microsoft and the national PTA (Parent-Teachers Association) are urging parents to use “P A C T” to determine what types of media are appropriate for young children
      a. “P” stands for parental involvement
      b. “A” is for determining what a child can access online
      c. “C” is for selecting content deemed appropriate for little ones
      d. “T” stands for time, as in how long children can play a game console, TV or computer

iii. New products are building in features that encourage children’s group play (Nintendo Wii) and other features such as co-viewing

VIII. Planning Language Centers and Computer Centers
   a. Once rooms or areas are designated as language centers, staff members classify materials into “looking and listening” or “working with” categories
      i. Display, storage, working space, and looking and listening areas are determined
      ii. Activities that require concentration are screened off when possible
      iii. Many different arrangements of materials and equipment within a language arts center are possible
         1. Most centers rearrange furnishings until the most functional arrangement is found
   b. Many children like to escape noise with a favorite book or puppet
      i. Most centers provide these quiet retreats within a language arts center
      ii. School staffs have found creative ways of providing private space
      iii. Old footed bathtubs with soft pillows, packing crates and barrels, pillow-lined closets with doors removed, tepees, tents, and screened-off couches and armchairs have been found workable in some classroom language arts areas
c. With the fears mentioned earlier in this text concerning the overuse of television and videos, some educators see computer programs as offering a “cartoon world” rather than the real experiences and human interactions upon which real knowledge and literacy depends
   i. Early childhood educators realize that computer skills and knowledge may be necessary in elementary school grades
      1. They may be unsure about the best time to introduce them to young children

d. Slowly but steadily, computer centers are becoming standard in three-and four-year-olds’ preschool classrooms
   i. Staffing, expense, and time for teacher preview of programs are important considerations
   ii. Many educators agree that computer centers are compatible with developmentally appropriate practice
   iii. Computers can offer problem solving, creative experiences, and literacy opportunities
   iv. Benefits cited by many early childhood advocates of child computer use include:
      1. Child cooperation and turn taking are promoted
      2. The need for adult supervision is minimal once “rule use” is accepted and initial child training on mechanics has taken place
      3. Children can work at their own speed
      4. Opportunities for child collaboration, mentoring, negotiation, and joint solutions to problems are provided
      5. Use builds children’s self-confidence and also builds children’s feelings of independence
   v. Benefits related to language arts include children’s:
      1. Verbal interactions with a peer partner or others
      2. Experiences with alphabet letters, print, and words
      3. Ability to see uses of print, which include recording, informing, sending, and receiving messages
      4. Opportunity to create literary works that then can be recorded
      5. Experience in making greeting cards
      6. Exposure to rhyme
      7. Opportunity to match letters, patterns, rhymes, and words with pictorial representations
      8. Exposure to visual and interactive story-books

e. Teachers with computers in their classrooms will agree that it is appropriate to step in when children are frustrated or lack necessary user skills
   i. Tend to offer minimal help if they believe the child can work out a problem on her own, thereby allowing the child to experience mastery and the resulting feeling of accomplishment

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ii. Most teachers periodically join children at the computer to ask questions or make comments that encourage the expansion of skill.

f. Some educators are concerned about the fact that some elementary school children and adolescents have displayed obsessive and addictive behaviors, and have indulged in computer or video game overuse.
   i. “Gamers” have less social contact with peers and less interest in reading, which affects their school performance.

g. Centers develop simple computer area rules that are appropriate to their classroom, children, and equipment.
   i. Rules usually involve clean hands, number of children allowed at one time, how to ask for help, taking turns, time allowed per turn, use of earphones, and what training is required before use.

h. Research seems to suggest that three- and four-year-old children who use computer programs that support and reinforce the major objectives of their curricula have significantly greater developmental gains when compared with children who have not had computer experiences in similar classrooms.
   i. Among the gain areas researched were nonverbal skills, verbal skills, problem solving, and conceptual skills.
   ii. Computer program use has been found to improve the speech skills of children with dyslexia and other language-based learning disabilities.
      i. Researchers noted language comprehension improved to normal, near-normal, or above normal in children who had been 2 to 3 years behind peers in speech skills.
      ii. The findings are especially encouraging for children who have difficulty learning to talk (developmental dysphasia) or who have subsequent reading problems (developmental dyslexia).

j. For preschool classrooms, educators recommend an initial training period, turn taking, cooperative learning in small groups, peer tutoring, hands-on experience, waiting lists, and a sufficient number of adults who make an “adult time” investment.
   i. Software variety should also be offered.

k. Software selection.
   i. Developmentally appropriate integration begins with selecting hardware and software that will complement goals.
   ii. Software features to check:
      1. Does not include violence.
      2. Provides positive verbal and visual cues and responses (feedback).
      3. Allows the child to control pace and action.
      4. Allows option of practicing a skill or moving on.
      5. Supports working alone or with others.
iii. When teachers provide open-ended software that encourages creativity, rather than drill-and-practice software, this is developmentally appropriate.

iv. Open-ended programs encourage children to explore and to extend their thinking:
   1. Spark children’s interest as well as social and cognitive development.

v. Other software features teachers need to examine include:
   1. Content
   2. Age appropriateness
   3. Pacing
   4. Child choices available
   5. Meaningful graphics
   6. Sound, clear directions for yet-to-read children
   7. Approaches to learning
   8. Appropriate cost
   9. Integrity and craftsmanship

vi. Four critical steps to maximize children learning through computer use:
   1. Selecting developmental software
   2. Selecting developmental web sites
   3. Integrating these resources into the curriculum
   4. Selecting computers to support these learning experiences

vii. Web sites offer many rich educational opportunities and provide opportunities that appear to enhance:
   a. Problem solving
   b. Critical thinking skills
   c. Decision making
   d. Language skills
   e. Knowledge
   f. Research skills
   g. Ability to integrate information
   h. Social skills
   i. Self-esteem

I. Computer location
   i. Ideal classroom location for computers is a visible location where monitors can be seen throughout the classroom
      1. Enables supervision and quick assistance
   ii. Computer center or activity area in a preschool or kindergarten classroom will operate well with two or three computers and one or two printers