

Capstone Early Childhood Education

Study of child development
and observation techniques

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Observation techniques:

Anecdotal notes: An anecdotal record is an authentic assessment method that describes objectively an event or incident that happened during the day. It's brief and states only what the child does without any judgment or personal opinion. It describes the context in which the event happened and includes other people's behaviors at the time of the observation (family members, teachers, or peers.) as it affects the "focus child's" behavior. the observer can later add details to the anecdotal note and attach it to a specific learning area or developmental domain

Running Records: Running record is a detailed, objective, narrative that describes the child's behavior during a given period of time within the context of the classroom activities. Running records give the teacher the ability to assess the child's development and to plan accordingly for coming activities.

Observation techniques (continued):

Developmental check list: Developmental check list is the list of the milestones (physical, cognitive, social-emotional and language) corresponding to the child age. used to assess children development and to watch for “red flags” that may be a sign of a delay or the need of extra work on a specific developmental domain.

videotapes and photos: In a busy Early childhood classroom videotaping and photo taking is an effective way to document children’s development. Capturing moments and allow the teacher to go back to this videos and pictures latter to analyze theme.

I will use these observation techniques according to different situations and circumstances, as they all provide an objective picture of the child. These techniques will help me keep track of my observations and allow me to perceive and analyze the whole child, reflect and respond in order to make the learning experience responsive to children.

Descriptive Review:

Teacher's curiosity is the first step in the descriptive review process. When teachers ask meaningful questions about a child and use observation techniques that are objective, unbiased, and without labeling the child or giving assumptions, then reflect on those observations. They can draw a whole picture of the child as a learner who has his unique way of making meaning of his surrounding, the environment, and interactions with others. The descriptive review covers different aspects of the child; learning style, mode of thinking, child temperament, interest, and choices. The review also includes relations with adults and peers, physical presence, and the child's cognitive and language development. When these aspects are put together and shared with colleagues and caregivers (with respect to the child's privacy) we can understand the child's behaviors and respond by affording the appropriate environment and the appropriate scaffolding and challenges to help the child in his learning journey.



Physical development

Observation Methods: Physical development checklist/photos

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yYLrDiPH9sk>

Physical Development Check list		
Gross Motor Skills	Independently	With help
Able to walk upstairs while holding an object	✓	
Walks up/downstairs alternating feet	✓	
Jumps over an object and lands with both feet together	✓	
Locomotor skills (run, walk, jump, skip)	✓	
Fine Motor Skills		
Handedness is well established	✓	
Uses non-dominant hand to assist and stabilize the use of objects	✓	

Physical Development (continued)

Photos	Comment
	<p>Toby leading the way to the treasure, walking over the obstacle course. He is walking upstairs alternating feet while holding the treasure map in his right hand.</p>
	<p>Toby kneeling and using both hands to hold the shovel and digging into the sand.</p>
	<p>Toby opening the treasure box using his hands and the shovel.</p>



Descriptive Review

(physical Development)

Toby is a 4-year-old boy in kindergarten. He is slim and average height compared to his peers. During this observation, Toby was wearing a blue sun hat, a long gray sleeve shirt, black pants, and sneakers. Toby is very energetic and physically present; he moves steadily and quickly from place to place. He can run, jump, climb and slide, during the observation, Toby was able to walk upstairs on the obstacle course while holding the treasure map and walked down the slid. He was able to jump and land on the bridge with both feet together. He demonstrated the ability to balance and coordinate his body movement while participating in this treasure hunt activity.

Most of the time Toby has a serious facial expression and uses words in a firm clear tone that shows his determination and leading skills. During this observation, Toby demonstrated a great level of agility and alertness. He was able to lead and go over the obstacle course easily and quicker compared to some of his peers.

He also demonstrated great fine motor skills and muscle strength as he was able to use the shovel to dig and he was able to break open the treasure chest using his hand and the shovel at the same time, which required quite a big effort and coordination.

When Toby found the treasure chest he showed excitement, he grabbed it with both hands and shouted “Yaaay” and handed the treasure chest to his teacher. He confidently nodded his head and said “yes” when the teacher asked, “Is this the right one” Toby and the other kids were sure that it was the right treasure as they all shouted it is sparkly golden and big.



Social/Emotional Development

Observation Method: Anecdotal Record/Photo

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=1&v=HImQK00CQow&feature=emb_logo

Gavin, Aiden, and Emiliano are sitting together around the box of Lego pieces. Each one is making his own Lego piece and talking to each other about what they are making as they work. After a few minutes (3.16min of the video) Gavin leaned on the Lego Box and accidentally knocked down Aiden's Lego. Aiden frowned and put his head down on his knee. Gavin said "Oops Sorry, do you want me to help remake it. Make it cooler, can we help make it cooler." Looking at Aiden and the person holding the camera. He grabbed one of the broken pieces and started to rebuild Aiden's Lego, he put the pieces back and said "there" Aiden then lifted his head up and started to rebuild his Lego with Gavin. They continue working together and at the end Gavin suggested "Do you wanna Make it longer." And grabbed new Lego pieces.

Social emotional Development (continued)

Photos	Comment
 A photograph showing three young boys in a classroom setting. One boy, Aiden, is sitting on the floor looking downcast. Another boy, Gavin, is standing nearby. A third boy is also present. A white plastic bin filled with colorful Lego bricks is on the floor.	<p>Aiden gets upset after Gavin accidentally knocked down his Legos.</p>
 A photograph showing two boys, Aiden and Gavin, sitting on the floor and working together to rebuild a structure made of colorful Lego bricks. They are both focused on the task.	<p>Aiden And Gavin working together, rebuilding Aiden's Legos</p>
 A photograph showing the final result of the Lego structure. It is a tall, colorful tower made of various Lego bricks, standing on a purple carpet. A white plastic bin filled with more Lego bricks is visible in the background.	<p>The final result!</p>



Descriptive review

(Social emotional development)

Gavin, Aiden, and Emiliano are engaged in Parallel play, they seem to enjoy being together talking, and showing their work to each other. Observing Gavin during this video I notice that he is doing a good job interacting with others he was right in the center of the conversation, asking, answering, and interacting with his peers. Gavin demonstrated an advanced level of understanding others' "theory of mind." He was able to understand that Aiden was upset after he accidentally knocked his Legos. Aiden expresses his feeling using facial expressions and body language, he frowned, puts his hands together on his knee, and puts his head down on his hands. Gavin was able to understand Aiden's body language and realized that Aiden was sad. Gavin moved right into the action and suggests rebuilding Aiden's Lego. Gavin's reaction demonstrates a great level of empathy, prosocial, and altruistic as he didn't expect anything in return. Gavin's Social skills impacted Aiden's behavior and switches from being upset to being more open to Gavin's suggestion and they both end up having fun rebuilding Aiden's Legos.



Cognitive Development

Observation method: Anecdotal Record

<https://vimeo.com/387705627>

In the video Sarah (given name) is participating in the class science presentation about plants. Her part is to explain what a root is. Using clear language and advanced vocabulary Sarah explained that “Carrots are root vegetable, roots have an important job, roots absorb water through osmosis. Water likes to move from a place with a lot of water to a place with little water, from the soil to the root. Carrots absorb water to make green leafy stem like this.” And she pointed to the leaves of the bunch of Carrots she has in front of her. Sarah then moved to explain the process of how the roots absorb water and minerals from the soil using a pumping machine. Sarah explains how the pump machine is similar to the roots in absorbing the water and pumping it up to the leaves through the stem.





Descriptive Review

(Cognitive Development)

Sarah and her colleagues are working together to understand and figure out how plants grow. Sarah demonstrated a great understanding of new concepts such as how the water travels from the soil through the stem to the leaves. She uses new vocabulary (absorb, osmosis, stem, roots) she was able to understand and explain what osmosis is. Sarah and her colleagues use models and simple machines as visual stimuli to help them focus and remembering information and to test their understanding and consolidate new concepts. Sarah can understand and memorize new information. as she explained the process, she was able to remember new vocabulary and demonstrated a deep understanding of the process. Sarah demonstrated a great level of executive functions and the use of strategies for remembering information.



Language Development

Observation Method: Running Record

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DbdL6U006iU>

Running record:

Beginning of the video: During this observation, David is participating in a small group oral activity with two other students, Sally and Melody. The teacher asked the participants to sit, and she sat in front of them. David sat in a cross-legged position and looked at the teacher. The teacher then asked the group “do you know what these things are?” Holding two hula-hoops. David said, “they are yellow” and the teacher said, “they are yellow hula-hoops.” The teacher starts to explain the rules of the activity when she pointed to one hoop and draw a circle using her pointer David said “Circle.” The teacher confirmed and continued her explanation. Participants were asked to identify pre-selected items from a bag and place them inside the hoop with the sign “block” center or “Art” center. The teacher started first she put her hand inside the bag and without looking at what inside it, grabbed a marker and asked the students “here is one thing I took (marker) do you think this is something I would use in the block, or this is something I would use for art.” David was looking quietly as Sally and Melody were answering the questions.

1:40 min: Next, the teacher graded a block and David said “square.” The teacher said, “it’s a square, do you think it’s from block or art David?” Sally said Blocks, and David nodded his head yes, the teacher asked again. What do you think David? David replied “Blocks.” the teacher said, “you think blocks too!” David then pushed himself up and leaned toward the hoop with the sign “block” and pointed to the block sign and said, “there is another square.” The teacher confirmed David’s observation and asked, “what would I do with a square?” Sally said, “play with it” and David repeated after her “play.”

2:20 min: The teacher asked the students if they would like to have a turn. And asked David if he would like to start first David nodded yes. He reached inside the bag and grabbed an item. The teacher asked David “where would you use that? Would you use that in the block center or the Art center?” David Pointed toward the Art center and said, “Art center.” The teacher said put it in the Art circle.” David pushed himself forward leaned on his left hand and with the right hand he puts the item inside the art circle, the teacher asked” what would you do with that David? David replied “paint,” the teacher said, “you would use it for painting.” And David nodded his head.

3:00 min : now it’s Sally’s turn to pick an item from the bag.



Descriptive Review

(Language Development)

David seems to be engaged in this activity, as he was listening carefully to the instructions and looking at the teacher while explaining the game's rules. David uses words and gestures to participate in the game. He would use one- or three-word sentences to answer questions (yellow, square, paint, cut,) and point or nod his head. In the minute 3:23 of the video, David said Cut and uses his pointer and middle finger to show how he would use the scissors. He also said airplane and waved his hand to show the airplane flying (5:14 min). He also said that he has three doors in his house and uses his fingers to show the number three (6:22). He stood up, walk and said: "go like that" to explain what the sign "walk" means (6:45). David was able to identify yellow, blue, square, and other items during this activity. And he can use short sentences to express his ideas "I have a door in my house." David seems to have no difficulty following instructions and conversations. He can understand and answer simple questions using words (one to three words sentences) and gestures. And recognize and name the items used during this activity.

Conclusion

In general, we use observation and documentation in Early Childhood Education as a tool to support best practices. We all know that for a speaker to successfully deliver his speech and convince the audience to take action is to know the audience. Knowing the audience is the key to unlock the barriers that prevent the connection between the audience and the speaker. Knowing the audience's culture, background, interests, needs, fears, and expectations makes the connection not only easier but pleasant and reciprocal. Observing, thus, knowing the child is challenging and rewarding at the same time. When writing observations, the challenge is to be objective to put our personal opinion aside and focus on the child. Our Observations should not be limited to formal observations. It must be an ongoing, heart-filled process to draw the whole picture of the child in different circumstances, events, and times of the day. An effective observation, one that integrate all the developmental domains, help the teacher create a connection with the child, have a better understanding of the child as a learner and thus, respond effectively to the child's needs which is the core of Developmentally appropriate practice.