

MODULE 3

MAKING SENSE OF OBSERVATION DATA: POST-OBSERVATION ANALYSIS

...It is tempting to provide immediate feedback at the conclusion of the observation; however, taking the time to analyze observational data and to think about the conference that is to follow increases the success and the power of the...cycle.

—J. Caruso and T. Fawcett (1999)

CONTEXT

The third step of the Professional Conferencing Process is **post-observation analysis**. In this step, both the Mentor-Coach and the protégé have a chance to reflect on what happened during the observation and to prepare for the upcoming reflective conference. The insights that they gain from this analysis sets the stage for rich conversations about the protégé's practice. It informs decisions that the Mentor-Coach and the protégé make about follow-up steps.

In this module, you will learn new techniques to enhance your analysis skills. You also have an opportunity to practice these skills through case studies.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By completing this module, you will:

- Understand the importance of reflecting on observation data for both you and the protégé
- Learn new techniques to review and reflect on observation data
- Learn and practice how to use information gathered from a formal observation tool.



MAKING SENSE OF INFORMATION FROM OBSERVATIONS

Allowing Time for Reflection

Responding to a protégé’s eagerness to receive immediate feedback after an observation can present a dilemma to Mentor-Coaches. Some Mentor-Coaches meet with protégés right after the observation. Others share the completed observation tool or their notes with their protégés right away. Although these approaches may seem more responsive to staff members, Mentor-Coaches need time to reflect on what they saw and heard and about ways to support protégés in changing their teaching practice. Protégés need time to think about what occurred during the observation and what they need from Mentor-Coaches.

Providing instant feedback can overwhelm protégés who are insecure in their practice. It may also prompt protégés to make a quick fix that they don’t understand. For example, it may not help protégés to simply tell them to put more books in their classroom. It is more important to explore with them why having more books is important and how they can use them effectively with children.

Rather than struggling to provide instant feedback, it is better to set aside time between the observation and the reflective conference. To help ease their concerns, tell protégés how much you enjoyed the observation and hearing their thoughts about it. Tell them you need time to reflect and that you want the protégés to have time to think about their questions and insights. Although it is important to allow time for reflection, Mentor-Coaches also need to be sure to schedule the conference while it is still fresh.

What Mentor-Coaches Can Do:

- Reflect on what they saw and heard.
- Think about ways to support protégés.

What Protégés Can Do:

- Think about what happened during the observation.
- Think about what they need from Mentor-Coaches.

Discussion Questions

1. How do you encourage protégés to reflect on their observation experience?

2. What strategies have you used to ease protégés’ anxiety between the observation and the reflective conference?

Using Critical Incidents

In analyzing information about an observation, a Mentor-Coach can use the objective notes that include what she or he saw and heard, along with questions and comments that came to mind. Videotapes of the observation can also be very helpful. (Unit 4 provides information on videotaping a classroom observation.)

When reviewing observation notes, a Mentor-Coach needs to ask herself what she learned about the protégé’s teaching and the children’s learning related to the goal of the observation. By focusing on the interactions between the protégé and children, and not on children alone, a Mentor-Coach can learn about the protégé’s strengths and areas needing improvement.

Important moments in the protégé’s teaching, called **critical incidents**, often give a Mentor-Coach insights about the protégé’s work and clues about that protégé’s knowledge and understanding.

A critical incident can be an example of a major improvement in a protégé’s practice. Or, it can represent a challenge for the protégé. Frequently, critical incidents take the form of **missed opportunities**.

Mentor-Coaches can identify critical incidents by asking:

- Is this incident consistent with other events I observed? If not, are there factors that may have contributed to this particular incident?
- What did I see that makes me think that the protégé understands an aspect of language and literacy?
- What did I see that makes me think that the protégé is struggling with an aspect of language and literacy?
- Did one incident stand out? If yes, what did it tell me?
- What did I *not* see that I want to bring to the protégé’s attention?

Record some of your thoughts about critical incidents:

Discussion Questions

1. What examples of critical incidents have you observed in your own work?

2. How did these important moments shape your feedback to your protégé?



Looking at Patterns of Behavior

Patterns in a protégé’s behavior provide clues about her or his understanding of effective practice. Notes about repeated or similar actions during the observation can help a Mentor-Coach gather clues about what the protégé thinks is important or a challenge. For example, a protégé who always labels preschool children’s drawings with their names in upper case letters demonstrates understanding of the importance of labeling. He or she might not, however, understand that children need to see their names as they typically appear in print—with an initial upper case letter followed by lower case letters.

Once they have identified critical incidents, missed opportunities and patterns of behavior, Mentor-Coaches can list topics that they want to explore during the reflective conference with the protégé.

Patterns of behavior:

- Can provide clues about protégés’ knowledge and understanding
- Can be identified by reviewing observation notes for repeated or similar actions
- Can be identified by organizing observation notes into broad categories (e.g., conversations with children).

Discussion Questions

1. What examples of behavior patterns have you observed?

2. How did these practices shape your feedback to your protégé?

EXERCISE 1: CASE STUDY ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

DIRECTIONS: This exercise provides an opportunity to apply what you have learned about analysis of observation data. Select either the case study about Keesha, a teacher in a toddler classroom, or about Marie, a preschool teacher.

Case Study 1: KEESHA

Get acquainted with Keesha and the goals for improving language and literacy in her classroom by reading the following:

Keesha started volunteering in her daughter's Head Start preschool classroom six years ago. She found out that she loved to work with children. The next year, she was hired as an assistant teacher. During the next four years, she earned an Associate's Degree in early childhood education.

Last year, the program added Early Head Start (EHS) services in the center where Keesha works. There were few trained infant-toddler teachers in the community. So, the program sponsored a course on infant-toddler development for EHS staff. Keesha enrolled in these classes and became a teacher in one of the new toddler classrooms. When she volunteered to take on the classroom, she said to the EHS manager, "I am not sure that I will be comfortable working with infants. But, I'm sure that a lot of what I know about preschoolers applies to toddlers as well."

After six months in the toddler room, Keesha doubts her decision. She has asked her Mentor-Coach to help her support the toddlers' language and literacy development. "I don't feel like I'm teaching the children anything," Keesha lamented. "Once we get through all the routines of the day, there is very little time left for literacy!"

The Mentor-Coach engages Keesha in a conversation about what she does to support her goals for the toddlers' language and literacy development. Keesha says that she doesn't know which of her current activities are actually preparing the children to read. Sensing Keesha's frustration, the Mentor-Coach offers to conduct a formal observation in her classroom, "I've found that an observation provides both me and the teacher with insights about new directions to take." She and Keesha agree that conducting an observation using the sections of the *ITERS* related to the environment and activities would be a good next step.

Now, turn to **STEP-Doc 2.3a**. Review the notes that Keesha's Mentor-Coach prepared as she observed Keesha's classroom using selected items on the *Infant-Toddler Environmental Rating Scale (ITERS)*. Think about what the notes tell you about Keesha's practice and analyze the data using the **Observation Data Analysis Guide**.

Case Study 2: ANN MARIE

Get acquainted with Ann Marie and her goals for improving language and literacy in her classroom by reading the following.

Ann Marie is a veteran teacher who is near retirement. In her career, her program has changed its philosophy about the preschool experience. When she began teaching in Head Start, socialization and play were the core of XYZ's Head Start curriculum. Ann Marie has a CDA and a number of college credits that she could use towards an Associate's Degree. She says that she is not interested in completing the degree because she hopes to retire in the next two years. Through her years of experience, Ann Marie has developed classroom management practices that allow the day to flow smoothly. Focusing on language and literacy practices is new for her.

In a recent conversation, her Mentor-Coach asked about specific strategies that Ann Marie uses to promote early writing and alphabet knowledge. She replied that she has always provided markers and crayons in the art area and gives children pencils when the class is working on special projects. She also mentioned a "letter of the week" approach that she uses with the children. Ann Marie and her Mentor-Coach agreed that an observation of her classroom using sections of the ELLCO related to the contents of the classroom, opportunities for children's choice and initiative, classroom climate, and approaches to children's writing would be the next step in their work together.

Now, turn to **STEP-Doc 2.3b**. Review the notes that Ann Marie's Mentor-Coach prepared as she observed her classroom using four sections of the ELLCO. Think about what the notes tell you about Ann Marie's practice. Begin to analyze the data using the **Observation Data Analysis Guide** provided.

Discussion Questions

1. Was the data analysis exercise you chose difficult? If so, what aspect did you find most challenging?
-
-

2. Did your conclusions differ from those of others in your group? How?
-
-

3. Analyzing case study information can be considerably different from analyzing information from classroom observations. What factors will you think about as you are making sense of information from your own observations?
-
-



EXERCISE 2: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Think back on the information in this module:

- Understanding about the importance of the observation for both the Mentor-Coach and the protégé.
- Learning about new techniques to review and reflect on observation data.
- Learning and practicing how to use information collected from a formal observation tool.

Take a few moments to reflect on these questions:

1. What did you learn about your knowledge and skills in analyzing observation data?

2. What are some skills you would like to practice? What additional knowledge do you want to acquire?

3. How will this information influence your work as a Mentor-Coach?

Based on your reflections, revisit your Professional Development Plan and make any necessary updates.

WRAP-UP

- Continue on to the next module in the unit (Unit 2, Module 4). Complete the exercises alone or with a colleague.
- Before the next facilitated session, be sure to complete Module 1 in Unit 3.
- Note the time and location of the next *Steps to Success* session (Unit 3, Module 2).

STEP-Doc 2.3a: Notes from Keesha’s Classroom

Review the modified ITERS Score Sheet and the ITERS explanation pages that follow.

MODIFIED SCORE SHEET

Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale – Revised Edition

Thelma Harms, Debby Cryer, and Richard M. Clifford (2002)*

Observer: ELMC Observer Code: Date of Observation: $\frac{0}{m} \frac{2}{m} / \frac{1}{d} \frac{4}{d} / \frac{X}{y} \frac{X}{y}$

Center/School: XYZ Head Start Center Code: Number of children identified with disabilities:

Room: Toddler Room #2 Room Code: Check type(s) of disability: physical/sensory cognitive/language
 social/emotional other:

Teacher(s) Keesha 2 Teacher Code:

Number of staff present:

Number of children enrolled in class: 10

Highest number center allows in class at one time: 10

Highest number of children present during observation: 10

Ages of children enrolled: 24 months

36 months

Time observation began: 9:30 AM PM

Time observation ended: 11:30 AM PM

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
|--------------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|---|---|---|
| 5. Display for children | | | | | | | | NOTES: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The classroom contained some colorful pictures at children’s eye-level. Photographs of children and their families were too high for toddlers to see. An alphabet chart containing upper- and lower-case letters was displayed next to the bookshelf in the cozy area. Heavy emphasis on letters and numbers in the materials displayed. All items in the room are labeled. Keesha was observed talking to a child who was looking at a picture of a truck that hung near the block area. Instead of engaging child in discussion about the truck, Keesha pointed out that the word “truck” was printed underneath the picture and she spelled out each letter. |
| | Y N | Y N | Y N | Y N | NA | | | |
| 1.1 | <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | | |
| 1.2 | <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | | |
| | | | <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | | |

Excerpted from *Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scales—Revised Edition* by Thelma Harms, Debby Cryer, and Richard M. Clifford. Copyright 2003 by Thelma Harms, Debby Cryer, and Richard M. Clifford. Used by permission of the publisher, Teachers College Press, and the authors.

| 15. Fine Motor | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | NOTES: |
|----------------|--|-----|--|-----|--|-----|--|---|--|
| | Y N | | Y N | | Y N | | Y N | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fine-motor materials are stored in separate bins on a low shelf next to a rug. Children have access to these materials throughout the day. • Materials included: large stringing beads, large interlocking blocks, alphabet blocks, large pegs and pegboard, and plastic alphabet letters. • When asked about other fine-motor materials, Keesha replied that she rotates the materials about every two weeks to keep the children’s interest. • Crayons and large pencils were stored on a high shelf out of the children’s reach. |
| 1.1 | <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | 3.1 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | 5.1 | <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | 7.1 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | | |
| 1.2 | <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | 3.2 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | 5.2 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | 7.2 | <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | |
| | | 3.3 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | |

| 31. Group Play Activities | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | NA | NOTES: |
|---------------------------|--|-----|--|-----|--|-----|--|----|----|--|
| | Y N | | Y N | | Y N | | Y N | NA | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A daily schedule is posted in the classroom. The schedule includes a full-group circle time right before lunch and a small group activity mid-morning. • Keesha selected four children to participate in the small-group activity. One child refused to join the group, saying “Don’t want to” and returning to the cozy area. Keesha assured him that he could go right back to his play after he participated in the activity with the other children. • Keesha gave the four children paper, crayons, and large pencils and asked them to “write or draw something.” When a child indicated that he/she had finished, Keesha asked questions about what they had drawn and wrote the child’s responses on their papers. She then printed the child’s name on the paper, noting each letter. • The full-group circle time began with the children singing the alphabet song. Keesha then began to read the book <i>A Snowy Day</i> to the entire group. After the first three pages of the book, some of the children got up and left the group. The teacher assistant made repeated attempts to get the children to rejoin the group, but many refused. Keesha was unable to finish reading the entire book and told the children that they would look at it again tomorrow. |
| 1.1 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | 3.1 | <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | 5.1 | <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | 7.1 | <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | | |
| 1.2 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | 3.2 | <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | 5.2 | <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | 7.2 | <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | | |
| 1.3 | <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | 3.3 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | 5.3 | <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | |

Excerpted from *Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scales—Revised Edition* by Thelma Harms, Debby Cryer, and Richard M. Clifford. Copyright 2003 by Thelma Harms, Debby Cryer, and Richard M. Clifford. Used by permission of the publisher, Teachers College Press, and the authors.

ITERS Explanation for Section 5: Display for Children

| Inadequate 1 | 2 | Minimal 3 | 4 | Good 5 | 6 | Excellent 7 |
|--|---|--|--|--|---|---|
| 5. Display for children | | | | | | |
| 1.1 No pictures or other materials displayed for children. | 1.2 Most of display is inappropriate for predominant age group (Ex. materials showing violence; numbers and letters overwhelm display). | 3.1 At least 3 colorful pictures and/or other materials displayed where children can easily see them (Ex. mobiles, photos).* | 3.2 Content of display is generally appropriate (Ex. not frightening; showing things that are meaningful to children). | 5.1 Many colorful, simple pictures, posters, and/or photographs displayed throughout the room. | 5.2 Mobiles and/or other colorful hanging objects for children to look at.* | 7.1 Photographs of children in the group, their families, pets, or other familiar faces displayed on child's eye level. |
| | | | | 5.3 Many items displayed where children can easily see them, some within easy reach. | | 7.2 Most pictures protected from being torn (Ex. clear plastic over pictures). |
| | | | | 5.4 Staff talk to the children about displayed materials.* | | 7.3 New materials added or display changed at least monthly. |
| | | | | | | 7.4 Art work done by toddlers displayed (Ex. scribble pictures, hand prints).* NA permitted. |

***Notes for Clarification**

- 3.1. When the only display is wallpaper with colorful pictures, or a mural painted on the wall, credit can be given for this indicator, but not for 5.1.
- 5.2. To give credit for hanging objects and mobiles, the materials must be able to move in space. Flat picture-like objects hanging against the wall (e.g., colorful quilts, cut-outs) are not counted for this indicator. Hanging plants can be counted.
- 5.4. To give credit, at least 1 instance must be observed during the observation.
- 7.4. Any artwork done by toddlers can be counted, including ditto or coloring book pages that toddlers have scribbled on.

Questions

- 7.3. Do you add to or change what is displayed in your room, such as the pictures on the wall? *If yes, ask:* About how often?

Excerpted from *Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scales—Revised Edition* by Thelma Harms, Debby Cryer, and Richard M. Clifford. Copyright 2003 by Thelma Harms, Debby Cryer, and Richard M. Clifford. Used by permission of the publisher, Teachers College Press, and the authors.

ITERS Explanation for Section 15: Fine Motor

| | Inadequate 1 | 2 | Minimal 3 | 4 | Good 5 | 6 | Excellent 7 |
|--|-----------------|--|--------------|---|-----------|---|----------------|
| ACTIVITIES | | | | | | | |
| 15. Fine motor* | | | | | | | |
| 1.1 No appropriate fine motor materials accessible for daily use.* | | 3.1 Some appropriate fine motor materials accessible for daily use.* | | 5.1 Many and varied appropriate fine motor materials accessible for much of the day.* | | 7.1 Materials rotated to provide variety. | |
| 1.2 Materials are generally in poor repair. | | 3.2 Materials are accessible for much of the day. | | 5.2 Materials are well-organized (Ex. similar toys stored together; sets of toys in separate containers; toys picked up, sorted, and restored as needed). | | 7.2 Materials of different levels of difficulty accessible (Ex. some challenging and some easy for all children in group, including those with disabilities). | |
| | | 3.3 Materials generally in good repair. | | | | | |
| *Notes for Clarification | | | | | | | |
| 1.1, 3.1, 5.1. Examples of appropriate fine motor materials: | | | | | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infants—grasping toys, busy boxes, nested cups, containers to fill and dump, textured toys, cradle gyms. • Toddlers—shape sorting games, large stringing beads, big pegs with peg boards, simple puzzles, pop beads, stacking rings, nesting toys, medium or large interlocking blocks, crayons. | | | | | | | |
| 5.1. "Many" means enough materials for children to use without excessive competition. "Varied" means materials that require different skills (such as grasping, stacking, turning, pushing, pulling, poking, putting together, using thumb and forefinger together, scribbling). Materials should also vary in color, size, shape, texture, sound, and action. | | | | | | | |
| Questions | | | | | | | |
| 7.1. Do you have any additional fine motor materials that you use with the children? <i>If yes, list: Could you please show these to me?</i> | | | | | | | |

Excerpted from *Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scales—Revised Edition* by Thelma Harms, Debby Cryer, and Richard M. Clifford. Copyright 2003 by Thelma Harms, Debby Cryer, and Richard M. Clifford. Used by permission of the publisher, Teachers College Press, and the authors.

ITERS Explanation for Section 31: Group Play Activities

| Inadequate 1 | 2 | Minimal 3 | 4 | Good 5 | 6 | Excellent 7 |
|---|---|--|--|-----------|---|----------------|
| 31. Group play activities* | | | | | | |
| 1.1 Children must often participate in staff-directed activities, even when not interested (Ex. all do art project at same time; forced to sit in story group). | 3.1 Children never forced to participate in group play activities (Ex. children allowed to leave group when they wish and do something else). | 5.1 Staff are flexible and adjust activity as children join or leave the group (Ex. enough materials for all who want to join; make more space for newcomers; stop activity when children's interest is gone). | 7.1 Group activities are set up to maximize children's success (Ex. enough space so children are not crowded; active participation encouraged; book large enough so all can easily see). | | | |
| 1.2 Activities done in groups are usually inappropriate for children (Ex. content too difficult; children not interested; activity lasts too long). | 3.2 Activities done in group are usually appropriate. | 5.2 Size of group is appropriate for age and ability of children (Ex. 2-3 infants; 2-5 toddlers; 4-6 two-year-olds). | 7.2 Staff meet the needs of individual children to encourage participation (Ex. child who is distracted cuddled in teacher's lap; signing added for child with hearing difficulty). | | | |
| 1.3 Staff often behave negatively when children do not participate well in group (Ex. get angry; send child to time-out). | 3.3 Staff are usually positive and acceptant with children during group time. | 5.3 Alternative activities are accessible for children not participating in group. | | | | |

***Notes for Clarification**

Item 31. This item refers to play and learning activities, and not to routines. Score this item NA if group play activities are never used. Group play activities are staff-initiated and have an expectation of child participation. This item does not apply to the less formal group activities that usually occur during free play in which children participate in groups because they are interested in doing the same activity at the same time. Examples of these less formal group activities include a few children looking at a book with a teacher or a few children playing close to one another, doing solitary play with blocks with a teacher supervising.

Excerpted from *Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scales—Revised Edition* by Thelma Harms, Debby Cryer, and Richard M. Clifford. Copyright 2003 by Thelma Harms, Debby Cryer, and Richard M. Clifford. Used by permission of the publisher, Teachers College Press, and the authors.

Observation Data Analysis Guide

| | |
|---|--|
| TEACHER'S NAME | |
| TEACHER'S CLASSROOM LITERACY GOALS | |
| AGREED-ON FOCUS AREA FOR OBSERVATION | |
| DESCRIBE THE CRITICAL EVENTS THE OBSERVER NOTED | |
| DESCRIBE ANY EVIDENT PATTERNS | |
| LIST POINTS TO DISCUSS IN POST-OBSERVATION CONFERENCE | |

STEP-Doc 2.3b: Notes from Ann Marie's Classroom

NOTES FROM ELLCO OBSERVATION

Contents of the Classroom

- Ann Marie developed most of the classroom materials on display. Most coordinate with the “letter of the week.”
- There were few examples of children’s work. Some completed workbook pages from a packaged literacy curriculum were hung near the book area; art projects from the previous week (children’s drawings of their families) were hung near the art area.

Opportunities for Child Choice and Initiative

- Following circle time, children could choose to go to the dramatic play area, the block area, the art area, or to play with puzzles. Areas seemed to have materials that had been there for a while. Children did not rush to the centers. In a subsequent interview with Ann Marie, she said that she refreshes the materials in the areas when children seem to be getting bored.
- During the free-choice period, Ann Marie spent most of her time in the art area helping children with an activity in which they pasted leaves on a piece of colored paper. They also wrote the letter “L” for leaves on the page. When one group of children finished a project, Ann Marie or her assistant selected children from the other classroom areas to join the art area. Some children wandered between areas seemingly without a purpose.

Classroom Climate

- Conversation with children during book reading at circle time did not flow freely. From time to time, Ann Marie stopped reading and asked children to identify letters of key words.
- When singing an alphabet song with Ann Marie during circle time, children didn’t smile but seemed to be concentrating on getting the words right.
- Ann Marie’s tone of voice when talking to children was generally positive. However, most of her interactions with children involved giving directions. She missed several opportunities to engage children in conversation. For example, she went to talk to three boys who were building a structure in the block area. But instead of asking about the tower, she reminded them that they had five minutes to finish up and put the blocks away before circle time.

Approaches to Writing

- The alphabet is hung in the corner of the classroom used for circle time.
- Letter of the week is prominently displayed.
- Some children had written their names on the workbook pages hung near the book area.
- A desk was labeled as a writing area, but no writing materials were apparent, nor were there any in the classroom centers.
- Art area had a few crayons and markers with a limited supply of paper accessible to children.
- Ann Marie and an assistant wrote children's names on art work but did not invite children to try to write their own names. They did help children write the letter "L" on the leaf project they created.

ELLCO Section 2: Contents of the Classroom

Classroom Observation

General Classroom Environment

| | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
|---|---|---|--|--|------------------------|
| | Exemplary | | Basic | | Deficient |
| <p>2. Contents of the Classroom</p> <p>Evidence: Organizer and content of materials and classroom displays</p> <p>Notes:</p> | <p>There is strong evidence of an intentional approach to the organization of materials and displays, coordinated with ongoing learning goals.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Materials are clearly organized in conceptually related groups and are appealing and accessible to children. For example, a science area might contain small magnifying glasses, "samples" to magnify, and pencils and paper for drawing and recording observations. The materials and their organization suggest particular purposes to children. Displays are related to and clearly support current classroom investigations. There is a preponderance of child-generated, original work. Children's work is displayed in ways that reinforce children's sense of their own contributions to the learning community (e.g., at eye level, coordinated with ongoing themes). | <p>There is some evidence of an intentional approach to the organization of materials and displays, coordinated with ongoing learning goals.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some materials are organized in conceptually related groups, but appeal or accessibility to children may be limited. For example, a science area might contain small magnifying glasses, paint color samples, a rock collection, an aquarium, and tweezers. The materials are all science-related, but the links among the materials themselves are not evident. | <p>There is minimal evidence of an intentional approach to the organization of materials and displays, coordinated with ongoing learning goals.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Materials may be stored or arranged in a haphazard manner that limits their appeal and accessibility to children. For example, in an art area, markers may be out of ink, watercolors dried out, or colored pencils unsharpened. | <p>There is little or no relationship between displays and current classroom investigations. Teacher-generated displays may predominate.</p> | |
| | | | | | <p>Score: 2</p> |

Do not reproduce without permission of Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co. 1-800-638-3775 www.brookespublishing.com
 Copyright © 2002 by Education Development Center, Inc., Newton, MA.

Excerpted by permission from *Early Language & Literacy Classroom Observation (ELLCO) Toolkit, Research Edition* by M.W. Smith, with David K. Dickinson, A. Sangeorge, and L. Anastasopoulos. Copyright 2002 by Education Development Center, Inc., Newton, MA. Do not reproduce without permission of Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co. (1-800-638-3775; www.brookespublishing.com).

ELLCO Section 4: Opportunities for Child Choice and Initiative

| Classroom Observation | | General Classroom Environment | | | | |
|--|---|--|--|-------|---|-----------|
| | | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| | | Exemplary | | Basic | | Deficient |
| <p>4. Opportunities for Child Choice and Initiative</p> <p><i>Evidence:</i> Classroom schedule (posted or observed), routines, and observations of how teachers and children use the classroom and materials</p> <p>Notes:</p> | <p>There is strong evidence that the design and structure of the classroom encourages child choice and initiative in the service of learning.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The daily schedule includes sufficient time for self-directed activities and independent exploration (i.e., alone or with other students). Schedule and grouping flexibility allow teachers and children to pursue deep, ongoing investigations. Classroom routines support children's engagement in self-directed activities. | <p>There is some evidence that the design and structure of the classroom encourages child choice and initiative in the service of learning.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The daily schedule includes some time for self-directed activities and independent exploration but may not allow for deep or ongoing investigations. Classroom routines support children's engagement in some self-directed activities. | <p>There is minimal evidence that the design and structure of the classroom encourages child choice and initiative in the service of learning.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The classroom schedule may not include appropriate opportunities for children to engage in self-directed activities. The classroom may be characterized by strict scheduling and grouping practices or, conversely, by excessive time in unstructured activities. Classroom routines and materials do not support children's engagement in self-directed activities. For example, materials may not be available for children to use without the teacher's presence; activities may be inappropriately easy or too difficult; or routines may be so "scripted" that they do not allow for individualization, choice, or child initiative. Children may be expected to wait for teachers to provide and/or instruct them in the use of materials and activities. | | | |
| | <p>Teachers organize and provide interesting materials and experiences and actively facilitate children's constructive independent (i.e., alone or with other students) engagement in learning activities.</p> | <p>Teachers provide materials and/or activities and make children aware that they are available for independent use. Teachers may not actively support children's independent engagement in learning activities.</p> | | | | |
| | | Score: 2 | | | | |

Copyright © 2002 by Education Development Center, Inc., Newton, MA. Do not reproduce without permission of Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co. 1-800-638-3775 www.brookespublishing.com

Excerpted by permission from *Early Language & Literacy Classroom Observation (ELLCO) Toolkit, Research Edition* by M.W. Smith, with David K. Dickinson, A. Sangeorge, and L. Anastasopoulos. Copyright 2002 by Education Development Center, Inc., Newton, MA. Do not reproduce without permission of Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co. (1-800-638-3775; www.brookespublishing.com).

ELLCO Section 6: Classroom Climate

| Classroom Observation | | General Classroom Environment | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|-------|---|-----------|
| | | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| | | Exemplary | | Basic | | Deficient |
| <p>6. Classroom Climate</p> <p>Evidence: Interactions between teachers and children and between children and children, tone and quality of treatment</p> <p>Notes:</p> | <p>There is strong evidence of a classroom climate that respects individual children and their contributions to the classroom.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The tone of classroom conversations is positive and shows respect for children's contributions, encouraging children to speak from their different perspectives and experiences. • Teachers listen attentively to children, encourage children to listen to each other, and deliberately foster a climate in which differing opinions and ideas are valued. • Teachers display fairness in treatment of children from differing gender, racial, and cultural groups. | <p>There is some evidence of a classroom climate that respects individual children and their contributions to the classroom.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The tone of teacher-child conversations is generally positive. Teachers engage in conversations with children but do not typically encourage voicing of multiple and diverse perspectives. • Teachers listen to children but do not intentionally encourage children's conversations with each other. Similarity and convergence of opinions are valued. • Teachers display fairness with differential treatment of children from differing gender, racial, and cultural groups. | <p>There is minimal evidence of a classroom climate that respects individual children and their contributions to the classroom.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The tone of classroom conversations may be negative, or the teacher's manner may be harsh or punitive. Alternatively, the teacher may appear "distant" or "tuned out" and unavailable to children. • Children are expected to listen to the teacher, and there are few opportunities for conversation. • Teachers may show preferential treatment of children from differing gender, racial, and cultural groups. | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | Score: 2 | | | | |

Excerpted by permission from *Early Language & Literacy Classroom Observation (ELLCO) Toolkit, Research Edition* by M.W. Smith, with A. Sangeorge & L. Anastasopoulos. Copyright 2002 by Education Development Center, Inc., Newton, MA. Do not reproduce without permission of Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co. (1-800-638-3775; www.brookespublishing.com).

ELLCO Section 10: Approaches to Children’s Writing

| | | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
|--|--|---|---|-------|---|-----------|
| | | Exemplary | | Basic | | Deficient |
| <p>10P. Approaches to Children’s Writing <i>Prekindergarten and Kindergarten Version</i></p> <p>Evidence: <i>Observations of writing materials and opportunities for children and teachers to be engaged in writing</i></p> <p>Notes:</p> | <p>There is strong evidence of a systematic approach to children’s writing that supports their development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multiple motivations and opportunities are provided within the classroom for children to see writing and to use their emergent writing skills. Writing is differentiated from art activities. A variety of helpful materials and tools are accessible to support children’s writing (e.g., types of writing implements, alphabet, word cards, lined paper). When appropriate, instruction in writing is provided (e.g., helping children form letters, recognize letters, read and write words). Teachers are regularly available to support and encourage all children’s writing efforts, which may include taking dictation, writing group stories, or engaging in real and pretend writing with children. | <p>There is some evidence of a systematic approach to children’s writing that supports their development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some opportunities and materials are provided within the classroom for children to see writing and to use their emergent writing skills. Some materials are available for children to use for writing activities. When appropriate, instruction in writing is provided (e.g., helping children write their own names). Teachers are occasionally available to support children’s writing efforts, which may include taking dictation, writing group stories, or engaging in real and pretend writing with children. | <p>There is minimal evidence of a systematic approach to children’s writing that supports their development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Few or no opportunities or materials are provided within the classroom for children to see writing or to use their emergent writing skills. Specific materials or tools to support children’s writing are not evident. If instruction in writing is provided, it may be ineffective or inappropriate (e.g., children must all practice a certain letter at a certain time). Teachers are not regularly available to support all children’s writing efforts and may discourage some children from writing attempts. | | | |
| | <p>Score: <u>2</u></p> | | | | | |

Excerpted by permission from *Early Language & Literacy Classroom Observation (ELLCO) Toolkit, Research Edition* by M.W. Smith, with David K. Dickinson, A. Sangeorge, and L. Anastasopoulos. Copyright 2002 by Education Development Center, Inc., Newton, MA. Do not reproduce without permission of Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co. (1-800-638-3775; www.brookespublishing.com).

Observation Data Analysis Guide

| | |
|---|--|
| TEACHER'S NAME | |
| TEACHER'S CLASSROOM LITERACY GOALS | |
| AGREED-ON FOCUS AREA FOR OBSERVATION | |
| DESCRIBE THE CRITICAL EVENTS THE OBSERVER NOTED | |
| DESCRIBE ANY EVIDENT PATTERNS | |
| LIST POINTS TO DISCUSS IN POST-OBSERVATION CONFERENCE | |