

Woman One: It's so much better to have the mentor relationship where it's a free exchange of ideas. Woman Two: Empowering them to let them know you want to participate, you have the right to bring your voice. Woman Three: I think within myself I feel confident.

Woman Four: I am a support system for her; I am not a criticizing element of this process. Woman Five: She really makes you feel like you have a part in what's going on.

Linda Warren: Hello, and welcome to the tutored video instruction for Unit 4. I'm Linda Warren, the founder and president of Early Childhood Associates and the director of the Steps to Success project. I've been a professor at the University of Hawaii and Wheelock College. I've helped develop state-wide standards for early learning and kindergarten. As a former teacher and program director, I know first-hand the rewards and challenges of using outcome-based frameworks. Joining me is Susan Fordice.

Susan is the Child Health and Education manager of the Kuayumawa tribal Head Start program in Oregon. Having run her own childcare business while raising her family, Susan has spent ten years in Head Start. She is currently a mentor-coach for both Head Start teachers and childcare providers in rural eastern Oregon. Welcome Susan, we're glad to have you with us today. Susan Fordice: Thank you, it's great to be here.

Linda: And also joining me is Carol Bellamy. Carol Bellamy is a mentor at Higher Horizons Head Start program in Falls Church, Virginia. Carol has a special interest in working with parents to meet the needs of children who are second-language learners and is the author of the article "Beginning the New School Year with Learners from Many Cultures," published recently in the Head Start Bulletin. She has been in Head Start for fifteen years. Carol, I'm glad you could be here.

Carol Bellamy: Thank you, I'm glad to be here as well. Linda: Since you have been participating in the Steps to Success TVI for the past three units, you know what we will be doing, so let's get started.

Here are our objectives. We will discuss the use and importance of ongoing assessment. Then we will define phonological awareness and its role in literacy development. We will examine the role of mentor-coaches and protégés in providing children with opportunities to develop phonological awareness. We will then look at options for collecting and organizing ongoing assessment information. We will talk about the role of parents in ongoing assessment and finally, we will discuss the use of ongoing assessment for instructional planning and individualizing children's learning experiences.

Successful ongoing assessment is well planned and conducted regularly. Teachers use consistent methods to gather information from several sources. Assessing children in authentic settings as they grow and learn is a cornerstone of good instruction. What do we mean by authentic assessment? [Music]

Slide reads: Authentic Assessment: Assessing children in a setting that is familiar and meaningful to them. Setting includes space, activities, materials, routines and people.

Linda: When teachers use authentic assessment, they are able to gather important information. Ongoing assessment allows teacher to document children's developmental growth and progress. It leads them to identify children's strengths and personalize appropriate experiences for them. Ongoing assessment gives teachers the information they need to plan instruction for individuals and groups of children, and it provides an opportunity for teachers to communicate with parents and work in partnership with them.

Mentor-coaches play a major role in supporting protégés as they plan for assessment, collect information, analyze that information, and design instruction. Mentor-coaches can help protégés understand why they collect information. They review what information protégés are already collecting, and how they collect it. If necessary, mentor-coaches and protégés together choose the most appropriate additional assessment methods and discuss how to summarize and

understand assessment results. Mentor-coaches can also guide protégés in understanding how the information is used once it is collected.

Assessment and instruction go hand in hand. Mentor-coaches help staff to use assessment information to inform instruction and manage and monitor children's learning. Carol and Susan, what do you see as the importance of ongoing assessment?

Carol: Well, ongoing assessments help teachers document that children are progressing in the goals that they have set for their children. It also helps them to plan the environment in a way that children can explore the materials that are needed. For example, if a child has a fine motor goal, a teacher should place some materials, say the child likes to stay in the block area, put some writing materials in that area so the child is able to explore those tools in the area that they are most comfortable.

Linda: That's a good example. Susan, I want to turn to another question and ask you to think about how the information that we collect in assessment affects children's learning and staff's teaching.

Susan: One example that comes right to my mind is a little boy in our classroom who we had identified the goal of teaching him how to count to five. And one day he gave me a window into what he was doing by coming up to me when I was going through some new books that we had gotten – there was a big stack on the table and he goes "Wow, that's a lot of books, six, seven, eight."

And so we were able to use that little vignette with his small group teacher to redesign the instruction for that child. The teacher had been teaching him to count to ten and by that little anecdotal observation, we saw that he was indeed learning that numbers go in a certain order but he had jumped way ahead to six, seven, eight. So we were able to refocus his instruction and just work on counting one to five for a while.

Linda: So assessment then is helping us to understand when children may need more of something to progress. Susan: Right.

Linda: So it's not only to measure progress, as Carol was saying, but helping us to sort of craft instruction so that it is individualized. Good. Thank you. We're going to take a look at assessments in various early childhood settings. We'll start with a visit to mentor-coaches and protégés in an infant and toddler classroom in Cincinnati, Ohio.

[Video begins] Narrator: Cincinnati, Ohio teachers Kim Riddell and Shelli Backer use many strategies to observe and assess children to gain a better understanding of their current skills and abilities. Kim Riddell: We observe and assess the children to get a better understanding of where they are developmentally, what their skills are and it helps us to plan for the classroom -- our lesson plans and our individual monthly goals for the children.

Narrator: Kim chats with each parent as they drop off their child. This informal conversation allows her to learn what the parents are observing at home.

Kim: Yeah, he had bumped his nose and it just bled just a little bit. Was it okay last night? Parent one: Oh yeah, he was fine. Kim: Yeah. When Thomas was dropped off, his mother reminded me that yesterday he had had an incident report that he had bumped his nose and I had the opportunity to ask her how his night was and ask her if his nose was okay, if there was any more bleeding. And she let me know that it was fine. So that was a good opportunity for me to check on his safety and well-being.

Shelli Backer: What, what are you looking at? You looking at Jackson? Are you watching, are you watching everybody? Narrator: Shelly takes notes as a way of observing and assessing Pablo's developing gross motor skills.

Shelli: He was throwing it and it ended up rolling, where later after he develops more of his gross motor skills, he may be able to just roll it without throwing it. And that is really good to look back on and the age that they accomplish that for assessing children. Narrator: Kim takes pictures of the children as an observation tool.

Kim: When we take pictures for the children we try to capture an action that the child is engaged in that shows the developmental stage that they're going through. For instance, today Paul was marking on the paper and he was actually making dots and and I tried to capture the way he was holding the crayon. And actually in the picture you could see the marks that he was making. (To children:) You going to make dots, Paul? I saw you making dots.

The photos that we take help us to assess the children because we use them as a tool, as an ongoing record that helps us visualize where the children are developmentally, plan to meet their developmental needs, and help develop their skills. And it helps us with our lesson planning and monthly developmental goals for each child.

This is one of our children's portfolios. I've used a form that we've developed here and there's a space to circle which area of development that you've illustrated with the photo. This particular picture was one of the first art experiences that that Nico had. He was actually painting with water. He was using his fine motor skills to paint with the water and that's why I took it.

Narrator: Finally, by intentionally watching and listening, Kim and Shelli observe and recognize children's increasing skills and abilities. Shelli: Yeah, what is that, look. Kim: Hey, that's the farthest I've seen you reach. Shelli: It is, I know, that's exciting, look at you. You're reaching for the rattle, oh reach, reach.

Kim: When Lilly reached for the toy, it was important because that was the first time I had seen Lilly reach so far and to actively try to move her body to get to something rather than to cry for us to bring it to her. Shelli: Wow, Kim, look at, look at Lilly. Oh she was it looked like she was getting ready to fall, look at her, you're taking off. Narrator: Informal conversations with parents, note-taking, picture-taking, portfolios and watching and listening. All of these are strategies that help teachers observe and assess infants and toddlers. [Video ends]

Linda: Now that we have seen examples of assessment in an infant and toddler classroom, let's visit Jewell, Gloria and Mumtaz in their preschool class in Chicago. We'll see how a mentor-coach and her protégés work together to observe and assess preschoolers.

[Video begins] Narrator: Teachers and mentor-coaches use many strategies to observe and assess preschool classrooms. In this Chicago classroom Head Start mentor-coach Jewell Bell and teachers Gloria Johnson and Mumtaz Harris gather information about the children to help give them a complete understanding of each child's current skills and abilities.

Jewell Bell: The observations and assessments that help me to coach and mentor by getting a picture of what's going on within the classroom and what the teachers are doing with the children in the classroom. And when I observe and I, I observe with the documentation and I look at the assessments tools that we use, I look for goals that they have also developed. And from there I can see what activities they are doing to help children achieve those goals.

Narrator: Assistant teacher Mumtaz Harris observes and takes notes throughout the day. While Gloria leads group time, Mumtaz assesses the phonological awareness of children as they recite nursery rhymes. Mumtaz Harris: Basically the observations are ongoing and what it does is it identifies the strengths and weaknesses in the language and literacy area for the child so we can be able to implement goals and plan for further goals to be achieved.

Thanks for my coffee, Martese. Martese: You're welcome. Narrator: While evaluating her language goals for Kayla, lead teacher Gloria Johnson takes notes and listens to Kayla tell her about her poem.

Gloria: They're green, they're blue, they're red... Kayla: And they're colored violet. Gloria: and what? Kayla: Violet. >Gloria: And violet?

Kayla: And a violet color. Okay. Gloria: And what other color are flowers? How many poems do you have on here? Kayla: Probably six or seven cause ... Gloria: Oh you have six or probably six or seven? Narrator: Documenting Kayla's current skills and abilities helps Gloria support Kayla in meeting future goals.

Gloria: I am going to continue to work with Kayla on these activities: the sounding of words, how words are formed,

that words that print has a message to it, and that she can form words herself. And I would like her to continue to give me words that I can write down for her.

Kayla: You can't see cause it's white. Gloria: Okay, so I have to use my imagination? Okay. Well, you know, you have to tell me that. >Kayla: You have to use your imagination, Miss Johnson. Gloria: Okay, thank you. Mumtaz: This is the beginning of the year? He can write his name.

Gloria: Yeah the beginning of the year. Mumtaz: Okay. Gloria: And ... Mumtaz: And this is Michael now? He can write his first and last name.

Narrator: Head Start mentor-coach Jewell Bell discusses the children's portfolios with Miss Johnson to help her assess how the children's writing skills have progressed during the school year. Gloria: The portfolios are a collective item that the child and the teachers do together. And we let them know that they are done because we would like to observe their work and we want them to be able to go back and observe the work and to see how they are progressing. (To Kayla:) What color is that? Brown?

Narrator: Miss Johnson watches and listens during a paper doll activity to assess the children's current skills and abilities. Gloria: Well, I wanted to see their cutting skills, fine motor skills, if they would count the articles, cognitive skills, one-on-one counting, if they could use their cognitive skills with knowledge of what they knew about clothing. And their language skills as to: if the pants were long, if they were short. (To Nastasia:) Well, what else do you want to tell me about?

Nastasia: Her hair is long. Gloria: Oh, so you have long hair? Nastasia: My mommy has short hair. Gloria: Oh, she does? Nastasia: It's black.

Gloria: It's black? Okay. Narrator: While working on the paper dolls, Gloria can see Nastasia's fine motor skills as well as her motor skills. Gloria: When I asked her about the doll's hair that she had drawn, she said it was long. And she said, "But my mother's hair is hort." And it is, very short her mother's hair is. (To Nastasia:) I'm going to give you some tape so you can put it on the wall, okay? Come on, let me get you some tape.

Narrator: The mentor-coach Jewell Bell takes pictures of the children throughout the day to model the strategy of observation and documentation. Photographs are a good way to document children's play. Jewell: So in observing and assessing, what are some of the things that you learned from that? Gloria: I observed, in assessing him, it was family-oriented..

Narrator: Jewell meets with her protégé, Gloria Johnson, to discuss their different strategies of observing and assessing. Jewell: And we talk about lesson planning, we talk about documenting observations. What did we learn from our observations on each individual child? And you know, we brainstorm on activities, how we can help them to further extend on their language or whatever areas that they need to extend on.

Gloria: Right, you see how she wasn't, she went off the line there and here her whole name. Mumtaz: Yes, you see the progress from the beginning of the year to the end of the year. Gloria: Yes, she's coming along. Narrator: Mentor-coach protégé meetings, picture-taking, watching and listening, portfolios, and note-taking: all sources for observing and assessing each child's current skills and abilities. [Video ends]

Linda: We saw a variety of assessment methods in these two videos. Susan, what ways of collecting information did you see the teachers and mentor-coach use?

Susan: There were a lot of really excellent ways of collecting information that could be used in an ongoing way. They did impromptu visits with parents. They did pictures that the staff had taken and also pictures that the children had drawn. They did some intentional listening and watching, some note-taking and a little bit of conferring back and forth with one another about what had gone on in the classroom.

Linda: It was very rich in the kinds of strategies that they were using. Carol, what are some of the ongoing assessment

methods that your staff and mentor-coaches use?

Carol: We use very similar to what Susan just stated but I also wanted to add that the mentor can also use her observations to support ongoing assessments. It's sort of like having a third eye in the classroom. And another point, some, some, sometimes you can use writing materials too -- to collect children's daily writing samples as well.

Linda: So that third eye in the classroom is a role that the mentor-coach can assume. Carol: Yeah. Linda: Susan, do you want to add to that? I know that one of the things we were hoping to do today in this conversation is to talk a little bit about the roles that you see for mentor-coaches in ongoing assessment.

Susan: Some of the important roles that we can play as mentor-coaches is just to be there to be a really good encouragement, a positive encouragement to the staff, to demonstrate some of the things that we want them to do. Also we can guide discussion after we've demonstrated an activity or observed an activity with the teacher.

We can use reflective questioning to get them to think about what they did and things that they might want to do differently or in addition to it. But positive feedback, I think, is one of the most important things that we can give, just to give them the confidence that what they are doing is good and that they can move on to the next step.

Linda: Thank you Susan and Carol for your ideas. Now you are going to discuss ongoing assessment with your facilitator. Stop your tape now; come back when you have concluded your conversations.

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