

Linda Warren: We assess children so we have information to support their development. Assessment provides the link to effective instruction. Understanding what assessment information tells us is important in making that link. Once mentor-coaches and protégés have collected information, they need to interpret what has been collected. Here are three steps they can follow to understand the information collected and how to use it for instructional planning. First, they look at the information as a whole, making sure it comes from a variety of sources and assessment times.

Then mentor-coaches and protégés reflect on the information and look for patterns. They consider how the information compares with the birth-to-5 developmental continuum and how it compares with teacher and parent understandings of the child. They also recognize that a child's preferences, skills and abilities vary across domains.

Based on this information, they make decisions on how they'll present instruction for the group, and individual children within the group. Our final videos take us to two classrooms in Virginia where we will see how mentor-coaches and protégés use assessment to plan for instruction and individualize children's learning experiences. First we'll see how it works in an infant/toddler classroom.

[Video begins] Narrator: We visited toddler classrooms in Falls Church, Virginia, where teachers use information gathered through ongoing assessment to guide instructional planning. In Jennifer Hughley's classroom, she combines language and literacy development with ongoing observation.

Jennifer Hughley: You're patting the water? You need help? Were they washing up and down, back and forward? And I was substituting those words in there for them if they were not able to say it cause one of the children was using the wash cloth – going back and forth in the water. So I was talking about the action that he was doing in there. And then, at one point, I just kind of sat back to observe exactly what he was doing after I said those words.

You're pushing the water back and forth and around in a circle. And I also was trying to encourage the child to use more vocabulary at the table, using "buh" sounds, "b" sounds because he's been pronouncing more words with "buh, buh, buh" sounds so I was talking about baby, "baa". What do you do in the bathtub – adding those words on so that he hears more of the extensions of the, of the vocabulary.

Narrator: Rachel Davis uses ongoing assessment to monitor Brandon's progress towards established language and literacy goals. Rachel Davis: Don't forget to say snap. Rachel and child: Snap.

Rachel: Brandon is not able to tell me what he's trying to tell me so he pretty much, he's still working on one word sentences and what we're trying – what I normally do is just follow his lead, follow what he's interested in. And I'll just speak on it and try to get him to give me a word to explain what he's doing, what he's playing with. And then I'll try to offer him a word back to come out, put those words together. That's one of his goals that his mother and I have come up with and we're trying to give him two-word sentences.

But we're still working on just single words also and just learning new words since his home language is Vietnamese. I'm working with him on experiencing fast and slow so I was trying to get him to just, you know, go along with his rhythms, slow, doing, you know, banging on the drum, slow, and then getting fast and faster. So that's what I was doing with Brandon and he's wonderful. He just started our program about a month ago, and he's repeating a lot of words that I say. Slow, bang, bang, bam, bam, now go fast, faster, get faster, fast, fast, fast, fast.

So I think with him, by jotting down my anecdotes, I share them with his mother and then together we come up with additional words he can add to fast and slow – maybe shaking fast, moving slow. You know, just giving him additional words and by jotting down the notes, it's just kind of just my evidence there that we are working on it and that he's actually saying it and he's experiencing you know, moving fast and slow. Slow, slow, slow, slow, slow, slow, slow, slow, fast, fast, fast, fast, fast, fast. [Video ends]

Linda: With infants and toddlers, it is key to follow the children's interests and use children's experiences to assess and

plan instruction. Carol, how did Jennifer and Rachel use assessment to inform instruction?

Carol Bellamy: Well, Jennifer used the beginning letter sounds to emphasize the sound when the children were working with the water. She was, the child, child was moving the moving the wash cloth back and forth and she made sure she said the "b" sound. And she used some other words "bath" then "baby" and some other "b" sounds, so she was emphasizing the beginning letter sound. Rachel, who was using the drum, she was working with Brandon. Brandon just started in our program. His mother had some goals as far as adding language to, to communicate.

He mostly speaks Vietnamese at home so Rachel tried to add some action words to the actions that he was doing. If you noticed he was using the drum, beating the drum slowly and Rachel made sure she used the word slowly, and then she used the word fast. She really tried to emphasize, and you could see Brandon tried to form those words as she was also.

Linda: Yeah, I thought that that Jenni -- I totally agreed with what you were saying -- those are some of the points that I noted as well. I also noted that Jennifer was able to use an activity in the classroom to observe children. She was kind of figuring out where they were going with sounds, what they understood and she was gradually adding more complexity to the play, perhaps adding some things into the water table area that helped them actually progress and build on, you know, what she was observing.

And, of course, with Rachel, wasn't that wonderful, the drumming and the fast and slow? And that youngster was just so excited and you could see that the word was, the words were really meaningful.

Susan Fordice: And totally engaged. Linda: Totally engaged. Thank you. In a preschool class in the same Virginia program, let's watch how assessment information leads teacher Shannon to expand her use of nursery rhyme activities.

[Video begins] Shannon Lazcano: The cow jumped over the moon. For me, ongoing assessment helps me to see where the kids have gone, where they are and where they will finish.

Carol: She has grown so much. When she first started in August, she realized that Head Start is a wonderful program, but she didn't realize how many things it involves. We involve the Performance Standards, we assess our children. Narrator: Head Start mentor Carol Bellamy and protégé Shannon Lazcano have regular meetings to discuss the CORE Assessment tool. The High Scope Child Observation Record or CORE is an observational assessment that looks at six broad categories of learning. The information gathered is important in guiding instruction for the children in Shannon's preschool classroom.

Carol: We had a good good morning in your class. Shannon: We did. Carol: I enjoyed seeing the children engage in nursery rhymes. Now we've been talking about ongoing assessments and I have the results from your first CORE, your classroom profile here for you to look at. Shannon: Okay.

Carol: And this is such an important piece. This helps you look at what goals your your whole class have mastered and it will help you plan activities to help your children master goals that they have not met. We were talking about language and literacy, so I wanted to show you all of the responses you entered on the CORE data sheets was entered into Child Plus and these are the responses that we got for your children.

Right now we're just talking about language and literacy. So some of your children are doing are doing pretty well as far as listening to a story. The one area that I see your children need some support in is, and this is the area right here, is words that describe position – on, off, beside, under, over. And those words are, are are a little challenging. Can you think of some position words that you use in nursery rhymes that could support their goals?

Shannon: Yeah, the fact that we did today Hey Diddle Diddle The Cat and the Fiddle, we were talking like the cow jumped over the moon. Carol: Over, yes. Shannon: With little Miss Muffet who sat on her tuffet. Carol: Yes, yes.

Shannon: Let me think, ah the Twinkle Twinkle Little Star, up above so high. Carol: Yes, up above the , yes. Shannon: Jovon, jump over the candlestick. Can you jump over the candlestick Jovon? Ooooo, are you okay? Jovon: Yeah, I

jumped over the candlestick.

Shannon: Carol and I discussed things that we could do to help the children learn some of the words that they need to know. So we came up with Jack Be Nimble Jack Be Quick where the children actually got to do the words over, under, around. So not only did they learn it, they also got to do the action.

So we brought in candlesticks for the children and we then reworked the nursery rhyme to include their names. So instead of saying Jack be nimble Jack be quick, Jack jumped over the candlestick, I would then use one of my children's names and I might change it around. Instead some of them would jump over, some would go under it and some would go around the candlestick. The cow jumped ...

Children: Over the moon. Shannon: Over the moon. During Hey Diddle Diddle, the children sat around me. They were able to tell me, over, under, they had a little bit of trouble with beside. (To children:) Where is the cow, is he over or is he under the moon? Children: Over the moon. Shannon: Over the moon. What if we moved him and he was, now where is he?

Child one: Under the moon. Shannon: Under the moon. What if I moved him right here, do you remember what this is called? He is beside, beside the moon. So I know that that is a word we're going to have to start using, such as you know, have somebody come sit beside me or else go sit beside our friend.

Carol: Well, Shannon, you've worked so hard on your COREs and I want to let you know that this document will help us fine tune what you need to focus on.

Shannon: I'm actually really happy that I do have a mentor, especially somebody as great as Carol. This is my first year in Head Start and there's a lot of things that I'm not familiar with, especially with the High Scope and CORE. I have never, never done that before. So for me it's easy for me to go "I have a question, I'm not sure if I'm doing this right or how do I do this?" And she's always been there to answer my question and I'd say "Oh, okay, now I get it." So she's really kind of helped me fit in the missing piece of the puzzle. [Video ends]

Linda: Carol, tell us more about how you support Shannon in using assessment information to plan instruction.

Carol: Well, it's so interesting working with Shannon; she's a first year teacher to Head Start. So I, I had to show her many things. We began by looking at the initial screenings that we do when our children first enter Head Start. And I helped her plan goals for each individual child. Then from there, I helped her collect data, collect anecdotes and writing samples, art samples, you name it.

She's very creative so I didn't have to show her too much. After collecting all of that data, she she entered information on a CORE data sheet and we took the information that she entered and now we can look at the whole classroom and see where each child is. And it's much easier for her to see what skills the children have mastered, what skills her children need to work on.

It's a wonderful way for her to fine tune what she's doing in the classroom. She can focus on activities to help the children. She's very interested in what the children are interested in, you know, not activities that she wants to plan, but listening to what the children want to plan. As you can see, the children enjoyed jumping over the candlestick and acting out the nursery rhymes.

Linda: They certainly did enjoy it and I was really struck by the level of intentionality that she used in looking at those assessment results and being able to apply them to some fun and engaging activities with children. Susan, do you have examples that you would like to share about how you can support protégés in using assessment information to plan instruction?

Susan Fordice: Well, we have a very similar assessment tool and one of the things that I found my teachers having the most difficulty wrapping their brains around or getting the idea of was how the observations that they made, the ongoing observations, actually fit into the continuum that we use. And so we put up charts on the wall that show the,

that are tied into the Outcomes Framework and the continuum framework. And then I have the teachers bring a little anecdotal note or something that they've collected, a picture or something.

And we stand and we look at the wall with all of these goals on it and we decide as a team, sometimes one-on-one with a protégé, sometimes as a teaching team, we'll look at those and decide where they best fit. And then carry that on to discuss, you know, what's the next step for that child? And so it's just kind of a more hands-on, very visual tool that also as we walk into the break room, it reminds us, you know, that that's what this is all about, there's a reason that we're doing this.

Linda: I'm very intrigued by that process that you use and do you keep those charts up on the wall in the break room for any length of.... Susan: All the time. Yep. Linda: All the time. So you're always using them, you're always going back and forth and looking at what's observed in the classroom and how it fits into the Outcomes Framework?

Susan: And the the charts are actually just an enlargement of of the actual tool so that when they go back to their their whatever method they're using, some use notebooks, you know, like we talked earlier. Some have portfolios, whatever they're using and then it ties right back into what they're using. And if there's one that they have that is real puzzling and they're not sure about then and they, I hope they feel comfortable just to come to me and say, "Where do you think it goes on the wall?"

Linda: Thank you for these really important examples. In today's videos, we have seen examples of staff using assessment information to guide instruction. In Massachusetts, the two Elizabeths planned to add books to the classroom. Sandy and Susan plan to expand Emma's communications skills. In Virginia, Shannon planned nursery rhyme activities to provide experience with positional words. Susan and Carol, I know we have had some great conversations today about assessment. Tell me about a time when you and your protégés have used assessment results to guide instruction, and how did it work out?

Susan: Well, one that just recently happened in our school was we had a little 3-year old boy we were having a very difficult time getting him to sit still for any length of time. He was still very much on the listening stage of the continuum, and the teachers tried, you know, all the stuff that they knew to try and I gave them suggestions. And nothing was working and fortunately it was time for our first parent/teacher conference. So we sat down with his mom and we said, "You know, he he tends to be very wiggly and we're having trouble getting him to pay attention."

And so she shared with us at the conference how much he loves hunting and how much he loves wild animals. And the father provided to us some outdoors magazines. And so I took those back, we took those back to school and I had a brand new little protégé that was just starting. She'd only been there a few weeks, and I, I suggested an activity where she would cut those pictures out and use those in activities with Andrew. And we had identified that he didn't know any of his colors, so she decided that she would use those pictures to teach him colors.

And she cut out some brown animals and some black animals and some dark brown animals and then she used those in a matching activity with him. And it was like, bingo, immediately this child was engaged in what she had to offer. And he, she continued variations of that of the activities throughout the week.

The other children in the small group enjoyed it too because it was very culturally relevant for our area -- the wild animals and the hunting is a big part of their culture. And, sure enough, by the end of the week Andrew had picked up "brown" and "black" and he's also picked up "green" because of all of the greenery and stuff in the pictures, and so that's one time when just that little observation from the parent really helped put it all together for one child.

Linda: As you're saying that I I I'm thinking about what a great way that is to individualize instruction for children and that's just to build on the family routines and the family interests. It's a great story. Thank you. Carol, I know that we had talked a little bit about writing materials earlier. Did you want to add some?

Carol: Sure, I have an interesting story. One of my teachers had a little boy who loved to play in the block area. And looking at those samples of his work that she collected, she had no writing samples. So she wanted him to have some kind of experience with writing but he loved to stay in the block area. He was always fixing a taxi. So I asked her to

add some props to help him to write.

And also you can also model those props. He would always fix his taxi and he had wonderful vocabulary, so we put a telephone book, a telephone, some writing materials and the little -- we, we pretended that he needed some parts for his taxi. So we would call on the telephone and then he would have to write down, you know, after you fix the taxi, write down the services that he provided. And he was really kind of expensive so we had to find another mechanic. (laughter)

Linda: Well, I have to tell you, these are, you know, great strategies and example of changes that you can make in the materials or or the approaches in the classroom to support children's progress in, in the outcome areas. Thank you. Okay, we have learned a lot in this TVI. So let's take a minute to review our objectives. First we discussed the use of ongoing assessment and its importance in documenting children's growth and progress. We then defined phonological awareness and the continuum of children's development of it and talked about its role in literacy development.

We examined the role of mentor-coaches and protégés in children's development of phonological awareness. We looked at several options for collecting and organizing assessment information. We talked about the role of parents in ongoing assessment. And, finally, we discussed the use of ongoing assessment for instructional planning and individualizing children's learning experiences. We have now reached the end of the video portion for this TVI. I want to thank Susan Fordice and Carol Bellamy for being with us and sharing their knowledge and expertise about assessment and phonological awareness.

Carol: Thank you so much for having me. I think that this is such good work that you're doing. This instructional video will really help a lot. A lot of people are anxious about outcomes and assessments, so thank you for having me. Linda: Thank you so much, Carol.

Susan: Thank you for having me too. This has been a great experience for me, just reinforcing in my own mind what I'm doing, but also to be able to share that with everybody else is truly an honor. And I have one little thing that I wanted to, to tie in. Phonological awareness is for everybody I think, so I have a little poem for our protégés:

To the protégé I must say, Ongoing assessment's the only way To ensure great outcomes every day.

Linda: Thank you Susan. I also want to thank the facilitators for their hard work in making this a successful learning experience. Please stop the tape one last time so that you can finish this session with your facilitator. For Susan, Carol and myself, goodbye.

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