

## Week 8: Photography & Checklists

### I. Highlights

- A. The photo assignment should answer the questions: How does this experience contribute to the development of the child? What are children learning? How are they learning it?
- B. Make sure your photo prints are neat, straight, evenly spaced, etc.
- C. Checklists have to be developmentally appropriate for the child's actual age to be fair and useful
- D. Checklist criteria should be objective and directly observable behaviors, not personal judgement or interpretation

### II. Homework

- A. Remember to go back and answer any questions classmates leave you in their replies to your online posts.
- B. Due Wednesday 10/22 at 3 pm: Discussion forum post on Cohen Chapters 7 & 8 and the handouts
- C. Due Thursday 10/23 in class: Read Nilsen Chapter 9
- D. Due Thursday 10/23 in class: Printed copy of another anecdotal record

### III. Photography Assignment

- A. Pick a topic/ activity (example: painting) and capture the process in sequential order through a series of photos
- B. The first photo doesn't have to be the first moment of the activity. If you're photographing painting, for example, the paper doesn't have to be blank in the first photo. Start the photos whenever you can.
- C. Choosing what to photograph:

1. Look for something that the child does over several minutes, such as painting, block building, or playing with trains or bubbles.
2. It's always nice to capture what the child chooses to do when they have free choice, but if your time in the school is limited, take what you can get.
3. For toddlers, the "sequence" could be caregiving routines throughout the day.
4. For an 8-month-old infant, "free play" may be crawling from one point to another, touching all the furniture and classmates, etc. This is how the child explores his/her environment at this age.
5. It's okay if you start out photographing one activity but don't get enough pictures, then the child gets distracted and you photograph a second activity for the second half of your project. If that's what happens, then that's what you document. Just make sure it's all happening in the same time frame.

D. When taking pictures:

1. With a phone, beware of distortion (things look wider than they are if you take it too close or at the wrong angle)
2. It's okay if another child comes into the pictures. It doesn't have to be only your case study child.

E. Arranging the photo board

1. Choosing Photos

a) After you've eliminated the "unusable" photos...

- (1) How many do you have left?
- (2) What do the remaining photos convey?
- (3) Which photos could be usable after cropping or digital manipulation?
  - (a) Cropping is one of the most powerful tools we have: can eliminate that harshly lit corner, brighten or straighten a mediocre photo

- (b) Free user-friendly photo editing tool online =  
www.picmonkey.com (lets you crop, lighten, etc.)
- (c) Photoshop Elements has a one-month free trial
- (d) Microsoft Paint is built into most PCs
- (e) iPhoto is built into Macs
- (f) Smartphones and tablets have free apps available for photo editing

b) Consider how big your mounting board is.

- (1) Will the remaining photos fit? How large are your photos?
  - (a) It's okay to decrease or increase the printing size.
  - (b) Crop if needed
  - (c) Consider borders and margins
  - (d) Can use 4x6, 5x7, 3½x5, squares, or even circles if you have a neat circle cutting tool (don't try it by hand)
- (2) It's okay to use two boards next to each other. Just make sure to put the title on one board; don't split the title across the two boards.

## 2. Adhesives

- a) (+) Remountable glue dots or mounting tabs from Office Max, Office Depot, Michaels, etc. are good
- b) (+) Spray adhesive is harder to use (can get messy!) but is one of the most permanent adhesives.
- c) (-) Rubber cement can be messy and turn yellow over time.
- d) (-) Tacky glue or craft glue won't dry flat, will wrinkle the paper/pictures
- e) Whatever you use, make sure it's all the way dry before you move anything! Otherwise things will become crooked.

3. Helpful tip: You can use a “quilter’s ruler” (a clear wide piece of plastic with grid lines in it) to help you get consistent spacing between pictures
  4. You can arrange the pictures in a linear grid, or stair-stepped, or in another way that shows the linear progression/sequence between the pictures
  5. If you use pencil marks to measure what’s “straight,” make sure to erase any lines that show after you mount the pictures
  6. Your posterboard or foamcore board can be white, cream, tan, brown, or black. Please avoid neon colors.
  7. The title can go anywhere on the front of the board. Think about what looks good with the way your photos are laid out: top, bottom, center, a corner...?
  8. Example titles:
    - a) “Cognitive Competency: Creating Patterns”
    - b) “The Conductor”
    - c) “Discovering the Properties of Paint”
    - d) “Recreating Figures: Mike & Sully from Monsters, Inc.”
  9. It’s okay to mount the photos individually on foamcore and then mount those on the board to give the photos dimension. This is not required!
  10. Always put the date on your documentation, including the year.
- F. How does this experience contribute to the development of the child?
1. You should be able to answer these questions about your photos after doing this assignment. The photos should convey the answers.
  2. *What* are the children learning? (What is your case study child learning?)
  3. *How* are they learning it?
    - a) Through free play, self-discovery / exploration?
    - b) Through teacher-directed / facilitated instruction with directions, rules, taking turns, etc. (Not necessarily a bad thing: cooking activities have health & safety rules that need to be taught)

G. Photo documentation in your classroom (for real, not this assignment)

1. Can mount the child's original artwork on one posterboard and the photos sequentially on another and hang them on the wall next to each other. This shows the process and the product.
2. Before you start any documentation project, ask yourself, "Is there a space in my classroom to dedicate to this documentation?" Is there a wall you could open up to display your photos? What will you do with the documentation you're creating? That affects the size/formats you choose.
3. Creating photo documentation can be expensive, but you can make it cheaper. WVC uses butcher paper (with the edges folded under so there's no raw edge showing) draped over a bamboo pole like a banner. Photos and captions are glued to both sides. You could hang this from the ceiling and see both sides at once.
4. Sanchez School in San Francisco is a Reggio Emilia-inspired school with lots of documentation based on children's observational drawings. They do a self-portrait every 3 months and keep those in a portfolio for each child to look at their past work.

#### IV. Checklists

- A. Week 9-10 forum and quizzes are up on ANGEL.
- B. A checklist is a predetermined list of observable criteria/skills for a given developmental domain, appropriate to the child's age, where the observer reads the criterion, decides on an answer, then makes a checkmark if the answer is "yes" the skill has been observed. There are examples in Nilsen Chapter 3.
- C. The key is to create a checklist that's developmentally appropriate to the child's age. One of the worst things a teacher can do is use an age-inappropriate

checklist because it will give the parents unrealistic expectations and inaccurate feedback about how their child is developing.

1. If the skills are older than the child, the parents will see lots of “not observed” checkmarks and worry when nothing is actually wrong.
2. A common problem is to see a checklist that’s a mix of 2-, 3-, and 5-year-old skills. That’s not appropriate for any age!
3. Get information on what’s age-appropriate for your child based on your old child development textbooks, examples in this textbook, a Google search, etc. You don’t need a bibliography for this assignment.

D. Include the child’s name, your name (as recorder), the child’s age in years and months, and the date. This can be a specific date (which may not work well because the child may not demonstrate all those skills in one day) or a range of dates (such as Sept.–Dec. 2014).

E. In two weeks, the homework is to bring a printed copy of a checklist you have designed for your case study child’s age.

1. There are two forms on ANGEL under the “forms” folder. Pick one as a starting point if you want to and then modify as needed, or just make your own.
  - a) One has two columns, “Observed” and “Not Observed.”
  - b) The other has multiple skinny columns to record the dates observed. This is more tedious but gives you more raw data so you can tell what order the skills appeared in, which happen more often, etc.
2. It has to have at least 15 items to check, ideally more.
3. Choose a single developmental domain (motor skills including fine and gross motor, just fine or just gross motor, social / emotional development or just social or just emotional, language development, cognitive development) to focus on for the assignment

4. Don't fill it in for your case study child yet. That comes later in the semester.  
Just bring the blank form that you could use at your child's age.

F. Be careful of how you word the criteria:

1. Word it so that it would make sense to the case study child's parents, not just someone with a child development degree.
2. It should be based directly on observable behaviors, such as "can walk on a balance beam for five feet without falling off"
3. Avoid writing it as a judgement based on the observer's opinion (there's no raw data/details recorded in a checklist, so it's extra important to keep the observations objective)
4. Avoid writing it in a way that asks for my perception of a child's feelings (such as "Enjoys storytime" — how would we know he enjoys it? Maybe he's just sitting because it's what's required of him now.) This is a big difficulty with writing social-emotional checklists.
5. Examples of concrete, observable criteria that are good to use:
  - a) She can spell the word "development" accurately out loud.
  - b) He can sit unassisted for two minutes.
  - c) She uses a pincer grasp to pick up small objects.
  - d) He can walk 6 feet on a 4-inch balance beam without falling off
  - e) She balances on one foot for five seconds
6. Examples of poorly-worded criteria that require my interpretation instead of fact:
  - a) Enjoys pulling herself up on furniture
  - b) Is able to do most small muscle skill tasks (This could become an objective usable criteria if you spelled out the tasks, such as pouring milk without spilling, using scissors to cut on a straight line, or button three buttons on a shirt.)

- c) He can cut. (too vague — cut what? with what? how accurately?)
- d) She moves gracefully.
- e) Increasing strength and dexterity (too vague — Increasing compared to when? Which part/type of strength and dexterity?)
- f) Gives little attention to small muscle activities (we spend less time/attention on things we don't enjoy as much, but it doesn't mean we're incapable of doing them)

## V. Notes

- A. In anecdotal & running records, don't say the child held their [pencil, scissors, paintbrush, etc.] "correctly" because that's too subjective. Say how they held it: a fist grip, tripod grip, thumb on top with scissors, etc. What's considered "correct" or "appropriate" is different at different ages, different developmental stages, for different techniques, or depending on the child's intent for their project.
- B. Exchange running records with a partner. Did they write in the present tense? Did they use direct quotes for language? Does it flow/make sense?