

## Week 9: Rating Scales

### I. Highlights

- A. A checklist is a list of criteria where you answer “yes” or “no” to each statement.  
A rating scale is a continuum/spectrum showing the degree to which a skill is being demonstrated.
- B. There are different types of rating scales depending on what you’re rating.
- C. In the summary of each observation, note all the important things your child demonstrated: which stage of play they’re in, whenever they assert themselves, whenever they demonstrate symbolic representation, how they communicate, etc. This will make the final summary at the end of the semester easier.

### II. Homework

- A. Remember to go back and answer any questions classmates leave you in their replies to your online posts.
- B. Due Wednesday 10/29 at 3 pm: Discussion forum replies
- C. Due Wednesday 10/29 at 3 pm: Two online quizzes on Nilsen Chapters 3 and 9
- D. Due Thursday 10/30 in class: Read Nilsen Chapters 5 and 7
- E. Due Thursday 10/23 in class: Printed copy of your checklist (not filled in yet!)
- F. Final countdown: The full observation packet is due 6 weeks from tonight, and the final evaluation is due 7 weeks from tonight. We can do this!

### III. Checklists

- A. We talked about these last week. One draft copy (printed, *not* filled out yet) of a developmentally appropriate checklist for your case study child is due next week in class.
- B. Checklist should have at least 15 items.

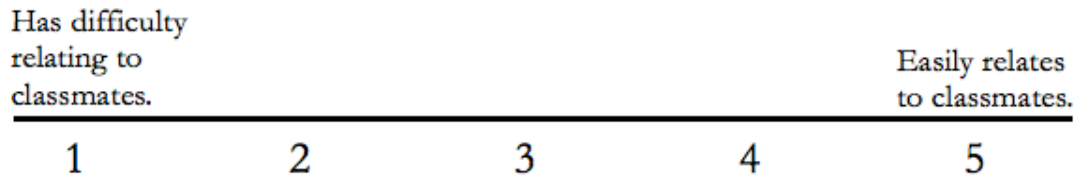
- C. Turn it in, then Leslie will approve it.
- D. After that, you will fill it out for your case study child by the end of the semester.  
It's up to you whether you do it in one day or based on your observations over a period of time. Either way is okay.

#### **IV. Rating Scales**

- A. This assignment will work the same way as the checklist.
  - 1. Turn in the blank version on November 13. Leslie will approve it, then we fill it in by the end of the semester.
  - 2. Focus on one domain of development: physical, cognitive, social-emotional, language, or even creativity.
  - 3. Use a different domain of development for the rating scale than the one you used for the checklist. (For example, if your checklist is on physical development, your rating scale could be on social-emotional or cognitive development, but not physical.)
  - 4. Have at least 10 skills you're rating.
- B. A rating scale is designed to demonstrate the degree to which the child exhibits a behavior or quality of that behavior.
- C. Each trait is rated on a continuum, allowing the observer to decide where the child fits on the scale. (Whereas a checklist says "yes" or "no," a rating scale has a spectrum of possibilities.)
- D. Be careful how you word the criteria/descriptions.
  - 1. Instead of "inadequate," try "emerging" or "still developing." Keep it positive. Negative feedback is not motivating.
  - 2. Do parents and other teachers define the words the same way you do?  
Otherwise you can have different people give different ratings on the same rating scale tool because the words mean different things to different people.

3. Good words you can choose to use:
  - a) Shows little or no interest yet
  - b) Shows interest
  - c) Makes attempts
  - d) Demonstrates effort
  - e) Emerging
  - f) Still developing or continuing to develop
  - g) Proficient
  - h) “Developing” is a better, more open word than “learning”
4. Don’t say “mastered” because that implies there is nothing left to learn, which is never true in life, even for adults. There is always room to practice and learn more. Try “proficient” or “developed” instead.
- E. It’s okay to remind parents that practicing skills (even fully developed skills) is a significant part of our curriculum. We can’t just do this week’s “letter of the week” once and assume they will know it by heart forever.
- F. You can only do a rating scale after multiple observations (formal and informal) so you have some baseline data/knowledge of the child. You can’t determine if a skill is “still developing” if you don’t know where the child started or what is typical for that child.
- G. There are different ways to do a rating scale. Different types are more useful in different cases or with different skills you’re looking at.
  1. Numbers can be used to rank behaviors of interest from high to low. You could use 1-2-3 or 1-2-3-4-5 or 1 through 10. (Minimum is 3 because 2 would

be a checklist. Maximum is 10 or it gets too hard to use.)



- a) The more numbers you use, the more levels/possibilities are represented.
- b) You can choose to label each number with words, or just label the minimum and maximum and let the reader interpret what the middle numbers mean to them.
- c) It's common to see the middle as a "safe spot" if the teacher isn't sure or doesn't want to offend the parents. This can skew your results when there's really something that should be rated very high or very low.

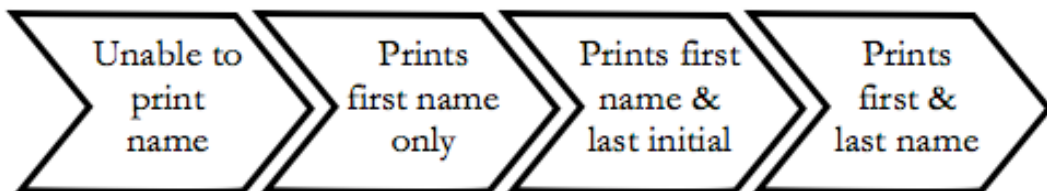
2. Descriptive phrases of attitudes

*Example: Is attentive to teacher directions.*



3. Specific qualities or objectives stated in terms of performance.

*Example: Printing his/her own name*



- a) Can be best for skills like "Demonstrates understanding of..." skills, tasks, etc. that are small, specific sets of skills
- b) You would describe the different levels of ability/skill as this develops

- c) Example: see the literacy rating scale on page 240 in the Nilsen textbook
  - d) This is the most labor-intensive type of rating scale to make.
4. If you ever work in a Title 5 (state government-funded) center, you will do a DRDP on each child. That's a Desired Results Developmental Profile, which uses rating scales. Next week Leslie will show us the online version as an example.
- H. Can use rating scales for staff evaluations too. Not just children!
- I. A rating scale can look like a checklist, so be careful. Remember yes/no is a checklist, a spectrum is a rating scale. If a survey asks you to rate each statement on a scale from 1-5, that's a rating scale, even if it's a list of statements with blanks next to each one so it looks like a checklist.
- J. Forms on ANGEL to get you started:
1. One type uses the same labels/stages for each skill. Check off the appropriate stage. For labels, you could use "Emerging," "Practicing" and "Developed" or whatever works for you. It doesn't have to be just three. Do what fits your needs.

**RATING SCALE**

CHILD'S FIRST NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ RECORDER: \_\_\_\_\_

AGE (years, months): \_\_\_\_\_

DOMAIN OF DEVELOPMENT: \_\_\_\_\_

	Label 1	Label 2	Label 3
Skill #1			
Skill #2			

2. The other type lets you create custom labels for each skill. Type the labels into the little boxes. You would still just check off (circle, highlight, etc.) the

appropriate level for each skill.

## RATING SCALE

CHILD'S FIRST NAME:

RECORDER:

AGE (years, months):

Date: (today's date or a range of time)

DOMAIN OF DEVELOPMENT:

Skill #1			

Skill #2			

3. The best type of rating scale to use depends on the skills you're looking at. When we review each other's in class, you may get feedback that a different type would be better in your case. That's okay. Sometimes it's easier for an outside observer to see what you're not seeing.

K. This assignment is practice for us to describe the range of abilities and not see things as black & white like a checklist.

### V. Activity: Describing tangram layouts to your partner with one-way communication only

- A. The more detail-oriented and descriptive your words are, the more accurately you can convey a situation to another person who can't see it first-hand.
- B. Be specific. Are you talking about my right or her right? My left or her left? "Up" higher on the paper, or "up" stacked on top?
- C. The words you use are useless if the other people don't understand them. Know who you're talking to. If your audience knows geometry, "hypotenuse" and

“parallelogram” can allow you to communicate precisely. If they don’t know those words, you will not be able to communicate at all. We need a shared vocabulary.

- D. Don’t make assumptions. For example, I assumed the shape was being built flat on the table (two-dimensional) but my partner didn’t assume that and started building up in 3-D instead.
- E. It’s hard to know if your partner is on the same step you are when you can’t see their work and they can’t talk to you. It’s common for this to happen with children — we assume that their silence means they’re understanding and following along, when maybe it means they’re too lost to know what to ask.
- F. Mutual understanding relies on feedback/interaction/conversation. Talk about the ouch report (or whatever it is) with the parent, even just for a quick minute, so you can both walk away with the same understanding of what happened. If you just send a note home, they may read it differently than you intended.

## **VI. Comments about Anecdotal Records and Running Records**

- A. Leslie leaves comments in our ARs and RRs to help us see the meaning/significance of the child’s behaviors. It doesn’t mean we wrote it wrong.
  - 1. Examples: which stage of social play or block building the child is showing
  - 2. These are the kinds of things we should be writing in the summary at the end of each record.
  - 3. This is helpful because at the end of the semester, it’s very hard to write that comprehensive summary of everything all semester if you don’t have a summary of each observation. It’s too overwhelming. Writing good summaries for each observation is a building block to that final project.
- B. Notice the minor details of *how* a child is using blocks.

1. When stacking up, is it random stacking, or does the child use his hands to align the edges as he goes? This shows a higher level of spatial awareness and shows that he knows that alignment will make a more stable tower.
  2. When lining up blocks on the floor, is it haphazard, or does she use her palms or a tool to align the top and bottom edges to make it straight?
- C. Notice when the child complies with an adult or classmate.
- D. Notice when the child asserts himself/herself to an adult or classmate because the ability to assert oneself is a very important skill.
1. In some families/cultures, this is unacceptable/rude. It can take years for adults to learn this skill when they don't get it in childhood.
  2. Children need to be able to articulate/advocate for their own needs, express what they want and need from other people, speak up for themselves
- E. Read the observation out loud to yourself before you turn it in.
1. Notice sentences that don't make sense or are missing words
  2. Notice when you switch from present to past tense
  3. Notice when you're missing complete sentences in paragraph form
- F. See the examples in the "Case Study" folder on ANGEL
- G. Words to skip:
1. Avoid calling them "little boys" or "little girls." They are just boys or girls.
  2. Avoid "over" after verbs. Instead of "walking over to the blocks" or "running over to the sandbox" or "standing over there," take out the "over." It's just "walking to the blocks," "running to the sandbox," or "standing there."
- H. Notice whenever your child demonstrates symbolic representation.
1. This can be in dramatic play or whenever the child substitutes one object for another
  2. This is so important to development that you should always note it in the summary when you see your child do it.