

Week 12: Wrapping Up the Semester

I. Highlights

- A. Checklists should start with verbs, not repetitive phrases.
- B. It's possible to make checklists extremely detailed!
- C. Cognitive competencies (developing cognitive skills/milestones) are important building blocks of future skills
- D. Children have a lot less opportunity to connect with nature or play outdoors than earlier generations had. We need to do what we can to help our children be outside and connected.
- E. When looking at a short story of a child, ask yourself, "What does this tell me about the child's development in each area?" Not every activity shows every area, but most show more than one, so look at everything.

II. Homework

- A. Remember to go back and answer any questions classmates leave you in their replies to your online posts.
- B. As soon as possible, go on ANGEL to look at the available slots for your 1-on-1 appointment with Leslie for the first week of December. Email her your first and second choices. Slots are assigned on a first-come, first-served basis.
- C. Due Wednesday 11/19 at 3 pm: Read Cohen Ch. 11, 12, 13
- D. Due Wednesday 11/19 at 3 pm: Discussion forum original response
- E. Due Thursday 11/20: Photo documentation board and be prepared to talk for two minutes about it
- F. Due Wednesday 11/26 (day before Thanksgiving): Discussion forum replies
- A. Due Wednesday 11/26 (day before Thanksgiving): Quizzes on Nilsen Ch. 13 & 14

- G. Due Wed/Thu/Fri December 3/4/5 during your meeting appointment: Your completed collection of all observations from the semester. Optional: also bring a draft of your final paper for her to give you feedback.
- H. Due Thursday 12/11: Final evaluation case study paper. Turn it in online or in person, but come to class at 6:30 either way to pick up your other materials and wrap things up. There is no final exam.

III. Checklists

- A. For professional look and consistency, it's best to begin each checklist item with a verb. Avoid repetitive phrases. The item doesn't have to make a whole sentence, so instead of "Is able to..." or "The child can balance..." just say "Balances on..."
- B. We could probably do an entire semester on checklists because it's possible to drill down within each skill into more and more detail. Beyond this class, there are commercially available checklists that get extremely detailed.
1. Instead of "uses art materials," think about all the different materials and the different ways children interact with each one: paint, collage, woodworking, 3-dimensional sculpture, pencil drawing, crayons, pastels, etc.
 2. Instead of "paints" being one checklist item, you could make a whole checklist about painting. It's a different experience and skill to paint with fingers vs. a small brush vs. a foam brush vs. a 3" house painting brush, watercolor vs. tempera, easel vs. table vs. building, etc.
 3. In modeling clay/playdough, think about poking vs. pinching vs. rolling the dough. Could make each skill a checklist item and the whole checklist about dough.
 4. These are all beyond the scope of this class's assignment, don't worry! She's just showing us how detailed it's possible to get.

IV. Photo Documentation Assignment (due next week!)

- A. First we will all set our boards on the tables and walk around like a museum.
- B. Then we each get two minutes to talk about it to the group.
 - 1. Talk about the experience of photographing the child.
 - a) Was it easy or challenging? Why or why not?
 - b) Were there other environmental factors/influences/barriers that affected the experience or opportunity to take pictures?
 - 2. Talk about how these photos visually represent what the child is learning.
 - a) Remember that this poster is an opportunity to visually represent what you might otherwise do in a formal written observation using words.
 - b) How is the child learning in this image? (Through discovery and self-exploration? More teacher-directed?)
- C. The minimum photo size is 3.5x5" but larger is okay. They can be rectangles, squares, or even circles, depending on what you think showcases your images best.

V. One-on-One Meeting with Leslie

- A. This is when we turn in all the observations from the whole semester!
- B. The final folder is open on ANGEL. Look in there for a schedule of available slots. Email Leslie with your first and second choices. Slots are given on a first-come, first-served basis.
- C. The slots are the Wed/Thurs/Fri of the first week of December. There is no regular Thursday night class that week. Just go to your meeting.
- D. When you meet with Leslie:
 - 1. Meeting will probably be in her office in the portable next to this classroom. She'll email us that week to let us know for sure.
 - 2. Bring a printed hard copy of all observations from the whole semester.

- a) Just bring the clean final copy. You don't need to include the rough drafts with her notes all over.
 - b) Put them in a binder or paperclip them together somehow. Whatever's easier for you to flip through them while you're sitting with her.
 - c) Look at the case study assignment sheet on ANGEL to double-check that you have everything that's required!
3. This is a very informal meeting, nothing to stress out about. You will "take her on a visual tour" of your case study child's development over the semester by walking her through all of the observations in your packet.
 4. If you want to bring a copy of your final evaluation paper to the meeting (optional!), she can give you some feedback before you turn in the final copy the week after.

VI. Final Evaluation Paper

- A. There's no final exam/test for this class, just the big final paper. It's looking at all the observations you've done all semester and putting it all together to summarize/evaluate your child in each domain of development.
- B. It's due at 6:30 on Thursday of finals week, December 11. You can bring a printed copy or turn it in on ANGEL through the dropbox she'll put up. Either way, come to class that night to pick up your photo documentation board and your packet of observations.
- C. How you go about writing this summary depends on how you define your role as an observer.
 1. If it's a child in your classroom, you will have even more insight/knowledge about the child than the observations show. It IS okay to include this outside knowledge to help make a more complete picture.

2. If it's a child in another classroom at your center, you will have extra insight into the program philosophy / approach but less context about the classroom and family than if it were your own child.
 3. If it's a child at another center and you're observing as an outsider, you only know what you've seen at observation times. Remember to acknowledge that you have a more narrow window into things than if you were there all the time. (Even teachers who are there all the time have a limited window because the child is with their family the rest of the 24-hour day.)
- D. Remember that this compilation / summary is a student assignment meant as an educational exercise for us. It's NOT appropriate to share this final paper or the packet of observations with the family. (If you would like to give the photo poster or another single piece of your work to the family, give it to the director and let the director decide whether it's appropriate to pass it along. Don't give anything directly to the family.)
- E. It can be helpful (optional, up to you) to use a different color of Post-It note for each domain of development (gross motor = yellow, fine motor = orange, social-emotional = pink, cognitive = blue, language = green, etc., whatever colors you like) to flag your observations. That helps you see what you have a lot of and what you need to focus on more.

VII. Last week's discussion forum: Cohen Ch. 9 + 10 + nature article

- A. Leslie loves Ch. 9 in Cohen because it talks about how each of these cognitive competencies (generalization, differentiation, cause & effect) is "meant to serve as a guide to better understanding children—not as a standard for measuring their intellectual abilities" (page 142).
1. This is important to emphasize when talking to parents who worry whether their child can recognize enough numbers yet or not.

2. Help parents understand how these other cognitive competencies evolve and why they matter too.
- B. "The uncovering of principles is a major occupation of children" (page 142) This is why play is so important!
- C. Teaching them to repeat a principle verbally by rote is not the same as letting them discover for themselves and come to their own conclusions. (page 143)
1. Just because they can say something doesn't mean they really understand it.
 2. Just like children who can read with good phonics skills but don't understand the story they're reading.
- D. The ability to differentiate is an important cognitive competency that is the basis for lots of other skills, including reading. It's easier for children to learn to differentiate concrete, physical things (such as appearance) they can experience first-hand.
- E. Analogies (such as "___ is like ___" or "___ looks like ___") indicate a higher order thinking level because it requires making a comparison between what the child is experiencing now and something they have in long-term memory. Notice whenever you hear this in older children because it's significant.
- F. The handout on children in nature:
1. A hot topic recently in ECE is the concept of the "natural environment" or "outdoor classroom"
 2. We don't all have access to this kind of environment at our centers.
 - a) Sometimes outdoors is all structured/scheduled with each classroom allocated a narrow time slot for the day. (Leslie struggled between being unfair to the children who were deeply engaged in something great inside when it was their turn, and being fair to the children who had no other safe outside time except for school.)
 - b) Sometimes outside is just asphalt and a sandbox, no nature around.

3. What kinds of outdoor play do you remember that might be different from our children's experiences?
 - a) Now children have fewer opportunities to "frolic in the meadow."
 - b) We remember riding bikes independently, going down to the creek, running freely on a baseball field, etc. as long as we came home by the time the street lights kicked on.
 - c) Today we would never let 6-year-olds ride their bikes around the city alone for hours at a time. Maybe the world is crazier, maybe we're all more paranoid, maybe places are too lawsuit-happy.
 - d) We never intentionally put children at risk, but there needs to be a way to take reasonably safe risks and learn to handle getting hurt sometimes. It's not healthy to make things too safe/sanitary all the time. (This is different depending on your program philosophy.)

VIII. Interpretations

A. These short anecdotes/stories are examples for us to practice interpreting what meaningful insights we can gain from our observations. This is the kind of interpretation you will do in your final paper.

B. Marcus, 10 months old

Marcus crawled up our small carpeted ramp and then crawled down the three small carpeted stairs. He repeated this five or six times with a big smile on his face.

1. What is the significance of this and how can it be integrated into the summary we're writing for the child? (Pretend this is your case study child.) What areas of development can you link this to?
2. Gross motor (obviously)

3. Could indicate his level of competence/ confidence, which is part of emotional development. He may be showing a sense of mastery by repeating his action and smiling while he does it.
4. Could also show problem-solving (part of cognitive) if we knew more about *how* he went down the stairs.

C. Juliana, 17 months old

Julianna toddled toward her teacher with a doll in one hand and a blanket in the other. She handed her teacher the doll and the blanket, softly saying, "Wrap baby." The teacher handed the wrapped baby back to her and she snuggled with it and rocked it in her arms.

1. The two-word sentence is communicating her need and getting her needs met. That's an effective use of language.
2. She seems to see the teacher as a resource, someone who will meet her needs. This shows us about their relationship.
3. She's showing symbolic representation by imitating real baby care.
4. Depending on the context, she may be demonstrating the stage of play. She seems to be in the solitary stage, assuming she's playing by herself.

D. Katsu, 24 months old

All week, Katsu has asked me, "Me help?" When I entered the hallway to gather everyone's coats before we went outside, one by one we got the coats off the hooks and stacked them into a pile outside of our door. Today I held up a purple coat and asked, "Do you remember whose coat this is?" and he said, "Ava!" I held up a blue coat and asked him the same question. He said, "Keiko." I held up a third quote and he quickly exclaimed, "MINE!"

1. This demonstrates one-to-one correspondence when he's matching one coat to one child. This requires noticing similarities and differences, discrimination, and classification skills.

2. This shows that he recognizes ownership. He only claimed one coat at his.
(Younger children may say everything is theirs.)

3. This demonstrates memory skills too!

E. Mario, 4 years 11 months old

The other day as we read a story at large group time, some children complained that they couldn't see. Mario said, "How about those in the back get on their knees? Then they can see." Today he suggested that we make a pattern of boys and girls at the snack table. The other children agreed, and Mario directed everyone so that the children were seated boy, girl, boy, girl. The last child made it girl, girl at the end, and Mario said, "That's okay. We'll do it different another day."

1. Shows he's adaptable when his plan didn't work out on the first try. (Didn't freak out when the pattern was broken at the end.)
2. Patterning is a cognitive competency that also requires classification (girls vs. boys)
3. Demonstrates conflict resolution: he offers a solution when some children can't see, shows initiative by offering the solution
4. Leadership skills: saying "How about those in the back..." instead of being bossy and saying, "You should..."
5. Showing perspective-taking/empathy when he makes a suggestion to help the kids in the back (assuming he's not back there, since he calls them "they" and not "we")
6. Clear, articulate communication/language skills
7. Saying we'll "do it different another day" shows that he has some sense of time and the maturity to have some delayed gratification.

F. Joelle, 4 years 3 months old

Almost every day when she arrives at school, Joelle seeks out her best friend, Mariah.

"Want to play house, Mariah?" she'll ask. Most days Mariah agrees. The two pretend to

cook and take care of the babies. Joelle directs the play scenario, while Mariah follows along. Today Joelle said, "Okay, Sister, it's time to make them pancakes. We gotta give these babies some breakfast, huh?" Mariah looked through the food items in the play refrigerator and found the pancakes. Joelle put out plates on the table and placed a pancake on each one. "We got one, two, three, four pancakes, huh?"

1. Shows imaginary play and solitary representation
2. Stage of social play = "cooperative play" (the highest stage) because they're both involved, collaborating, mutually agreeing on what happens
3. Possibly demonstrating one-to-one correspondence with the pancakes, but we don't know because it doesn't say how many plates there were, how many pancakes there really were (did she count them accurately?), and whether she did the counting as she touched each pancake.
4. Asking if Mariah wants to play, instead of telling her that they're playing, shows some social awareness. Also means Joelle has formulated a plan and is acting on it when she asks if Mariah wants to join her.
5. Teachers need to be sensitive to the Mariah type of child who often gets dragged around by stronger-willed children.
6. Curious if the title "sister" is a role in the game, or a term of endearment, or slang. We would need to know more about her language use in other contexts.