

# Week 1: Introduction

## I. Highlights

- A. The online discussion forum is like an extension of our classroom. This is a hybrid class, so participating in the forum is as important as participating in class. Both count toward our grades.
- B. We'll be covering a variety of types of observation. Each type has its own strengths, weaknesses, and special uses.
- C. Both textbooks are required. We won't necessarily go in order, so follow along with the chapters Leslie assigns each week.
- D. Always remember confidentiality! What's discussed in this class stays in this class. Respect the children and teachers you observe by keeping what you see confidential.

## II. Homework

- A. Read the syllabus that's posted on ANGEL. Look at the other handouts on ANGEL too.
- B. Get both textbooks as soon as possible.
- C. Skim through notes/textbook from CHS 002 Growth & Development. We'll be using that material a lot, and it's been a while. Refresh yourself on which types of behaviors fall into which domains of development.
- D. Due Monday at 1:00: Introductory post.
- E. Due Wednesday at 1:00: Three replies to other people's introductory posts.
- F. Due Thursday: Read Nilsen introduction (the part before Chapter 1), especially the part about ethics and confidentiality.
- G. Due Thursday: Read the description of the case study assignment. Bring your questions to class. We'll work on this project most of the semester.

### III. This is a hybrid course.

- A. Class meets every Thursday in V-27 from 6:30 to 7:55. The rest happens online.
- B. Our online ANGEL classroom is ready to go. If you need help using ANGEL for the first time, ask Leslie after class.
- C. Class will be more about activities, less about lecture. We'll focus on our choice of language/ words to use, what it is we're observing, how we feel about, our personal reactions to what we observe, etc.
- D. No individual public speaking/ presentations required.
- E. Leslie's office is next door, but she'll be in the classroom by 6:00 or 6:10 if you need help. Class begins promptly at 6:30.
- F. Email is the best way to get in touch with Leslie. She checks her college email and ANGEL email several times a day. Phone is much less reliable.
- G. Must have access to a backup computer just in case. Computer problems are not a valid excuse for missing assignments.
- H. Discussion forums
  1. We may or may not be broken into two smaller groups as the syllabus says.
  2. Discussion forums are centered around assigned chapters in the Cohen book, plus maybe one or two supplemental articles that relate to observing children.
  3. The discussion is about extracting key concepts or ideas that I can personally/ professionally relate to within the context of observing children. Maybe something that reminds you of your current classroom work, or something that your own child did in the past at this age.
  4. The first week's introductory forum has a one-week lifespan: original post by Monday at 3:00, replies by Wednesday at 3:00.
  5. Normally forums will have a two-week lifespan: original post by Wednesday at 3:00, then replies and online quiz by the following Wednesday at 3:00.

6. In any forum, after reading the directions, click the [-] next to “Directions” at the upper-left to minimize them and save screen space.
  7. Graded on quality + quantity of responses + doing it on time. There’s a grading rubric on time.
- I. Online quizzes are given one chapter at a time from the *Week by Week* textbook.
- J. ANGEL demo
1. Go to WestValley.edu > click on ANGEL at the top
  2. Log in with your username (student ID) and password (birthday as 6 digits)
  3. Important to use the correct browser, which is not the current version of Firefox. See the options listed on the login page.
  4. Click on CHS\*087 in the list on the left.
  5. Most stuff will be under the “Course Content” tab.
    - a) The syllabus is there.
    - b) The only online assignment for this week is the “Post an Introduction” forum. This gets us used to the online forum environment that we’ll be using all semester. You don’t have to answer every question in the directions; they’re a guideline. It’s not meant to be offensive or intrusive.
    - c) If you have a question about anything, it may be faster to post it to the “Student Discussion Forum/Class Material” forum to get an answer from a classmate than to wait for Leslie to check email.
    - d) “Student Chat/Irrelevant to Class Material” is for posting jobs, interesting articles, anything else you want to share that isn’t a chapter response.
    - e) “ANGEL Help Guides” are handouts that use screenshots to show you how to do things in ANGEL.

#### IV. Syllabus

- A. "Cohen" refers to the smaller textbook, *Observing and Recording the Behavior of Young Children*. The online discussion forum assignments come from this book.
- B. "Nilsen" refers to the larger textbook, *Week by Week*. There are multiple formats for this book, so get whichever you like. We won't necessarily go cover-to-cover in this one because it's designed for a two-semester-long course. In-class work and online quizzes will come from chapters in this book.
- C. Observations
  - 1. Will be doing running records, anecdotal records, checklists, frequency counts, meaningful photos/images, etc.
  - 2. Meaningful photos are those that capture moments of development, achievement, problem solving, a great block structure the child is building, etc.
  - 3. We'll be doing a different type of observation every week or two, depending on the type of observation.
- D. We'll talk about the photo documentation assignment in Week 4 or 5 including examples. We'll talk about the do's and don'ts of professionalism in photography. The assignment will be due in the second half of the semester so we'll have time to work on it. Don't procrastinate in case your camera malfunctions or the child is absent.
- E. Case study portfolio
  - 1. Collection of observations conducted on one child over the course of the semester
  - 2. Maybe one child in your classroom that piques your interest for some reason, would like to get to know them better. Can use a child you nanny for if you also get to see them in the school environment.
  - 3. Must be ages 0-8, infants up to 3<sup>rd</sup> grade max.

4. Can do observations at the on-campus Child Development Center or at the other sites listed on ANGEL. Will need an appointment to go to any of these.
  5. During the last week of class (before finals), we will each schedule a one-on-one appointment with Leslie to show her our collection of observations in a portfolio. Then during finals week, we'll turn in a full written evaluation of our case study child based on that collection of observations.
  6. Three parts of the assignment: collecting data all semester, meeting one-on-one with Leslie during the last week, then the comprehensive evaluation during finals week.
  7. Examples are posted on ANGEL for each part.
  8. Important to get the permission form signed. Need permission from the parent and/or director before starting observations. This is the first document in our case study portfolio to show to Leslie.
  9. Resources on ANGEL to help you build vocabulary for articulating different areas of child development. It's worth reading these before conducting the first anecdotal record or running record.
  10. The case study tracking form on ANGEL is optional. If you prefer to use a different record-keeping system (calendars, sticky notes, smartphone, etc.) feel free.
- F. In Week 3, the assignment to bring a full-length photo of a person:
1. Must be a color photo.
  2. Can be a photo you've taken, or something you cut out of a magazine or brochure or poster. It doesn't have to be nicely printed on photo paper this time.
  3. Must be full-length, from the top of their head/hair to the bottom of their feet. No cropping.
  4. can be a child or adult.

## V. Topics

- A. We'll focus on what Leslie thinks are the most difficult and time-consuming methods of observation first, then finish with the easier things later in the semester as the holidays approach.
- B. We'll start the semester with ethics, confidentiality, our own language and choice of words, etc.
- C. Then we'll work on narratives (anecdotal and running records) because they're the most time-consuming.
- D. Photo documentation assignment will be on our case study child. The case study will be a semester-long project that ties everything together.
- E. Leslie thinks of observation & assessment as being like all the different ways to cook chicken: there are tons of recipes for cooking chicken (fry it, bake it, etc.) and each gives a different flavor experience, but it's all still chicken. Similarly, different observation methods are all unique in their own way, give us their own unique understanding of that child, but it's all about gathering information on a child.
- F. Confidentiality
  - 1. You might observe something that makes you uncomfortable, something you disagree with about how a teacher responded to a child. Can share this in this classroom/ discussion, share what it means to observe such a situation.
  - 2. What we discuss about other children and families stay in this classroom, not the parking lot or other CHS classes or your center's break room. You never know who knows whom, is unprofessional to share negative stories about other people's children or teachers. As observers, we never have the whole story.

3. Also applies to teachers. It's very easy to pass judgement on the quality of someone's teaching based on an observed incident. It's a human reaction not to like it, but it's not fair to pass judgement on the teacher because of it. Is okay to bring those feelings to our discussion in class.
4. Striving to be as objective as possible, but part of that is learning to acknowledge our subjective feelings so we can separate them from the objective observations. Articulating your feelings helps them stop from spinning around in your head, poisoning your objective efforts to be fair to the child/teacher/parent involved.