

# Week 10: Frequency Counts & Time Samples

## I. Highlights

- A. Frequency counts are a quick measure of how often something is happening (good or bad) and for which children. It can help you figure out if something needs to change in the room. Doing one before and after a classroom change can help you show the result of the change.
- B. Time samples show which children and teachers are in which areas every few minutes for a while. Only useful during free choice time and only for children ages 3 and up.

## II. Homework

- A. Remember to go back and answer any questions classmates leave you in their replies to your online posts.
- B. NOTE: Next week (11/6) is a “work day” so there’s no class that night. Use the time at home to catch up on assignments. It’s her gift to us. :)
- C. Due Wednesday 11/5 at 3 pm: Read Cohen Ch. 9 & 10
- D. Due Wednesday 11/5 at 3 pm: Discussion forum original response
- E. Due Thursday 11/6: Read Nilsen Chapter 13
- F. Double-check that your checklist (turned in today) is worded objectively so that the behavior/skills can be directly observed by someone else and the other person would rate the child in the same way
- G. Final countdown: The full observation packet is due 5 weeks from tonight, and the final evaluation is due 6 weeks from tonight. We can do this!

### III. Looking Ahead

- A. We won't be turning in any more required anecdotal records or running records between now and the final package. If you want her to look at one more (either an anecdotal or running record), bring her a printed copy by Thursday 11/13 (the next time we have class) so she can get it back to you by the following week. This is just for feedback/guidance, not for points. It's optional.
- B. New in ANGEL:
1. The next week's folder is open. There's only one more after this!
  2. Sample frequency count and time samples are in the Forms folder
  3. DRDP information is also in the Forms folder
    - a) DRDP = Desired Results Developmental Profile = the type of rating scale you have to use for developmental assessment on every child if you work in a state-subsidized/grant-funded/Department of Education Title 5 center
      - (1) Starting fall of 2015 they'll all be online.
      - (2) The old 2010 version is simpler, so Leslie posted those too for us to see/use as a resource.
      - (3) Each is divided into measures such as "children are socially competent" or "children practice safe and healthy habits." Each measure has a rating scale with terms like "Developing... Understanding... Integrating.... Expanding... Connecting" and an explanation and concrete examples for each one.
      - (4) This can be a good resource to look at if you're stuck on how to word your own rating scale assignment. You don't have to do a DRDP for homework. They're way more complicated than this class gets.
- C. When we come back on Nov. 13 she'll talk about compiling everything into the final summary.

- D. The week after Thanksgiving (Week 15, the week before finals) we won't have regular class. Each person will make a one-on-one appointment with her on Wednesday or Thursday or Friday.
  - 1. Bring your pile of completed observations (all 3 running records, 10 anecdotal records, completed checklist, etc. — all listed in the case study assignment sheet) in a binder or folder or paper clip. You'll talk about it with her.
  - 2. Everything you bring has to be a printed copy. Emailed doesn't count.
- E. The following week is finals week when the final summary essay is due.

#### **IV. Article on "how children see us" from this week's discussion forum post**

- A. We're spending all this time talking about us observing children. It's good to take a moment to think about how children and families see us.
- B. It can be especially hard if families only see you at very-early-not-awake-yet in the morning and/or end-of-the-day-I'm-wiped in the evening. Be extra aware of your face, body language, casual comments, etc. when you feel like that because that's all some parents see of you.
- C. Children notice your small mannerisms, habits, tone of voice, word choice, etc.
- D. We all want to be the best role model we can be at all times, but we're human and can't be 100% all the time.

#### **V. Frequency Counts**

- A. Provide a very quick method to determine whether a change is needed in a child's behavior and brainstorm ways to encourage that change (and measure if it worked)
- B. Measure the repeated actions of a child, the entire classroom, or a teacher
- C. The purpose is to determine how often an event occurs
- D. Examples:

1. Is there a lot of teacher-directed conversation or is it open-ended questions with two-way conversation?
2. Biting, profanity, etc. — usually behaviors that we find very challenging.
3. Spills at meals, punching (as intent to harm, not rough-and-tumble play), sharing, using the block area, teachers saying “Don’t...,” children saying, “Teacher, teacher...”
4. First you need to know how often it’s happening (is this an isolated or frequent occurrence?) so you can know how to address it

E. For this assignment

1. Blank starter forms are in ANGEL if you want to use them
2. Determine your categories (the textbook example uses pro-social vs. anti-social) but be *very* clear on how you define those labels.
3. We’re not turning in a blank draft this time, just the completed frequency count at the end of the semester with everything else
4. It’s okay to apply it to a teacher in the case study child’s classroom. For example, looking at responsive and non-responsive teacher behavior toward children would be appropriate in an infant/toddler classroom where there’s often not one organized large group time. “Responsive” would be verbal or nonverbal, eye contact, smiling, moving closer, asking open-ended questions, getting more materials when the child runs low, etc. “Non-responsive” would be sitting and staring into space, not getting up when a child is seeking help/attention, etc. List teachers’ names down the left instead of children’s names in that case.
5. Think of something you want to know more about in your case study child’s classroom. It can be more than two categories. Name all children (or teachers) in the classroom down the left side, not just your case study child.
6. The summary is just one paragraph.

- F. If you think something is happening often, such as spilling every day at lunch, do the frequency count daily for at least a week. Get a sense of whether your instinct is accurate. Maybe it's half as often but just really annoying? Maybe it only happens on Tues/Thurs when certain kids are there, etc.?
- G. Always define your terms so someone else can pick up the tool and get the same answer about the same child. For example, differentiate between "punching" to hurt and "punching" as part of rough-and-tumble wrestling play
- H. Can document something positive (such as sharing) and check off different examples of different kinds of sharing
- I. For example, how frequently is the block area being used? The categories could be 9:00-10:00, 10:00-11:00, and 11:00 to 12:00 to help show when it's most popular.

## **VI. Time Samples**

- A. Can be used to measure attention span
  1. Attention span has to do with how much time you spend doing something
  2. Example: how long a child spends in the block area or painting
  3. Only accurate during free open choice time because if the activities are structured/teacher-driven, you'll never know how long the child would spend at that activity voluntarily
  4. We are all more likely to spend time on something we enjoy doing
  5. Given the choices, if none of the choices is attractive to the child, he may not spend much time on any one thing, but that doesn't mean he always has a short attention span
  6. We are all more likely to spend time on something where we've found success before, wanting to avoid too much frustration
  7. Attention span for a given activity can be influenced by things the parents tell them, such as, "Don't get dirty" or "Only girls play dress-up."

8. We are all more likely to spend time doing something if other people we like are doing it with us. We will also avoid something because a person we don't like is going to be there.
  9. These many factors together makes it very hard to determine/measure ADHD.
  10. Attention span for circle time may seem short, but for many children, it's uncomfortable to be around so many children so close for such a long time. That's a new experience for some children.
- B. Time samples track children's choices, their playmates and the time they spend in one area
- C. Best used with children 3 and older (infants/toddlers can do it but it's harder because they are governed more by sensory distraction than by attention) so if your case study child is little, do the best you can in your school.
- D. You can draw conclusions about these things based on a time sample:
1. The child's interests
  2. Where the child feels competent (because he spends a lot of time there)
  3. Where the child may not feel competent (because he avoids it, but he could be avoiding it because of who else is there or another reason)
  4. The stage of play
  5. Length of attention span
  6. If a child is teacher-dependent or avoids adults or just doesn't need us
- E. Example on page 182. Look at that before doing your assignment. We don't have to use symbols like they did, but it's okay if you want to.
- F. Can list the adults who are present in each area at the time.
- G. Include the other children this time, not just your case study child.
- H. Maximum summary is one paragraph.

- I. Remember to note other factors that may have influenced the child's behavior, including fear of another child, separation anxiety from parents, etc.