Welcome to CUR117: Authentic Assessment in Early Care and Education

What is authentic assessment, exactly, and what makes it different from other forms of assessment? Why is authentic assessment so important in the early childhood education environment? How can authentic assessments be used to improve individual outcomes and overall program quality?

In this course, participants will not only learn what authentic assessment means but also why and how to utilize a wide variety of methods and instruments to learn about the whole child and make informed, purposeful curriculum decisions.

Course Objectives:

By taking notes on the handout and successfully answering assessment questions, participants will meet the following objectives as a result of taking this course:

- Identify appropriate methods and uses of assessment in the early care and education environment
- Compare and contrast formal & informal assessments and traditional & authentic assessments
- Identify characteristics of authentic assessment
- Demonstrate an understanding of NAEYC’s indicators of effective assessment
- Demonstrate an understanding of the observation process
- Identify characteristics and proper application of observation assessments involving checklists and rating scales
- Identify the purpose and characteristics of anecdotal records, running records, frequency count, and event/time sampling
- Identify purpose and recommended practices for using child interviews as a form of assessment
- Identify purpose and recommended practices for portfolio-based assessment
- Demonstrate an understanding of the difference between objective and subjective observation records and characteristics of appropriate, effective recordkeeping

Note: At five points in this course, participants are expected to reflect and write about topics related to their own learning and teaching experiences in relation to course content.

References:


NAEYC Developmentally Appropriate Practice Position Statement, 2009


Assessment: What It Is and Is Not
Define *assessment*:

What does *assessment* mean in the education world?

**In ECE, Assessment Is Not**

**A Note about Screening**

**The Purpose of Assessment in Early Childhood Education**

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) states that:

The purpose of assessment, according to NAEYC, is three-fold:

1. 
2. 
3. 

**Assessment Forms: The Big Picture**

Use the space provided to record important information from this section of the course.
How are standardized tests different from other formal assessments?

Informal Assessment

Traditional and Authentic Assessment Forms

What Is Authentic Assessment?
Use information from the course to write a definition of authentic assessment that makes the most sense to you:
Traditional-Authentic Comparison

This table highlights the basic differences between traditional and authentic assessment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Traditional</th>
<th>Authentic</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Select a Response</td>
<td>Artificial or Contrived</td>
<td>Perform a Task</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Recall/Recognition</td>
<td>Real-life, Genuine</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Teacher-structured</td>
<td>Construction/Application</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Indirect Evidence (The student does well on the test but does he really know it?)</td>
<td>Direct Evidence (I know he can do it because I saw it with my own eyes.)</td>
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Characteristics of Authentic Assessment

Use the space provided to record important information from this section of the course.

NAEYC Indicators of Effective Assessment Practices

Use the space provided to record important information from this section of the course.
Observation

The Observation Process

1. Plan the Observation

2. Conduct the Observation
Be objective!

3. Interpret the Data

4. Take Action

Assessment Tools and Methods

Checklists

Developmental Checklists

Environment Observation Checklists
Try This!

Explore Resources
Take a few minutes to research some checklists. Please open a separate browser with a search engine, or simply click on this Google link, which will open a new window.

A simple google of “Developmental Checklists” or “ECE Environment checklists” will yield all kinds of helpful results. You can further refine your search with terms like “early literacy checklists,” “early language checklists,” or “social skills checklist.”

Search around until you find a checklist that might be useful in your current classroom or one in which you have taught or observed in the past.

Rating Scales
Anecdotal Records

An *anecdotal record* is a

Running (or Narrative) Records
Frequency Count

Sampling

Time Sampling

Event Sampling

Interviews

Child Interviews

Parent Interviews
Child Self-Assessments

Portfolio

Tips, Recommended Practices, and Reminders