Using Observation to Inform Instruction in Early Childhood Education

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<http://faculty.tamuc.edu/jthompson/Observation>

A simple liberating thought came to our aid, namely that things about children and for children are only learned from children. Follow the child. Malaguzzi (1998) p. 51

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| Domains of DevelopmentPhysicalLanguageAestheticCognitiveEmotionalSocial | Stages of DevelopmentInfant (neonate, infant, mobile infant)ToddlerPreSchoolerKindergartnerPrimary (1st & 2nd gr)School age, middle childhoodTweener |

Eyes in the back of your head – Kid Watching

 Three objectives – to know a child, to monitor growth over time, to evaluate a program

Main Types of Observations

Narratives

Sampling

Child Study

Types of Narratives

Diary

Anecdote

Running Record

Date of observation

Describe the setting

Demographics:

People

Race, age, gender, language, SES

Narratives: Running Record

Thick rich descriptions of everything w/in your eyesight and ear range

Use time stamp

Write down everything

Examples of Sampling

Event

Time

Artifacts

Portfolio

What goes in?

Who chooses?

How is material managed?

What does it mean?

Child Study

Thick, rich descriptive observations of children in natural settings that captures all aspects of their lives: classroom environment, friendships, parents and family life, and community

Child Study

May include tools:

Developmental checklists

Analysis:
What to do with what you know?

Making Inferences

http://faculty.tamuc.edu/ jthompson/Resources/ InterpretingObservations.ppt

Drawing Conclusions

Evaluate and Apply

Discuss: What makes any one of these observation techniques effective and appropriate for different observation settings?

Follow the child