This course supports the assessments for EXC1 and HJT1. The course covers 4 competencies and represents 3 competency units.

Introduction

Overview
Assessment is a very controversial topic in the field of early childhood education. Early childhood professionals have always considered assessment as a form and a tool of inquiry, insisting that all assessment of young children is developmentally appropriate. In this course, you will identify appropriate uses of the principles and methods of assessment and observation.

Many experienced teachers will tell you that it is through observation, assessment, and reflection that they find true satisfaction in their work. Your previous work in the program has given you a strong background in child development, the importance of reflection, and the ethics of the field of early childhood education. As you become increasingly skilled in the tools of observing and assessing, these processes will give you a level of clarity and bring into focus the necessary steps to best support the learning and development of young children.

Competencies
This course provides guidance to help you demonstrate the following 4 competencies:

- **Competency 607.3.1: Observing Infants, Toddlers, and Young Children**
  The graduate uses effective methods and tools of observation to support the learning, growth, and development of infants, toddlers, and young children.

- **Competency 607.3.2: Developing and Interpreting Assessments**
  The graduate develops and uses appropriate assessments to support developmental and educational goals for infants, toddlers, and young children.

- **Competency 607.3.3: Developmentally Appropriate Assessment Strategies and Tools**
  The graduate observes, documents, and uses developmentally appropriate assessment strategies, techniques, and tools.

- **Competency 607.3.4: Responsible and Ethical Assessment Practice**
  The graduate practices responsible and ethical assessment of infants, toddlers, and young children in multiple modalities for multiple purposes.

Teaching Dispositions Statement
Please review the WGU Statement of Teaching Dispositions.

Course Instructor Assistance
As you prepare to successfully demonstrate competency in this subject, remember that course instructors stand ready to help you reach your educational goals. As subject matter experts, mentors enjoy and take pride in helping students become reflective learners, problem solvers, and critical thinkers. Course instructors are excited to hear from you and eager to work with you.

Successful students report that working with a course instructor is the key to their success.
Course instructors are able to share tips on approaches, tools, and skills that can help you apply the content you're studying. They also provide guidance in assessment preparation strategies and troubleshoot areas of deficiency. Even if things don’t work out on your first try, course instructors act as a support system to guide you through the revision process. You should expect to work with course instructors for the duration of your coursework, so you are welcome to contact them as soon as you begin. Course instructors are fully committed to your success!

**Preparing for Success**

The information in this section is provided to detail the resources available for you to use as you complete this course.

**Learning Resources**

The learning resources listed in this section are required to complete the activities in this course. For many resources, WGU has provided automatic access through the course. However, you may need to manually enroll in or independently acquire other resources. Read the full instructions provided to ensure that you have access to all of your resources in a timely manner.

**Manually Enrolled Resources**

Take a moment to enroll in the learning resources listed in this section. To enroll, navigate to the “Learning Resources” tab, click the “Sections” button, and then click the “Enroll Now” button for each resource. Once your mentor approves your enrollment in the resource, you will receive an e-mail with further access instructions. Contact your mentor if you have questions.

You will need to enroll in or subscribe to learning resources as a part of this course. You may already have enrolled in these resources for other courses. Please check the “Learning Resources” tab and verify that you have access to the following learning resources. If you do not currently have access, please enroll or renew your enrollment at this time.

- **MyEducationLab** provides access to interactive resources such as videos.
- **Cengage Learning**

You will access instructional videos through this resource. You will be directed to the specific videos within the activities in this course.

To access the resource, you will need to set up your own personal account with Cengage, if you do not already have one, which will then allow you to access your Cengage resources all in one place.

**Registration Instructions for New User:**

- Enter the product access code **ELPPND12PPPHZ5** in the "Access Code" box and click
on REGISTER.
- Confirm that your institution name & materials requested are displayed correctly and click on CONTINUE.
- Fill in all the required fields for creating your Cengage account, select "I Agree" to the License Agreement, and click on CONTINUE.

Registration Instructions for Registered User:

- Enter the product access code ELPPND12PPPHZ5 in the "Have Another Product to Register?" box and click on REGISTER.
- Confirm that your institution name & materials requested are displayed correctly and click on CONTINUE.

Purchase Learning Resources

Listed below are the learning resource materials you will need to obtain.

Textbooks
Purchase the following textbook:


You may purchase this text from the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). After accessing the NAEYC website, click on the "Learn More" link for this book to order. NAEYC members receive a discount on this purchase. It is recommended that you join NAEYC as you work through your program.

Note: This text will be used in multiple Early Childhood Education courses. Be certain to purchase the 3rd edition of this text that includes the free CD. You will be using the CD as a learning resource.

Automatically Enrolled Learning Resources

You will be automatically enrolled at the activity level for the following learning resources. Simply click on the links provided in the activities to access the learning materials.

VitalSource E-Texts
The following textbook is available to you as an e-text within this course. You will be directly linked to the specific readings required within the activities that follow.


Note: This e-text is available to you as part of your program tuition and fees, but you may purchase a hard copy at your own expense through a retailer of your choice. If you choose to do
so, please use the ISBN listed to ensure that you receive the correct edition.

Other Learning Resources

You will use the following learning resources for this course.

National Research Council E-Text
Access the following online textbook:


Click on the link “READ THIS BOOK ONLINE, FREE!” for immediate access. You can also download the full PDF of the text to your computer.

Learning Community

This course is supported by the Foundations of Early Childhood Education Learning Community. Learning communities are an integral part of the WGU learning experience. Communities provide opportunities to learn through communication with the course instructor and other students. Contact the course instructor for assistance. Course instructors do not provide answers; rather they engage you in discussion to help you gain understanding of important concepts.

Certain activities in this course may direct you to participate in the learning community to strengthen your understanding of particularly important concepts.

Professional Portfolio

Continue building your professional portfolio. As you begin this course, add a tab for Observation and Assessment. Place resources in this section that will demonstrate your knowledge and competency in this area.

Note: As always, do not include anything that specifically identifies a child or adult. Change all names or leave names out altogether.

Arrange for PCEs

This course will have recommended or required pre-clinical experiences (PCE) that will count toward your required number of 60 or more hours in the classroom prior to Demonstration Teaching.

Look through this course to identify any required activities and to become familiar with the PCE activities that will best support your learning and development as an early childhood educator in the context of observation and assessment. Be sure to arrange for your PCE visits well enough in advance to allow for any scheduling changes that may occur.
Understanding the Role of Assessment in Early Childhood

Imagine, for a moment, that you have just been given a refrigerator. The person who delivers the refrigerator says, "You are so lucky to have one of these models, but I hear they are kind of quirky." The delivery person does not seem to know anything more, so you go about assessing the characteristics and performance of the refrigerator. You find that you can test certain characteristics quite easily, but other aspects of the refrigerator require more knowledge and experience than you have. You conduct research and consult with an expert to gain additional knowledge, clarification, and direction. In the end, you find that you have come to understand the strengths and weaknesses of your refrigerator extremely well and that you have the knowledge necessary to take good care of your new appliance.

Young children are not at all like refrigerators, nor are the purposes and methods of assessing young children anything like the example of the refrigerator assessment, but the example does serve to illustrate the importance of using a comprehensive approach and multiple effective measures to gain a thorough understanding.

In this section you will gain an understanding of the role of assessment in early childhood education. This understanding will help you as you learn about the assessment methods, tools, and responsibilities that will be at your disposal as you work with infants, toddlers, and young children.

What is Assessment?

The reading and activities in this section will help you to define assessment in the context of early childhood. Please keep in mind that this course has the most extensive new vocabulary of any of the courses in your early childhood program.

Appendix A in *Assessing Young Children* has a list of terms five pages long. As a professional educator, you will want to be familiar with these terms. Just for fun, read through the terms and count the number you already know.

Consider making a copy of the list and checking off each term as you become familiar with its meaning. You will feel a sense of satisfaction at the end of this course when you have checked off each of the approximately 180 terms.

This topic addresses the following competencies:

- **Competency 607.3.1: Observing Infants, Toddlers, and Young Children**
  The graduate uses effective methods and tools of observation to support the learning, growth, and development of infants, toddlers, and young children.

- **Competency 607.3.2: Developing and Interpreting Assessments**
  The graduate develops and uses appropriate assessments to support developmental and educational goals for infants, toddlers, and young children.

- **Competency 607.3.3: Developmentally Appropriate Assessment Strategies and Tools**
  The graduate observes, documents, and uses developmentally appropriate assessment
Defining Assessment

In your study notes, jot down what you believe to be an adequate definition of assessment. As you read, continually refine and expand your definition.

Read the following in Assessing Young Children:

- chapter 1 ("A Comprehensive Assessment System for Birth Through Age 8")

As you read, continually refine and expand your definition of assessment.

Next, review the following and share your thoughts in the message board:

- Authentic Assessment--What's It All About?

Purposes of Assessment

Now that you have explored the meaning of assessment, you will be taking a look at the purposes of assessment in early childhood education. As you work through this section, let the following questions guide your study:

- How is assessment more than testing?
- What is involved in a comprehensive system of assessment for young children?
- What assessment techniques do early childhood teachers typically use?
- Who are the various stakeholders in early childhood assessment?

This topic addresses the following competencies:

- **Competency 607.3.1: Observing Infants, Toddlers, and Young Children**
  The graduate uses effective methods and tools of observation to support the learning, growth, and development of infants, toddlers, and young children.

- **Competency 607.3.2: Developing and Interpreting Assessments**
  The graduate develops and uses appropriate assessments to support developmental and educational goals for infants, toddlers, and young children.

- **Competency 607.3.3: Developmentally Appropriate Assessment Strategies and Tools**
  The graduate observes, documents, and uses developmentally appropriate assessment strategies, techniques, and tools.

Gaining an Overview of Assessment

Read the following text-based article on the CD-ROM that accompanies the Developmentally Appropriate Practice text:

- article 6 ("Beyond Outcomes: How Ongoing Assessment Supports Children's Learning and Leads to Meaningful Curriculum")
- Click on "Print Readings" and then on "By Topic."
Select the category "Assessment."
Select the article by clicking on the title.

Now, skim through the text and look through the course. You will begin to see how broad the topic of assessment is. As you skim through these documents, begin compiling a list of the purposes of assessment in your study notes.

As you continue through this course, check off these purposes as you come to understand them and feel that you can implement them. Add some of the items on your list to the message board discussion. As you consider some of these purposes, ask yourself if you would consider all of these items as true assessment, based on your definition. Are all of these types of assessment developmentally appropriate for infants, toddlers, and young children?

**Basic Concepts of Measurement in Assessment**

Are you one of the many early childhood professionals who thrives in the use of informal and authentic classroom observation tools and assessments, but shrinks in fear when it comes to interpreting and using the statistics associated with standardized testing and other high-stakes exams that are becoming, more and more, a part of early childhood education?

Whether or not you have a strong background in mathematics, this section will give you the tools you need to work with assessment statistics with confidence. With these tools and skills, you will be able to determine more readily what information is helpful and necessary for you, as a teacher, and for the families of the young children with whom you work in supporting the learning and development of each child.

**Basic Concepts of Measurement**

It may sound very dry and uninteresting to say that measurement is the process of systematically assigning numbers to test results so that teachers can accurately interpret the results, use the information to communicate with children and families, and guide learning. However, the process and the results are anything but dry or boring. The more you understand the information in this section, the better able you will be to serve the young children in your care and the greater satisfaction you will feel in knowing you are positively impacting the learning of each child.

This topic addresses the following competency:

- **Competency 607.3.2: Developing and Interpreting Assessments**
  The graduate develops and uses appropriate assessments to support developmental and educational goals for infants, toddlers, and young children.

**Study Activities for Basic Measurement Concepts**

Read the following in *Assessing Young Children*:

- **chapter 4 ("Using Basic Concepts of Measurement")**

Use the study questions on page 101 to guide your reading. Thoroughly read the chapter,
rereading sections that may seem complicated the first time through.

Select one or more of the "Field Activities" on page 101 to help you gain experience with using measurement concepts.

If you feel you need additional help to solidify these concepts, check the learning community for chats or additional information on basic measurement concepts.

**Exercises in Avoiding Bias in Testing**

You will notice that the chapter 4 reading selection includes a paragraph on bias in testing.

Since early childhood educators must be particularly careful not to plant seeds of bias in the developing minds of young children. Complete the following observation bias exercise:

- **Observer Bias**

This document provides an overview of bias and then asks you to practice your observation skills on several photographs of young children. You may want to print out the forms for recording your observations and education values.

Next, research how bias in testing negatively impacts learners. Make certain you understand how to avoid instances of gender, ethnic, and cultural bias. Include the "halo and horns effect" in your search. In your reflection journal, consider how this phenomenon can impact early childhood assessment and allow a subtle form of bias to influence the objectivity of a teacher or caregiver.

**Methods of Observation**

People tend to see what they expect to see, but true observation is much more that just watching or looking. In this section, pay particular attention to the aspects that will help you see young children and their behaviors with the eyes of a trained observer.

**Observation**

A teacher who has not learned the skills of observation may be like young Morgan, easily distracted from events that may seem very important at the moment. Observation holds the key to being an intentional teacher -- a teacher who is able to maintain a focus on important concerns and who systematically gathers information and bases decisions not on the emotion of the moment, but on real data and insight gained from multiple, careful observations. For this reason, your reading, research, and study in this section may be among some of the most important learning you do in your program.

This topic addresses the following competency:

- **Competency 607.3.1: Observing Infants, Toddlers, and Young Children**
  The graduate uses effective methods and tools of observation to support the learning, growth, and development of infants, toddlers, and young children.

**Create an Observation Resource List**
Read the following in *Assessing Young Children*:

- chapter 3 ("Observation as the Key Method in the System")

As you read, make a chart, such as the one started below, that includes each observational tool or method included in your reading and research, a brief description, and its primary purposes.

You may refer to this chart as you decide which observational or assessment tools you will use in the performance assessments related to this course.

- Observation Chart

When your chart is complete, consider exchanging charts with a fellow student to compare notes.

Post your chart in your professional portfolio in the "Observation and Assessment" tab.

*Note: For more information on the professional portfolio, see the "Preparing for Success" section.*

**Observation with Reflection**

Arrange to spend observation time in various early childhood classrooms at each of the following three developmental levels (birth to two years, preschool/kindergarten, and first through third grade. If you have been fully approved to begin your PCE, you may arrange to do your observation activities at your PCE sites. Select one or more of the observation methods you have studied to use in your PCE observation experience.

When you have finished, place your reflections and summaries in your professional portfolio. Then, reflect on one or more of the following topics in your reflection journal:

- the role of observation in a well-designed early childhood program
- your ability to record and summarize observation data
- the critical, yet insufficient, nature of observation as a comprehensive assessment strategy
- your ability to incorporate observation in your professional practice as an early childhood professional

**The Role of Testing in Early Childhood Assessment**

What memories do you have of tests and testing from your childhood? Were you a good at taking tests? Did you have test anxiety? How do your past experiences influence your perspective of testing and its role in early childhood education?
Since the No Child Left Behind, there has been a far greater emphasis on testing young children than ever before. If you have been out of the field of education for 10 or more years, you may be astonished at how much emphasis is placed on testing children, even in the earliest grades. If you have been able to watch the emergence of this era of testing, you may have asked yourself how testing can be accomplished in a way that provides valid data for supporting the learning and development of young children without undermining the developmentally appropriate learning environments that promote an intrinsic love of learning.

This section will address that very issue. In particular, you will look at the developmentally appropriate uses of tests for accountability, screening, diagnosis, and Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). Your study and learning in this area will prepare you to make use of testing tools to support, with greater confidence, the young children that you work with and their families.

**Testing**

Parents are known for taking pictures of their children to capture and preserve a particular moment. Testing can be considered a snapshot of what an infant, toddler, or young child can and cannot do developmentally, academically, socially, and so on. Picture-taking uses a camera and produces a photo, while testing uses a standardized format, set of questions, or procedures, and the results can be communicated numerically or statistically. This information helps parents and teachers understand how a child might compare.

As you engage in this section, ask yourself how you will know when to use a test, what you can learn from the results of the test, and how you will go about selecting the appropriate test for a given situation. You may want to ask how state and federal laws regarding testing will impact your teaching.

This topic addresses the following competency:

- **Competency 607.3.3: Developmentally Appropriate Assessment Strategies and Tool**
  The graduate observes, documents, and uses developmentally appropriate assessment strategies, techniques, and tools.

**Reading Selection and Self-check: Testing**

Read the following:

- **Assessing Young Children**, chapter 5 (“Testing: Choosing the Right Measure”)
- **Early Childhood Assessment: Why, What, and How**, chapter 4 (“Screening Young Children”) and chapter 5 (“Assessing Learning and Development”)
- **A Guide to Assessment in Early Childhood**, Screening Assessments (pgs. 21-28)
- **A Guide to Assessment in Early Childhood**, Diagnostic Assessments (pgs. 43-54)

As a self-check, answer the following questions in your study notes. Review the sections in your reading for any questions you cannot confidently answer.
What are the four purposes of tests?
What is the difference between norm-based and criterion-based assessments? When would you use a norm-based assessment? When would you use a criterion-based assessment?
When is it appropriate to use a screening test? What information can you not get from a screening test? What are some typically used screening tests?
Describe three specific instances in which you might use a diagnostic test. What information would you hope to get from the test in each instance?

**Rubric Construction**

Select a learning activity you have taught or observed at one of your PCE sites. Using the steps suggested by Richard Stiggens in chapter 5 (“Testing: Choosing the Right Measure”), construct a rubric that could be used to measure children's performance in the activity. What information do you think you would gain from using this rubric?

Consider asking your host teacher for feedback on your rubric.

**Case Vignette**

Complete the case vignette at the end of the following chapter in Assessing Young Children:

- chapter 5 (“Testing: Choosing the Right Measure”)

You will interpret assessment data for a young English-learning child to determine the next steps for kindergarten instruction.

Do you feel confident in your ability to interpret the given assessment data? If not, see the learning community for assistance.

**Alternative Assessments**

Teachers are aware of many concerns associated with formal testing procedures and often choose to use alternative and informal assessment means to learn more about their children's development and learning. You will have the opportunity to learn about some of the alternative forms of assessment that may be useful to you as a professional educator.

**Using Alternative Assessments**

You may find that there are many differing definitions of alternative assessment. A quick Internet search will identify diverse and conflicting ideas of what an alternative assessment is.

For the purposes of this course, you should explore the ideas of authentic assessment so that you have a good feel for what alternative assessments entail, but you should not worry about deciding on a definitive definition. Rather, concentrate on exploring different types of assessment you will find useful in working with young children.

This topic addresses the following competency:

- Competency 607.3.3: Developmentally Appropriate Assessment Strategies and
Tools
The graduate observes, documents, and uses developmentally appropriate assessment strategies, techniques, and tools.

Activities Using Alternative Assessment

Read the following chapter in *Assessing Young Children*:

- chapter 6 ("Using Alternative Assessment Strategies")

Use the study questions at the end of chapter 6 to guide your reading.

At one of your PCE sites, with the permission of your host teacher, implement one of the following assessments with a young child:

- task analysis
- ecological assessment
- functional assessment

Share your results with the host teacher.

Portfolio Assessment
For some educators, portfolio assessment is almost synonymous with alternative assessment. A portfolio can be considered to be the story of one person in a particular context. It is an excellent way to collect multiple measures or snapshots of a young child's learning and development.

In the following activities you will increase your understanding of the portfolio method of assessment and then observe portfolios at one of your PCE sites before discussing portfolio assessment with one of your host teachers.

This topic addresses the following competency:

- **Competency 607.3.3: Developmentally Appropriate Assessment Strategies and Tools**
  The graduate observes, documents, and uses developmentally appropriate assessment strategies, techniques, and tools.

Exploring Portfolios as Assessments

View the following two video clips in *MyEducationLab*:

- "Portfolios"
- "Portfolio Exhibitions"

Note how the child is able to reflect on her own performance through the work sample process.

Next, use the index in *Assessing Young Children* to find the various entries on portfolios.
including the template found in the appendix.

Once you have acquainted yourself with the portfolio process, ask for permission to examine portfolios at one of your PCE sites. Discuss with your host teacher, reasons for similarities and differences among the children’s portfolios.

Complete option 4 in the “In-class Activities” section of chapter 11 (“Special Issues in Primary Grades”) in Assessing Young Children.

**Building a Child Study**

A child study (similar to a case study) can be a culmination of a comprehensive assessment plan. As part of the performance assessment you will compile a child study from three separate assessments conducted with a single child.

In this section you will have the opportunity to review several case studies in preparation for your child study assessment.

This topic addresses the following competency:

- **Competency 607.3.3: Developmentally Appropriate Assessment Strategies and Tools**
  The graduate observes, documents, and uses developmentally appropriate assessment strategies, techniques, and tools.

**Reviewing Child Studies**

Read the following section in Assessing Young Children:

- pages 190–194 of chapter 8 (“Building a Child Study”)

This will give you an overview of the purposes of child studies as well as a look at what to include when you put together a child study.

After reading the pages listed above, skim through the case studies in the following section:

- pages 194–284 of chapter 8 (“Building a Child Study”)

Select four or five case studies to read in detail. Make note of what each study includes, the types of assessments that are conducted, and the questions, comments, notes, or conclusions that are reached.

You may want to finish this course before you commence your child study, but you can now begin to identify both the child you want to study and the assessments you will use.

**Observing and Assessing Every Child**

Think of the children you have observed in your PCE experiences to this point. What makes some children more outgoing? What causes some children to have difficulty fitting in with other
children or cooperating with classroom procedures? Why are some children so apparently gifted when it comes to learning? Why do some children struggle academically or physically?

You have already studied many of the methods that will help you observe young children and assess their learning and behavior to find the answers to such questions, but this section will help you gain further knowledge about the specific assessment concerns of different groups of children. This will better prepare you for any role you may find yourself in as an early childhood professional.

**Assessment in Special Education**

You have already studied assessment for children with special needs in another course of study. For the purposes of this course of study, you will briefly consider a few additional points of interest.

This topic addresses the following competencies:

- **Competency 607.3.1: Observing Infants, Toddlers, and Young Children**
  The graduate uses effective methods and tools of observation to support the learning, growth, and development of infants, toddlers, and young children.

- **Competency 607.3.3: Developmentally Appropriate Assessment Strategies and Tools**
  The graduate observes, documents, and uses developmentally appropriate assessment strategies, techniques, and tools.

**Assessment in Special Education Activities**

Look up and read all listings under "Response to Intervention (RTI)" in the index of *Assessing Young Children*. Make certain that you understand the assessment processes of screening, diagnosis, and Individualized Educational Programs (IEPs).

Ask a teacher about your district's early intervention program and referral processes. How is RTI implemented your PCE schools?

Read the following chapter in *Early Childhood Assessment: Why, What, and How*:

- chapter 8 ("Assessing All Children")

Share your findings on the message board and comment on other students' findings.

**Infant and Toddler Assessment**

Imagine that every time you woke up, or turned around, the world seemed different—the scenery had turned upside down, people you did not know were talking to you as if you knew and trusted them, and just when you thought you had something figured out, it changed. To add to the confusion, you cannot seem to communicate about it with anyone. Little by little, most infants begin to make sense of the world, but without the tools of observation and assessment, adults cannot know how to best support babies as they grow and learn about the world.

This section will cover some of the unique aspects of observing and assessing the learning and
development of infants and toddlers. If you plan to work professionally with infants and toddlers, pay particular attention to the daily health check and daily report.

This topic addresses the following competencies:

- **Competency 607.3.1: Observing Infants, Toddlers, and Young Children**
  The graduate uses effective methods and tools of observation to support the learning, growth, and development of infants, toddlers, and young children.

- **Competency 607.3.3: Developmentally Appropriate Assessment Strategies and Tools**
  The graduate observes, documents, and uses developmentally appropriate assessment strategies, techniques, and tools.

**Exploring Infant and Toddler Assessment**

Read the following chapter in *Assessing Young Children*:

- **chapter 9 ("Special Issues in Infant and Toddler Assessment")**

Use the study questions to guide your study and note taking.

Next, you will explore the aspects of daily observation and reporting for infants and toddlers in daycare settings.

Log in to Cengage Learning and view the following video clip:

- "Infants and Toddlers: Daily Health Check."

In your study notes, write each of the aspects that should be checked as part of the daily health check process.

Collect and view different versions of infant and toddler daily reports.

You may obtain a copy from your PCE site for infants and toddlers. You might also do an Internet search, first for "infant daily report" and then for "toddler daily report." How are these reports alike and different? How are they used?

If possible, observe a care provider recording an activity or observation on a health check form or daily report form. Select or create a daily infant or toddler report or health check form. Post this in your portfolio in the "Observation and Assessment" tab. If you would like, share your form in the message board.

**Assessment in the Preschool Years**

A teacher of 3- and 4-year-old children sat down to plan for the week’s lessons and activities. There were many questions running through this teacher’s mind (e.g., Why has Child A been out of sorts recently? Will Child B still be in a sensitive period for early writing development? How can we encourage and facilitate Child C’s social interaction with the other children? Will the
adaptations made to the art area help Child D access the easel painting?). This teacher knows that observation is the key to gaining the answers to these and other questions, so planning for the week includes a careful consideration of the types of observation and assessment activities that will be used.

You have already studied many of the methods this teacher might incorporate into the week's plan. This section will focus on observation and assessment issues unique to the preschool years. If you have intentions of working professionally with this age group, pay particular attention to the information on transitions to kindergarten or first grade.

This topic addresses the following competencies:

- **Competency 607.3.1: Observing Infants, Toddlers, and Young Children**
  The graduate uses effective methods and tools of observation to support the learning, growth, and development of infants, toddlers, and young children.

- **Competency 607.3.3: Developmentally Appropriate Assessment Strategies and Tools**
  The graduate observes, documents, and uses developmentally appropriate assessment strategies, techniques, and tools.

**Exploring Preschool Assessment**

Read the following chapter in *Assessing Young Children*:

- chapter 10 ("Issues in Preschool Assessment")

Explore one or more of the technology links at the end of the chapter to expand your understanding of preschool assessment issues.

Read the following chapter in *Early Childhood Assessment*:

- chapter 9 ("Implementation of Early Childhood Assessments")

In your reflection journal, reflect on the importance of play and a professional educator's ability to assess the learning and development expressed during the play activity of young children.

**School Readiness**

Read the following text-based article on the CD-ROM that accompanies the *Developmentally Appropriate Practice* text:

- article 55 ("School Readiness Assessment")

As you read the article, take note of what you can learn and what you cannot learn from school readiness assessments. Share ideas on how to determine school readiness on the message board.

**Assessment in the Early Grades**
You may think (and it is true) that ongoing, comprehensive assessment of young children is difficult because their development and learning can be rapid, slow, uneven, episodic, and influenced by diverse cultural and linguistic circumstances. To make matters worse, developmentally inappropriate or inaccurate assessment measures are too often used to label or track young children in ways that do more harm than good.

Fortunately, your study and research in the area of observation and assessment of young children is laying the foundation for a positive and effective professional approach to assessment and observation that you can draw on with confidence to implement developmentally appropriate practices that will serve all children well.

In this section, you will focus your study on the many issues that impact assessment of children in the early grades.

This topic addresses the following competencies:

- **Competency 607.3.1: Observing Infants, Toddlers, and Young Children**
  The graduate uses effective methods and tools of observation to support the learning, growth, and development of infants, toddlers, and young children.

- **Competency 607.3.3: Developmentally Appropriate Assessment Strategies and Tools**
  The graduate observes, documents, and uses developmentally appropriate assessment strategies, techniques, and tools.

**Exploring Assessment in the Early Grades**

Read the following chapter in *Assessing Young Children*:

- chapter 11 ("Special Issues in Primary Grades")

Use the orienting questions at the beginning of the chapter to identify any special areas of interest for you. As you read, take note of any message board discussions on topics that interest you, and add your thoughts and ideas to the discussion.

You will come back to the topic of portfolios in this section. If you have plans on teaching in the early grades, take notes on ideas for using portfolio assessment in grades K-3. In particular, how can you involve children in deciding what to incorporate in individual portfolios?

Ask a current elementary teacher to share thoughts with you on how standardized assessment and achievement testing impact the day-to-day activity in the classroom. How do teachers prepare children for tests without teaching to the test?

**Assessing Systematically**

Using assessment systematically refers to the integration of assessment into the larger system of early childhood education.

Read and carefully consider Part IV (pages 299–420) of *Early Childhood Assessment: Why,*
What, and How, including the following chapters:

- chapter 10 (“Thinking Systematically”)
- chapter 11 (“Guidance on Outcomes and Assessments”)

Pay close attention to aspects that will help you incorporate a systematic approach to assessment in your own professional practice. As you read, compile a document of points and ideas that support the concept of systematic assessment. When you are finished reading, reflect on how the conscientious application of this principle will impact your professional practice as an early childhood educator. Capture your ideas in your reflection journal.

**Teacher-Made Assessments**

In spite of all the commercially available assessments a teacher can use, the teacher-made test and the teacher-designed observation form are still some of the primary tools a teacher uses to assess the learning of young children. This section will give you the opportunity to focus on the process of designing effective instruments for assessing the learning, development, and behavior of young children.

**Making and Using Assessments**

As you have studied the material for this course, you have seen many observation forms and classroom assessment instruments that can be adapted for various uses. You will gain experience in creating observation forms and assessments to help you learn about the development or abilities of infants, toddlers, and young children.

Ask yourself, what you can learn about this child through systematic observation and assessment. What would an observation or assessment tool look like that provides just the right data or insight?

This topic addresses the following competency:

- **Competency 607.3.2: Developing and Interpreting Assessments**
  The graduate develops and uses appropriate assessments to support developmental and educational goals for infants, toddlers, and young children.

**Creating Observation Forms**

Access the following two videos from Cengage Learning:

- "0-2 Years: Observation Module for Infants and Toddlers"
- "2-5 Years: Observation Module for Early Childhood"

Watch both videos to get a good sense of what they include. Then select two of the following observation methods to complete as you observe the young children in each of the videos (for a total of four observations).

- anecdotal note
- running record
For each observation, construct a form that will allow you to capture the data accurately and efficiently. Now watch the videos again, this time completing the observation form as you observe.

In your study notes, answer the following questions for each of the forms you created:

- How did completing the observation form change the way you observed?
- Did you see things differently the second time through?
- Did the form help you to get the information you wanted to capture?
- What recommendations would you make to the teacher or families of the child you observed based on the data you collected?
- How effective were the forms you created in allowing you to record data from your observations?
- How would you change the form to be more effective?
- What did you learn from this experience?
- What questions remain for you regarding creating observation forms?

Now, read the following section in *Assessing Young Children*:

- appendix D

Select one or more of the assessments you have created or used in this course. Using the guidelines in appendix D, evaluate the assessment. Include the assessment and your evaluation in your professional portfolio.

Share your thoughts on the message board. If you are unsure whether or not your forms are appropriate, seek feedback from the course instructor.

**PCE Activity: Creating Classroom Assessments**

Read the following article:

- "Unlocking the Power of the Teacher-Made Test"

Select a learning goal from the elementary class you are observing (e.g., a math learning objective, a state science benchmark or standard, or a reading or spelling assignment). Create a performance assessment or quiz to measure the children's learning. Ask your host teacher for feedback on the assessment you create.

*Note: If you are concerned that asking your host teacher for feedback is too much of an imposition, please feel free to ask for feedback from a colleague or mentor. You may ask your host teacher for permission to administer the assessment if you desire.*
Recordkeeping, Collaboration, and Communicating about Assessments

Parent-teacher communication should begin the moment a child enrolls in a class or program, not just at parent-teacher conferences. One event, no matter how successful, cannot compensate for strong relationships with parents and solid, systematic recordkeeping strategies.

In this section, you will look at the value of a good recordkeeping system and the importance of effective and collaborative interactions with the families of young children.

**Recordkeeping and Reporting**
Keep the following guiding questions in mind as you complete this section:

- What types of documentation contributes best to parent communication?
- What types of reports are useful for families? For principals? For other stakeholders?
- How can you maintain the confidentiality of all participants while maintaining an open and collaborative approach?

This topic addresses the following competency:

- **Competency 607.3.4: Responsible and Ethical Assessment Practice**
  The graduate practices responsible and ethical assessment of infants, toddlers, and young children in multiple modalities for multiple purposes.

**Documenting Learning and Assessment**

Read the following text-based article on the CD-ROM that accompanies the *Developmentally Appropriate Practice* text:

- article 23 ("Documenting Early Science Learning")

As you read the article, take note of what evidences the teacher gathered to document individual and group learning. Check your comprehension by writing down the five steps in the documenting and assessment process in your study notes.

Discuss with fellow students how you would adapt this process for other content areas and other age groups.

**PCE Activity: Exploring Recordkeeping and Reporting**

Contact each of your PCE sites and set up an appointment to visit with your host teachers for a brief period of time.

In preparation for your PCE activity, read the following in *Assessing Young Children*:

- chapter 7 ("Record Keeping, Reporting, and Collaborating with Families and Others")
As you read, develop a set of questions to ask your host teacher about report cards, recordkeeping strategies, and parent-teacher conferences.

Ask these questions of each of your three host teachers and compare their responses. If possible, collect examples of report cards or parent communicating systems from various teachers.

In your reflection journal, explore your thoughts about report cards for infants, toddlers, and young children.

**Establishing Partnerships with Families Through Assessment**

The relationship you establish with the families of the infants, toddlers, and young children you work with is the key to everything you hope to accomplish. The relationships that are the most difficult to create and maintain could very well be the most important.

As you move through this section, keep in mind the family of a young child who you know would benefit greatly from a better partnership with their child's teacher or caregiver.

This topic addresses the following competency:

- **Competency 607.3.4: Responsible and Ethical Assessment Practice**
  The graduate practices responsible and ethical assessment of infants, toddlers, and young children in multiple modalities for multiple purposes.

**Establishing Family Partnerships**

Read the following chapter in *Assessing Young Children*:

- **chapter 2 ("Developing Family Partnerships in Assessment")**

Pay attention to the different forms that are included in the chapter.

As you read, think about ways you will begin to establish a relationship of trust and collaboration with parents from the beginning. Join in the message board discussion on this topic and share your ideas.

Visit the "Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS)" webpage.

Explore this site and take notes of the types of interactions and intervention practices that are sensitive and respectful of families of young children.

In your reflection journal, consider how families can benefit from a relationship with a teacher who is particularly mindful of the needs of individual families.

**Professional Issues in Observation and Assessment**
You have probably noticed by now that there are many professional issues associated with observation and assessment of young children, but perhaps none as important as the ethical implications of assessment.

You should access the [NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct](https://www.naeyc.org) and do a quick search for the word assessment. Notice how many times the code specifically refers to assessment.

As you complete this final section, reflect on the importance of each early childhood practitioner’s professionalism. How will you assure that your own practice is a model of exemplary behavior?

**The Ethics of Assessment**

The last decade has seen issues in educational assessment take a prominent position in the public eye. Along with this has come media attention and scrutiny into the assessment practices of leading educational institutions, districts, and policy makers. Headlines have pointed to unethical and illegal practices in some areas of assessment and parents now have the right to take their children out of schools that do not show adequate yearly progress as measured by assessment of student achievement. This attention and pressure on schools and districts to have assessment scores and results that meet standards brings the ethics of educational assessment to the forefront.

This section asks you to consider how assessment practices can be ethical and responsive to the needs of families, society, and young children, and how the early childhood professional can contribute in an ethical way to those ethical practices.

**Exploring Ethics in Early Childhood Assessment**

Review the following section in *Assessing Young Children*:

- pages 10–14 of chapter 1 ("A Comprehensive Assessment System for Birth Through Age 8")

Consider the importance of each professional early childhood educator's ethical responsibility in terms of assessment and observation.

- What stands out to you as important in this reading?

Please join in the discussion in the learning community on ethics in education.

For the purposes of your own development, add to the discussion in the context of ethical observation and assessment in early childhood education.

**Culturally Responsive Assessment**

Read the following text-based article on the CD-ROM that accompanies the *Developmentally Appropriate Practice* text:

- article 29 ("Ensuring Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Assessment of Young..."
In your reflection journal, consider the reasons why culturally responsive assessment is such an important issue in the education of young children and the assessment of their development and learning.

Using Documentation for Suspicions of Child Abuse or Neglect

Each state has laws protecting young children from abuse and neglect. Among those laws are requirements for the reporting of suspected or observed abuse or neglect. Research the law in your state (you may wish to also talk with teachers and administrators at your PCE sites) to create a document that includes the following:

- your state's definition of child abuse and neglect
- reporting procedures including liability of failure to report and immunity of the reporting person
- physical and behavioral indicators in children who suffer from physical abuse or neglect, sexual abuse, and emotional abuse or deprivation

Post the document in your portfolio in the "Observation and Assessment" tab.

Current Issues in Early Childhood Assessment

With the passage of the No Child Left Behind Act, along with the more recent attempts to overhaul the act, assessment has become increasingly important in education. Every effort has the potential to become controversial, with its share of advocates and opponents. While every issue has multiple perspectives, many evoke highly emotional reactions in teachers and parents.

In this section, you are asked to explore some of the hot topics and become acquainted with both sides of each issue. As you complete the following topic activities, be on the lookout for a topic that you would like to explore for the performance assessment.

Technology-Assisted Assessment

Many states, districts, and individual schools are moving toward online assessment, even in the early elementary grades.

Read the following section of Assessing Young Children:

- appendix E

Ask a school administrator or teacher if your district or state has or will implement computer-based standardized testing. If so, what does your interviewee feel are the benefits and drawbacks of this initiative?

If possible, evaluate an online assessment software package according to the guidelines in appendix E. Share your experience and outcomes on the message board.

Research in Educational Assessment
Research each of the following hot topics in educational assessment. Write a short paragraph capturing both sides of each issue and include a statement of your perspective. If you wish, post this document in your professional portfolio in the "Position Statements" section.

- accountability in assessment
- assuring equity in assessment
- using assessment for program improvement
- culturally sensitive assessment
- standardized assessment in early childhood education
- trends in assessment

When you have completed this section you will be prepared to complete the performance assessment. The performance assessment will ask you to explore a current trend, issue, or controversy in early childhood assessment.

**Objective and Performance Assessments**

You are encouraged to make a last careful review of the areas of new learning in this course before moving on to the performance assessment. In this assessment you are going to observe a young child and assess the child's learning and development from three different perspectives. This is an important and significant task. Make certain you understand the ethical responsibilities involved in working with a real child.

If you have any concerns about this assessment, check with the mentor of the Foundations of Early Childhood Education Learning Community.

**Final Steps**

Congratulations on completing the activities in this course! This course has prepared you to complete the assessment associated with this course. If you have not already been directed to complete the assessment, schedule and complete your assessment now.