

Informal Assessment

What is Assessment?

- “Assessment is a process of collecting data for the purpose of making decisions about individuals and groups”

(Salvia & Ysseldyke, 2007)

Conducting Assessments

- Collect background information:
 - Performance data on objectives
 - Maintenance and generalization data on objectives
 - Medical and physical conditions
 - Medications and dietary restrictions
 - Challenging behaviors
 - Likes and dislikes
 - Physical and sensory abilities
 - Communication skills

Why Do We Assess?

■ To...

- make decisions about individuals and groups
- show direction of progress
- visualize achievement (by graphing)
- plan instruction
- have documentation
- determine eligibility
- diagnose
- screen
- determine the least restrictive environment (LRE)
- for accountability
- evaluate the program, instruction, or system in use

Types of Assessments

- Formal assessments
 - Consist mainly of standardized test
 - Criterion-referenced assessment
 - Norm-referenced assessment
- Informal assessments
 - Non-standardized procedures
 - Case history: Interviews
 - Observational measures
 - Performance-based assessment
 - Dynamic assessment

Interview Parents

- What can your child do?
- What do you want your child to learn?

FIGURE 6-3 Sample of Parent Interview Using a Rating Scale

What Is Important for Your Child to Learn at School?

Parents want their child to go to a classroom where he or she will make progress. Children can make progress in different areas, and some areas may be more important than others. The list below contains different areas your child may progress in next year. Please circle the number to the right of the phrase to show how important it is for *your* child to progress in this area next year.

	NA	Not at all	1	2	3	4	5	6	extremely	RANK
1. Learn basic concepts such as colors, numbers, shapes, etc.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6			___
2. Learn prereading and reading skills such as letters.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6			___
3. Learn to use a pencil and scissors.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6			___
4. Learn to listen and follow directions.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6			___
5. Learn to share and play with other children.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6			1
6. Learn to be creative.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6			___
7. Learn more communication skills.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6			3
8. Learn confidence and independence.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6			___
9. Learn to work independently.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6			___
10. Learn to climb, run, and jump.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6			___
11. Learn self-care skills such as toileting, dressing, feeding.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6			2
12. Learn to follow classroom rules and routines.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6			___

Using the above list, place the numbers 1, 2, and 3 next to the three most important areas for your child to progress in next year.

Source: Salisbury, C. L., & Dunst, C. J. Home, School, and Community Partnerships: Building Inclusive Teams. In B. Raintoth & J. York-Barr, 1997, *Collaborative Teams for Students with Severe Disabilities: Integrating Therapy and Educational Services* (2nd ed.). Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co. Reprinted with permission.

The van Dijk Approach

- Holistic understanding of the child's current level of development in the different area
 - Identify Developmental Abilities
 - Ability to maintain and modulate behavioral state
 - Preferred learning channel
 - Means of processing information and stimuli
 - Ability to accommodate new experiences with existing schemes
 - Ability to learn, remember, and anticipate routines
 - Approach to problem-solving situations
 - Ability to form attachments and interact socially
 - Communication modes and skills

What is an Observation?

- A way to gather data by watching behaviors, event, or noting physical characteristics in their natural setting.
 - *When should observations be used?*
 - Trying to understand an ongoing process or situation
 - Gathering data on individual behaviors or interaction between people
 - Information on the physical setting

Observations

- Planning for observations
 - Determine focus
 - Design a system for data collection
- **Pros:**
 - Collect data where and when the event or activity is occurring
 - Does not rely on people's willingness or abilities to provide information
- **Cons:**
 - Bias
 - Time-consuming

Observations

- Observe the student in multiple settings
 - Classroom, lunchroom, related arts, physical education, etc.
- Consider
 - Classroom arrangement and instructional methods
 - Interactions with others
 - Work habits
 - Facial expression and affect
 - Body movements
 - Adaptive skills
 - Participation in activities with peers

Observations

- It is often helpful to use a form or checklist when observing

**Note: See sample observation form under tipsheets and forms*

- Observations are useful in allowing the observer to :
 - confirm areas of needed evaluation noted by the team
 - Identify additional areas of assessment
 - Note student demeanor to assist in identifying needs related to evaluation location, length, and materials

Observation Form

Description of the environment	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lesson topic, theme, and/or objective(s) 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environment 	Type of class _____ Number of teacher assistants _____ Number of students _____ Disabilities: _____
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Instructional method(s) being used 	<input type="checkbox"/> Full class direct teaching <input type="checkbox"/> Small group direct teaching <input type="checkbox"/> Discussion <input type="checkbox"/> Learning centers <input type="checkbox"/> One-on-one <input type="checkbox"/> Hands-on activity <input type="checkbox"/> Seatwork <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Instructional resources being used 	<input type="checkbox"/> Worksheets <input type="checkbox"/> Books <input type="checkbox"/> Board (e.g., dry erase) <input type="checkbox"/> Technology _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Hands-on manipulative <input type="checkbox"/> AAC/AT: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environmental arrangements 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adaptations and/or modifications 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Behavior management strategies used 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HI: Questioning and responding strategies: LI: Prompt hierarchy: 	
Description of the student	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Academic skills 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communication skills 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Response to task and/or directions</i> 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Motor skills 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transition 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interaction (i.e., peer, adults) 	
Summary of the student strengths and needs	
Impressions and comments	

What are Ecological Inventories?

- Analysis of activities required within a domain/
environment or subenvironment
 - Obtain performance data during structured or
unstructured activities, BEFORE instruction has
begun

Ecological Inventories

- Questions to be answered:
 - What skills are needed to perform the task?
 - (e.g., simple, complex, functional)
 - How well does the person perform the task?
 - Is total independent participation possible?
 - How does the person communicate in this setting?
 - Does the person need to communicate with others?
 - How does the person interact with others?
 - Does the person need to interact with others?
 - Does the person exhibit any inappropriate behaviors?

What is a Task Analysis?

- "Task analysis for instructional design is a process of analyzing and articulating the kind of learning that you expect the learners to know how to perform"

(Jonassen, Tessmer, & Hannum, 1999, p.3)

– *The analysis of how a task is accomplished*

Task Analysis

- Means to carefully validate throughout observations
 - **Pros:**
 - Easy to implement
 - Test a variety of skills
 - Commonly used on life skills
 - Measures performance of a chain behavior
 - **Cons:**
 - “Steps” (or behaviors) in a chain may have a different level of difficulty
 - Collapsing data into “number of steps correct” may mask learning difficulties

What is an Activity Participation Inventory?

- A method used to obtain information on student's performance and for conducting discrepancy analysis
1. Identify a target activity.
 2. List the steps of the activity (task analysis).
 3. Observe typically developing peer(s) of average/typical ability performing this activity.
 4. Observe the target student performing the activity.
 5. Indicate whether a discrepancy exists between the peer's and target student's participation.
 6. Based on your observation and impressions, indicate the type of barrier(s) that seems to inhibit the target student's participation.

Activity Participation Inventory

■ Barriers to participation → Opportunity Barriers

- **Policy barriers:** the result of legislative or regulatory decisions that govern the situations in which students find themselves
- **Practice barriers:** procedures or conventions that have become common practice, but are not actual policies
- **Attitude barriers:** negative or restrictive attitudes of individuals other than the student
- **Knowledge barriers:** lack of information by someone other than the student that results in limited opportunities for participation
- **Skill barriers:** lack of technical assistance and interaction skills by someone who may assist the student

Activity Participation Inventory

- **Access Barriers → Motoric Barriers**
- **Fine motor:** barriers resulting from the student's reduced or lack of fine motor skills
- **Gross motor:** barriers resulting from the student's reduced or lack of gross motor skills
- **Mobility:** barriers resulting from the student's inability to move about independently
- **Positioning/posture:** barriers resulting from poor positioning of the student or from the student's poor posture due to physical impairments

Activity Participation Inventory

- Access Barriers → **Sensory Perceptual Barriers**
- **Auditory:** barriers resulting from the student's decreased ability to obtain and use information from auditory input
- **Visual:** barriers resulting from the student's decreased ability to obtain and use information from visual input

Activity Participation Inventory

- Access Barriers → **Communicative Competence Barriers**
- **Linguistic:** barriers resulting from a lack of mastery of knowledge and skills of the language spoken by the student's community or required by the student's communication system
- **Operational:** barriers resulting from a lack of mastery of knowledge and skills necessary to operate the AAC system
- **Social:** barriers resulting from a lack of mastery of knowledge and skills in the use of sociocultural rules governing communicative interactions
- **Strategic:** barriers resulting from a lack of mastery of knowledge and skills necessary to prevent and/or compensate for communication breakdowns

What are Reinforcers?

- A procedure whereby a student, contingent upon performing a specific behavior or skill is immediately rewarded to maintain or increase that behavior.

Reinforcers

- Can be:
 - Edible (e.g., bananas, juice, cereal)
 - Sensory (e.g., sit in a rocking chair, listen to music)
 - Natural (e.g., watching a movie, free-play)
 - Material (e.g., stickers, coins)
 - Social (e.g., smile, proximity)

Reinforcers

- Effective reinforcer/praise:
 - Immediate
 - Frequently
 - Enthusiastic
 - Eye contact
 - Describe behavior
 - Variety