

**CAP Course Outline Recommendations**  
**Observation and Assessment** (Revised March 2021)

**Course Description:**

Introduces the appropriate use of assessment and observation tools and strategies to document young children’s development and learning. The use of findings to inform and plan learning environments and experiences are emphasized. Recording strategies, rating systems, portfolios, and multiple assessment tools will be discussed, along with strategies for collaboration with families and professionals.

**Student Learning Outcomes:**

1. Evaluate the characteristics, strengths, limitations, and applications of contemporary observation and assessment tools.
2. Complete systematic observations and assessments of children’s development and learning using a variety of data collection methods to inform classroom teaching, environment design, interactions, and curriculum.
3. Discuss the role of partnerships with families and other professionals in utilizing interpretations of observational and assessment data.

**Objectives:**

1. Compare and contrast various observation and assessment tools according to their purpose and validity.
2. Apply basic formative and summative assessment techniques.
3. Apply knowledge of development to interpret observations and assessments.
4. Use observation and assessment tools to evaluate quality in environments, interactions, and curriculum.
5. Identify logistical challenges, biases, and preconceptions about observing and assessing children.
6. Explain how observation and assessment are used to plan for and adjust learning experiences so that children continue to be actively engaged in their learning.
7. Describe legal and ethical responsibilities in relation to observation, assessment, documentation, and recordkeeping.

**Course Content and Topics:**

1. **Observation and Assessment Based on Theories of Child Development and Learning**
  - a. California Infant-Toddler Learning and Development Foundations
  - b. California Preschool Learning Foundations
2. **Tools of Observation and Assessment**
  - a. Purpose and use
  - b. Current and historic
  - c. State and national tools e.g., Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale (ECERS), Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS), and Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS)

## **CAP Observation and Assessment (cont'd)**

- d. State tools e.g., Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP), and the resources of the California early care and learning systems.
- 3. Observation and Reporting**
- a. Formal and informal
  - b. Legal and ethical responsibilities
  - c. Confidentiality
  - d. Data collection methods such as:
    - i. Direct observation
    - ii. Time and event samples
    - iii. Interviews
    - iv. Questionnaires
    - v. Rating scales
  - e. Reporting methods such as:
    - i. Anecdotal records
    - ii. Running records
    - iii. Checklists
  - f. Subjective and objective reporting
  - g. Qualitative and quantitative
  - h. Documentation
    - i. Types
    - ii. Purposes
- 4. Impact of Situational Factors in the Process of Observation and Assessment**
- a. Factors outside of the school setting
  - b. Demographics, cultural background, and perspectives of the children and families
  - c. Observers' cultural perspectives, expectations, and personal bias
- 5. Use of Observation and Assessment to**
- a. Monitor children's health, well-being, development, and learning
  - b. Determine, plan, and adjust teaching strategies and curriculum to meet
    - i. Various content and curriculum purposes
    - ii. Child's interests, skills, and abilities
    - iii. First and dual-language learners
    - iv. Environmental design needs
    - v. Guidance and behavior needs
  - c. Inform referral and intervention
- 6. The On-Going Cycle of Curriculum Development**
- a. Observation
  - b. Planning
  - c. Implementation
  - d. Assessment
  - e. Reflection
- 7. Collaboration with Families and Professionals**
- a. Use of assessment data
  - b. Promoting family involvement

**CAP Observation and Assessment (cont'd)**

- c. Referral processes
- d. National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Code of Ethical Conduct
- e. Recordkeeping
- f. Rights of children and families