

**CAP Course Outline Recommendations**  
**Observation and Assessment (Revised August 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. Describe the ethical and professional responsibilities for educators in observing and assessing young children’s development and learning.

**Objectives:**

1. Differentiate between various observation and assessment tools according to their purpose and validity.
2. Demonstrate basic formative and summative assessment techniques.
3. Apply knowledge of development and other influencing factors to interpret observations and assessments.
4. Use standardized observation and assessment tools to evaluate quality in environments, interactions, and curriculum.
5. Discuss logistical challenges, biases, and preconceptions about observing and assessing children.
6. Demonstrate how observation and assessment are used to plan for and adjust learning experiences.
7. Describe legal and ethical responsibilities in relation to observation, assessment, documentation, and recordkeeping.
8. Discuss the role of partnerships with families and other professionals in utilizing interpretations of observational and assessment data.

**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

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

- c. National tools such as the Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale (ECERS), Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS), and Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS)
  - d. State tools such as the 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

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

### **7. Collaboration with Families and Professionals**

- a. Use of assessment data
- b. Promoting family involvement
- c. Referral processes
- e. National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Code of Ethical Conduct
- f. Recordkeeping
- g. Rights of children and families