

T&L 2900— Early Childhood: Observation & Assessment

Course at a Glance

Instructor: Dr. Marrea Winnega

Facilitator: Darcie Donegan, MA/Ed, your contact for course content or examination questions.

Length: Approximately 45 hours, complete in 4 months

Dates: Rolling admission

Number of Graduate Professional Development Credits: 3, from the University North Dakota

Introduction

Early Childhood: Observation & Assessment is an interactive distance learning course which explores observation and assessment instruments, as well as recommended practices and available resources for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers. Content includes an emphasis on observing young children and assessing their early childhood learning environments.

This course is designed to help educators, para-professionals and child caregivers observe and assess various aspects of children's development and programs. Participants will learn the components necessary for strong observation skills, such as self-awareness, objectivity, confidentiality and ethical guidelines. Web links to videos and other observation and assessment resources will be included.

This online, self-paced program can be started and completed at the student's own leisure **within four months from the UND assigned course start date after enrollment.**

CDA Related Information: This course is one part of a five part series on early childhood education. Upon completion of all five courses, you will have covered all of the CDA Competencies to prepare you to take the CDA exam (**applicable in certain states, not in North Dakota**). This course specifically covers CDA Competencies 1-9, 12, and 13 (**Check your individual state requirements**), which all relate to the establishment of well-run, purposeful programs for young children that are responsive to individual needs and advance the development of the whole child.

Other courses in this five part series includes:

- Early Childhood, Infant & Toddler Mental Health: Issues & Information for Educators, 2 credits
- Early Childhood: Family Centered Services, 2 credits
- Early Childhood: Typical & Atypical Development, 3 credits
- Early Childhood: Program Planning, 3 credits

Learning Objectives

As a result of this course, participants will demonstrate their ability to:

- Become aware of your own biases to become skilled in objective observation.
- Describe the cycle and functions of observation and assessment in early childhood settings.
- Learn best practices for observing and assessing the development of young children.
- Identify a variety of observation recording tools for developmental screening and program assessment.
- Learn advantages and disadvantages of each tool and guidelines for choosing the most appropriate choice for different goals.
- Understand how to summarize and interpret observation data to assess children and programs.
- Apply observation data to planning for individual children and programs.
- Develop formats for documenting, sharing and explaining observation and assessment practices and information to parents and colleagues.
- Design a personal strategy for gathering information and keeping records in a specific early childhood setting.

Session Topics

The **Observation & Assessment** course has been divided into four chapters. A general overview of chapter topics include:

- 1) Introduction to Observation & Assessment: What and Why?
- 2) Definitions, History & Trends in Early Childhood Assessment
- 3) Personal Ethical & Legal Guidelines: Best Practices
- 4) Observing & Recording Tools: Using & Choosing
- 5) Authentic Assessment of Children & Environments
- 6) Interpreting for Meaning: Analyzing & Applying Data
- 7) Documentations & Communication: Showing & Sharing
- 8) Course Summary and Conclusion

Course Materials

This computer-based instruction course is a self-supporting program that provides instruction, structured practice, and evaluation all on your home or school computer. Technical support information can be found in the Help section of your course. There are NO required textbooks.

Assignments & Examinations

Assignments-

This course has two required writing components. **ALL ASSIGNMENTS ARE REVIEWED.**

1) **Essay Requirement: Critical Thinking Questions**

There are four Critical Thinking Questions that you must complete. You will do research on the questions and write brief essay responses relating it to the course content (and your personal experiences, when possible).

2) **Essay Requirement: Journal Articles**

This task requires you to write a review of three peer-reviewed or scholarly journal articles (blogs and news articles are not acceptable) of your choice on a topic related to this course.

Examinations-

At the end of each course section, you will be expected to complete an examination designed to assess your knowledge. There are a total of 4 exams in this course. You may take these exams a total of three times.

Grading

This online course uses **Letter Grading (A, B, C, or F)**.

- **Writing assignments for this course comprise 50%** of the final grade.
- **The remaining 50% of the grade will be the average from the four (4) course examinations.**

Course Grading Scale for Letter Grades:

A = 90 - 100% of total score

B = 80 - 89%

C = 70 - 79%

F= below 70%

Scholastic Dishonesty

Students enrolled in this course are expected to be aware of the seriousness of scholastic dishonesty. Unacceptable behavior such as submitting someone else's work as your own, cheating on exams, or plagiarizing can result in failure of the course or other sanctions. For a more detailed description of these policies, please refer to the UND Code of Student Life; Appendix IIIa-3, at: <http://und.edu/student-affairs/code-of-student-life/>