

Ongoing Child Assessment: Collecting and Using Videos

Narrator: Welcome to this short presentation on collecting and using video. There are lots of ways that video can be used in the classroom. In this presentation, the focus will be on using video as one method for ongoing child assessment. Video can be used to keep track of children's progress and to understand whether or not our teaching practices and learning activities are having an impact. Video is particularly useful for helping us see how a child performs a skill.

Ongoing child assessment is an important component of the house framework. Ongoing child assessment helps to tell us what to teach and how to teach, and it also tells us whether or not the child is making progress. This module on video is part of our series on different ways to collect information on children's learning. It extends the module on collecting and using work samples. Let's start by watching and listening as we look at some examples of using video for ongoing child assessment.

[Video begins] Allison Ferry: One of the ways that I hear many people using is a Flip video, so a little video camera that fits in your pocket. When I see an opportunity that I can take a videotape of the children and be able to go back and access that later, when I am diving into, "Okay, where are they at?" or "What have I seen?"

Rebecca Courtney: We did actors and actresses and we put on a whole play, and the kids were really into it. We brought in a camera that the kids could use. We started videoing. They started videoing each other. And we talked about, you know, all these different roles. Every once in a while still, they'll be like, "I think we need to take a video of this," you know, and so they're requesting the videos now.

Like if they do something that they're proud of, we'll take a video, which is like all of those social-emotional skills. Like, in my brain, I'm like, "Okay, she's proud of what she's doing. She's initiating that we – you know, like, she's got all these different things going on right in this one little – just, 'I want to take a video of what we're doing.'" And we try to have those, like, videos and pictures and stuff for when we do parent conferences, because I think parents are a little bit nervous to be in the school all the time. And so, when they see stuff that we're doing and they're like, "Oh my gosh, that's really cool," and so it helps them come in and be a little more comfortable. [Video ends]

Narrator: Collecting and using video is really just one way to collect work samples, and so the benefits are similar. The video can capture the child or group of children engaging in authentic activities. The video can also capture behaviors that may be difficult to observe or difficult to count, such as interacting with a peer or attempting to balance on the balance beam. The video can be viewed more than once and can be a real advantage. Video can also facilitate communication with families. It brings the classroom to life with real examples, and these examples can be the springboard for conversation about the child's development and learning.

It takes planning to get started with using video and to use it efficiently. Video cameras are becoming more and more accessible, and smartphones have video capability, but the camera needs to be convenient and it needs to be in good working order. And of course, the cameraperson needs to know how to use the camera. That might take some practice. It will also take some practice to figure out how to get close enough to capture the child's voice without interrupting the learning activity. It's fun to video those unexpected moments, but for the purposes of ongoing assessment, you will want to plan your videotaping schedule. Think about who will be taped, during what activities, and where and when the taping will take place.

Finally, storing the video clips takes some thought as well. They can be stored on a flash drive or disc or on the computer, but figure out a way to keep track of the date and the activity or learning objective. Some teachers construct electronic portfolios and insert the video clips into these portfolios. As with any other method of collecting child information, to make the information useful, the teacher needs to ask questions and figure out what the video examples are saying about the child's learning.

An important feature of using video is that the teacher has more information than just whether or not the child performed the task or did the behavior. The teacher can also see how the child approached the activity, how much effort it took, and all sorts of other aspects. And by viewing video clips over time, the teacher and parents can observe the child's progress. Here we see the video fits into the observation and documentation cycle. It is one more way to document our observations.

We can use the documentation to support our interpretations and to use the information to plan more effective teaching. Video can be a useful method for collecting ongoing child assessment information. If you can, include this method in your plans for documentation. Collect video clips and other assessment information often enough to help make teaching decisions and to keep track of a child's progress.

To learn more about collecting and using video, see our longer module. You can also check out our tips for teachers and our helpful resources. Thank you for listening, and have fun by adding video to your toolkit of ways to collect assessment information.