



T Level Technical Qualification in Education and Early Years (Level 3)

QN: 610/5748/4

Occupational specialism assessment (OSA)

Early Years Educator

Assignment 3 – distinction

Guide standard exemplification materials

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Introduction

The material within this document relates to the Early Years Educator occupational specialism specimen assessment. These exemplification materials are designed to give providers and students an indication of what would be expected for the lowest level of attainment required to achieve a pass or distinction grade.

The examiner / moderator commentary is provided to detail the judgements and rationale for grades awarded, in context of the grade descriptors. This should be used in conjunction with the Qualification Specification and the relevant external assessment materials, which detail the related qualification content and grade descriptors for assessment.

In assignment 3 part 1 (a), the student is required to conduct a set of observations of children in the early years setting.

In assignment 3 part 1 (b), the student is required to produce an analysis of observation data. The student evidence is written work produced under supervised conditions.

In assignment 3 part 2, the student is required to produce an analysis of observation data supplied with an insert that accompanies the assignment questions. The student evidence is written work produced under supervised conditions.

After each live assessment series, authentic student evidence will be published with examiner commentary across the range of achievement.

Part 1 (a) Child observation

Read the information below carefully before carrying out your observations.

This child observation task is set within the industry placement. Therefore, you will be expected to be in the role of an observer within an early years setting.

This task is split into **two** separate and distinct observations.

You must observe the child in activities that support the specific area of learning in the early years foundation stage (EYFS) – **literacy**.

You will be expected to perform two observations:

- **observation 1** requires the use of a **narrative** observation method
- **observation 2** requires the use of the **time sample** observation method.

You will use the same template for each observation but must use different observation methods to complete the templates.

You must record each of your observations and hand them to your tutor.

The observations do not need to be carried out in the order outlined in this booklet.

Evidence The following evidence **must** be submitted to your tutor:

- **two** completed observation templates.

All evidence **must** be saved securely by your tutor.

Part 1 (a) Student evidence

Observation 1

Date of observation:	XX/XX/XX
Age of child (in years and months):	3 years and 2 months
Development / Curriculum links:	Communication and language (Literacy)
Observation method:	Narrative (extended piece of writing)
Place of observation:	Private Day Care
Time of observation:	14:00 – 14:20pm

Aim of observation 1

The aim of the observation is to watch Child A over a period of 20 minutes, recording what the child is doing, who / what they are playing with and any communication and interaction involved. Opportunities for literacy have also been identified as relevant for the observation.

Observation 1

14:00

Child A is by the painting area. He struggles to put his apron on and asks for help from a nearby adult who holds one side of the apron which has become twisted. Child A rushes to the painting area and grabs a sponge. He looks at the different colours that have been mixed into plates and selects yellow. Using a sponge he prints onto the paper. Child A studies the paint trolley and collects some white paint that is in a squeeze bottle. He squirts some of the white paint onto the plate that has been mixed with the blue paint. An adult approaches and comments: 'Oh Wow Child A. I like that shade of blue, the white has made it so much lighter. I think it looks like the sky do you?'

Child A replies: 'it is the sky'

Adult to Child A 'It's a beautiful colour, just be careful you don't slip as you have paint on the floor just there Child A'. Child A continues to mix the white paint into the blue and hums to himself. Another child comes over to the painting area and gives Child A a small tractor saying 'do you want this tractor Child A, I have finished'. Child A says 'no thank you' but the tractor is left on the side of the table. Child A picks up the plate of mixed paint and carries it over to the adult: 'Look it's the sky has gone now look'. The adult is sitting at a table with some other children talking to them about the clay that is on the table. Adult turns her head to Child A and says 'where's the sky hiding do you think?' and at the same time she gets up from the table and gently guides Child A back to the paint table as paint is beginning to drip from the plate to the floor. The adult wipes up the paint and asks Child A if he wants to wash his hands now (Child A is pulling off his apron in a hurry as another child has just shouted to him from outside). Child A rushes to the climbing frame and slide and joins in with his friend to slide the dolls down the slide into a puddle at the end of the slide, they both laugh as the dolls get wet. Child A calls to Child B 'throw it down into the water, 1, 2, 3 go'.

They repeat this twice more before an adult asks them to take the dolls in and put them by the door as they will need to be cleaned. Child A and B ignore this and run back round the slide and slide them down again. The adult comments, 'this looks like fun but the dolls will be broken' and has to intervene to take them off the two boys. Child A runs inside laughing and Child B runs after him. Adult to Child A 'what shall we read this afternoon, any ideas boys?' Child A and Child B go to the story area and select The Three Little Pigs, Child A says to Child B 'the pigs is funny isn't it'. Nodding Child B replies 'huff puff Mr Wolf' using intonation in his voice, they both laugh and ask the adult if they can have the story sack for this story. The adult reaches the story sack down from the shelf and the boys carry it together to the story corner laughing.

End of the observation 14:20.

Observation 2

Date of observation:	XX/XX/XX
Age of child (in years and months):	3 years and 2 months
Development / Curriculum links:	Communication and language (Literacy)
Observation method:	Time sample / Snapshot
Place of observation:	Private Day Care
Time of observation:	09:40 – 10:00am

Aim of observation 2

The aim of the observation is to watch Child A over a period of 20 minutes, recording what the child is doing, who / what they are playing with and any communication and interaction involved. Opportunities for literacy have also been identified as relevant for the observation.

Observation 2

09:40: Child A sits on the edge of the sandpit outside. He watches two other children in the sand play area and starts to laugh:

Child A “That’s too much” (points at the ladle of sand one of the other children is trying to transfer from the sandpit to the grassy slope opposite where there is another sandpit)

All three children laugh.

An adult notices what they are doing and brings over a wheelbarrow: Adult to Child A “We could help Child B and C with this wheelbarrow, what do you think?”

Child A to adult “Mmm I can do that with this” (waves spade)

All three children start to fill the wheelbarrow with sand. The adult walks back towards the nursery entrance.

09:45: Child A remains engaged with the activity at the sandpit and the three children are either filling the wheelbarrow or carrying spades of sand from one sandpit to another. Child A almost collides with a young girl on a trike and runs to avoid the collision. Child A shouts “Hey” as he runs past. He notices that the adult has put up the story tent and stops to look inside. He follows the adult inside and sees that the tent has been turned into a jungle with long green strips of green crepe paper hanging from the top. Child A picks up one strip that has fallen to the floor of the tent and runs outside letting the wind blow the paper strip. Other children race after him to try to catch the strip laughing and screaming.

09:50: Child A is asked to come into the tent for a story but continues to run around outside. He trips on the edge of the slide and falls over. An adult approaches to make sure he is OK and Child A quietly nods his head. He takes the hand of the adult and they go towards the tent. Adult to Child A: “let’s read a story and have a drink and some fruit shall we” Child A replies: “OK” and walks with his head down looking at his knee and rubbing it as he walks. Another child approaches Child A and says, “did you hurt your knee Child A?” Child A replies; “Yes running and I fell over” Adult to Child A and other child “Yes running; like the wind weren’t you Child A” and smiles, Child A laughs and Child B repeats “like the wind, the wind can’t run”, and they all start to laugh.

09:55: Child A is playing with Child B and three other children in the story tent. They are exploring the dressing up area in the story tent which has some feathers inside. Child A tips them over and laughs and they run around chasing each other with the feathers. The adult peeps inside the tent and asks if they are coming in as the tent is going away now. "No it's not" says Child A and runs outside with some feathers.

10:00: Child A lies on floor with large bricks. He passes one to another child. Child B to Child A: "I need that one", trying to take Child A's brick. Child A refuses and the children begin to snatch at the bricks. Child B finds a triangular shaped brick "I'm having this one now": Child A looks and finds another one the same "so am I" they both laugh.

End of the observation 10:00.

Part 1 (a) Examiner commentary

Distinction

The student has presented two observations in accordance with requirements set, demonstrating an understanding of diverse observation methods.

The evidence is precise, logical and provides a well-informed and detailed response to the demands of the brief. The two observations capture details of Child A and provide opportunities for analysis and informed reflection in relation to the focus and in line with the early years foundation stage. The information recorded captures detail of peer, as well as adult, interaction with specific detail of how Child A uses communication during play, for example, how Child A responds to adult interaction with purposeful and expressive communication. Child A engages in dialogue, interprets suggestions 'I can do that with this', and follows adult-led transitions with verbal and non-verbal cues.

By recording language and interaction with such precision, a clear picture of the child's interests and stage of development is evidenced which support next steps planning. The only consideration for improvement would be to capture language and social situations in as much detail as possible during observations of young children to ensure next steps planning for literacy is focused and child centred.

Part 1 (b) Observation and assessment of children in settings

You must answer a series of **two** questions. You must work from your observation records.

Complete the questions below.

1. Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of **your own** practice and skills in carrying out **each** of the different observation methods in **part 1 (a)**.
2. Suggest ways that you could engage with continuing professional development (CPD) to improve **your own** observational practice and skills.

You will need to review your observation records to complete these questions.

Resources

For this task, you will have access to the following:

- this brief
- your observation records.

Evidence required for submission to NCFE

The following evidence **must** be submitted to your tutor / invigilator:

- answers to the two task questions.

All evidence **must** be securely saved by your tutor / invigilator.

Part 1 (b) Student evidence

Q1 Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of **your own** practice and skills in carrying out **each** of the different observation methods in **part 1 (a)**.

[9 marks]

This paper relies on the observation data from part 1 (a).

The observations methods that I have used are:

Snapshot (time sampling), writing (narrative observation).

I am now going to write about my own observational skills by evaluating my strengths and weaknesses when I recorded each observation. I will start by exploring how I managed to apply each of the different methods, how the observations could support me to plan for the child's needs and also how they could be used as records to support practitioners when working as part of a team with other professionals. I will also be able to consider how I could have improved my work here.

The snapshot was a very simple and straightforward observation method that is ideally suited to time sampling. This method allowed me to watch the child for a period of 20 minutes but in intervals. For example, I watched the child for 20 minutes but recorded information for 5 minutes, then stopped and observed again and so on. This allowed me to watch the child in different situations. From this I can see developmental stage, levels of interaction and communication, interest and how the child responds in a range of diverse social situations. The snapshot would be useful for parents / carers and other professionals (as appropriate) to see, as they will be able to appreciate and learn about how the child played, with whom and aspects of language and socialisation and this will offer an insight for monitoring and assessment as well as any necessary intervention – this will improve the way the setting can meet the child's individual needs too.

It is important to think about what the child's needs are and if the key person has any specific areas that he / she would like me to watch for. The snap shot is used in my setting when children are settling in to see how they are interacting. Peer friendship groups are often identified and also periods of time where children may be more engaged in activities than others may highlight their interest and help to plan next steps for the practitioner. Snap shots can also provide information around triggers for a child who may become upset or anxious at particular times of the nursery day or during certain events. They may also support wider learning around the individual needs of children and this is where a skilled and experienced practitioner would be able to identify areas of importance for potential intervention. My strengths in relation to this particular method include:

- clear record keeping and I managed to record most of any conversations taking place
- detailed observation recording all language and socialisation
- noting interests of the child
- noting any key developmental milestones that may be influential for monitoring, tracking and next steps
- triggers and concerns
- use of resources
- need for intervention as appropriate
- strategies for support
- next steps planning information to share with others.

There are also some areas that I could improve on and these include:

- being more flexible for the snapshot method as a couple of times I missed some opportunities that may have showed me some real learning, for example Child A was upset following conflict that required adult intervention and because I was not recording at the time I missed that and if I had been prepared to be a little more flexible I would have captured useful data
- one of the main focus areas for the observation was literacy. I was able to look through the EYFS and relate my observation to specific opportunities for communication and language.

I need to practice observations and also get more confident in the areas of the EYFS as well as the planning stages within the observational cycle. The placement I am in are very keen to support me to learn more and have even invited me to discuss observations and plan next steps with them. I have had some of my observations included in the child's tapestry and have met with the speech and language therapist as it is important that everyone has a consistent approach when working with children, especially children with SEND for their best possible outcomes.

The written account, (narrative), allowed me the opportunity to write freely for a period of 20 minutes. I did feel that this was perhaps the easiest method but it was also quite time consuming and I needed to watch Child A in one long period of time and this may have been at the risk of missing relevant information and activity at different times of the day outside of the observation but at significant times such as at the beginning and the end of the day when the child may be tired or more unsettled. I did feel that my own strengths here were in being able to record Child A by writing a written observation in detail and this information would support the next steps planning.

The activities that Child A engaged with would allow me opportunity to engage with the focus on literacy too. My weaknesses at recording were that I would not be able to really engage with the children during this type of observation as I will need to focus fully on the child. It is time consuming and I also put my observation down once to help a child in the role play area who was asking for help with dressing up resources and my supervisor had to remind me of the importance of confidentiality. This made me realise that I need to be much more organised and aware in relation to safeguarding.

I am learning about Kolb's reflective cycle and how this can help me to reflect and revise / review how I approach learning and this will also be useful in the future when I think about what I will do and why. It is important to always keep reflecting to make improvements in my work. Being a reflective practitioner is critical to best practice. In class we have learned about models for reflection such as the Gibbs model. I can see how the observational cycle and the Gibbs cycle of reflection are really trying to support the same sort of aspects in the context of the child. For example I can't plan effectively if I can't stop and reflect upon the needs of the child and I can't recognise the needs of the child or my own training needs if I don't take stock of what is happening and what the child needs next. I have never really thought about what it really means to be a reflective practitioner and whilst it is a simple, quite straightforward concept really it is an aspect I will always build in to my practice now – I have seen the staff do this in planning meetings that I have been lucky enough to be invited to attend. For example, they always start by reflecting on the week, what has been significant, what can we learn about our children, ourselves and the setting and then we think about any specific planning and intervention – it's really interesting and it doesn't make everything rigid or too structured, it just kind of sets the scene there is still everything to go for in 'in the moment' spontaneous experiences! The KEEP principles include 'effective practice in the early years requires committed, enthusiastic and reflective practitioners with a breadth and depth of knowledge, skills and understanding'.

Q2 Suggest ways that you could engage with continuing professional development (CPD) to improve **your own** observational practice and skills.

[6 marks]

I think it is important to be able to reflect on my own continuous professional development in order to improve my own skills involving observations. I am able to record clearly and I can keep up with the fast paced nature of recording communication and interaction but I am not confident in how observations are used by professionals to support next steps planning or intervention for identified additional needs.

My knowledge of the Early Years Foundation Stage is further limited and this will impact on how I support tracking and progression against the learning aims of the observation and I will not be able to provide information that parents / carers may ask me and this would not be professional. By not being very confident with the Early Years Foundation Stage I would also find it difficult to recognise atypical development or areas of need where skilful intervention could support the child or even other professionals who may need this information because they will find it insightful and informative. So I would need to learn more about different types of observation, the areas of learning and development in the Early Years Foundation Stage and also be more mindful of the need for confidentiality and its role in safeguarding. For my own CPD I would like to practice new methods so that I can get more refined with the methods. I also need to be able to shadow my mentor and other experienced practitioners. I would like to learn about how the technology side of observations at my industry placement works, although I appreciate the confidentiality here and why my observations may be used but they are added into the system that is password protected, so only staff have this access and parents can view their own child's progress.

I have some awareness of how observations are used for planning next steps, for intervention and team work with others and this, coupled with my developing awareness of the Early Years Foundation Stage, will support my ability to draw conclusions about children's age and stage and consequently plan well for their next steps. I will always be mindful of planning in partnership with others so that my approach is the best one and that it is consistent and in the best interest of the child. Working as part of a partnership with parents / carers will support the child in their holistic development and nurture relationships and attachments too.

Part 1 (b) Examiner commentary

Distinction

Q1 Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of your own practice and skills in carrying out each of the different observation methods in part 1 (a).

The student makes extensive use of relevant knowledge and has extensive understanding of the practices of the sector. This is clearly evidenced when making reference to the early years foundation stage, partnership and collaboration as well as the significance of being a reflective practitioner.

The student makes decisive use of appropriate skills and techniques forming well-founded judgements to demonstrate an extensive breadth and depth of knowledge and understanding of own developmental needs. For example, by explaining how the methods may be used to analyse and find suitable solutions, 'to identify triggers', showing an advanced appreciation of observations for intervention.

The student reflects on the usefulness of the methods before going on to evaluate their own strengths and weaknesses in a skilful, honest and purposeful way. The way that the student comments on the limits and usefulness of each method from a self-reflective perspective further adds strength to this work. This work could be improved by discussing how other observation methods may be useful in this context and why. This would show a deeper understanding of knowledge and application of observation and assessment.

Q2 Suggest ways that you could engage with continuing professional development (CPD) to improve your own observational practice and skills.

The student provides a precise and coherent approach to consider their own learning. The response offered is detailed and comprehensive, utilising an extensive application of relevant knowledge. The response includes an extensive and decisive engagement with theory involving reflection for improved practice. The student demonstrates highly appropriate skills and techniques relevant to reflection, offering a very honest overview of own strengths in line with ongoing training and makes extensive use of relevant knowledge and understanding of reflection in context of education and early years when suggesting strategies to build on areas requiring further knowledge.

Suggestions are offered with detailed explanation such as increased practice through continuing professional development opportunities, further knowledge and theoretical understanding to enhance and refine application. The work would be improved with examples of when specific reflective theories could be applied to support learning in particular situations.

Part 2

You must answer a series of **four** questions.

You should spend the first part of this assessment reading the observation data provided in the insert.

You should do this before attempting to answer the questions.

1. Identify **and** describe the **two** different methods of observation (provided in the insert) that were used to assess Natalia's development in **expressive arts and design**. (4 marks)
2. Using an example, evaluate the purpose of **each** of the **two** methods of observation identified in **question 1** in the assessment of children. (6 marks)
3. With reference to the insert, analyse **each** of the **two** observations to draw conclusions about Natalia's holistic developmental needs, as identified through **expressive arts and design**. In your answer, you should relate to the current requirements of the early years education curriculum. (12 marks)
4. Use your analysis of the two observations to discuss the next steps for Natalia's holistic developmental needs, through **expressive arts and design**. Give examples of suitable educational activities or opportunities to support your answer. (12 marks)

Resources

For this part of assignment 3, you will have access to the following:

- this brief
- the insert for assignment 3 part 2
- the Department for Education (DfE) – Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage (EYFS) (2021)
- DfE – Development Matters Non-statutory curriculum guidance for the early years foundation stage (EYFS) (2021)
- Birth to 5 Matters: Non-statutory guidance for the early years foundation stage (EYFS) (2021).

Evidence required for submission to NCFE

The following evidence **must** be submitted to your tutor / invigilator:

- answers to the four questions.

All evidence **must** be securely saved by your tutor / invigilator.

Part 2 insert: observation data

Observation 1

	The early years practitioner (EYP) and two children, including N, are sitting around the table with red, yellow and blue ready-mix paint in soap dispensers to help the children access the paint. Each child has a palette for mixing the paint and a paintbrush.
EYP	'We have three colours of paint in our pots. Who can put their hand up and tell me the colours?'
N	'This one is orange.' N points to the red paint. 'This one is ellow.' N points to the yellow paint. 'And this one is purple.' N points to the blue paint.
EYP	'Thank you N. Let's look again.' EYP points to the red paint. 'This one is red. Can you all say red?' EYP points to the yellow paint. 'This one is yellow. Can we all say Y-yellow? This one is blue. Can we say blue?' EYP points to the blue paint.
N	N joins in saying the colours, although she still pronounces 'ellow.'
EYP	'Today we are going to make some new colours. First, we will make this colour.' EYP holds up an orange leaf. 'Which colour is this?'
N	'Orange.'
EYP	'Yes, N, you are correct. This leaf is the colour orange. Does anyone know which two colours we mix to make orange?'
N	N points to red, yellow and blue paints. 'All of them and mix, mix, mix.'
EYP	EYP mixes the colours suggested and discusses with the children the colour it has made. 'I am going to show you how to make the colour orange, using the colours yellow and red.' EYP demonstrates making orange, by placing three squirts of yellow, adding one squirt of red and mixing it together. EYP models how to squirt the paint and count at the same time. She explains that yellow must be used first. 'Now it is your turn.'
N	'I can do it, I can do it.' N carefully puts three squirts of yellow and one of red into a palette. She picks up the paintbrush with her right hand in a whole-hand grip. She swaps to her left and back to her right hand. She spills the paint over the side of the palette. 'Tah dah, I made ellow, orange!'
EYP	'Now we are going to mix this colour.' EYP holds up a green leaf. 'Who can tell me what colour this is?'
N	'It's purple, it's purple!'
EYP	'Let's ask your friend!' EYP asks Child A, who correctly says green. 'That's correct, it is the colour green. Which two colours do we need to make green?'
N	'This one and this one'. N points to the red and the blue paint.

EYP	'That makes purple.' Child A points to yellow and blue. 'That is correct, we use two squirts of yellow paint and one small squirt of blue and mix the colours together.' EYP asks Child A if they would like to make the colour.
N	'No fair, I do it!' N turns her back to the activity and refuses to look.
EYP	'N, if you don't look, you might not know how to mix the paint to make green for your leaf print.'
N	N covers her eyes and watches through her fingers as Child A mixes the green paint.
EYP	'Now you can choose which colour you would like to make for your leaf prints'. EYP demonstrates putting paint on the back of the leaf and placing plain paper on top, pressing down to make a print. 'Now it's your turn.'
N	'I wanna make that!' N points to green colour.'
EYP	'Can you remember which colour we use first?'
N	'Eallow.' N squirts three of yellow and one of blue. She mixes paint holding the brush in whole-hand grip: first in her left hand, then her right hand and then back to left. 'It's green, it's green!'
EYP	'Well done, N, you have made green. Now can you paint your leaf and make a print?'
N	N takes a leaf and puts it on the table. She takes the brush in her right hand and dips it in green paint. She swaps the paintbrush to her left hand and paints some of the leaf. She puts paper on top of it. 'Press, press, I done it, I done it!'
EYP	'Well done, N. I love your leaf print. Can you remember the colour you made?'
N	'Green, green, green!'
EYP	'Can you make some more prints, N?'
N	N spends 5 minutes choosing and printing leaves.
EYP	'How many leaves have you printed, N?'
N	'1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 9, 10'. N does not point to each leaf but just recites numbers.
EYP	'N, can you remember the names of the colours that we used to make our green and orange paint?'
N	'Purple, ellow, red. I want my milk.' N takes her apron off whilst talking.
EYP	'Can you write your name with this pencil on your picture, please?'
N	N holds the pencil in whole-hand grip and draws some marks. No letters recognisable.
EYP	'You may go now. We will hang your lovely picture up to dry.'

Observation 2

Time	Activity	Comment
09.30 am	Home corner	N is playing in the home corner. Three other children are present. She does not interact with them but sits at the table pretending to eat tea. 'I am eating pizza and chips, yum yum!' Another child approaches and asks to play with her. N says 'No!'
09.40 am	Home corner	N is lying on the floor with a blanket. She pretends to be a baby and makes crying sounds. She pretends to drink from a doll's bottle. She is playing alone.
09.50 am	Mark-making area	N is drawing a picture of mummy. She draws a large circle with a green pen. She puts four dots in the circle: eyes, nose and mouth. The arms come out of each side of the circle with two lines for fingers. There are no legs. She swaps the pen from left to right hand and holds pen in a whole-hand grip.
10.00 am	Model-making area	N is in the model-making area and is trying to cut a cardboard tube with scissors. She holds the scissors with two hands trying to snip the tube, which keeps rolling away.
10.10 am	Model-making area	N is still working in the model area. She is now trying to join two boxes. She tries with a glue stick, but the boxes will not stay joined. Next, she tries with sticky tape, but pulls a long length of tape that sticks together. She attempts to cut tape using scissors held using two hands. She gives up and leaves the area.
10.20 am	Painting area	At independent colour mixing table, N mixes colours to paint a green dragon. 'I'm mixing purple and yellow!' She points to the blue and yellow paint. She successfully makes a green colour. She paints over the dragon shape but does not stay within the lines.
10.30 am	Outdoor tarmac area	N has some pink chalk. She draws circles on the ground. 'This is Mummy and Daddy Pig, oink, oink!' She puts dots for eyes and mouth. She swaps the chalk from hand to hand using whole-hand grip. She adds a line to one circle. 'That's his tail!' Two children come to join N drawing. She leaves her chalk and walks away.

Part 2 Student evidence

Question 1: The two methods that were used include narrative and a snapshot / time sample method. Narratives can help to record a range of things and in this case allowed the practitioner the opportunity to observe and record N's involvement with a painting and leaf printing activity.

The second method is snapshot / time sample. This is a very useful way of getting to know what the child can confidently achieve in a specific area of learning and development. This allows the practitioner to record at different times throughout the day to explore the child engaged in various activities and social situations.

Question 2: The narrative allowed for detailed information to be recorded. It is a straightforward, albeit often time consuming process. It does allow for a detailed account of language, behavioural responses and reactions as well as giving information that can be easily connected to learning goals and in this case to expressive arts and design.

When sharing this type of observation with parents / carers and other professionals it is potentially the most straightforward. For example, it is free from codes or any system links so easy to access. This makes it simple to interpret and is useful to share and exchange information relevant to a specific area of development, health or learning. Narrative is useful as a method for analysis against expressive arts and design in the EYFS as the practitioner has recorded detail that can be used for drawing conclusions and making links to the learning goals / area of learning. For example, N did this...this shows that N is able to reach this area of learning / early learning goal and the next steps should build from this by...The framework offered by a narrative allows for this. It is clear that N enjoys expressive art and design and loved her experience with the paint mixing opportunity.

The narrative method, whilst time consuming, did give me the opportunity to see N's holistic development. Formative assessment through observation of N during play is a really useful way of monitoring holistic development for progress and next steps planning. For example, in this observation I recorded language, physical development, social situation as well as cognitive areas of development. This information will help me to focus on any specific area of development through play experiences that are centred around N's interest in expressive arts and design.

The snapshot is a very useful way of getting to know what the child can confidently achieve in a specific area of learning and development. For example, I can easily and quickly see what the expected goals are and how they may have been evidenced by N throughout a set period at the setting. It is of course important to remember that this is only a guide, for example, if N had been unwell or if something was interrupting her development such as a transition then it would be difficult to draw conclusions about N's ability – although it would give an indication of her current stage / need.

The snapshot observation may limit what I see as it is a focused observation at specific times of day. This could actually reduce this method's ability to gain a fuller picture of N's holistic development. I may miss important aspects of N's day which could be really informative to her holistic development, for example, it is just as important to see how she interacts with others throughout the day. I was reminded that I need to be mindful of observing at all times and not just using observational skills just when formally recording.

A snapshot / time sample observation can record wow moments and can be useful when recording significant areas of progress or particularly meaningful conclusions in relation to expressive arts and design in this case. It is perhaps not the best use of observation for recording early learning goals unless looking for specific detail, ie waiting for N or looking to see if N can understand about a particular emerging expressive arts and design concept and then the observation can really capture and highlight her progress and attainment here. This is often the method that experienced practitioners use as they

are able to identify the special key moments for a child that really are milestones of progress that should not be missed and that are significant in the monitoring and assessment process for individual children.

Question 3: I am now going to analyse each of the 2 observations on N. This will help me to use the data from the observations to draw conclusions about her development so that any next steps are appropriate to her age, stage, interest and needs.

The observation data will help me to discuss N's needs with parents / carers, colleagues, the key person involved and any other professionals as appropriate as they may have relevant information that can be shared to support N's development and in this particular case support N's holistic development through expressive arts and design experiences.

Observation 1 was a narrative observation that recorded N's engagement in a small group during an adult-led painting and leaf printing activity. Painting and printing are rich in opportunities for expressive arts and design concepts to be shared and the adult was able to introduce expressive arts and design language and concepts such as colour, design, materials and texture during this activity with N. Sustained shared thinking was encouraged by the practitioner in this observation who used open ended questioning and led a discussion, moving this discussion forward in order to maximise and optimise opportunity for emerging expressive arts and design. N was also encouraged to anticipate and to problem solve too. All of these skills can be related to expressive arts and design concepts and also to skills associated with meta cognition and autonomy of learning. N was obviously enjoying this activity and there were opportunities to record N's expressive arts and design experiences:

Understanding of simple expressive arts and design language was evident when responding to instructions from the EYP. This could be seen when N was able to identify the paint colours to make purple when asked. Being able to differentiate colour is important in expressive arts and design and N was able to select and demonstrate understanding of colour not only in naming colours but when selecting on being asked, this shows that she is confident with aspects of experimenting with colours.

Creating with materials: N will name colours and happily pointed to named colours, however on two occasions when the EYP encouraged N to identify the colours that were needed she was unable to make the correct choice, for example, she pointed to the red, yellow and blue paints when asked how to make orange.

Explore paint as well as using brushes and other tools: N takes a leaf and puts it on the table. She takes the brush in her right hand and dips it in green paint. She swaps the paintbrush to her left hand and paints some of the leaf. She puts paper on top of it. 'Press, press, I done it, I done it!'

This observation shows some links with expected milestones in expressive arts and design:

- Explore paint, using fingers and other parts of their bodies as well as brushes and other tools.
- Express ideas and feelings through making marks and sometimes give a meaning to the marks they make.

Observation 2 is a snapshot / time sample and clearly identifies the areas of expressive arts and design development and learning that N has reached. By recording examples of N's active engagement over a set period of time results are likely to be more accurate records of evidence which reflect the stage of expressive arts and design development attained. There are also lots of different activities identified as part of the evidence, including:

Home corner: N was playing in the home corner. Three other children were present. N did not interact with them but sat at the table pretending to eat tea. 'I am eating pizza and chips, yum yum!' Another child approached and asked to play with her. N said 'No!'

There is further evidence throughout the observation period when N is playing in the mark-making area. She can clearly draw a picture of mummy. She draws a large circle with a green pen. She puts four dots in the circle: eyes, nose and mouth. The arms come out of each side of the circle with two lines for fingers. There are no legs. She swaps the pen from left to right hand and holds pen in a whole-hand grip. The practitioner could use this knowledge of N to help plan further activities that consolidate her learning and plan to meet emerging skills that require potentially more focus. When planned against N's interests this may support her expressive arts and design skills to blossom. It is important to remember that the EYFS requires assessment that helps practitioners to support and extend a child's learning as it is happening in everyday activities and experiences.

As with the brush for the painting activity, N showed that she has a basic understanding of expressive arts and design, this awareness is shown in the time sample / snapshot when speaking about events such as going outside later and using chalk, as well as attaching meaning to the marks that she makes by identifying that she has drawn the pig's tail. The time sample clearly identifies that N has some awareness of expressive arts and design in mark making, but that colour names, in particular colour blending, is an area that is emerging rather than evident.

Question 4: I am now going to use the analysis of each observation to discuss the next steps for N's expressive arts and design development and will give examples of appropriate educational activities and learning opportunities to support my findings.

N has a good understanding of mark making and uses artistic language appropriately in her play, she has an awareness of simple mark making related matters. The main area that I would like to discuss and plan for N's next steps are around the emerging colour skills. N has the ability to identify colour and does so by rote accurately, however with scaffolded activities and experiences N could begin to practise and refine, develop and enhance her skills in this area:

- 30–50 months – safely use and explore a variety of materials, tools and techniques, experimenting with colour, design, texture, form and function (EYFS).

At 4 years 3 months N is showing developing awareness of skills expected by 50 months and knowing where N is at will support the EYP, the parents / carer, key person, colleagues and any other professionals to plan to enable progression at an appropriate starting point that is in line with N's interests, stage and needs. Activities around colour will be of real benefit to N as she continues to develop in this particular area of expressive arts and design.

The next steps would be to share the analysis data with N's key person, colleagues and parents / carer and other professionals involved in N's care. In this way everyone involved in the education and care of N can work together to provide appropriate challenging activities that support her needs and build on what she is particularly interested in.

Then sharing any further information and insight planning for the next steps for N can begin! N enjoys working with an adult close by and finds this reassuring, she does not appear to enjoy peer collaboration and creativity, especially during mark making and imaginary role play. Being aware of this next step, planning can be carefully arranged to support development that N will actively engage in and therefore expressive arts and design development becomes incidental allowing the EYP to check learning through further observations of N at play to measure the effectiveness of the experiences offered in terms of expressive arts and design accomplishment.

The activities I would suggest are identified below and all are with the following in mind:
Uses some colour names and artistic language spontaneously, emerging in terms of colour blending, ie singing a range of well-known nursery rhymes and song (EYFS).

1. Rainbow Song: Use coloured cards and sing the song 'I can sing a rainbow...'

The EYP uses the cards to reflect the colours and asks for support selecting the first colour, the second colour and so on. This will support colour recognition.

2. Rainbow Sun-catcher: N can make a sun-catcher rainbow for display in the window.

Cut strips of the coloured tissue paper to be attached to white tissue paper with a glue stick.

The EYP will create a display that has colours on large, laminated cards with the corresponding colour names or items of that colour underneath, such as green with a picture of a leaf for example. Each week the practitioner could select a different colour and use this in their general language throughout the day, encouraging N to select an item of that colour for example.

The EYP can be focused on expressive arts and design in the way they use the everyday routines in the setting, for example, when talking about what is happening during the day, use language such as colour, texture and materials. The EYP will also be encouraging expressive arts and design through song and story and colour matching during activities such as setting the table. By using N's current interest in expressive arts and design her holistic development can be monitored, planned for and encouraged.

Part 2 Examiner commentary

Distinction

Q1

The student makes extensive use of relevant knowledge and demonstrates an extensive understanding of the practices of the sector to accurately identify and describe the different methods of observation used to assess Natalia's expressive arts development. Each observation method has been described in accurate detail which could be extended to support future analysis as appropriate to identify any limits of the specific method.

Q2

The student has been able to present detailed and contextualised evaluative explanations regarding the purpose of each of the two methods of observation identified in the tasks. The response is logical and coherent, making exceptional use of appropriate information relevant to the sector. The student makes well-founded judgements demonstrating highly appropriate techniques relevant to the skill of observation in context. For example, the strengths as well as the limits of the different types of observation are well-reasoned in the response offered by the student, demonstrating knowledge and understanding of the observation and assessment cycle. Clear examples from the observation data make this a useful and purposeful evaluation. The work could be improved by considering alternative observation methods and how these could be applied.

Q3

The evidence provided by the student is precise and logical and provides a detailed and informative response to the demands of the brief. The student makes extensive use of relevant knowledge within the statutory framework for the early years. This is clearly demonstrated through the engagement with the early learning goals and the response evidences the student's breadth and depth of knowledge to combine information from the observation to make coherent, well-informed decisions. For example, the response draws conclusions in a sophisticated and purposeful child-centred manner. The response demonstrates in-depth and precise understanding relevant to the sector, applying techniques to analyse and find solutions. For example, the student is able to extract and describe early learning goals and opportunities where expressive arts and design skills have been apparent in the observation and is aware of how the early years practitioner is able to maximise emergent expressive arts and design skills in an appropriate way through their interactions. The work could be improved with a deeper focus concerning how the observations assess the holistic needs of the child.

Q4

The student makes decisive use of facts and selects highly appropriate techniques to comprehensively identify information from the observations, making exceptional use of appropriate information to make coherent decisions. For example, the student has been able to select appropriate activities and opportunities as next steps for Natalia, which are not only mindful of her stage of development and learning in expressive arts and design, but also in tune with her holistic developmental stage. The activities reflect an extensive use of relevant theory and approaches applied in the sector when planning for the age / stage, interests and preferences of Natalia, significantly planning with others and sharing information to enrich N's overall experience in the setting and home-learning environment. The student uses recognised pedagogical approaches in early years precisely and accurately in context, such as 'scaffolding' learning. The role of the practitioner is well-informed in order to support and promote next steps. The application of theoretical conceptual knowledge and understanding has been applied constructively and comprehensively in this response. The response would be improved with wider application of pedagogical strategies to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of evidence-based knowledge application.

Overall grade descriptors

The performance outcomes form the basis of the overall grade descriptors for pass and distinction grades.

These grade descriptors have been developed to reflect the appropriate level of demand for students of other level 3 qualifications; the threshold competence requirements of the role are validated with employers within the sector to describe achievement appropriate to the role.

Occupational specialism overall grade descriptors

Pass
The evidence is logical but displays baseline knowledge in response to the demands of the brief. The student makes some use of relevant knowledge and understanding of how it informs practices of the sector and demonstrates a baseline understanding of perspectives or approaches The student makes acceptable use of facts / theories / approaches / concepts and attempts to demonstrate breadth and depth of knowledge and understanding. The student is able to identify information from appropriate sources and makes use of appropriate information / appraises relevancy of information and can combine information to make decisions. The student makes judgements / takes appropriate action / seeks clarification with guidance and is able to make progress towards solving non-routine problems in real-life situations. The student demonstrates skills and knowledge of the relevant concepts and techniques reflected in the sector and generally applies these across different contexts. The student shows adequate understanding of unstructured problems that have not been seen before, using limited knowledge to find solutions to problems and make justification for strategies for solving problems, explaining their reasoning. EYE only – demonstrates achievement of all EYE criteria.
Distinction
The evidence is precise, logical and provides a detailed and informative response to the demands of the brief. The student makes extensive use of relevant knowledge, has extensive understanding of the practices of the sector and demonstrates an understanding of the different perspectives / approaches. The student makes decisive use of facts / theories / approaches / concepts, demonstrating extensive breadth and depth of knowledge and understanding, and selects highly appropriate skills / techniques / methods. The student is able to comprehensively identify information from a range of suitable sources and makes exceptional use of appropriate information / appraises relevancy of information and can combine information to make coherent decisions. The student makes well-founded judgements / takes appropriate action / seeks clarification and guidance and is able to use that to reflect on real-life situations in the sector.

The student demonstrates extensive knowledge of relevant concepts and techniques reflected in the sector, precisely applies this across a variety of contexts and tackles unstructured problems that have not been seen before, using their knowledge to analyse and find suitable solutions to the problems.

SAMPLE

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Version	Description of change	Approval	Date of issue
v1.0	First published version	03 November 2025	04 November 2025
v1.1	Word formation changed to literacy as a 'specific' area of learning	02 June 2026	15 September 2026