

ASSESSMENT #5: Action Research Project

Assessment conducted in CI 285: Advanced Educational Psychology

2010 NAEYC Advanced Standards 1, 3, 4, 6 Key Elements 1a, 1b, 1c, 3a, 4b, 4d, 6c, 6d

Assessment #5, Action Research Project, evaluates four NAEYC Standards and eight Key Elements. The Action Research Project is embedded in CI285, Advanced Educational Psychology. This assessment is required of all ECE graduate candidates as part of CI285, which is a core (required) course.

The Action Research Project provides students the opportunity to engage in reflective practice by exploring an action research question through a review of the literature and approved action research methodology. The project includes development of an assessment plan, implementation of an evidence-based practice, and connection of assessment and practice to theory.

Based on feedback regarding Assessment #5 in our Recognition Report, we have revised the description and rubric to more clearly align with Standard 3. We have also added Standards 1 (Key Elements 1a, 1b, 1c) and 4 (Key Elements 4b, 4d) to this assessment. We have disaggregated Key Elements for all standards. This assessment and rubric assess the following Key Elements: 1a: *Knowing and understanding young children's characteristics and needs, from birth through age 8*; 1b: *Knowing and understanding the multiple influences on early development and learning*; 1c: *Using developmental knowledge to create healthy, respectful, supportive, and challenging learning environments for young children*; 3a: *Understanding the goals, benefits, and uses of assessment – including its use in development of appropriate goals, curriculum, and teaching strategies for young children*; 4b: *Knowing and understanding effective strategies and tools for early education, including appropriate uses of technology*; 4d: *Reflecting on own practice to promote positive outcomes for each child*; 6c: *Using professional resources, inquiry skills and research methods to engage in continuous, collaborative learning and investigation relevant to practice and professional role*; 6d: *Integrating knowledgeable, reflective, and critical perspectives on early education based upon mastery of relevant theory and research*. Because the rubric has major revisions, this is a new assessment. We have included data from one semester using this revised rubric.

Data are included for Spring 2015, which is when the revised assessment and rubric were piloted. Candidate scores demonstrate that all candidates either met or exceeded expectations. Standard 1 (Key Elements 1a, 1b, and 1c) seemed to be an area of relative strength for the candidates. This relative area of strength is not surprising given that the focus of the course is developmental and learning theory. Performance on the other Key Elements demonstrates relative weaknesses, particularly in regard to candidates' ability to reflect on their own practice and apply their knowledge of

development and theory to practice. These data suggest that although the course content and instruction is providing a strong theoretical foundation, candidates may need more support in learning to apply their knowledge of theory to their praxis. Another possibility is that, even though the assignment requires candidates to reflect on their own practice and to apply their findings to their practice, the candidates may be overlooking on the reflective component of action research. More time in the course might be devoted to interpreting the implications of action research.

Action Research Project

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This assessment addresses these specific program standards for the development of Early Childhood Teacher Leaders and Early Childhood Program Leaders:

**2010 NAEYC Advanced Standards 1, 3, 4, 6
Key Elements 1a, 1b, 1c, 3a, 4b, 4d, 6c, 6d**

Overview

Every profession has a knowledge-base specific to the discipline. Early childhood education is no exception. When a question is asked in our field, it is set in the context of research findings and/or previously established best practices.

In CI 285: Seminar in Advanced Educational Psychology, students are asked, “Is there a question about the profession you are entering that you are eager to explore?” Both basic research and action research are encouraged but the project must have relevant implications and applications for practice.

Basic research typically establishes new knowledge about developmental phenomena or learning. The following is an example of a basic research question: “What effect does age of puberty onset have on peer relationships?” Action research endeavors to discover which ways of doing things yield the best results. The following is an example of an action research question: “What is the relationship between classroom management model and student self-regulation?”

Description

The Action Research Project is a semester-long project that requires reflection on personal practice, a small intervention to address a challenge in practice, assessment and data collection, data analysis, and reflection on the effectiveness of the intervention and implications for future practice. The project is developed over the course of the semester with guidance from the instructor. Students work in groups of two to four to select a cohesive set of research questions to investigate. However, each student is responsible for his/her own action research. The research project must be framed using a developmental perspective based on one or multiple theoretical frameworks addressed in the course.

Objectives

1. Students will identify the core concepts and principles that characterize one or more psychological and culturally-based theories implicated in development,

- learning, and design/implementation of instruction or intervention. (NAEYC 1a, 1b, 1c, 6d)
2. Evaluate research-based psychological frameworks used in explaining and planning behavior. (NAEYC 1b, 1c, 6c, 6d)
 3. Analyze and interpret research, translate research findings into practice, demonstrate personal research skills, and implement applied research. (NAEYC 4b, 6c, 6d)
 4. Use research-based evidence to defend a position using a developmental framework. (NAEYC 6c, 6d)
 5. Apply theoretical and research knowledge to practice in appropriate settings—in the context of field study projects, action research, and observed clinical practice. (NAEYC 1a, 1b, 1c, 4b, 6d)
 6. Practice reflection using a developmental framework as part of professional practice. (NAEYC 1a, 1b, 1c, 4d, 6d)
 7. Design and implement an action research project which includes identifying a context for a brief intervention, developing and implementing an assessment or measurement plan, collecting data, interpreting results, describing implications for planning and change, and reporting the research to others. (NAEYC 1a, 1b, 1c, 3a, 4b, 4d, 6c, 6d)
 8. Practice 21st century competencies including collaboration, creativity, critical thinking, information literacy, communication, valuing diversity, flexibility, adaptability, and self-direction.

Steps for Completing the Action Research Project

These steps will be completed throughout the semester with guidance from the instructor who will provide class time and deadlines to facilitate success in completing the Action Research Project:

1. Identify questions or challenges based in practice.
2. Find a partner/team.
3. Develop a cohesive set of research questions.
4. Find 7-15 peer-reviewed journal articles on your selected topic.
5. Write a 5- to 7-page literature review using previously-generated research findings from the journal articles.
6. Decide on a method for investigating your research question.
 - a. Design a small intervention based on a theoretical perspective, which will address your question or challenge as a practitioner.
 - b. Create an assessment plan that is appropriate for measuring your desired outcome(s) and for your target age group/population.

7. Collect pre-intervention data.
8. Implement the intervention.
9. Collect post-intervention data.
10. Analyze the data—make sense of what was gathered.
11. Relate the findings to the formal research reviewed earlier.
12. Examine the implications of the action research for your practice and the ECE profession.
13. Make a presentation of the research.
14. Write and submit the research report: Intro/Literature Review, Method, Results, Discussion, and Conclusion and Implications. You must adhere to scholarly standards for graduate work and APA style.

Assessment #5: Action Research Project Rubric
 Assessment conducted in CI 285: Advanced Educational Psychology
 2010 NAEYC Advanced Standards 1, 3, 4, 6 (Key Elements: 1a, 1b, 1c, 3a, 4b, 4d, 6c, 6d)

NAEYC Advanced Standard/Key Element	DOES NOT YET MEET EXPECTATIONS (1)	MEETS EXPECTATIONS (2)	EXCEEDS EXPECTATIONS (3)	Analytic Score
<p>STANDARD 1. PROMOTING CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND LEARNING</p> <p>Key Element 1a: Candidates know and understand young children’s characteristics and needs, from birth through age 8</p>	<p>Candidate does not identify a learning/developmental topic that is relevant to ages birth through 8 years for the action research.</p> <p align="center">OR</p> <p>Candidate does not identify developmental milestones or identifies milestones that are not relevant to the chosen topic.</p>	<p>Candidate identifies a learning/developmental topic that is relevant to ages birth through 8 years for the action research. Candidate identifies major developmental milestones and necessary conditions for healthy development specific to the chosen topic.</p>	<p>Candidate identifies a learning/developmental topic that is relevant to ages birth through 8 years for the action research. Candidate identifies major developmental milestones and necessary conditions for healthy development specific to the chosen topic <u>and theoretical framework</u>.</p>	
<p>Key Element 1b: Candidates know and understand the multiple influences on early development and learning</p>	<p>Candidate does not identify multiple influences that are related to early development and learning.</p> <p align="center">OR</p> <p>Candidate identifies multiple influences that are not relevant to the chosen topic.</p>	<p>Candidate identifies multiple influences on early development and learning that are specific to the chosen topic. Candidate identifies catalysts or barriers to healthy development and learning contexts, but not both.</p>	<p>Candidate identifies multiple influences on early development and learning that are specific to the chosen topic and theoretical framework. Candidate identifies influences including <u>both catalysts and barriers</u> to healthy development and learning contexts.</p>	
<p>Key Element 1c: Candidates use developmental knowledge to create healthy, respectful, supportive, and challenging environments for young children</p>	<p>Candidate identifies practices that are not relevant to the chosen developmental/learning topic.</p> <p align="center">OR</p> <p>Candidate does not provide research evidence to support recommended practices.</p> <p align="center">OR</p> <p>Candidate does not describe implementation of an evidence-based practice.</p>	<p>Candidate identifies recommended practices relevant to the chosen developmental/learning topic. Candidate provides research evidence to support recommended practices. Candidate describes his/her implementation of an evidence-based practice that supports respectful, supportive, and challenging environments for children.</p>	<p>Candidate identifies recommended practices relevant to the chosen developmental/learning topic <u>and grounded in the chosen theoretical framework</u>. Candidate provides <u>research evidence from multiple sources</u> to support recommended practices. Candidate describes his/her implementation of an evidence-based practice that supports respectful, supportive, and challenging environments for children.</p>	

NAEYC Advanced Standard/Key Element	DOES NOT YET MEET EXPECTATIONS (1)	MEETS EXPECTATIONS (2)	EXCEEDS EXPECTATIONS (3)	Analytic Score
<p>STANDARD 3. OBSERVING, DOCUMENTING, AND ASSESSING TO SUPPORT YOUNG CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES</p> <p>Key Element 3a: Candidates understand the goals, benefits, and uses of assessment—including its use in development of appropriate goals, curriculum, and teaching strategies for young children</p>	<p>Candidate includes no or developmentally inappropriate methods of assessment.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Candidate uses assessments that are not relevant to the goals and rationale of the action research.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Candidate uses assessments that are not explicitly related to the action strategies/curriculum implemented in the action research.</p>	<p>Candidate includes developmentally appropriate methods of assessment that are relevant to the goals and rationale of the action research. Candidate explicitly relates the assessment(s) to the action strategies/curriculum implemented in the action research.</p>	<p>Candidate includes developmentally appropriate methods of assessment that are relevant to the goals, rationale, and implemented strategies of the action research.</p> <p>AND</p> <p><u>Candidate explicitly connects the data from the assessment(s) to the goals of the action research in a way that highlights the benefits of using the assessment.</u></p>	
<p>STANDARD 4. USING DEVELOPMENTALLY EFFECTIVE APPROACHES</p> <p>Key Element 4b: Knowing and understanding effective strategies and tools for early education, including appropriate uses of technology</p>	<p>Candidate implements developmentally inappropriate action strategies/tools.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Candidate provides inadequate theoretical rationale or research-based evidence for the chosen strategies/tools.</p>	<p>Candidate implements developmentally appropriate action strategies/tools.</p> <p>AND</p> <p>Candidate provides theoretical rationale or research-based evidence for the chosen strategies/ tools.</p>	<p>Candidate implements developmentally appropriate action strategies/tools.</p> <p>AND</p> <p>Candidate provides sound theoretical rationale <u>as well as</u> research-based evidence for the chosen strategies/tools.</p>	
<p>Key Element 4d: Candidates reflect on their own practice to promote positive outcomes for each child</p>	<p>Candidate does not connect the rationale, conclusions, or implications of the action research to personal practice.</p>	<p>Candidate connects rationale, conclusions, and implications of the action research to personal practice.</p>	<p>Candidate connects rationale, conclusions, and implications to personal practice, <u>with specific references to possible changes in future practice or next steps for future action research.</u></p>	

NAEYC Advanced Standard/Key Element	DOES NOT YET MEET EXPECTATIONS (1)	MEETS EXPECTATIONS (2)	EXCEEDS EXPECTATIONS (3)	Analytic Score
<p>STANDARD 6. GROWING AS A PROFESSIONAL</p> <p>Key Element 6c: Candidates use professional resources, inquiry, skills, and research methods to engage in continuous, collaborative learning and investigation relevant to practice and professional role</p>	<p>Candidate's action research does not reflect systematic inquiry or processes/protocols common to the ECE profession.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">OR</p> <p>Candidate's voice is personal only and not professional.</p>	<p>Candidate uses systematic inquiry and processes/protocols that are common to/consistent with the ECE profession. Candidate satisfactorily establishes professional voice and speaks as a member of his/her profession.</p>	<p>Candidate demonstrates knowledge of <u>current and classic discipline-specific areas of inquiry</u> and uses methods that are relevant to ECE practice and well aligned with professional goals. <u>Candidate's inquiry process demonstrates standard practice in the ECE profession.</u> Candidate's professional identity is clear and <u>implications of analyzed data have high potential for informing practice.</u></p>	
<p>Key Element 6d: Candidates integrate knowledgeable, reflective, and critical perspectives on early education based upon mastery of relevant theory and research</p>	<p>Candidate does not use research evidence to support claims.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">OR</p> <p>Candidate does not connect goals, rationale, or conclusions of the action research to a relevant theoretical framework.</p>	<p>Candidate uses research evidence to support claims. Candidate explicitly and specifically connects goals, rationale, and conclusions of the action research to at least one relevant theoretical framework.</p>	<p>Candidate uses focused research evidence to support claims. Candidate explicitly and specifically connects goals, rationale, and conclusions of action research to at least one relevant theoretical framework. <u>Candidate identifies gaps in the research literature and/or theoretical framework and connects these gaps to the action research.</u></p>	

Action Research Project Scoring Guide

Analytic Scoring:

Does Not Yet Meet Expectations = 1; Meets Expectations = 2; Exceeds Expectations = 3

Holistic Scoring:

Does Not Yet Meet Expectations = 8-15; Meets Expectations = 16-20; Exceeds Expectations = 21-24

ASSESSMENT #5 Action Research Project Data

Assessment #5 Analytic Data (Spring 2015); n = 6

NAEYC Advanced Standard/Key Element	Does Not Yet Meet Expectations (1)	Meets Expectations (2)	Exceeds Expectations (3)
STANDARD 1. PROMOTING CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND LEARNING Key Element 1a: Candidates know and understand young children’s characteristics and needs, from birth through age 8	0	0	6 100%
Key Element 1b: Candidates know and understand the multiple influences on early development and learning	0	0	6 100%
Key Element 1c: Candidates use developmental knowledge to create healthy, respectful, supportive, and challenging environments for young children	0	0	6 100%
STANDARD 3. OBSERVING, DOCUMENTING, AND ASSESSING TO SUPPORT YOUNG CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES Key Element 3a: Candidates understand the goals, benefits, and uses of assessment—including its use in development of appropriate goals, curriculum, and teaching strategies for young children	0	5 83.33%	1 16.67%
STANDARD 4. USING DEVELOPMENTALLY EFFECTIVE APPROACHES Key Element 4b: Knowing and understanding effective strategies and tools for early education, including appropriate uses of technology	0	3 50%	3 50%
Key Element 4d: Candidates reflect on their own practice to promote positive outcomes for each child	1 16.67%	4 66.67%	1 16.67%
STANDARD 6. GROWING AS A PROFESSIONAL Key Element 6c: Candidates use professional resources, inquiry, skills, and research methods to engage in continuous, collaborative learning and investigation relevant to practice and professional role	0	4 66.67%	2 33.33%
Key Element 6d: Candidates integrate knowledgeable, reflective, and critical perspectives on early education based upon mastery of relevant theory and research	0	5 83.33%	1 16.67%

Assessment #5 Holistic Data (Spring 2015); n = 6

Does Not Yet Meet Expectations (8-15)	Meets Expectations (16-20)	Exceeds Expectations (21-24)
0	4 66.67%	2 33.33%