Notes to accompany learning resource:

**Part 3 - Using observation to improve learning**

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| Slide  | Notes |
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| 1 | Education Scotland introduction slide |
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| 2 | Resource title: Using observation to improve learning |
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| 3 | * Four statements outlining how the resource can be used.
* The resource is intended to be used as part of a series (part 3 of 3). It can also be used independently.
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| 4 | * A quotation from Cathy Nutbrown’s text: *Respectful Educators – Capable Learner* (1996) is presented for discussion and debate.
* What are the behaviours of practitioners that show them to have ‘wide eyes and an open mind’?
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| 5 | * A second quotation from Cathy Nutbrown’s text: *Respectful Educators – Capable Learner* (1996) is presented for discussion and debate.
* A good quality observation is a factual account of what you see and hear. It will include what the child actually says, not what you think they are saying. By keeping the observation factual it will help you to challenge perceptions and show what is **really** happening.
* Good quality observations lead practitioners to question and think deeply about what they see and hear.
* Take time to think about and/or discuss the questions posed in respect of your own practice.
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| 6 | * According to Sancisi and Edgington in *Developing High Quality Observation, Assessment and Planning in the Early Years* (2015), there are five main outcomes to gathering observations.
* Close observing of young children allows practitioners to understand the fullest capabilities of children as well as to gain insight into how and where children like to learn for example, some children may wish to represent using paint, other may wish to use blocks, some children may show more confidence learning outdoors rather than learning indoors.
* Children will also show through their play, how they are developing as capable and competent learners. They will display important skills for learning such as: perseverance, motivation, self-regulation, concentration and creativity.
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| Slide  | Notes |
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| 7 | * A quotation from Cathy Nutbrown’s text: *Respectful Educators – Capable Learner* (1996) is presented for discussion and debate.
* Take time to consider the reflective question presented.
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| 8 | * Building the Ambition talks about the image of the child and reminds practitioners that ELC needs to be:
	+ child centred;
	+ nurturing;
	+ responsive; and,
	+ give space for play and learning.
* Now reflect on your own practice giving consideration to how you value children as capable and competent learners. Is there a shared understanding across all colleagues about what ‘child-centred’ provision is?
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| 9 | * Two statements are given for consideration.
* What is understood in your setting by ‘holistic judgement’? Is this consistent across all the whole team?
* Do parents/carers play enough of a role in forming a holistic view of their child as a learner? Is there a way that this could be improved?
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| 10 | * This slide introduces the skill of ‘noticing’.
* Practitioners should take time to notice the quality of the environment, experiences and interactions within their setting. This allows them to identify the significant learning, needs and interests of children.
* Practitioners should use a variety of methods, such as, discussions with the children, effective questioning, planned and spontaneous observations, professional dialogue and discussions with parents and agencies.
* Noticing where significant learning is taking place allows skilled practitioners to make judgements about how best to extend and deepen learning. This can be ‘in the moment’ or at a later point.
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| 11 | * Read carefully the case study.
* What are your initial impressions about the quality of learning experience the children are having?
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| 12 | * Example to be used with case study in slide 11.
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| Slide  | Notes |
| 13 | * Take some time to consider the questions posed.
* Consider, your own practice. Has there been a time when you have fallen into the same trap as Brian?
* What could be done in your setting to ensure that observations are rich and not superficial?
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| 14 | * This slide introduces the notion of ‘dependable’ assessment.
* Click on the link to *Building the Curriculum, 5* for more advice.
* What steps has been taken in your setting to ensure that information gathered and recorded about children is both valid and reliable?
* Is there more that needs to be done?
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| 15 | * Two examples of observations out of the same single learning episode are given.
* Which of these would you consider to be the most dependable? That is, which would you be more confident in taking some future action around?
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| 16 | * For observations/assessment to be dependable, they need to stand-up to scrutiny and challenge.
* Four criterion are given against which observations can be measured.
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| 17 | * An example of a non-biased observation is given.
* You are invited to write a biased observation using this information. What inferences could be drawn from what is seen?
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| 18 | * An example of a biased observation is given.
* Think about and/or discuss the reliability and validity of each.
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| 19 | * An example of an observation that is free from context is given.
* You are invited to write a context-driven observation using this information.
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| 20 | * An example is given.
* Think about and/or discuss why it is better to remove the context from observations. Is it always necessary to remove the context? When might the context be important to note?
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| 21 | * An example of a non-judgemental observation is given.
* You are invited to write a judgemental observation using this information.
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| 22 | * An example is given.
* Think about and/or discuss the possible impact of judgemental observations.
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| 23 | * This quotation is taken from the text: *Learning Through Child Observation* (2009) *by* M. Fawcett
* When writing an observation practitioners need to consider the language they use.
* Observation should contain enough factual evidence. Be wary of personal judgements such as “enjoyed” or “shared well”.
* Observations should highlight what a child **is able** to achieve, not what they cannot achieve.
* Observation of a child’s learning should highlight what is **significant** for that child.
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| 24 | * Now reflect on an observation which you have recently recorded.
* Using these questions above reflect on your current practice and identify areas to improve.
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| 25 | * The Children in Scotland publication: *The Cycle of Observation Assessment and Planning (2013)* offers advice on what makes a significant observation and offers a set of reflective questions.
* When recording observations there is a need to consider what is that is already known about the child, that is, what is his/her starting point and prior learning.
* It is probable therefore, that observations will differ from child to child.
* It is important that observation practice is manageable, avoiding duplication and unnecessary form filling. A link is provided to Education Scotland’s page on Tackling Bureaucracy.
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| 26 | * Ultimately, observations are gathered so that practitioners can make informed judgements about **how much** children have learned and **how well** they are progressing in their learning.
* Judgements cannot be made using single observations. Go to slides 17-22 for more practise.
* In order to make judgements about children’s learning and to meaningfully evaluate their progress, a range of observations need to be considered and the questions asked, ‘so, what do we know now about this child?’.
* Three significant observations for Skye are given. From these observations, what evaluation would you make of Skye’s progress in early language development? A link is given to the English and Literacy page of the Education Scotland website.
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| 27 | * Watch the video and listen to the narration. Consider what you see and hear.
* Think about and/or discuss the reflective questions.
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| 28 | * You will hear from further dialogue from staff of Ferguslie Pre-Five Centre in Renfrewshire.
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| 29 | * Using what you heard in slide 28, consider the reflective questions.
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| 30 | Education Scotland end slide |