# Analysis of Observation Tools: Learning Stories and Photographs Assignment Answer

Please choose two observation/assessment tools and analyse them with regard to: theoretical basis, appropriateness, ethical implications and implications or considerations for the teacher applying the tool.

CRITERIA

Score

1. Demonstrates understanding of the model/thec

2. Provides evidence to support the point (i.e., why appropriate); Reviews counter-arguments

3. Demonstrates understanding of ethical implication considerations for the teacher in applying the tc

4. Articulation of links between theory and practice

5. Overall quality of writing Strong writing style with clear ability to express thought excelent grammar, syntax, spelling, etc. Correct APA referencing.

## Answer

****Analysis of Observation Tools****

****Introduction****

In this assignment, two observation tools namely learning stories and photographs that are frequently used by early years' educators, have been analyzed. For analysis, the theoretical basis of these tools, the appropriateness of the tools as observation tools and ethical considerations for teachers while using the tools are considered.

****Analysis of tools****

****Theoretical basis****

****1 Learning stories:****

Educators or tutors while observing children in a care setting, learning stories are used as an observation tool where the tutor documents the activities in which a particular child or children engage in. The tutor details the type of activities, the behaviour of the observed child/ children for a specific amount of time adding their own interpretation of these activities and behaviours. Most of the times, the stories are accompanied by photographs or videos of the child in action. This technique as an observation tool was first propped by Margaret Carr who explained it as a pedagogical narration to a child’s behaviour and actions requiring the education to engage in observation, recognition, interpretation, documentation and reflection on the child’s learning behaviour. New Zealand early childhood curriculum TeWhāriki uses learning stories as an important tool, and currently, this is being used in Australias EYLF and UK’s and EYFS (Southcott, 2015).

****2. Photographs:****

Photography is another widely used observation as well as teaching tool preferred by early childhood educators. A photograph is a vibrant visualizing tool to not only observe many things but also can be used to convey many important aspects as the notion “pictures say a thousand words” is widely accepted as true. Educators use a picture to integrate theory with visualization to enhance the effectiveness of classroom learning. During observations, educations take pictures of students engaged in different tasks that can be later observed to interpret the child’s facial expression, their engagement with the activity (Edwards& Bird, (2017). Thus, these tools provide a window to the child's thoughts as it summarizes the child's experience in a perfect view. Children are often excited when educators take pictures of them in action, making it easier to interpret and reflect on children's behaviour. Teachers often let children use the cameras to click pictures, and such photographs are more informative as in such cases children behave more openly because instead of the tutor their peers are engaged in taking their photos (Fawcett & Watson, 2016). Pictures are used as an individual observation tool as well as accompanying observation tool with learning stories.

****3. Appropriateness****

The appropriateness of the chosen observation tools has been analyzed by identifying their benefits and drawbacks associated with being used as observation tools.

****Benefits****

***Learning stories:*** The benefits of learning stories reflect with its ease of access to children’s behaviours by both parents and tutors as these are written in story format. Learning stories are very effective in collecting examples of children’s activities and interest. As most learning stories are accompanied by pictures, these make them interesting to read and share with the parents. Learning stories also impact learning by identifying whether children have a sense of identity, enabling family engagement, interpretation and contribution, describing children's perspective and intensifying the noticing skills of the teacher (Zhang, 2017). Learning stories also helps in making the children feel that they are making a contribution, focuses on what children can do and integrates teaching, learning and assessment.

***Photographs:*** According to a study conducted by Einarsdottir (2007), two groups of children, one accompanied by a tutor to take photos and other were given access to use the camera themselves provided astonishing revelations on children’s behaviour. The first group behaved quite professionally while the second group showed more vibrant expressions. This study revealed that photographs could be quiet and efficient medium to express children’s emotions and can be used to teach children autonomy and responsibility. Photographs efficiently capture different expressions on children’s faces and body language in different situations and help in promoting inclusiveness in a culturally diverse classroom (Fawcett & Watson, 2016).

****Drawbacks****

***Learning stories:*** The appropriateness of learning stories is also met with much criticism. Critics of this method suggested that the quality and efficiency of learning story as an observation tool is highly dependent on the adult writing the story, their views, values and feelings. The interpretations are subjective, and it provides only a small opportunity to access a child's actual growth and learning because their effectiveness is also dependent on the frequency of writing the stories (Zhang, 2017). Moreover, such short portfolios do not necessarily cover the entire picture and most often does not include the child's or the parents' involvement.

***Photographs:*** Photographs could be restrictive in many ways as permission is required for taking photographs and for letting children use a camera. Moreover, photographs only capture the emotions showed in a particular moment (Fawcett & Watson, 2016).

## ****ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS****

The tutor who is using these tools has certain ethical implications. These are as follows.

1. Neither of the tools can be used on children without expressed permission from the parents and the supervisor of the care facility. The information gathered and interpreted needs to be accurate and trustworthy and devoid of any manipulation (Kennedy, Barblett  &Hydon, 2016).
2. The use of these tool for observation and should be consistent over a particular period in order to produce viable and reliable results. Valid results should be produced in a non-threatening and supportive matter.
3. Usage of these tools should consider the ECA codes of ethics and UN conventions on children’s rights (Barblett, Hydon & Kennedy, 2017).
4. A fair assessment should be produced using these tools, and during these observation activities and while using the tools, educators need to ensure ethical behaviour is maintained and respect towards children’s diverse cultural background is displayed in an appropriate and professional manner (Kennedy, Barblett & Hydon, 2016).
5. The primary legal responsibility of educators regarding ensuring the safety of children has been outlined by National Law and National Regulations while designing activities for children and using these observation tools.

****Conclusion****

From the above analysis, it can be concluded that learning stories and photographs are both widely accepted and effective observation tools despite much critics present. Educators must consider the ethical responsibilities while using these tools.