
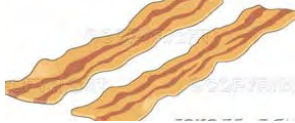





## DIAMOND'S DINER

**Key Focus:** Language Development

**Observation:** Ms. Diamond planned to use the dramatic play area as a restaurant. She created menus and order books for her dramatic play area. Here is what the menu looked like:

### DIAMOND'S DINER

<b>Ham</b>		\$4.00
<b>Bacon</b>		\$2.00
<b>Eggs</b>		\$3.00
<b>Toast</b>		\$1.00
<b>Milk</b>		\$1.00

On Monday she used a pad and pen in the dramatic play area to model for children how a server would act—greeting, handing out menus, and taking orders. She asked each child who came to the “restaurant” what they would like to order. She asked children questions such as, “Oh, I did not know we had that. Where does it say *toast* on the menu?”

Some children in her class knew some letters, so sometimes she asked them to help her spell (“ham,” for example), so she could write down their order.

Here are three ways that Ms. Diamond might collect information:

The first time she collected information, she pre-printed mailing labels with the following information:

<i>Name</i>	<i>Date</i>
While playing restaurant,	
<b>Pointed to words:</b> ham bacon egg toast milk	
<b>Pointed to pictures:</b> ham bacon egg toast milk	

She put the child's name and date on the label and then circled or added a word children said. At the end of the day she put the label in the child's folder.

The next day she decided she wanted to try a checklist. She created the following checklist:

Restaurant Activity					
	Number of words used to order	Complete sentences to order	Pointed to word	Pointed to picture	Named letters
Angelo	4, 3	y, n	ham, milk		m
Juan	0			#4	
Hillary	0, 0, 1	n		milk, milk	
Raquel				eggs	
Bill	0, 2	n		bacon	

She entered children's names as they came to the "restaurant" and noted what happened.

After modeling for children how to use a complete sentence to order food, Ms. Diamond decided to collect more information about what parts of sentences children said. However, she did not want to do a lot of writing, so she used large mailing labels and her computer to pre-print the labels that included the words she expected to hear children say:

<i>Name</i>	<i>Date</i>
While playing restaurant, said:	
I'd like to order some / a _____.	
I'd like to order some / a _____.	
I think I'll have some / more _____.	
I think I'll have some / more _____.	

She underlined the words that they said in each sentence and added the noun at the end. She only collected two of each child's sentences.

Reflecting on  
the  
Documentation:

*\*Participants may quickly shift from reflecting on the documentation to interpreting the observation or suggesting strategies for extending learning. Remind participants to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of the documentation technique.*

**Ask:** What are the advantages of each of these approaches?

**Sample Responses:**

The first label allows the teacher to quickly jot down what children point to while the second card allows the teacher to quickly jot down what children say.

By dividing the cards into two categories, it is easier for her to continue interacting with the children while taking observation notes. She could later transfer the responses she collects from children on the cards to a table.

The table allows Ms. Diamond to compare children easily as well as to quickly understand trends and patterns in what children in her class are able to do. It would be easy to put the checklist on her "order pad," but it might be difficult to capture all the information about children's responses and interact at the same time. The table would also need to be duplicated for each child's folder to examine individual progress over time. She might need to look at different things on different days (see alternative tables). The pre-printed labels make it easier to quickly note the words used unless the child says something like "I want\_\_," in which case she may need room to write in responses.

Interpretation of  
the  
Observation:

*\*Remind participants that in their interpretation they are looking for patterns, critical incidents, or errors. It is important to stick to the data. Reflection on the observation often leads to additional questions and hypotheses. You may want to follow-up with participants and discuss how they could answer questions posed or what additional information they need to collect.*

**Ask:** What can you learn about the children from the observations recorded in the checklist?

**Sample Responses:**

In an analysis by child:

- Angelo uses the most words and is the only child to use a complete sentence. He also named the letter M and he pointed to the word rather than the picture.
- Juan does not use any words to order and pointed to the number 4 rather than the word or the picture. Did he understand what they were playing? Had he ever been to a restaurant? Did he have trouble with the task due to limited English proficiency or a lack of background knowledge? Did he observe his peers ordering?
- Hillary eventually uses one word to order. One wonders if the word was "milk." She does not use complete sentences.

- Raquel only pointed to the picture.
- Bill uses two words to order the second time, and also points to bacon. Was he unsure of what to do the first time he was asked? Did he observe other children and follow what those children did?

Analysis by skill:

- For the most part, children in this class are using very few words to order.
- Very few children are using complete sentences.
- Only one child points to words (and he also names a letter).
- A few children point to pictures.

Relating Your Observation to the Child Outcomes Framework:

*\*Although participants can defend other interpretations, there should be general consensus that this observation demonstrates:*

**1B4 (Language Development/Speaking and Communicating):** Children progress towards speaking in sentences of increasing length and grammatical complexity. **2C1 (Literacy/Print Awareness and Concepts):** Children show increasing awareness of print in classroom, home, and community settings.

**5D1 (Creative Arts/Dramatic Play):** Children show growing creativity and imagination in using materials and in assuming different roles in dramatic play situations.

Next steps for large group instruction:

*\*Help participants make connections between what they learn from the assessment and the next steps they want to take in instruction. If suggestions for instruction extend activities to new areas of learning, ask participants to consider what aspects of children’s progress they would assess and how they would do so during those extension activities.*

**Ask:** What would you recommend that the teacher do next for the class as a whole?

*\*Responses will vary but might include:*

- Perhaps come up with a song, poem, or game that repeats “I’d like to order some \_\_\_\_” For example, ask the class to sit in a circle. The entire class can chant, “We’re going to a restaurant, a restaurant, a restaurant, we’re going to a restaurant and . . .” At the same time that the class is chanting, the class can pass around a menu. The teacher asks the child who has a menu, “What would [CHILD] like to order?” That child then has to respond, “I’d like some \_\_\_\_” or “I’d like to order\_\_\_\_.” This type of choral singing may help reinforce both full sentences and the script for ordering food.
- Have the children take the server role and prompt them to ask a question as a complete sentence. For example, “What would you like to eat?” “What do you want?”

Next steps for individualized

**Ask:** What would you recommend that the teacher do next for individual children?

instruction: \* Responses will vary but might include:

- Work with Hillary and Bill to begin using more words when they speak. Model longer utterances or expand what they say.
- Work with Juan and Raquel to begin saying words (even just one) to match the pictures they point to. Ask questions and model in their home language—pair them with a child who is using words to order.
- Work with Angelo to begin naming more letters and perhaps creating his own menu to tap into his writing skills.

Additional Notes: The teacher might also listen for what children say when she is not involved in their play. Perhaps place a tape recorder in the play area and listen to it later. Disadvantages of this approach include difficulty hearing children when there is lots of background noise and difficulty distinguishing children’s voices. An advantage is that the teacher can evaluate which children talk more when there is not an adult present, who takes a leadership role when the teacher is not present, and whether some of the children speak less with peers. In addition, the teacher can be documenting an observation in another area at the same time.

Here is an alternative checklist for examining children’s ability to identify words and pictures over time and in different contexts:

Pointing: Words or Pictures?

Date	1/18	1/20	3/10	4/1
Context	Restaurant Menu	Menu	“Brown Bear” book:* I see a _	Weather Chart
Angelo	W, W	W	W	W
Bill	P	P, P	P	W
Hillary	P, P	P, W	P	W
Juan	O, O	O	P, P	P
Raquel	P	W	P	P

W = word; P = picture; O = neither picture nor word (no pointing)

\**Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?* (Martin, Bill Jr., 1996).