

## *Improving the Quality of Experience Journals: Training Educational Psychology Students in Basic Qualitative Methodology*

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*This study evaluates the impact of teaching basic qualitative methodology to preservice teachers enrolled in an educational psychology course in the quality of observation journals. Preservice teachers enrolled in an educational psychology course requiring 45 hr of field experience were given qualitative methodological training as a part of the course content after students in a prior semester had shown weak journaling skills. In the first semester, students received general guidance on creating an “observational journal” required as a part of the course. In the second semester, students received additional qualitative methodological training. Analysis and comparison of student journals from the two semesters revealed that preservice teachers who received instruction in qualitative methods demonstrated a higher level of analysis, insight, and application as measured by the journal rubric. Surveys at the end of the course indicated that qualitative training helped the students to reflect on the field experience and appreciate the applicability of the theoretical concepts presented in the course.*

Field experiences and other authentic preparation opportunities are increasingly viewed as a vital part of the development of preservice teachers (Anderson, Barksdale, & Hite, 2005; Guyton & McIntyre, 1990). Often a part of courses such as educational psychology, these experiences ideally allow preservice teachers to observe excellent content-area teaching and professional skills (McIntyre, Byrd, & Foxx, 1996). Courses with field components frequently require preservice teachers to reflect and make connections across concepts by creating and maintaining a journal of their experience. One important question associated with teaching courses that incorporate field experiences and journaling relates to how to support preservice teachers to maximize the impact of time in the field and create high-quality reflective journals.

Courses that utilize field experiences typically pair lecture

meetings with time in the field to deliver content and to support and contextualize events in school settings. This format allows teacher educators to make links between theory and practice, as well as to help preservice teachers to understand events observed in the field (Varrati, Lavine, & Turner, 2009). Journals or records of classroom observations made by preservice teachers represent an attempt to facilitate reflection, application, and recall. These assignments range from a general “diary” requirement, asking only that the student chronicle how they spent their observational time, to the requirement that the student journal each week based on a given prompt provided by the instructor. Ideally, such journals add value to classroom observations and field experiences (Cheng & Tang, 2008). Without giving preservice teachers the tools to create high-quality reflections, the resulting journals can be flat one-dimensional balance sheets of activities viewed and time served, and they can

make connecting theory and practice difficult (Shuell, 1996).

The preservice teacher is often viewing the classroom from the “other side of the desk” for the first time. The mechanics of the classroom, technical, and logistical concerns, as well as apprehension in regard to their “position” in the classroom can be overwhelming (Perry & Savage-Davis, 2005). Without instruction in observational techniques and tools, the newness of the situation coupled with the requirements to create some type of record can result in superficial records that include little reflection or insight. Expecting preservice teachers new to the classroom to construct such meaning without preparing them to use beginning qualitative methodologies lessens the opportunity for application of theoretical material. At the same time, it is less likely that preservice teachers will generate substantial insights or reflections without the means to structure the time in the field (Boz & Boz, 2006).

In this study, I considered whether teaching basic qualitative methodology to preservice teachers enrolled in an educational psychology course improves the quality of observation journals. The desire to investigate the potential of this approach emerged after my initial semester teaching educational psychology and supervising the field work requirement. During that initial semester, I maintained the approach to the field experience component used in the previous semesters by other instructors. Preservice teachers enrolled in the course in the past had been required to submit a time sheet, documenting the

number of hours they spent in the classroom, and create a log or journal of the experience. No further instruction or detail had been given in the past in regard to the journal requirement. The resulting journals submitted at the end of my first semester were disappointing and showed little evidence of quality reflection or synthesis. At the end of the semester, it was clear to me that students were not applying the course concepts in the field and lacked the knowledge to record observations in a manner that would facilitate reflection.

The following semester, in an effort to improve the effectiveness of the field experience, I created a course unit that focused on teaching qualitative methodologies. Traditionally, undergraduates at the sophomore or junior level are not exposed to qualitative methodologies and research methods. This study proposes that educational psychology courses that require preservice teacher fieldwork should consider training students in qualitative methodology. Such training may not only improve course effectiveness but may also help them grow into reflective and insightful educators.

#### *Classroom Observation in Teacher Education*

Since the mid 1960s, educational research has explored the utility and nature of field experiences in teacher preparation. Early studies, including Ingle and Robinson (1965) and Hedberg (1979) argued that field experience is essential in the development of preservice teachers. More recent inquiry has focused on the impact field work has on performance in subsequent teacher preparation coursework (Denton, 1982;

Engle & Faux, 2006), as well as on teacher beliefs and practices (Wedman, Espinosa, & Laffey, 1999) and teacher “quality” (Darling-Hammond, Hammerness, Grossman, Rust, & Shulman, 2005; Goodman, 1985). Clift and Brady (2005) emphasized the importance of the structure and content of field-based experiences to preservice teacher learning, highlighting the importance of considering the structure and tools provided before field experiences begin. In light of this research, as well as increasingly prescriptive state requirements in regard to teacher preparation, universities and colleges increasingly incorporate and emphasize field experiences in teacher preparation programs.

Field experiences, however, exist in a variety of different forms, and approaches to their structure and requirements are far from homogenous. Mandating field experiences with coursework but not considering the different approaches or tools necessary to make those experiences productive may lead to disappointing results for both institutions of higher education and preservice teachers (Loughran, 2002; Roth, 1989; Sparkes, 1991).

#### *Approaches to Classroom Observations*

As noted by Anderson et al. (2005), field experiences are often presented to students by using either a *guided* (focused) approach or an *unguided* approach. A guided or focused approach requires students to write responses to specific topics or elements of the environment in which they are observing. In educational psychology courses, examples of such prompts include noting the amount of “wait-time” a teacher allows or tallying the number

of collaborative activities used in the classroom that is being observed each week (Bowman & McCormick, 2000; Wynn & Kromrey, 2000). These assignments are structured to facilitate reflection and application of course material while in the field setting. They represent an attempt to reinforcing the applicability of learning theory and other course concepts in the classroom.

Another type of guided observation involves the use of observer rating scales and instruments. Instruments for teacher observation such as the Classroom Observation Rating Schedule (CORS; Waxman, Rodriguez, Padron, & Knight, 1988), Flanders Interaction Analysis (1970), and the Florida Performance Measurement System (Florida Coalition, 1983) provide structures that can be used for classroom observation. Tools such as these can be useful for the experienced educator, but they are less useful for the preservice teacher because such observational instruments require training and practice for effective use. Using established teacher observation instruments would require substantial time spent training preservice teachers to use these tools. Additionally, preservice teachers enrolled in educational psychology courses often have limited experience with classroom structure, content, and pedagogy. Even with substantial training, preservice teachers may not have the knowledge base to use observational instruments effectively.

A second approach to field experiences—unguided observation—provides the student with no dictated focus or prompt. Although this approach allows the observer to shift focus quickly and to be flexible, it can result in an

untrained observer becoming overwhelmed by the environment. Because of lack of experience in the classroom, preservice teachers do not have the context, content, and experience to complete unguided observations efficiently (Nirula & Peskin, 2008). Englert and Sugai (1983) found indications that observers using a guided approach had an increased ability to use language successfully in observation. The preference toward recommending a guided approach is prevalent in the literature (Artzt & Armour-Thomas, 2002; Florio-Ruane, 1990; Mills, 1980). Preservice teachers in courses such as educational psychology are building conceptual and linguistic understandings, and the scaffolding provided by guided observation is critical.

Anderson et al. (2005) suggested that blending a guided and unguided approach to preservice teacher observations may provide the greatest benefit. Combining the two approaches has merit, especially in courses such as educational psychology. Educational psychology classes often serve students from a wide range of certification areas, and providing some guidance for journaling may help students to get the most out of field experiences. Because each student observes a different classroom, mandating what must be observed is not practical. If preservice teachers have the training to observe in their unique setting and understand the techniques and methods useful in making sound observations, these skills may help time in the classroom gain value. Two research questions guided this study:

1. Do preservice teachers enrolled in an educational psychology course who receive training in

qualitative methodology use that training in their observations and experience journals?

2. Do preservice teachers who receive training in qualitative methodology indicate at the completion of the course that the training was useful and may continue to be useful in the future?

## Method

### *Participants*

Participants consisted of two classes of 49 undergraduate students enrolled in a 3 credit educational psychology course at the regional campus of a large state university. There were 23 students the first semester and 26 students in the second semester, 42 females and 7 males, a ratio that is not remarkable in university education courses. Students ranged in age from 20 to 46, and most are juniors just beginning their coursework in education. The enrolled preservice teachers identified as ethnically diverse and included African American, Latino, Middle Eastern, and Southeast Asian students. The course material included learning theory, instructional design, cognition, memory, and beginning classroom management. During both semesters, students were simultaneously registered for a 1 credit (45 hr) field placement in a local school. As a part of that field placement, students were required to keep an observation journal with one entry for each visit to the classroom, as well as to write two short reflection papers. The two papers required students to document if and how they observed specific theories and principles discussed in class in the classroom. A field placement administrator placed all 49 students into classrooms according to their major and

minor fields, which included early childhood, elementary, middle, and secondary level.

### *Procedure*

#### *Semester 1*

During the first semester of the study, instruction on the experience journal duplicated that given by instructors in previous semesters. Students were placed in field experience positions in nearby schools, and they received general guidance in relation to the keeping and content of experience journals. I instructed students to maintain a journal for their experiences as observers in the classroom. They were required to make an entry in their journal at each visit, as well as to keep a time sheet that the classroom teacher signed after each observation. Students were not told what to write in their journals, and had no rubric or guidelines as to the content or length of the entries. Students submitted their journals to me twice during the semester to assure that they were being completed and were up to date. At the end of the semester, students submitted their journals, and the journals were evaluated by me, using a rubric (see Appendix).

#### *Semester 2*

During the second semester, students were placed in field experience positions in our schools, but they also received three lessons in qualitative methodology. I checked journals twice during the semester to ensure that the entries were being completed and were up to date. The three 60-min lessons in qualitative methodology involved selected readings in qualitative methodology, class discussion, and activities designed to develop qualitative

skills and give students the opportunity to practice making observations.

*Lesson 1.* Prior to the first qualitative lesson, students were required to complete selected chapters from Spradley's (1980) *Participant Observation*. Students read steps 2–4 of Spradley's (1980) "Research Sequence" (p. ix). These sections of the text discussed participant observation and types of participation, ethnographic records, and descriptive observations. In these sections, Spradley offered not only a discussion of the tension and challenges in participant observation but also examples of observations and observational records and notes.

The first class discussion began with a discussion of the reading and focused on what it means to observe and participate, and the class recorded participant observations. After a discussion of the reading, the class took part in an observational activity. In this activity, the class watched a 5-min video clip of a fifth-grade classroom and made observational notes about what they were seeing. After viewing the video, students were paired with a peer, and they compared their observational record with their partner. After peer discussions, the class discussed why observational notes vary across observers. Students noted that different people in the class noticed and focused on different aspects of the video. The result, they saw, was that everyone's notes were different, even though the video was consistent. For the next class meeting, students were assigned to complete a 15-min observation of an event or environment in which they were a participant.

*Lesson 2.* The focus of the second qualitative class discussion was the maintenance and organization of field notes. At the start of class, students were again paired with a peer and shared notes from their out-of-class observations. In addition, students were instructed to talk with each other about what they found challenging about participant observation and notetaking. The class discussed the difficulties and challenges that exist in participating and taking notes and the challenges specific to observing in classrooms. Students talked about concerns, including how to keep a journal while working with students; explaining to students why they had to write things down; and what to do if you were unable to make notes during a specific activity, such as working with clay or water. Next, students received an excerpt from Marshall and Rossman's (1999) *Designing Qualitative Research*, including an example of field notes (pp. 106–109). As a class, we discussed how using the two-column format might assist a participant observer and how it might have helped them in the 15-min assignment they conducted. After group discussion, students received readings for the next lesson, focusing on the ethics of qualitative research and participant observation. Students were assigned to read Spradley's (1980) discussion of ethics (pp. 20–25).

*Lesson 3.* The focus of the third session on qualitative methodology focused on the analysis of field notes. The lesson began with students reading excerpts from Strauss and Corbin (1990) focused on the process of data analyses, themes, and coding. The class discussed the process of analyzing observations, looking for themes, and labeling codes

to observational notes. Students brainstormed some likely codes or themes that might exist in an observation of a classroom, including relationships, student behavior, teacher actions, and classroom resources. Students then began an activity working in pairs to practice looking for themes and coding the observational notes they made after Lesson 1. After looking for themes, generating a few codes, and listing those codes as pairs, each pair shared the themes and codes they had focused on and the reasoning behind them.

After the exercise, the class discussed issues surrounding ethics, maintaining confidentiality and how researchers can protect those being observed in field notes and analysis. The discussion on ethics focused on how the researcher should behave in the field, as well as how to maintain confidentiality while still sharing findings. This discussion was solicited after the students attempted some observation and rudimentary analysis so that they would better understand how ethics might play a role in each stage of their observation.

The third lesson closed with a final discussion of the challenges of analyzing data, and how to manage notes from a large number of observations. Student questions included concerns about the type of notebook that should be used, how the names of children and teachers should be noted, and whether comments they might record about teachers would be used against them or negatively impact their grade in the course.

#### *Analysis*

The journals submitted by students at the end of each semester

provided the study data. Student comments were elicited at the end of both semesters in relation to the impact of the journaling process. A full rubric analysis was completed only on the final submission (see Appendix). I completed the final evaluation of journals from both semesters by using a 4-point rubric, measuring six standards: completeness, application, analysis, reflection, organization, and evaluation. Rubric value qualifiers were (a) *seldom or not evident*, (b) *developing*, (c) *frequently evident*, and (d) *consistently evident*. Students were given the rubric with the course syllabus at the start of the course in both semesters. Quantitative statistics were appropriate in a limited manner because the study was exploratory and sought to identify differences in formatting and content.

These characteristics provided a thematic foundation for examining the journal entries and considering not only the difference in scores through the rubrics but also how the journals from the two semesters differed in more subtle ways within the following categories: completeness, application, analysis, reflection, organization, and evaluation.

The rubric was created consistent with the process detailed by Hanny (2000) and Moskal and Leydens (2000). In creating the rubric, the objectives of the journaling assignment were detailed, and the criteria developed for scoring each of the six objectives. This allowed construct validity to be considered and to assure that all of the important criteria of the assignment were evaluated.

### Results

Study findings indicated substantial differences in the journaling experience of preservice teachers who received the lessons in qualitative methodology and techniques. Improvements in journaling quality, content, and length suggest that students developed a conceptual framework for a journal other than as a diary of an experience or time period. The journals submitted at the end of the second semester showed improved journal quality, focus, and reflection. These improvements allowed me to more effectively monitor preservice teacher learning and assess progress in acquiring the skills and knowledge associated with educational psychology.

Table 1. *Rubric Score Comparison*

	Semester 1: No qualitative training ( <i>n</i> = 23)	Semester 2: Qualitative training ( <i>n</i> = 26)
Organization	2.1	3.4
Completeness	2.0	3.2
Application	2.2	3.3
Analysis	2.9	3.3
Reflection	3.0	3.6
Evaluation	1.9	3.5
Total score	2.4	3.4

Although we would expect an increase in journal mean scores because of training, within that increase in mean is an increase in the richness of the observations, the quality of the entries, and the specific characteristics that changed in the journals are important to consider. Differences exist in the mean scores earned by students on the six factors the rubric evaluated. In comparing the means of the two semesters, the average journal score as evaluated by the rubric increased by 1.0 from 2.4 to 3.4. When the semesters were compared, the greatest was in the characteristic of evaluation. Student scores on the evaluation element of their journal increased from a mean of 1.9 to a mean of 3.5 in the second semester. The increase in evaluation in the journals indicates an increase in student judging, analyzing and comparing in their journal entries. Students in Semester 2 engaged in evaluation through their journals and applied course material critically to observations, often forming and defending opinions. The journal scores in the second semester also increased substantially in the categories of organization, completeness, and application.

I analyzed the journals submitted from both Semester 1 and Semester 2 to explore more fully the differences indicated in the rubric score. This also provided the opportunity to analyze the data, looking for evidence that contradicted indications that the qualitative training improved student journal. The journals in the second semester displayed three primary characteristics not evident in the journals from the first semester. The first way the journals differed was in organization and presentation. Although this is reflected in the rubric evaluation, additional substantial differences existed in this category that became evident in the qualitative analysis. Journals created in the second semester contained clear

sections, headings, and date/time identifiers that were not present or that were sporadic in the first semester. In addition, students in the second semester drew visual representation of the physical environment and created charts and tables for themselves to assist in the organization of their journal. For example, seven students drew maps of the classrooms, while two others created seating charts. In the journals from Semester 1, only one student included a graphic representation of the classroom. These organizational tools were not required, but they were self-imposed. Their authentic nature indicates that the importance of organization and structure in observational methodology was adopted by students.

A second way in which the journals differed was in increased ability to perspective take. Students in the second semester differentiated observation from opinion, and they created separate sections of reflective passages in which they ask rhetorical questions or stated opinions in regard to what they had observed. The ability to differentiate observations from researcher questions and thoughts represents a step for students who are seeking to become educators. Journals from the second semester illustrated that the concept of participant observation had impacted the students and that they were better able to differentiate observation, opinion, and inquiry. In Semester 2, 16 journals used a format that isolated personal thoughts and questions separately from the observation notes. One student commented, "Why does the teacher put them in different groups every day? Why aren't they in the same groups? The students don't like it." Interests and concerns indicated in this content highlight increased willingness to engage in perspectives and opinions. In Semester 1, this format was not evident, and only 3 of

the 23 journals included consistent (more than 5) personal notations by the student.

A third way in which journals in the second semester differed from the first was in the level of completeness. Journals from the first semester were perfunctory and provided largely a bare-bones account of student experience and observation. In the second week of journaling, a student included the following in her entry: “9:10 a.m. is reading groups. It was suppose to start at 9 a.m. Reading group time lasted 30 minutes. The teacher yelled at the groups to be quieter in their circles.” Journals completed in the second semester were not only longer and richer in accounts of observations, but student involvement in the journal process resulted in a personalization of the journal that is evidence of its meaning. In the second week of journaling, a student included the following in his entry: “This afternoon the lesson on fractions began five minutes late. The teacher began it late because two boys were fighting over something as they came into class, and instead of starting class he dealt with it right there. Later he had to get on them again, but he took them to back of the room which makes me wonder if that is good or not.” Both of these entries represent student observations at the start of presentation of content and behavioral issues; however, the student from Semester 2 expanded, reflected, and questioned what was observed.

The completeness of the journals was also evidenced by the way in which the students used the journals in class. Students in the second semester used their journals to assist them in recalling events, and they would flip through them during discussions to assist them in class discussion. This deep level of investment and involvement resulted in more complete journals, but it also allowed me to assess student learning

and experience in a deeper and more meaningful way. One student commented on the final class evaluation: “I think I want my journal back when you are done. It is where I put all my thoughts and ideas to use in the future, and it will help me remember what ideas I had and how I wanted to do it.”

At the end of both semesters, students completed a standard university course evaluation. After the second semester, students were asked to respond to an additional item on the course evaluation stating, “Do you think that the qualitative techniques and training you received as a part of this course will be useful for you as a teacher?” Of the 26 students enrolled in the second semester, 24 (92%) responded that they did feel qualitative training would be useful in the classroom in the future. Nine students wrote additional comments in relation to the qualitative training they received, all of which were positive. One student commented, “Knowing what I know helps me make connections and write my thoughts in an orderly manner.” Another student stated, “I look at things differently now and understand how to make the most of what I see in the classroom”.

### Discussion

Although the study is limited because of its size and scope, perhaps it can serve to highlight the possible utility of exposure to qualitative methodology at the early undergraduate level, as well as the importance of imbedding and reinforcing skills necessary to make field work more meaningful (Cheng & Tang, 2008; Varrati et al., 2009). By exposing students to qualitative methodology in educational psychology courses designed for preservice teachers, students may get more out of the field experiences that has become such an integral part of teacher education (Anderson et al., 2005). The limited nature of the study

does not allow for the assertion that this experience impacted substantially all students' observational skills and theoretical knowledge; however, this study does suggest that qualitative research skills may help to maximize student experiences as classroom participants. By offering some qualitative training, students are more likely to create quality reflections in regard to what they observe in the classroom, and transfer those reflections in an organized way to their journal and to classroom discussion (Boz & Boz, 2006).

This study also sheds some light on the question in regard to the use of guided or unguided approaches to journaling assignments. Qualitative training creates an opportunity to give preservice teachers the context that Nirula and Peskin (2008) suggested is necessary to complete unguided observations effectively. If students are offered qualitative training, then the guided approach recommended in the literature (Artzt & Armour-Thomas, 2002; Englert & Sugai, 1983; Florio-Ruane, 1990; Mills, 1980) may be viewed as less necessary, and instead the "blended" approach (Anderson et al., 2005) could become more practical and productive.

Training students in basic qualitative skills gave students more tools with which to synthesize their field experiences; however, a variety of other activities and exercises incorporating the journal might further increase the value of time in the field. This study illustrated that the increased quality of the journals also made them more useful as tools for reflection and discussion. Additional activities that use the improved journals might serve to heighten this impact. For example, incorporating peer or small group discussion as a part of lecture meetings during which students are asked to use their journal to reflect on a topic with a

peer or small group could magnify the impact of field observations. Students would benefit from the experiences of others, and in the course of sharing the findings documented in their journal, they might clarify and reflect on an even deeper level. By encouraging discussions and reflections that require students to use the journal, we both emphasize the value of their observations and increase the likelihood they will make valuable connections across the content we teach (Shuell, 1996).

The study is limited by both the number of students participating and the lack of multiple raters. Future studies should use multiple raters to build the case for validity. In addition, this study was limited in the number of lessons and the amount of time spent on qualitative exposure. Future exploration of this topic might include the effectiveness of including qualitative method training throughout teacher education programs or courses, as well as exploring the long-term attitudes or utility this training has for students.

This study points out that building strong observational skills in preservice teachers is not the only benefit in offering undergraduate students training in qualitative methodology. An additional implication from this study is that by providing some qualitative training and improving journal quality, I was more able to be responsive to student experiences in the field. Students in Semester 2 wrote expanded entries and engaged in more reflection and questioning. The result was richer discussion and an increase in my ability to comment and contextualize student experiences. If it is important to have students observe excellent teaching, it is also equally important to maximize our ability to use that field experience in our courses to training teachers (McIntyre et al., 1996).

Weaving field experiences into course requirements and staying connected to students in the field are important elements in connecting theory to practice. This study suggests that exposure to qualitative methods resulted in more complete and reflective journals, and it helped me to relate student observations to theory and practice as well as maximize the impact of classroom observations (Shuell, 1996).

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## Appendix: Field Experience Journal Rubric

	Seldom/not evident 1	Developing 2	Frequently evident 3	Consistently evident 4	Score
Completeness	Journal is not complete or does not correspond with time sheet submitted	Journal corresponds with time sheet and has entries for each observation	Journal corresponds with time sheet and has an entry for most observations	Journal corresponds with time sheet and has substantial entries for each observation	
Application	Little or no evidence of the application of class material in journal content	Some evidence of the application of class material in journal content	Substantial evidence of the application of class material in journal content	Frequent and consistent evidence of the application of class material in journal content	
Analysis	Little or no evidence of analysis of classroom events, teaching, and learning	Some evidence of analysis of classroom events, teaching, and learning	Substantial evidence of analysis of classroom events, teaching, and learning	Journal contains consistent evidence of analysis of classroom events, teaching, and learning	
Reflection	Little or no evidence of reflection; Student does not question meaning, ethics, context, and influence of what is observed	Some evidence of reflection; Some attempt to question meaning, ethics, context, and influence of what is observed	Substantial evidence of reflection; Student does often question meaning, ethics, context, and influence of what is observed	Consistent evidence of reflection; Student consistently questions meaning, ethics, context, and influence of what is observed in an exceptional manner	
Organization	Little or no organization exists in journal; Journal is not orderly, labeled, or in any particular order	Some organization exists in journal; Journal is orderly in some areas, has some labels, and has a detectable order particular order	Substantial organization exists in journal; Journal is orderly in most areas, has many day/time/names labeled, and is clearly structured	Consistent organization exists in journal; Journal is very orderly, days/times/names are labeled, and the structure/layout adds to the observational notes	
Evaluation	Little or no evidence of evaluation: Few or no attempts to use course knowledge to judge, appraise, or draw conclusions	Some evidence of evaluation: Some attempts to use course knowledge to judge, appraise, or draw conclusions	Substantial evidence of evaluation: field notes show some attempts to use course knowledge to judge, appraise, or draw conclusions	Consistent evidence of evaluation; Student regularly used observation and course knowledge to judge, appraise, or draw conclusions	

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Laura Reynolds-Keefer is an assistant professor of education at the University of Michigan-Dearborn School of Education. Her research interests include classroom assessment and testing, research methodologies in teacher training, teacher application of learning theory, program evaluation, and play. She is the author of several articles relating to classroom assessment instruments and teacher training methodologies. She teaches graduate courses in assessment and research methods, as well as undergraduate courses in educational psychology.

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