



Universidad
de Alcalá



Centro Universitario
Cardenal Cisneros

STUDY GUIDE

Pedagogical diagnosis and observation techniques in the infant classroom

Degree in Infant Teacher Training
Bilingual program
C.U. Cardenal Cisneros
Universidad de Alcalá

Academic year 2025-2026

1st Year – 2nd Term

STUDY GUIDE

Name of subject:	Pedagogical Diagnosis and Observation Techniques in the Infant Classroom
Code:	510005
Studies:	Degree in Infant Teacher Training. Bilingual program.
Department and area of knowledge:	DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Character:	BASIC TRAINING
ECTS:	6
Year and term:	1st year, 2nd term
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Language:	English

1. INTRODUCTION

Relationship between this and other subjects

The present subject, *Pedagogical Diagnosis and Observation Techniques in the Infant Classroom*, belongs to the content area of Education and is complemented with the remaining subjects that constitute the latter content area, such as Didactics or *Early Intervention: Fundamentals and Resources*. It is also conceptually related to subjects from other areas, such as *Developmental Psychology* or *Psychological Fundamentals of Attention to Diversity*, both from the area of Psychology.

Importance of this subject within the Degree

Assessment forms part of the process of teaching and learning and allows us to gather information about all the aspects that are involved in such process. Based upon this information and depending on the aims the teacher might be working towards, different conclusions can be drawn in order to make decisions that should help improve the teaching/learning process, adjusting our intervention and likewise improving the results of the educational activity.

The prescriptive Curriculum specifies what should be assessed by determining aims and assessment criteria, and delivers some guidelines as to the requirements it should meet, but does not establish how such assessment should be carried out in order to be reliable and

systematic. The two most utilised techniques to gather information in Infant education are observation and interview. They can provide the teacher with very useful information and they must therefore be known and commanded so as to constitute a useful tool.

Use of the English language in the subject and artificial intelligence tools

Since bilingual education became popular in Spain, the learning of English as a Foreign Language has evolved dramatically from being a subject in the school curriculum to be considered a communication tool to create meaning in most content areas. This shift must be considered in the training of the future Infant Education teachers.

For the realization of any academic work, it is important to consult the faculty about the permitted use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools. If it is not expressly stated in the guide or instructions of the specific activity or practice, it is understood that AI should not be used in any case. It is reminded that the improper use of these technologies, such as the generation of work without express authorization, may constitute academic fraud. Therefore, it is recommended to review the university regulations regarding the use of AI, always act responsibly and transparently in the learning process, and consult with the faculty for any doubts in this regard.

Prerequisites

The student should have passed the Bilingual route entry exam, which would certify an A2 level according to the Common European Framework of Reference¹.

2. COMPETENCES

Generic competences:

- Acquire and understand the necessary knowledge for the different areas of study that confirm the Degree, in order to receive the necessary qualification as an Infant Teacher. (CT4)
- To know how to apply that knowledge to the job in a professional manner, demonstrating a proficiency of the skills through the design and defence of arguments and problem solving in such areas. (CT5)
- To know the aims, contents and assessment criteria in Infant Education. (CP1)
- To know the organisation of Infant Schools and the range of actions its functioning comprises. To acknowledge that teaching must be improved and adapted to scientific, pedagogical and social changes throughout life. (CP9)
- To act as orienteers to parents in the 0-6 period, and be socially proficient when relating to the family of each student and with the whole set of families. (CP10)
- To reflect upon the practices that take place in the classroom in order to innovate and improve teaching. To acquire habits and skills for independent and cooperative learning and to promote it in students. (CP11)

¹ More information can be found here:
http://www.coe.int/T/DG4/Portfolio/?L=E&M=/main_pages/levels.html

Specific competences:

1. Understand the educational and learning processes in the 0-6 period, in the family, social and school context. (C1)
2. To acquire the necessary resources in order to enhance educational integration of students with learning difficulties (C5).
3. To understand that the daily dynamics in Infant Education is changeable depending on the student, group and situation, and to develop a flexible role as a teacher (C9).
4. To understand that systematic observation is a basic instrument to be able to reflect upon practice, as well as to contribute to innovation and improvement in Infant Education (C12).
5. To respond to the children's needs and transmit a safe, calm and affectionate atmosphere (C13).

3. CONTENTS

Modules	Units	Hours / lessons
Introduction to the subject		1 hour
I. Introduction	1. Assessment as a basic tool for innovation and improvement in Infant Education.	11 hours
II. Information gathering	2. Techniques for information gathering (I): <i>observation I. Classroom observation.</i>	29 hours
	3. Techniques for information gathering (I): <i>observation II. Teaching skills for observation.</i>	
	4. Techniques for information gathering (II): Interview and parent-teacher conference	
III. Information analysis and report	5. Techniques for data analysis and assessment reports.	7 hours
TOTAL:		48 hours

4. TEACHING-LEARNING METHODOLOGY. FORMATIVE ACTIVITIES

4.1. Credit distribution

Lessons will be structured throughout the term in three different ways:

1. **Theoretical lessons** or lectures (50 students, 30 hours)

These will rely on the teacher's explanations and the necessary resources, as well as on activities such as communication-based work (pair or group discussions), information searching, question answering based on different texts, and others, all aimed at consolidating the theoretical contents. Based upon these activities, the student will develop each of the units' notes.

The work here will mainly be done individually and in small- to medium-sized groups.

2. **Practical lessons** (25 students, 15 hours)

These will consist of activities such as problem solving, analysis of legal documents or other materials, film viewing and commenting, resource creation or adaptation, and the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) for different purposes. During these sessions the work will be done individually, in pairs and small- to medium-sized groups.

3. **Seminars** (12 students, 3 hours).

The seminars will consist of case studies, cooperative group work, tutorial sessions and the final project's oral presentations. The work here will be done in the groupings previously fixed for the development of the final project.

Apart from the above detailed 48 hours of lesson attendance, the student must also complete 102 hours of independent work at home, which will include finishing activities from class, preparing presentations, reading articles or other texts, and revising the subject contents. Questions will be answered during tutorial hours.

Total number of hours (6 ECTS): 150	
Number of hours of classroom attendance: 50	30 hours of theoretical lessons 15 hours of practical lessons 3 hours of seminars 2 hours of assessment tasks
Number of hours of independent learning: 100	100 hours of independent learning

4.2. Methodological strategies, materials and resources

The teaching-learning methodology will be based on the CLIL (*Content and Language Integrated Learning*) approach, whose main aim is to create a communicative atmosphere and to involve the students actively in high-order thinking processes. Thus, students will be improving their competence in the English language and, at the same time, learning the subject contents. In addition, they will be helped to reflect upon the “mechanics” of this approach, enabling them to transfer their learning experience to their teaching practice.

The contents will therefore be worked through the English language, and methodology will vary according to the type of grouping but will always be active and require the student’s participation. The teacher will act as a facilitator of learning, providing resources and explanations, whilst the assistant teacher will support the linguistic area and enhance cooperative work.

During the development of the unit, students will be provided with various *handouts* in order to complete the activities through which the unit contents will be worked. All these activities, once completed, will compose the student’s *workbook*. Throughout the whole term, students will have access to the *library*, to the *digital interactive whiteboard* in the classroom and to several other *Information and Communication Technologies* (ICT) in order to develop their work and carry out theoretical and practical activities. Additionally, the *on-line platform* will allow them to contact the teacher, receive additional material and hand in their activities once they have been completed.

Teaching method	Organisational mode							
	Lecture	Case study	Problem solving	Problem-based learning	Project-oriented learning	Cooperative learning	Learning contract	Total
Theoretical lessons	15	2	5	0	0	8	2	30
Seminars	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	3
Practical lessons	0	7	1	6	0	0	0	15
Office hours	2	0	1	0	0	1	0	4
Group work and revisión	0	5	5	5	10	10	10	45
Independet / individual work and revisión	0	5	8	5	10	10	15	53
Total	17	21	20	16	20	29	27	150

5. ASSESSMENT: assessment criteria, report criteria and assessment procedures

According to the European Commission of Education and Training², ECTS credits are based on the workload the student has to do in order to achieve the expected learning outcomes. This includes theoretical and practical lessons, seminars, projects, activities, as well as the time dedicated to independent study and exams.

Assessment criteria

The following table shows the relationship between specific competences and assessment criteria of the subject.

Specific Competences	Assessment criteria
To understand the educational and learning processes in the 0-6 period, in the family, social and school context. (C1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The student shows an adequate understanding of a series of specific concepts related to the subject, such as valuation, diagnosis, intervention, observation, scale, standard, etc. • The student identifies similarities and differences among the different types of evaluation that exist and that take place at school and in the classroom.
To acquire the necessary resources in order to enhance educational integration of students with learning difficulties. (C5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The student identifies similarities and differences among the different types of evaluation that exist and that take place at school and in the classroom.
To understand that the daily dynamics in Infant Education is changeable depending on the student, group and situation, and to develop a flexible role as a teacher. (C9)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The student demonstrates an understanding of the need to carry out a continuous and flexible assessment which will always allow to integrate the student in the most normalizing schooling mode and to provide the most normalizing support.
To understand that systematic observation is a basic instrument to be able to reflect upon practice, as well as to contribute to innovation and improvement in Infant Education. (C12)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The student makes correct designs of different assessment instruments: observation scales, classroom diaries, control lists, etc. • The student shows a sufficient understanding of and familiarity with the ways different standardized tests work. • The student designs and creates several types of evaluation reports in a correct and clear manner.
To respond to the children's needs and transmit a safe, calm and affectionate atmosphere. (C13)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The student expresses the results of systematic observation in positive terms, referring to specific conducts and from an optimistic perspective.

Report criteria:

The report criteria define, according to the degree of achievement of the established assessment criteria, the mark that corresponds to the student.

Assessment criterion	Weight (%)
The student shows an adequate understanding of a series of specific concepts related to the subject, such as: evaluation, diagnosis, intervention, observation, scale, standard, etc.	15
The student identifies similarities and differences among the different types of evaluation that exist and that take place at school and in the classroom.	15
The student demonstrates an understanding of the need to carry out a continuous and flexible assessment which will always allow to integrate the student in the most normalising schooling mode and to provide the most normalising support.	15
The student makes creative and correct designs of different assessment instruments: observation scales, classroom diaries, control lists, etc.	15
The student shows a sufficient understanding of and familiarity with the ways different standardised tests work.	10
The student designs and creates several types of evaluation reports in a correct and clear manner.	15
The student expresses the results of systematic observation in positive terms, referring to specific conducts and from an optimistic perspective.	15
TOTAL	100%

The learning outcomes included in the degree verification report for the bachelor's degree in early childhood education corresponding to this subject are:

Learning Outcomes: Pedagogical Diagnosis and Observation Techniques in the Infant Classroom	Code
Students must be able to master interpersonal and communication skills that convey security, calm, and affection, recognizing that daily interaction in the classroom and the relationship with families are privileged spaces for identifying the needs of children.	RAE3
Students must demonstrate that they master strategies to identify difficulties in students and propose improvement responses in classroom action and tutorial action with families.	RAE5

Assessment system and procedures:

- The subject has an ordinary sitting in May and an extraordinary one in June.
- The ordinary sitting (May) will be developed under the continuous assessment mode. This mode will take into account, in both sittings, the following elements:
 - Attendance to class.
 - Giving in individual activities.
 - Giving in practical activities.
 - Giving in the final personal project derived from seminars.
 - Sitting the exam.
- Characteristics of the **ordinary sitting**:
 - It will be developed under the **continuous assessment** mode.

- o Requirements of the continuous assessment mode:
 - Giving in individual and group activities (at least 80%) through the procedure indicated by the teacher and at the exact date.
 - Whenever the student cannot attend a lesson and/or does not give in an activity, it should be due to a justified cause (illness, justified by Doctor's note, accident, family problem, etc.). In any case, the justification of the absence will allow the student to not miss the opportunity of continuous assessment but does not imply that the teacher should allow them to recover the activity nor take it out of deadline.
 - o If the student does not meet these requirements, they will not be able to sit the exam, and will appear on the official register as "Not present" (according to article 9.5. of the assessment regulations of UAH), having therefore to attend the extraordinary sitting.
 - **Final assessment** in the ordinary sitting:
 - o If a student cannot follow the continuous assessment mode in the ordinary sitting, they shall apply for the final assessment mode, during the first two weeks of lessons, to the subject teacher, who will indicate their favourable or unfavourable judgement and transfer the application form to the University Head Teacher. Reasons for a final assessment may be face-to-face work placements, work obligations, family commitments, a disability or health problems.
 - o Students who have followed continuous assessment, but fail it, will not be able to use this final assessment mode in the ordinary sitting.
4. Characteristics of the **extraordinary sitting**:
- **Final assessment:**
 - o The final assessment is the only available mode in the extraordinary sitting.
 - o It is compulsory for the following students:
 - Those who have not met the requirements for continuous assessment in the ordinary sitting, due to not handing in activities and/or not attending lessons.
 - Those who have reached the requirements for continuous assessment (in terms of attendance to lessons and handing in of activities) but who have not sat, or have failed, the exam of the ordinary sitting
 - Those who applied for final assessment at the beginning of the course but did not sit the final exam in the ordinary sitting.
5. Whichever is the mode of assessment (continuous or final), in order to pass this subject, it is essential to demonstrate the development of **all competences** associated to the subject, at least in a degree of **50%**, through the **different assessment tools** that are indicated in this guide.
6. Considerations on the exam and grade revision:
- The aim of revising the student's mark is to give them feedback for the improvement of their learning, not to obtain a higher mark.
 - If a mistake in the mark is detected during the exam revision, the mark may increase but it may also decrease.
 - If plagiarism is detected, the mark will be zero, with no possibility of recovery, and will affect both the student who committed the plagiarism and the student who was supposedly affected by it.
 - Once the practical, theoretical and seminar marks are published on the on-line platform, the student must revise them and will have one week to inform the teacher about any disconformity. After this deadline there will be no modifications of the mark.
 - The official final revision will be dedicated to revising the exam and/or the final mark, not any other marks on previous activities. It will be face-to-face on the date and time established by the teacher.

7. For more information on the regulations on assessment, see the following link:
<https://www.uah.es/export/sites/uah/es/conoce-la-uah/organizacion-y-gobierno/galleries/Galeria-Secretaria-General/Normativa-Evaluacion-Aprendizajes.pdf>
8. The relative weights of the assessment instruments assigned to each assessment criterion are detailed below.

Continuous assesment. Ordinary and extraordinary sittings:

Assessment instrument	Attendance and Class Activities	Group practical work	Seminars	Exam	WEIGHT (%)
Assessment criterion					
The student shows an adequate understanding of a series of specific concepts related to the subject, such as: evaluation, diagnosis, intervention, observation, scale, standard, etc.	X	X	X	X	15
The student identifies similarities and differences among the different types of evaluation that exist and that take place at school and in the classroom.	X	X	X	X	15
The student demonstrates an understanding of the need to carry out a continuous and flexible assessment which will always allow to integrate the student in the most normalizing schooling mode and to provide the most normalizing support.	X			X	15
The student makes correct designs of different assessment instruments: observation scales, classroom diaries, control lists, etc.	X	X	X	X	15
The student shows a sufficient understanding of and familiarity with the ways different standardized tests work	X	X		X	10
The student designs and creates several types of evaluation reports in a correct and clear manner.	X	X			15
The student expresses the results of systematic observation in positive terms, referring to specific conducts and from an optimistic perspective.	X	X	X		15
TOTAL	15	30	15	40	100

*50% is required in each assessment criteria.

*80% of assistance is mandatory

Final assessment. Ordinary and extraordinary sittings:

Assessment instrument	Project	Exam	PONDERACIÓN (%)
Assessment Criteria			
The student shows an adequate understanding of a series of specific concepts related to the subject, such as evaluation, diagnosis, intervention, observation, scale, standard, etc.		X	15
The student identifies similarities and differences among the different types of evaluation that exist and that take place at school and in the classroom.		X	15
The student demonstrates an understanding of the need to carry out a continuous and flexible assessment which will always allow to integrate the student in the most normalizing schooling mode and to provide the most normalizing support.	x	X	15
The student makes correct designs of different assessment instruments: observation scales, classroom diaries, control lists, etc.	x	X	15
The student shows a sufficient understanding of and familiarity with the ways different standardized tests work	x	X	10
The student designs and creates several types of evaluation reports in a correct and clear manner.	x	X	15
The student expresses the results of systematic observation in positive terms, referring to specific conducts and from an optimistic perspective.	x		15
TOTAL	20	80	100

*50% is required in each assessment criteria.

During all assessment tasks, the guidelines established in the University of Alcalá Coexistence Regulations must be followed, as well as the possible implications of irregularities committed during those tasks, including the consequences for committing academic fraud, according to the Disciplinary Regulations for Students of the University of Alcalá.

The teaching-learning methodology and the evaluation process will be adjusted, when necessary, with the guidance of the CUCC Guidance Service and/or the Unit of Attention to Diversity of the UAH to apply curricular adaptations to students with specific needs, upon delivery of documentation certifying such need.

6. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Basic bibliography

The following references will constitute the basic bibliography for the course, and more specific textbooks or journal articles will be provided throughout the term for each of the syllabus units.

In English:

Butatko, D. & Daehler, M. (2001). *Child Development. A Thematic Approach*(4th Ed.). Houghton Mifflin Company.

The trainee teacher must know the normal pattern of child development in order to have a general frame of reference with which to compare the observed development of the children he/she will encounter in the future, and thus to be able to detect anomalies and cater for that child's needs. This book will be helpful for the preparation of the second practical lesson (timeline) and for that of the main unit related to information gathering: observation. Very user-friendly, with diagrams, photographs, charts and an attractive format overall, also includes prompts to reflect upon different issues and follow-up activities.

Coyle, D., Hood, P. and Marsh, D. (2010). *CLIL*. Cambridge, CUP.

An essential reference book to understand the origins and development of the CLIL approach in Europe. It contains both theoretical and practical information.

Gronlund, G. & James, M. (2005). *Focused Observations. How to Observe Children for Assessment and Curriculum Planning*. Redleaf Press.

This book is designed to help the student learn to observe children and document their development in a systematic, purposeful way that gives them a complete picture of each child's progress and supports curriculum planning. It is very user-friendly, and answers questions such as: "Why should I use observation in my classroom?" / "How is effective observation done?" / "How can my observation help with child assessment?"

Hobart, C. & Frankel, J. (2004). *A practical guide to child observation and assessment*. Nelson Thornes.

This book provides a full-colour guide that will continue to help teachers to improve their skills in observing children and writing up these observations. It includes full explanations of how and why we observe children; observation examples, including babies and Infant-age children, it covers the different observation methods and techniques, with photographs, charts, graphs, and diagrams to illustrate the information, as well as with activities to help consolidate the contents. Also very user-friendly.

Pianta, R., LaParo, K. & Hamre, B. (2008). *Classroom Assessment Scoring System (Pre-K Manual)*

This book is loaded with details about: Effective teacher-child interactions within each CLASS dimension, CLASS observation and scoring protocols, and technical information about how the CLASS measure was developed and refined.

Child Care Initiative Project (2018). *Observation, Screening, Assessment, & Documentation*.

www.rnetwork.org/observation_screening_assessment_documentation.

In Spanish:

Blasi, M. (2011). *Documentar la vida de los niños y las niñas en la escuela* (Temas de infancia). Octaedro
Cuatro conferencias que cuentan la importancia del proceso de documentación en niños y niñas de 0 a 6 años.

Casado, A.; Nápoles, M^ªD. y Pérez, C.A. (2010). *Casos prácticos de diagnóstico pedagógico*. Ediciones de Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha.

This book intends to serve as a guide for educational agents who work with children with learning difficulties or different kinds of developmental disorders. It first provides a theoretical basis, introducing the concept of pedagogical diagnosis (useful for unit 1) and describing the assessment report (approached in unit 5), and later analyses various case studies from a practical point of view. The cases that will be most interesting for the reader in the context of the present subject are number 5 (developmental retard), 11 (curricular retard) and 12 (learning difficulties).

Coll, C.; Martín, E. y Onrubia, J. (2001). La evaluación del aprendizaje escolar: dimensiones psicológicas, pedagógicas y sociales. En Coll, C.; Palacios, J. y Marchesi, Á. (Comps.). *Desarrollo Psicológico y Educación. 2. Psicología de la Educación Escolar*. Alianza Editorial. (Cap. 22: pp.549-572.)

Centrándose en el sistema educativo español, este capítulo es una herramienta valiosa para el primer tema de la asignatura, ya que es un texto introductorio que le dará al estudiante un esquema general de las principales cuestiones relativas a la evaluación.

Coll, C.; Martín, E. & Onrubia, J. (2001). “La evaluación del aprendizaje escolar: dimensiones psicológicas, pedagógicas y sociales”. In Coll, C.; Palacios, J. y Marchesi, Á. (Comps.): *Desarrollo Psicológico y Educación. 2. Psicología de la Educación Escolar*. Alianza Editorial. (Cap. 22: pp.549-572.)

Focusing on the Spanish educational system, this chapter is a valuable tool for the first unit of the subject, as an introductory text that will give the student a general outline of the main issues regarding assessment.

Fernández-Ballesteros, R. (1992). *Introducción a la evaluación psicológica. Tomos I y II*. Pirámide.

This well-known author from the field of Psychology introduces the reader in assessment of intelligence, motivation, learning style, learning potential and many other abilities and skills that may interest the teacher and will facilitate coordination among educational agents.

García Nieto, N. (1995). El diagnóstico pedagógico en Educación Infantil. *Revista complutense de educación*, Vol. 6, N^º 1, pp. 73-100.

This article may be especially useful for the student in the preparation of the first unit of the subject. It analyses the concept of pedagogical diagnosis, describing its aims and characteristics. It then highlights the main risk factors in Infant Education, describes the different developmental areas that must be taken into account when assessing, and includes a list and characterisation of well-known and useful diagnostic tests.

Padilla, M.T. (2002). *Técnicas e instrumentos para el diagnóstico y la evaluación educativa*. Editorial CCS.

In this book, the main basic concepts of diagnosis and assessment are applied to education. A very useful guide for teachers and pedagogy, psychopedagogy and educational staff. As far as this subject is concerned, it will be useful for the second contents section (information gathering).

Torroba Arroyo, I (1991). La observación como técnica de evaluación en la etapa de educación infantil. *Revista Complutense de Educación*, Vol. 2 (2), pp. 297-308. Edit. Univ. Complutense.

This article analyses observation as a tool for assessment in Infant education, providing the reader with information about the necessary criteria to gather, measure and transmit information, and giving very valuable guidelines as to how to design a systematic observational programme. It will be useful for the second unit of the syllabus.

Note: others will be provided by teacher through campus virtual.