

## Module 2

### *Research Connections* and Early Childhood Development

#### Worksheet 2.1: Child Development Case Study—Observation Methods

Your Name \_\_\_\_\_ Course \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

In your case study, you are using first-hand observations of one or more young children, which might include children across a range of ages, including young children and/or school-age children, depending on your program and interest. To learn more about how researchers use observation, in this activity you will search the *Research Connections* collection for examples of different observation methods. Please follow the steps below, and either bring the worksheet to class or include in your case study report.

1. Begin by performing your initial search. Type in either "Observation" or "Child Observations." Note how many results came up.	How many altogether?  How many results are "Fact Sheets & Briefs"?
2. From these, find at least one resource of interest to you—either a "fact sheet" or a resource that is available in full-text through your institution's library. Your instructor will tell you how to download these.	Name of resource(s) you are downloading:  Brief description and comment on why this interested you.
3. Comment on what you can learn from seeing how researchers do child observations—as this may relate to your case study observations. What is similar and what is different about what you are doing?	Comment and comparison:

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#### Worksheet 2.2: Risk Factors

Your Name \_\_\_\_\_ Course \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Risk Factor to Investigate:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Back-up** (if you are not successful in finding information on your first risk factor) \_\_\_\_\_

As discussed in class, your team will be responsible for learning more about a specific risk factor in children's development. Your main source of information will be the *Research Connections* web site, [www.researchconnections.org](http://www.researchconnections.org).

<p>1. Begin by doing a search from the home page using your assigned risk factor—in quotation marks--as the search term. Briefly describe the results. Consider how your risk factor might be relevant over time. For example, does the research address how some early risk factors may influence development in the school-age years?</p>	<p>How many resources? How many were "Reports &amp; Papers"? How many were published in the last year?</p>
<p>2. Try to refine your search or filter the results, using some of the suggestions discussed in class or in the <i>Research Connections</i> "Guide to Searching the Collection." Note: if you aren't feeling successful in searching for resources on this risk factor, try your back-up.</p>	<p>What did you do to refine the search term or to filter/narrow the results? (New term? Combination of two terms? Which filter or filters? Etc?)  What were the results? (fewer/more relevant resources, etc.)</p>

3. Download ONE resource that you found (it may be a Fact Sheet/Brief or some other kind of resource).  
Bring to class.

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#### Worksheet 2.3: Full-Text Resources

Your Name \_\_\_\_\_ Course \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Abstracts and summaries are often useful, but for in-depth knowledge it is best to have complete (that is, "full-text") versions of the research in which you are most interested. As your instructor has told you, *Research Connections* provides several ways to download full-text versions of the resources you find through your searches—(a) directly through *Research Connections*, from the original source (often a government agency), (c) from your institution's e-library, or (d) from a source such as Google Scholar. In this activity you will become familiar with how to identify full-text resources and download these through your institution's library system (or obtain a hard copy if necessary).

**Child Development Search Term or Topic** (your instructor will provide): \_\_\_\_\_

Now please follow the steps below:

1. Begin by doing a search from the home page using your assigned child development search term or topic.	How many resources? How many were from the past year?
2. From this list, find 1 resource that especially interests you and that is available in full text in one of the 4 ways listed above.	List the full-text resource you have obtained, and note how you obtained it. Bring the resource to class or follow other directions from your instructor.
3. Read this resource. (Some sections may be technical, but get the key points and think about what you can learn from this resource.) Be prepared to share ONE new idea or piece of information that might be helpful to you or other early childhood professionals.	Make notes here to remind you of the key ideas you wish to share.

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**Worksheet 2.4: Child Development Terminology**

Your Name \_\_\_\_\_ Course \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Assigned Child Development Term/Concept \_\_\_\_\_

As discussed in class, you will be responsible for learning more about a specific child-development-related term/concept—one that's important both in research and in your work with young children. Your main source of information will be the *Research Connections* web site, [www.researchconnections.org](http://www.researchconnections.org). From the home page, click on "Understanding Research" and from there, go to the alphabetical "Child Care and Early Education Glossary."

1. In your own words, how would you explain the meaning of your assigned child development term? (do not just copy the <i>Glossary</i> definition)	
2. Please add a specific example that illustrates this term, drawing upon your experience or observations with young children.	
3. Think about why early childhood and school-age professionals should know about this term/concept in child development. What difference would this knowledge make in their (your!) day-to-day work? Please make a few notes here, and be prepared to share your thoughts in class.	

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#### Worksheet 2.5 Child Development Researchers

Your Name \_\_\_\_\_ Course \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
 Assigned Researcher \_\_\_\_\_

As discussed in class, you (perhaps with partners) will be responsible for learning more about a child development researcher whose work has significantly influenced the early childhood field. If your course of study focuses on Afterschool, you are encouraged to select a researcher with a school-age emphasis. Your main source of information will be the *Research Connections* web site, [www.researchconnections.org](http://www.researchconnections.org). From the home page, you might try clicking on the "Browse By Author" link on the homepage. You can also do a search using the name of your child development researcher. If you have already done a search by some "content" terms (such as "play"), you can usually filter those results by author, from the search results page. Another strategy is to click on an author's name on any "View Resource Details" page to generate a list of all the resources in the *Research Connections* collection by that author. Please make notes on this form and bring to class for discussion.

1. In your search, how many resources did you find associated with this author's name? What kinds of resources? (That is, were they mostly research reports; peer-reviewed; fact sheets, etc.?)	
2. Print out or summarize on this form the information you found about this researcher. For example, when was her or his research done/published? Were the references mostly peer-reviewed, or other kinds of resources?	
3. For class discussion, how important do you think this person's research is for early childhood professionals? How might it help professionals make decisions?	

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**Worksheet 2.6: Play and Child Development**

Your Name \_\_\_\_\_ Course \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
 Your Team's Focus: Play and \_\_\_\_\_

As discussed in class, there is a wealth of research on young children's play and the importance of experiential learning for school-age children. To give you a sense of this body of knowledge, with other students you will search for resources on one specific aspect of play, which will be assigned by your instructor (such as "play and disabilities" or "play and infants" or "project-based learning in middle childhood"). You will gather examples of recent research on "your" play topic, make notes below, and prepare to share with others.

<p>1. How many resources did the search yield? How many were published in the past 2 years?</p>	<p># of resources: Which authors are listed on the right side of the results page as those most frequently publishing on this topic?</p>
<p>2. With your team, preview some of the resources close to the top of the results list (these have been sorted by relevance) and make notes about some of the new or especially intriguing ideas in this research. Be prepared to share with others.</p>	
<p>3. Has this search changed or expanded your ideas about young children's play? Are there points that might be helpful to think about as a future early childhood educator?</p>	