*Student Learning Objective II. Child and Environmental Assessment and Study*

*Students will demonstrate knowledge of assessment issues and perform qualitative and quantitative assessments of children and their environments.*

Child and environmental assessment involves a lot of research, practice, and application. There are different behaviors and situations to look for depending on the age of the child or the location of the assessment. The behavior being observed decides the best way to collect the information, whether with qualitative or quantitative means. I never knew how important or significant assessment is for children. The more I learn and practice assessment, the easier it is to observe, note take, and apply the information.

I found a stack of papers from a box of my old school work when I was little. On the papers were sentences of step by step what I had done at preschool one day. I never understood why my mom had them until I became the person writing the step by step observations of a preschool child. I took many classes through my Child Development major that allowed me to learn the correct way to write notes on a child, what to look for, and apply the observations to the developmental stages a child goes through. With those foundations I was better able to understand that assessment is necessary to judge development and know what skills children should work on or what they are strong in. With each new class I took I was expected to have less guidance and instruction for each assignment, be more specific with my note taking, and be able to focus on a certain type of behavior. My instructors have always been very clear on what is expected and are honest with correcting in order to guide the development of the assessment process. Group work enables the members to choose what type of development to focus on rather than taking notes on each type. Eventually watching one child develop over time showed me that it is important and necessary to scaffold the children for further development. While scaffolding it is imperative to assess how the child reacts to the new challenge and the result of the situation.

An assessment issue does not have to be based on note taking. Assessments need to be focused on the children and their cognitive, social, and emotional well being. Assessment can include noticing what supplies in a classroom are used more than others, what sections in the classroom are more occupied or more neglected, or allowing the children to decide what they want to do in the classroom. Assessment does not need to be focused on the children but instead on the staff working with them. Assessment on staff can include taking notes of observing their responses what goes on in the classroom and assessing what else could be done or what could be changed.

The most important thing I have learned about assessment is not only how beneficial it is to the children but how beneficial it was to me as the note taker. Assessment can address anything that happens in the classroom which allows the observer to be in control of the progress and direction of the wanted results. I learned so much about children in general, the specific children I worked with, and how to effectively use the information I found out to help the children, the staff, and the environment as a whole. Through assessment and reflecting it I was able to learn new ways to work with different behaviors appropriately and I hope to further that development of different ways to address all kinds of behaviors.

I have struggled to come up with new, creative ways to perform quantitative assessments. I have used check lists very often, but I hope to learn a new way to keep track of the number of times a behavior happens in order to better and more clearly assess why the behavior happens and if the behavior develops. I do not think checklists show development from stage to stage easily which can take away from truly documenting the child’s progress.