Knowledge of Assessment

During my study of Child Development, my knowledge of assessment has grown tremendously. Through classes on assessment, implementation of assessment, and observation of assessment being administered, I have gained experience, and knowledge, about processes of assessment, the different types of assessments, and how to avoid assessment errors. This information has been crucial in my professional development.

One of the key aspects of assessment that I have learned is that knowing the developmental norms helps tremendously when observing and assessing children. If the general guidelines for all domains of development for each age are known by the caregivers in the child’s environment, accuracy of informal assessments are greatly increased. From my work with children, aged infancy to middle school, developmental norms are still useful and should be regarded with great importance throughout all ages.

I also have grown in my view of individualism in children. Children need to be viewed as individuals. There are great variations between children which need to be respected and appreciated. In my Special Education field experience and education, I have learned that even though two children might be diagnosed with the same disability, it can be manifested in many different ways and they may need different support, strategies, and tools for learning. I have observed that individualized interventions can help children tremendously. In an elementary school I worked with two children in a reading specialist group. Both of these children were failing their grade level in reading but each student was below grade level in different areas. One child needed help with sounding out the words, and the other child needed support with the spelling of each word. When assisting these two students, I was made aware of how each student has individual needs. When individualism is considered when assessments are conducted, empirical studies show that there is more success for each individual student.

I have participated in gathering both quantitative and qualitative data. Both of these ways of collecting data have been valuable to me. In small family interviews I’ve conducted which have yielded qualitative assessment results, I was able to see the in-depth issues of the family and assess theories that explain their family relations. It was easy to see the impact of families and how family structure affects children’s lives through qualitative assessment. I conducted an assessment with many children about their musical knowledge using quantitative data. This assessment gave me a good estimate of preschoolers understanding of musical instruments. I used the pre-test/post-test model with this assessment. After a musical activity was implemented, quantitative classroom data was gathered again in the form of a post-test. This helped me see the learning that occurred through the implementation of the musical curriculum. Using both types of assessments, I have learned of the diverse benefits of quantitative and qualitative assessments and data.

One of the most important things about assessment that I have gained through information in classes, as well as reading many empirical articles that study student achievement, is the fact that the environment plays a huge role on student’s success in assessments. Issues such as poverty, hunger, and home life can distract children from learning. If children are hungry and taking a test they will be more likely to be cognitively disorganized and not display their true ability on the test. Another environmental factor that weighs heavily during assessment is time limits. Many students do not do well on tests if time limits are given because of the anxiety and distraction that time limits produce. Knowing the individual students in your classroom and their specific needs will help students succeed when assessment is administered.