Reflective Narrative 1

*Student Learning Objective I:. Foundations of Child Development*

*Students will demonstrate knowledge of the theoretical and empirical foundations of the discipline.*

 Through my Child Development major at CSU Chico State, my knowledge about the foundations of child development has grown. When I started I had common sense about how we develop but through my four years I have really developed a thorough understanding of what stages an individual goes through and how different individuals like parents and siblings can effect a person throughout their entire life. I believe the two theories that have effected the way I think the most would be the four different parenting styles and Erikson’s psychosocial stages.

 While growing up and visiting my friend’s houses I always realized that parents had different ways of raising their children. These different parenting styles used by adults would result in children behaving differently and growing up to have different personalities. I never realized how big of an impact and how many issues can stem in an individual due to the different parenting styles until I learned about them in class. Understanding the four different parenting styles and how they affect a child is very useful when working with children. If you see a child that has low self-regulation and experiences problems with authority and then learn that their parents style of parenting is permissive you can begin to understand why that child behaves the way he does. Understanding the underlying issue then allows you to come up with a more effective plan of action for helping that child. In the future I hope to work as a child therapist and I think knowing these parenting styles will be very beneficial for me. When working with a child, I will know to figure out how the child was parented and see if it correlates with the issues the child is having.

 For my Marriage and Family Relationships class, we did an activity where we looked at our own family and decided which type of parenting style our parents had. This made me really start to understand and grasp the knowledge of the four different parenting styles. Doing this caused me to think about how my friends and myself were raised, which then led me to think about how those parenting styles affected each of my friends. I was able to get a good understanding of the topic by relating it to my own life and putting it into real world context.

 Coming to CSU Chico and learning about Erikson’s stages helped me get a good understanding of how a child develops. I learned the 8 different stages that an individual goes through and the affects if a person doesn’t successfully complete a stage. For example if an individual doesn’t successfully complete the intimacy vs. isolation stage and form intimate and loving relationships with people you will see this result in loneliness and isolation. Looking at people I have met in my past and working with children and individuals today I am able to recognize now when a person has been able to successfully complete a stage or when they are stuck and haven’t. For example, I work at an after school program and while working with the elementary school children I have seen children in all different stages of development. There are children who are competent and are able to get their work done on their own. But there are other children who believe they can’t do any of their work and need to be walked through it all. Now understanding Erikson’s stages I can grasp that they are in the stage of industry vs. inferiority and need help learning to believe they can cope with the new academic demands. This will allow them to develop competency, which will help them succeed in school and life. I think knowing these stages will greatly benefit me as a child therapist because I will be able to understand what stages a child is having trouble with and help them work through and successfully complete that stage.

 While taking my Child Development Practicum I saw a low of examples as the infants in the infant room at CSU Chico mastered the trust vs. mistrust stage in Erikson’s psychosocial stages. One child I was observing started off at the beginning of the semester being very upset when his father would leave. He would cling to his father’s leg and cry when his father left. As the semester continued on I observed the child and he became more and more confident that his father would come back at the end of the day to pick him up. The child would be able to go to the window and wave goodbye to dad and would shed no tears because he developed trust in his caregiver.

 I would like to continue to grow in the area of Foundations of Child Development by continuing to put the foundations that I know into practice. I have been taught a lot of the foundations of the discipline and know them in theory but I think experiencing them in real life and putting them into practice helps a person truly grasp a concept.