SLO I: Foundations of Child Development

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

Before becoming a child development major I had not viewed preschool or early childhood education as anything more than daycare. I had not thought there was anything even remotely like that of the Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP), an observational tool for teachers to record individual progress toward the achievement toward the four desired results for children: children are personally and socially competent, children are effective learners, children show physical and motor competence, and children are safe and healthy. Furthermore, I had not thought about the meticulousness of the profession of working with children; designating activities that target things like phonological development, or nutrition, or fine and gross motor movement. To me, preschool was just a place for children to explore and observe before setting off to kindergarten. Classes that I found to be very useful in helping me grow in child development were Foundational Knowledge (CHLD 251), Developmentally Appropriate Curriculum for Children (CHLD 282), and Methods of Inquiry in Child Development (CHLD 353).

In CHLD 251, I was taught how to be objective in writing, specifically for observation notes, and in turn, how to be objective when working with children. For me, this provided me a way to see children more as individuals than I ever have, and that they are not simply the ideas and information that we as educators and adults put in to them. There is much to be valued in children’s individuality and by placing our biases as adults on their actions we lose sight of their genuine intentions. In CHLD 282, I grew by creating various curriculums for children at different skill sets, as well as various learning styles. I became familiar with many kinds of teaching styles: Reggio Emilia, in which students are given tasks that help prepare them more for “real life,” and preparing them to properly cooperative and interact with others. This was shown through things like team activities, such as dancing with a partner and instructing them in a way that required communication between the partners. Montessori, where the philosophy focuses on allowing the children to choose an activity, providing a sense of independence. Montessori can be seen during “free play,” typically during morning activities, where both outdoor and indoor activities are available ranging anywhere from bikes to painting to counting. The Waldorf method, in which students are given a routine and an emphasis on creative, individual learning through activities such as singing, dancing, and reading. The Waldorf method can be seen when transitioning children from free play to circle time to lunch to rest and back to free play. These are but a few examples of the teaching methods I saw put into place. Not only did I learn these different teaching techniques, I was introduced to how to apply them in the classroom through activities such as circle time, in which there is a feeling of community (Reggio), combined with song, or some kind of movement, or reading (Waldorf). Furthermore, CHLD 282 introduced me to the proper language to be used in the classroom. What I mean is, how to phrase words more positively, giving children a choice only when you want them to have a choice in the matter, how to scaffold and encourage children in their work, and most importantly modeling. In CHLD 353, I was taught the importance of academic writing and proceeded to see a drastic improvement in my writing, not only academically, but in general. CHLD 353 taught me a professional formatting and style when writing papers, how to statistically analyze data collected from research, and how to write a literature review, something I view as very important considering the profession of child development relies heavily on research for evidence-based practice. Furthermore, CHLD 353 gave me academic literacy—skills for locating research that is there to either support my findings, or show that there are little findings and that there is a rationale to the research that has been conducted.

The first assignment I have submitted is my final for CHLD 282. This assignment shows the different kinds of curriculum I have implemented and the developmental measures they meet for the DRDP. Furthermore, this piece of work shows the different kinds of teaching methods I have learned through my “program philosophy” section as well as the environmental setup I have described.

The second assignment I have submitted is an anecdotal note from CHLD 392. The anecdotal note I have chosen shows my ability to be objective when observing children. In this note, the child being observed is achieving one of the developmental standards of the DRDP: children are personally and socially competent.