Child and Environmental Assessment

Throughout my experiences and classes taken to obtain higher education I have learned about the many different types of assessments. My understanding and knowledge of assessment gained through higher education will definitely influence my future for better. I will have the ability to understand certain assessments and how they work. At the beginning of my college years I had no idea what assessments were all about. I knew I had taken assessments before, but I did not know that there are many different assessments and each have their own purpose. I didn’t understand the process of assessments and the reason behind the many assessments given to children and families.

There are many different types of assessments, those are the diagnostic, formative, summative, norm-referenced, criterion-referenced, and interim/benchmarked. Within these different assessments are different question types: multiple choice, constructed response, extended constructed response, technology enhanced, and performance task. These assessments can be given to individuals by paper and pencil, online, or computer adaptive testing. The computer adaptive testing uses an algorithm to adapt to a user’s responses. The scoring process can be done by hand, by computer, or distributed scoring.

My growth happened through some of my classes taken at California State University, Chico (CSUC). While at CSUC I have enrolled in varies classes that have taught me about assessment. These classes include; Methods of Inquiry in Child Development, Child Development Practicum, Issues in Assessment of Families and Children, and Observational Techniques in Child Development. Each class provided me with knowledge and experiences that take part in my overall growth and understanding of Assessment. In my Methods of Inquiry class I learned about the fundamentals of research and assessments. I learned about qualitative research methods, and acquired skills in measurement and statistical evaluation, which play a role in delivering assessments as well as scoring assessments.

In my Issues in Assessment class I learned about specific child and family assessments, I learned about both research based theory and practical applications in the area of families. We had the opportunity to apply our knowledge gained in class by doing hands on projects and papers. I had the opportunity to use The Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale (ITERS-R) to assess the classroom environment and measure the quality of group programs for infants and toddlers. I was able to collect data by observing the Willow Room (infants) in the Associated Students Child Development Lab. In my Child Development Practicum class I had the opportunity to use the Desire Results Developmental Profile (DRDP), which is, an assessment tool designed for teachers to use and reflect on learning, development, and progress of all children during the transitional preschool/kindergarten years.

After learning about Assessments, the most important thing I have learned is that they are critical and should be taken seriously and should be addressed to be reliable and valid. Assessments should bring about benefits for children and families and should be age appropriate in both content and the method of data collection. They should also be linguistically appropriate because to some extent assessments measure language. My Observational Techniques class taught me of an important aspect when performing an assessment and that is to refrain from personal bias and be as objective as possible. Being biased can alter the results of the assessment and therefore are not accurate.

The area that I have difficulty understanding is the area of research. Research has always been a little harder to understand for me, as it required interpretation of data and a lot of knowledge within the field. I have a hard time remembering all the processes done in research and constantly have to look back at notes when it comes to statistical analysis.