*SLO III. Developmental Context*

*Students will demonstrate knowledge of the multiple environmental contexts in which children grow and develop, and will be able to analyze systems that support children’s well-being.*

Two experiences that have greatly facilitated my growth and understanding of the multiple contexts in which children grow and develop, would be my internship in Child Development 282, Developmentally Appropriate Curriculum for Children. As well as my internship in Child Development 392, Child Development Practicum. My internship in Child Development 282 was three hours a week at a low income housing unit. We were facilitating an after school program for the children and families within the complex. Within this internship I learned about the different kinds of environments children are raised in, as well as experienced first hand how these environments effect children and their development. The one thing that I learned the most about was the effects of family dynamics on children. While at my internship, two of the children within the program experienced a sudden family tragedy, this effected the whole complex. I saw how this effected the children and the significant change it had on their environment. The family the children grew up in was the system that supported their well-being and the sudden change in that system took adjusting and support from those around them to cope with the loss. I same how a community came together around a family to support them.

The second experience that greatly facilitated my growth and understanding of environmental contexts in which children and develop, would be my internship in Child Development 392. In this internship, I spent eight hours a week in a classroom with sixteen, twenty four month to thirty six month olds. The experience within the classroom and interacting with each child individually gave me a greater understanding of how each environment a child is in effects them. The one thing I learned the most about was how to create a system that supported the well-being of the children. The classroom I worked in was an experience within a system that supported children's well being in every way. The environment was set up to support the children in every way, as staff we were expected to facilitate independence and growth in each child. Everything used to set up the classroom was centered on the children's well being and I feel I really learned to effectively interact with children. It was a valuable experience that has changed the way I see and interact with children.

Of all of the things I have learned in this area, the thing that has challenged me the most is understanding how to support families who do not support their children's development. I think my heart always goes out to the children, but when it comes down to the parents and guardians have the most impact. I am constantly challenged on how to encourage positive systems that support children's well-being within families. Having learned everything I have in my classes and internships, I feel that every parent and family should have the knowledge and experiences I have had, so that they can put positive systems in place for their children as well.

 I appreciate the experiences and coursework I have taken that has given me knowledge and real life experiences. I believe that not many people get the opportunities I have had to work with children from different environments, and learn effective ways to work with children. My goal is to share my knowledge with the families around me, and use my experiences and knowledge of the multiple environments to identify strengths within families. I have a unique insight into environments and systems and plan to utilize those insights throughout my life.