Reflective Narrative Two: Child and Environmental Assessment and Study

Students will demonstrate knowledge of assessment issues and perform qualitative and quantitative assessments of children and their environments.

Throughout many child development courses, the topic of assessments and the different types have been discussed thoroughly. Whether it is assessing the child or the environment, each assessment takes time to complete and typically includes observation. Many issues are taken into consideration when using assessments because you have to be sure to meet the needs of each child to get the right score or percentile for that individual. Another consideration of assessments is the use of either qualitative or quantitative measures.

When using assessments a person must consider many aspects of the individuals being tested. Issues such as gender, having a disability, English being the second language (ESL), the amount of time given to complete a test, and when the test is given, are a few issues. If a child’s first language is not English, the likelihood of him or her doing well on the test is not as high. For example, it is important to test the student and make accommodations to ensure they receive accurate test scores.

Qualitative and quantitative assessments are two different ways a person can perform the assessments of children and the environments. Qualitative assessments are word based and can provide detailed information. This type of assessment can discuss observations and focus on relationships, how the environment is set up, and what is occurring in the environment. Quantitative assessments on the other hand focus more on set answers and information. This type of assessment includes filling in of bubbles, the use of a rating scale, or marking yes or no.

In many courses I have used both qualitative and quantitative assessments. All of these assessments have been used while observing in the Associated Student Child Development Lab (ASCDL). From writing objective observation notes, to filling out, and completing the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised (ECERS-R), I have learned that it can be challenging and lengthy. When observing, challenges have occurred such as hearing correctly, not having a clear view, everything you should be. One thing that was important to do before observing was to read all of the questions, especially when completing a quantitative assessment. Being familiar and knowledgeable about what should be observed during the specific time frame is beneficial to ensure the completion of each assessment.

I have grown in my understanding of how many things need to be taken into consideration when using assessments. There is a lot to know when assessing children or the environment and completing assessments is not something that can be rushed through. Understanding the different issues in assessments is something that I have become quite knowledgeable about. This growth occurred due to my many child development courses especially the course, Assessment Issues for Children and Families. The most important thing I have learned about assessments is how beneficial the results are. The results give a lot of useful information that can help schools, teachers, students, and researchers.

One area of assessment that I have struggled to understand is the different types of validity. Once I reread each one I remember, but have a difficult time distinguishing between all of them. I understand that this topic of validity is extremely important to understand and become knowledgeable about, which is why I continue going over them to try and memorize and remember without having to read over and over again. Overall, what I have learned will influence my future because I understand the importance of assessments. I have a general knowledge of the many different tools that an educator can use and how to properly asses the environment as well as each student.

The first document that I mentioned was my ECERS-R Environmental Observation Assignment. I completed this assignment in my Assessment Issues for Children and Families course, over a period of two days. I observed for a minimum of three hours in one of the classrooms at ASCDL. I printed all of the documents needed to appropriately assess the environment. This was a quantitative rating scale that included seven subscales with domains within each subscale. Each domain was marked yes or no and was rated between inadequate and excellent. This assessment opened my eyes to the amount of time it takes to complete each question, and since the observation occurred two different days, that changed some of the results. The other document that I mentioned was my observation notes that I wrote in my Observation Techniques course. These notes were based on objective observations, and were used as a qualitative assessment. I observed at the ASCDL throughout the semester, and the notes helped my understanding on knowing how to be objective and descriptive. I had a target child that I observed and wrote notes about, which described how much the child grew over the semester socially, cognitively and emotionally.