Reflective Narrative One: Foundations of Child Development

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

Throughout the various courses I have taken for my Child Development major, as well as the prerequisites I have taken for the credential program, I have explored many different philosophies and studies to extend my knowledge. The foundation of learning and exploration that I have gained while in the Child Development field is applicable to many different aspects of my life. I feel confident that after four years of schooling I can demonstrate what I have learned and apply it to my future career.

Information that has stood out to me over the years are various learning and teaching philosophies, specifically Lev Vygotsky and his ideas about social interactions. When I first learned about the Zone of Proximal Development in an Introduction to Philosophy class, it really stood out to me as the first philosophy that I could relate to. I could remember specific examples from my childhood where I struggled with a task and was able to complete them with help from someone who was more experienced than I was. This is the first time that a philosophy really clicked for me. As I learned more about Vygotsky, I was drawn to his Theory of Cognitive Development and the importance of social interactions. Thinking back on my own personal experiences as a child, I realize how social interactions helped shape my development of communication skills and sharing with my peers. Vygotsky’s theory has encouraged me think more about my own personal teaching philosophy and what I believe is important for children in their development.

The Guides to Speech and Action is another foundation of discipline that has had a profound effect on how I interact and communicate with children. Prior to being introduced to the Guides to Speech and Action, I didn’t really have a clear understanding of the importance of how we speak to children. I was unaware of how great of an impact our words can have on a child’s development. After learning more in depth about the Guides to Speech and Action, I was able to use what I had learned and apply it to real life scenarios. I utilized the Guides to Speech and Action on a daily basis during my time spent in the Associate Students Child Development Lab in the infant room as an intern and as a student staff. I continue to use the Guides to Speech and Action on a daily basis in my interaction with children and I plan on taking this foundation of communication with me into my future career path.

There were two assignments that helped to form my teaching philosophy. The first assignment that helped me to develop my teaching philosophy and explore theories about development was a teaching philosophy paper that I wrote for a Psychology of Teaching class. This assignment helps to outline my understanding and application of specific theories and philosophies that I hope to incorporate into my classroom one day. The second assignment that helped me to understand the basics of the Guides to Speech and Action was my first exposure to the guidelines in an Observation Techniques class. In this assignment I had to observe interactions between a child and the teacher and then describe how the teacher demonstrated language used within the Guides to Speech and Action.