*SLO II. Child and Environmental Assessment and Study*

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

In my higher education experience I have grown to understand that assessment is important to use for a variety of reasons. There are different types of assessment that are helpful to figure out where improvements need to be made or to figure out what works. One of the reasons why assessments are used with children is to figure out where a child’s developmental level is and if there is a delay.

My growth in knowledge of assessment occurred in a class I took at Chico State called Issues in Assessments Child and Family. I had to observe for four hours or more in order to fill out an assessment. The assessments name is the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale, which is also known as the ECERS-R. It is scale that is designed to be used for children ages 2-5 years. The duration of the observation has to be at least 3 hours in order to assure that all the observations are completed.

The most important things that I have learned about assessments is that it is a useful tool which helps seek out at what development level a child may be at with their learning and development. Assessments are helpful to a teacher in order to come up with different teaching strategies to help the child achieve an appropriate developmental level. For example, if a child is assessed and the child is documented to be at an exploring developmental level using the Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP), the teachers could come up with curriculum to scaffold the child to be at a higher level such as developing, integrating, or emerging.

The area of assessment that I have struggled to understand the most is reliability and validity. When I hear these words my mind goes blank. In my Method of Inquiry in Child Development I was introduced to reliability and validity of measures and it was confusing, but in my Issues in Assessments Child and Family class, I was taught about the reliability and validity of assessments. Even to this day I struggle with knowing when an assessment is reliable or valid; I always have to look back through my notes from both classes to refresh my mind.

In my Prenatal-Infant Development class I had to observe a child three times on his perceptual development. Through the first few observations I had noticed the child would not respond to his name on the first call, but he would respond to noise. When there was a noise, such as a ball bouncing, a lawnmower outside, or a child crying he would crawl or try to walk towards the noise. Through my observations I noticed that in less than 3 months he would respond to the first time his name was being called by looking towards the teacher who done so. I assessed the progress of the child through written notes and figuring out what curriculum was appropriate to help the child improve the perceptual domain in order for the child to be at the appropriate developmental level.

In my Issues in Assessments Child and Family class, I had to observe a preschool environment in order to assess the classroom, teachers, and children. I used the ECERS-R and there were eight different domains I needed to observe. For each domain, there were sub domains. The assessment had to be done with a partner, but my partner and I could not discuss any of the items while we were observing until we were all done with the observations. There were some difficulties with using the ECERS-R because it would ask us to write down what kind of books were in the environment and that was a challenge since we couldn’t go inside the classroom. I know some assessments have challenges, while others are easier to use.