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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.

Assessing children and their environment is an important skills set to develop to perform in any area working with children because it provides information about how children learn and what parts of their environment affects their behaviors. A few classes offered at Chico State have increased my knowledge of how to assess various situations and perform different assessments on children and their environments. Each class has helped develop my knowledge of assessments, and because of the classes and assignments, I understand the use of assessments more clearly now than when I started my Child Development major. The classes Observational Techniques, Methods of Inquiry in Child Development, and Issues in Assessment for Children and Families have all increased my knowledge of the different types of assessments.

My understanding of both qualitative and quantitative assessment testing has been improved in the above three classes. I have learned how to use qualitative assessments in the Observational Techniques by observing children in a naturalistic setting. This has helped me grow in my understanding of not only how to collect data objectively, but how this type of assessment is recorded and the interpretations behind the assessment. In this class, the most important thing my professor taught me about assessment was to be objective in everything you observe. You only know what is directly observable, therefore, staying objective helps keep bias out of the assessment.

An area where I have learned to use quantitative assessment is in the Methods of Inquiry in Child Development class. This class included learning how to research a topic, and write a research paper. Taking the steps to research a specific topic for a research paper has taught me how to use quantitative assessment. Each researcher would provide assessments based on their topic, and if their assessment fit the criteria I was looking for in my research paper, I would have to learn how to read and understand the information. This class increased my knowledge immensely and allowed me to learn about how to conduct quantitative research.

Lastly, my Issues in Assessment for Children and Families class has helped me grow to understand both qualitative and quantitative assessments. This class thus far has provided information on the different types of assessments used in an environment, as well as the various assessments children are given to measure specific aspects. For example, I learned about how the SATs in high school is a type of assessment, and learned about how it measures how successful an individual will be in college. At this time, I am currently enrolled in this class, and am still learning information about how to perform assessments, although the information I have learned thus far has been consistent with past information I have learned.

As mentioned above, one of the most important things I have learned about assessment is to stay objective in a child's observation and when assessing children. Another important aspect of assessment is to make sure the assessment is not only reliable, but it measures what it intends to measure. Assessments used for working with children are extremely important because they can help measure whether a child has a delay or diagnosis as a result to their behavior and actions. Making sure the

assessments describe children correctly allows professionals to move forward with the possible treatment. An area of assessment that is still difficult for me to understand is the formula used to see if an assessment measures what it claims to measure, called the screening psychometrics. I understand that there should be a way of making sure an assessment is valid and reliable, but I do not understand how to use the formula, or how to read the answers and understand what they mean. It confuses me, and I will need to look into this more to completely understand the formula.

One of the papers I have done in the past focused on the qualitative assessment is an Individual child report. This report focused on one specific child for about 10 weeks to view the progression of his/her development. It helped me understand how to use qualitative assessments through naturalistic observations and collecting data that was objective. The report was one of my earlier examples of my knowledge on assessments, but it was a good place to start and learn the different types of assessments available to evaluate children and their environment.

A second paper I have written was more about quantitative assessment, in a research paper on gender stereotypes in preschool aged children. During this assignment, I needed to include a statical analysis plan on how to test what I was looking for in my paper. The type of test I used was a t test, which is a statistical test used with quantitative data to compare group means. Although I did not actually perform a t test for gender stereotypes, the process of explaining and researching the test allowed my knowledge of quantitative methods to grow.

Throughout several classes at Chico State, I feel confident in my understanding of how to measure and understand both qualitative and quantitative assessments. After

college, I will most likely use this material and knowledge in my dream job of working with deaf and hard of hearing/special needs children. This field will require my knowledge to perform assessments in order to help children and their families by providing them with specific evaluation of their child.