Child and Environmental Assessment and Study

Assessing children and their environments is important in evaluating children’s learning and progress. They help teachers and professionals plan curriculum that tend to the needs of individual children. In my experience with assessments, I have learned that it is an acquired skill that requires one to be familiar with many different tools.

My first introductions to assessments began in an observation techniques course. This course had taught me how to make objective observations as well as refined my writing to incorporate the language used in these evaluations. An example of my work in the course included an individual child report that featured taking observation notes that were then composed into an evaluation of an individual child. The language and cognitive development component of this report is a documentation of earlier work that had exposed me to professional writing in which I learned how to reference my notes and summarize my findings.

Practicing professionalism in writing and objectivity in this course has helped me in later courses that required more extensive analysis in assessments. An example of this came later in my practicum course as I completed a Desired Results Development Profile (DRDP) on a child. This assignment required both quantitative and qualitative components of assessment that required several observations on one child to determine their developmental standing. I learned the importance of why we do assessments and the systematic way in which we interpret data, which was through the observations that were then turned into data to support my findings.

Objectivity and professional writing are some key components in assessments; however, knowledge of what is being assessed and how it is assessed are also important aspects in making evaluations. I learned this key aspect at one point in a children and families assessment course in which I struggled to make quantitative observations due to my lack of knowledge on the tool I was using. In this instance, the lack of familiarization set me back in my evaluation process and is one of the things I struggle with the most in properly assessing children and their environment. Though I find familiarity with tools and assessments to be difficult at times, I believe with training and practice making these evaluations will be more straightforward as I have had more experience with them.

Making assessments and being knowledgeable about them are necessary in working with children. As children are developing each day it is part of our jobs as professionals to be keeping up with their progress and helping them to grow even further.