SLO II Child and Environmental Assessment and Study Reflective Narrative

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

When thinking of growth in learning about assessment, all of it has been through my experiences in higher education classes. I did not know much at all about assessment before this time. Now I have knowledge about what it is and is not, its importance, and the different types of assessment.

Assessment is a collection of information gathered about individuals, groups, or organizations. It is done through a systematic process that is a triangulation, interpretation, and evaluation of this collected information. After going through and understanding the assessment process, I have been able to complete projects throughout my college career. One class in particular at Chico State University, my Child Development Practicum class, incorporated assessment into the curriculum. One of these specific areas was called Child and Developmental Assessment. Without background knowledge of how to assess children, this area may have been confused with some of the things that assessment is not. For instance, I learned that assessment is not testing; it is not one isolated piece of information, and it is not something that is associated with grades.

As found in my Child Development Practicum class while working with children at the Associated Students Child Development Laboratory, assessment is important for many reasons. Observing and evaluating the progress of learning and development is necessary to determine where children are developmentally, and if they are typically or not typically developing. When assessing the child I observed over the course of one semester, I was able to see how I and other teachers were able to meet her individual needs. With this knowledge, I was able to realize the importance of carrying this into my future work with children.

Along with understanding why assessment is important, it is also necessary to learn about the different types of assessment. This allows you to know which type is most practical for the specific situation. The types of assessment vary, and there is a specific one that is sensible for each individual situation. Teacher constructed assessments are the types that have been used in my work with children thus far. They have been in classrooms and are informal, which means that they are used to determine a child’s developmental level.

This growth and understanding of assessment happened over time in my Child Development classes at Chico State University. It was through a combination of class lectures, text books, projects, hands-on learning experiences with children in my internships, and reflecting with peers. The experience that facilitated my growth the most was a project in my Child Development Practicum class. Throughout the semester, each student observed one child that was in the room in which they interned. The project involved each student rating their child on their developmental progress throughout the semester based on informal and formal observations. They were rated using the Desired Results Developmental Profile. The information was then scored on a chart based on a developmental rating scale and explained through notes from observations conducted throughout the semester.

The most important thing I have learned about assessment is the importance of knowing which type of method to use. Each assessment has its own standards and uniqueness, which makes them very different from one another. Understanding each one and realizing the differences between them is crucial to knowing which is the correct type to use.

An area of assessment that I have struggled to understand is in the new concept of Common Core in schools. Common Core is based on standardized assessment. Although standardized testing is necessary at times to figure out the large-scale success of schools, and to see which ones are falling behind, I do not believe Common Core or standardized testing is the answer. Standardized assessment should not be the indicator to see if a school is doing well or not. Teaching with the goal of achieving better scores takes away the freedom to teach in the way they know their students will best receive the information. Not only does it take away teacher’s freedom, it also takes away from children’s broader understanding of the learning environment and limits it to only certain specific areas. I do not understand the reasoning behind this new hype.

E-journals in the class, Child Development Practicum, were used to reflect on each students’ experiences in the classroom you were interning at. Sometimes they were prompted and sometimes you were free to write what you pleased. In the e-journal attached, it states many of the categories of the Desired Results Developmental Profile. This Desired Results Developmental Profile is what the formal, and informal assessments were based on. They had the categories and developmental rating scales for each age range, based on who the child was that each student was assigned to throughout the semester.

Observation notes in the class, Child Developmental Practicum, were notes that were written while observing the child assigned to each student while interning throughout the semester. Observation notes were used to rate the child on the developmental rating scale that was used to assess the child’s developmental process. This rating scale was called the Desired Results Developmental Profile and had many categories in which to rate the child.