Reflective Narrative SLO 2: Child and Environmental Assessment and Study

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

The second learning objective within the Child Development discipline is associated with a variety of diverse assessment types. I believe that this objective indicates and consists of studying children, teachers, environments, and learning in a variety of different settings that can be natural or structured. It’s important that we as professionals understand and take into consideration the advantages and disadvantages that are present within each assessment type so that we can obtain reliable and valid information on a child. Personally, I’ve learned about the positive assets and drawbacks of assessments in several courses throughout my higher education. I’ve been fortunate enough to perform my own assessments as well as observe other assessments completed on children in different environments at homes and schools.

Coming into a higher education, I was aware of the basics about assessments and I had become exposed to standardized tests in my past school years, but I hadn’t really understood the extent of what assessment was. I didn’t know that there were formal types and informal types, and I didn’t know that these different assessment types would be so prevalent in my future educational experience and career. I have grown in understanding assessment extensively since my first year in the Child Development major. I’ve learned about the importance of observation and gathering information when evaluating a child’s development. I’ve also learned that assessment is required in order to make a positive change in an environment and to improve an experience for a child in need, which is another reason why I’ve grown to appreciate the process.

The difference between research and assessment is that assessment focuses on learning, teaching and child outcomes and its primary goal is to improve practice, not necessarily to provide data and empirical studies on scores. Assessment is related to research because it is seen as a type of action research, and typically employs the same methods of data collection, though for different purposes. One experience I’ve had recently is in my current internship in a Child Development Practicum course. I am interning at an agency called Parent Infant Programs, and I spent one week researching and reading over the Hawaii Early Learning Profile (HELP) assessment that I will be using throughout this semester with children who are developmentally delayed. In my current job as an early interventionist, I’ve been able to participate and observe a HELP assessment being performed by my manager for one of the children I work with. I have been able to see the importance of assessing a child in order to really see their growth and what they still need to work on the next time that test comes around. The most important thing I’ve learned about assessment is being consistent and valid in my data collection. I would prefer to begin by observing a child first in order to get a full grasp of who they are prior to assessing them more formally, because I think that having a relationship first helps get more dependable and reliable results. An area of assessment that I have struggled to understand is the purpose and importance of the STAR tests. I have never understood how those two testing types are accurately representational of an individual’s intelligence because the predictive validity of SAT scores is quite limited.

The first assignment I chose to reflect on based on this SLO and my progress with assessments was a behavior guidance assignment with observation and analysis at my internship at Mi Escuelita Maya Preschool. I had to provide the antecedent event, the behavior, and the consequence event, followed by an analysis and reflection. This assignment helped me evolve my experience within this SLO because I was able to come into the classroom with some prior knowledge of the behavior guidance sheet, and then construct my response to the child when a behavior was emerging or demonstrated in the environment. I was then able to reflect on what guidance techniques I demonstrated, what that child’s reaction was to my techniques, and what I could have done differently in the future.

The second assignment I chose to consider is the DRDP Evidence Table I conducted in the Internship Practicum course. I was able to intern in the Infant room on campus, and observe one specific child throughout a semester. Towards the end of the semester, I conducted a complete DRDP on her development throughout those four months. This was a valid and reliable way to perform an assessment because of the formal and informal assessments that were completed prior, like observing and understanding the child’s interests or norms while assessing her in a play-based environment with other children her age over a long period of time. I was able to record observation notes myself, as well as receive written notes from others in her environment in order to complete and conduct a final table with every domain included within the DRDP for Infant age. This specific assignment was what really got me interested in assessing and evaluating children in my future career in the professional world.