Reflective Narrative SLO 3: Developmental Context

*Students will demonstrate knowledge of the multiple environmental contexts in which children grow and develop, and will be able to analyze systems that support childrens well being.*

The Student Learning Objective (SLO) of Developmental Context has been incorporated and present in several courses throughout my experience within the Child Development program. This SLO, among the others, is another imperative aspect of the core foundation within this discipline. Understanding the context behind a child’s development has expanded my knowledge when discussing assessments and environments that support a childs well being. This objective analyzes the variety of environmental settings that are present in a child’s life and has taught me how to teach and alter my ways of working with children depending on the specific setting I’m in whether that be in a home, or in a classroom. With that being said, this objective has influenced me and will continue influencing my future by showing me to embrace the multiple environmental contexts that I will encounter.

Throughout my experience in higher education, I’ve encountered several different assessment assignments that have required me to observe children in a variety of different settings from observing in a lab to observing in a natural playground setting. This experience facilitated my growth in understanding this SLO because I was able to see how the environment within the lab classroom benefited the children’s wellbeing and everything in the environment was developmentally appropriate and placed there with purpose. One thing I learned the most about was how important the Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP) is in the process of organizing and creating an environment for a child in a classroom. As an intern in the infant room, my peers and I were asked to organize certain areas of the room based on specific domains within the DRDP, and this helped teach me about how to effectively challenge a child in order to get them to grow but succeed all at the same time. Of the things I have learned in this area, the thing that currently challenges me the most is entering an in-home environment that isn’t developmentally

appropriate or safe for a child. It is hard for me to not step in and change an environment in a home because I’ve been taught to make the most of an environment and meet families half way. I can see the benefit of incorporating what a family already has and strategizing ways of working with what is already there, but this has always challenged me. I need to work on how to adjust to the differences in home environments. Being a life long learner, I will continue to observe and enter new homes in order to help a child thrive in their most familiar place. What I’ve learned to appreciate is how grateful I am for the environment I was raised in, and that has helped me remain motivated to help other children receive that support that I was so fortunately gifted with. I want to learn more about other environments outside of school and homes, like extracurricular activities, or therapy clinics that children are involved in.

One assignment that represented my growth and knowledge within this particular SLO was a write-up I had to complete in a course of Developmentally Appropriate Curriculum for children. This assignment allowed me to demonstrate my abilities in this objective area because I got to observe a school environment and assess how it is enhancing or hindering learning opportunities. After my observation, I had the opportunity to create my own environment that had to incorporate three age groups: Infant, toddler and school age. I was able to reflect back on quotes and passages within our class textbook to enhance my findings and produce an environment that was developmentally appropriate in order for curriculum to be implemented successfully. I had to assess what specifically in the environment would enhance a child’s wellbeing and challenge them in each specific domain of development in multiple environmental contexts whether that was indoors or outdoors.

Another assignment that reflected my experiences and knowledge of multiple environments was in a course identified as a Professional Seminar in Child Development. This assignment allowed me to observe an environment that was foreign to me, which helped me to expand my knowledge and analyze a new and unfamiliar area. I observed an Autism Clinic in the Kinesiology Department where I was asked to take notes, assess the environment and then reflect on my thoughts afterwards. I was able to distinguish and identify accommodations in this specific environment that were geared towards non-typically developing children who are diagnosed with Autism. This assignment allowed me to expand my knowledge of the multiple environmental contexts and how children are analyzed differently depending on the environment they’re in. I was able to learn more about Autism Disorder and then assess the benefits within the environment that allowed children to succeed as much as possible depending on the severity of their disorder and where their needs are. My work within this objective is never fully complete, and I hope to expand my knowledge and continue learning about multiple environmental contexts and how that can be altered to benefit the wellbeing of a child in order to promote development.