*SLO II. Child and Environmental Assessment and Study*

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

Assessments are tools used by teachers, researchers, parents, politicians and investors.

Assessments are conducted in order to come to research hypothesis but are not research itself. Assessments can be conducted formally following standardized procedures or informally using a variety of methods in order to gain a better understanding of a classroom, group dynamic, teacher or child. Assessments are an effective way to gain information in order to formulate strategies on supporting a child’s development. The findings of an assessment are not general to an entire population but are helpful in understand a single child, group of children or classroom.

Assessment was a word I could have basically explaine at the beginning of my educational career

but was unable to explain how they related to children, the environment or how to perform any such assessments. I was first introduced to the idea of assessments for children in a class focused on children with special educational and physical needs. I was introduced to the usage of individual education plans and different methods professionals use in order to gain information in order to formulate effective IEP’s. At California State University of Chico, my knowledge of assessment was furthered as I learned about the different styles of observation and documentation completed by teachers and nonbiased observers. The use of assessments has become invaluable to me as I have entered into the classroom and I am asked to formulate curriculum or strategies on solving classroom issues.

The most valuable experiences I have had that have affected my understanding of the importance of assessment are those in the classroom. When asked to formulate curriculum or implement strategies to engage children assessments have proved to be very helpful. Trying to create these things without any knowledge of a classroom, the children, or the teachers is challenging and often leads to your ideas being unsuccessful. I have found that when I conduct either formal or informal assessments of the children and environment beforehand my curriculum plans can be catered to specific situations and allow for higher levels of learning and more chance to engage children and encourage development. This has encouraged me to grow in my understanding and skills related to assessment threw lecture, group discussion and practice.

The most important thing I have learned about assessment is it is so much more than just a test that puts children into a category of below average, average, or above average. I lacked an understanding that there are many types of assessment and they must be used appropriately and are most effective in accordance with other forms of assessment or when they are conducted by multiple people to prevent bias or error.

I would like to learn more about assessments used to evaluate children with disabilities or who are struggling in the classroom setting or are developmentally struggling. I would like to know more about the tools out there that help understand the bigger picture related to these struggles and concerns. Based on my understanding and training as a child development major I don’t think children are ever just misbehaved or bad but there are underlying causes that lead to children struggling in a classroom or group setting. I want to learn more about assessments that help identify these underlying issues to avoid children being categorized as bad or misbehaved by teachers, peers and parents.

The first assignment that I used to demonstrate my understanding of assessment is a journal entry on the importance of observation and documentation which are important tools to have when conducting assessments of children. Young children cannot take test or perform self-assessment and so the most effective way of conducting assessments on young children is by observation and documentation.

The second assignment that demonstrates my understanding of assessment strategies and uses was

threw completing the desired results developmental profile. This is an assessment tool used by the state of California to assess children infant to five years old. It is a tool that has several different areas of focus and requires observation to justify the rating given in each area. Teachers use this tool to inform parents and develop curriculum. I had the opportunity to complete the DRDP for Infants and Toddlers on a child complete with observation and documentation during my time at the California University of Chico.