Reflective Narrative SLO 1: Foundations of Child Development

Students will demonstrate knowledge of the theoretical and empirical foundations of the discipline.

As child development majors and future professionals, we the students, should be proficient in understanding the theories and scientific studies in our field. Upon graduating the program, we should be capable of defining and describing the stages and/or events within each developmental domain, including physical, emotional, social and cognitive. The developmental theories should help us describe and explain certain behaviors and should be used as a tool in our field of work. Throughout my higher education experience, developmental theories have taught me that there are many different ideas, perspectives, explanations, and predictions when it comes to child development. I have learned that these theories work together to help one gain a better understanding of children and their development over time. This influences my future in such a way that I will be able to assess age appropriate developmental milestones, age norms, typical and atypical development behavior for each developmental domain while guiding parents in their understanding of what is normal and abnormal behavior in a preschool child.

My confidence has grown in my understanding of theoretical and empirical foundations of child development. Especially understanding what infants and preschoolers are capable of doing and what their developmentally appropriate milestones are. Courses I have enrolled in at California State University Chico have helped to further my understanding of these concepts by giving me the opportunity to observe and interact with children in a child development lab.

Temperament, a set of innate personality characteristics that follow you through life, would be an example of one of the theories that has changed my understanding of human behavior. The three basic temperament classifications are easy, difficult and slow-to–warm children. A child’s classification is based off of their activity level, rhythmicity, approachableness, adaptability, responsiveness, reaction intensity, mood, persistence and attention span. Applying what I have learned about temperaments has helped me to better understand the differences between children’s personalities. Classifying a child’s temperament helps you as a teacher and parent in recognizing and catering to your child’s needs and goodness to fit. Goodness to fit assesses how compatible the child’s temperament is in relation to his environment. Understanding temperament and goodness to fit can assist you with helping your students reach their full potential. Before I knew about temperaments I often thought that a child was just being difficult because of the environment in which they came from, now I am aware that it is not environment alone and that it is just the way the child’s personality is. Learning this has given me more patience as well as a greater awareness when dealing with different personality types in the classroom.

Besides temperament, other theories such as Erikson’s psychosocial theory and Piaget’s cognitive development theory will help guide my practice in the future. As a preschool teacher I will be able to implement curriculum that is developmentally appropriate by knowing what my students are capable of understanding. I would like to continue to grow in the area of foundations of child development by staying informed on the latest child development studies and theories.

Writing weekly journals and completing a Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP) in my Child Development Practicum class has helped document my growth in the area of foundational knowledge about children. These assignments helped me observe, implement and reflect on what is socially, cognitively, emotionally, and physically appropriate for a preschooler as well as helping me apply and strengthen my knowledge of theoretical and empirical foundations in child development.