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*SLO IV. Professionalism*

*Students will engage in professional behavior appropriate*

*to the discipline in professional contexts.*

My interpretation of this SLO is that students will demonstrate professional behavior within their given profession based on their education and knowledge in not only the field of Child Development, but whatever field they choose to focus their efforts on. However, in the field of Child Development, one would have the ability to approach their work subjectively, leaving any and all biases at the door. This includes having an open mind when approaching anything work related, whether it is working with particular families, colleagues, or programs. They will be able to work effectively as a teammate and group member to ensure the needs of the community they serve, as well as the program they work for are met. Honesty and integrity are key qualities when you are someone who serves your community.

In my work with children as well as my studies in Child Development, I have been given the chance to see firsthand how important possessing these qualities actually are. You need to be trusted in this field by not only your colleagues, but the families that you serve as well. Families are trusting you with their children, and there is nothing more important to families than that. For me, books and studies only provided so much information. I really needed to just get out in the real world and gain experience working in a professional environment to obtain these skills and knowledge. I feel that while I still have a lot of room to grow, these past two years at Chico State have really increased my knowledge and awareness of shaping my professional life and career. Having my own set of values, and being able to maintain those values while also providing quality care is really important to me. Recognizing that we are all different and come from different backgrounds has been valuable in more ways that I can even articulate.

Being a lifelong learner, I will continue to gain as much new knowledge as possible. I am constantly watching my superiors and seeing how they engage with children, and what vocabulary they use with them. A big part of professionalism is being able to communicate in ways that are effective, but appropriate. I told one of my mentors the other day, “If it seems like I am staring at you, I am. I am just watching the way you interact with the children so that I can use techniques that I know are appropriate and effective.” In particular, I like to take notes of phrases and words used with children so that I can get used to using them myself, because what better way to mold your professionalism, than watching professionals at work?

The best of what I have achieved in this area is a growing confidence. A confidence that I am becoming good at what I love doing. This past semester in particular, I have received very encouraging feedback from my superiors in both my job and my internship. I have taught preschool as an Aide for the past five years, and I genuinely love it. I am not sure if it is what I want to do in the long run, but I truly enjoy being able to shape and mold children’s social and cognitive skills. As well as seeing how far they have come in their development.

One assignment that sticks out to me is my Self Reflection Paper from my Practicum Internship. Self-reflections are a great way of evaluating personal progress in specific areas. This one in particular focused on my progress as an intern in the Associated Students Child Development Lab. It included a portion on my own personal thoughts, as well as me putting myself in someone else’s position and writing about ‘me’. It seems sort of odd to talk about yourself as someone else, but I think it was helpful in bringing out my true feelings about my abilities and how far I had really become in this whole process. The second assignment is from my Administration of Child Development Programs course, which had us create and design our own childcare center over the course of the semester. This class was so valuable to me, in that it had me look beyond the role of teacher, and into one of a director being able to create something from my own vision. Not only did you create a center, but you had to focus on choosing staff, philosophies, and any and every single detail that goes into developing your own center. This opened my eyes to the reality that this could very well be something that I do with my life. I already nanny for multiple families, and I truly get asked a lot when I will open my own center. This was a great learning experience for me, and really opened my eyes to what it would take to achieve such a great experience.