Reflective Narrative SLO 2: Child and Environmental Assessment and Study

Center

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

Research may be defined as the systematic process of gathering data, analyzing it, and disseminating results. The goals of conducting research include: discovering new information, confirming or replicating previous research findings, and testing hypotheses, in order to establish facts, or revise accepted theories or principles. Quantitative research studies are designed to produce generalizable results (i.e., information that applies to a larger population beyond the study sample). Quantitative research findings are also typically used to describe trends, patterns, and relationships among variables. The results or findings are intended for a broader educated audience. Research studies may also be designed to address social problems (i.e., applied research).

Assessment is a type of action research. Its primary goal is to improve practice, not to generate theoretical knowledge. Knowledge gained from assessment will not produce generalizable results. Assessment data collected from multiple sources and methods (qualitative and quantitative) are used to draw inferences about the characteristics of students, programs, or an institution for the purposes of making informed decisions to improve the learning process" (Linn & Miller, 2005). The unit of analysis may be at the individual student level, the program level, or the institutional level. Assessment typically involves collaborative reflection in making modifications based on shared feedback. Individual child assessment is intended to provide information about a specific child, typically for the purposes of: 1) evaluating current developmental or academic abilities, 2) diagnosis of a condition or disability, and/or 3) to determine and guide the creation of an intervention plan or services (Standford.edu).

Research and assessment are different because research is a process in which you collect data, examine it, and then interpret the results, while assessment is more of a reflection in order to learn about information that is presented to you. When talking about research and assessment we must be informed about quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative data involves numbers, and measurements that is intended for a general group or large demographic. Qualitative data deals with things that cannot be measured. These items may be observed and written about in the form of details or descriptions. Qualitative data is subjective while quantitative data is not.

After taking Methods of Inquiry at Chico State University, I learned how to measure both qualitative and quantitative data while researching and learning about assessment. I currently am taking an assessment class in which I am learning about assessment in regards to children and their wellbeing. I have learned that there are many way in which a person can research and assess something such as through documentation, observations, clinical practice, and working hands on with a child/children. I have gained the most valuable information through observing and keeping records of the things I have observed. With years of practice both inside and outside of the classroom, I now have gained experience in my researching and assessing capabilities. This practice will help me in the future when I am working with children and families in which research and assessment must be done in order to create an action plan or simply evaluate children’s progress and strides in respects to developmental delays, behavioral modification, and assessment of social and cognitive progression.