SLO 2: Child and Environmental Assessment and Study

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

 When I started taking Child Development courses I had little knowledge about assessments and how to perform them. The only assessments that I knew about were the standardized test you took throughout school and the comprehension test teacher would give you to see if you understand the material. However, as I began to take more classes in Child Development I discover that it is important to assess children environment and progression of their development to make changes in their environment, educations, and services. With the knowledge and experience that I gain in assessments issues, I was able to conduct qualitative and quantitative assessments of both children and their environment in two assignments called Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRPD) and Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS).

 My understanding in assessment has grown dramatically throughout my years as a Child Development major. One course that really helped me expand my knowledge of an assessment was Observational Techniques. In this class I assessed a child in their overall development by using anecdotes, event samples, autonomy rating scales, sociogram table, and checklist of their fine and motor skills. By assessing the child in all of these areas I was able to interpret the child’s developmental level and be able to tell parents or teachers what areas the child needed scaffolding. I began to understand that you need to use objectivity in your assessments and you cannot put your opinion in to your data or assume anything about the child with empirical evidence. This was very new to me because I always had thought that you assess children through formal testing their knowledge and skills in a one on one basis.

 I was able to acquire multiple qualitative and quantitative assessments on children in by using an assessment called Desired Result Development Profile (DRDP) in my supervised practicum course with toddlers. By using the DRDP I was able to get observational notes on a child and place that observational note on a measure with their developmental level. The DRDP is able to tell you where the child should be according to their age in the domains of language, social, psychomotor, emotional, and cognitive. When you know what level a child is in you are able to create an environment and activities that will help flourish those skills that the child needs. After this class I was able to understand why facilities change their environment and activities consistently because they want the children to be engaged and able to help develop their skills.

Another experience that helped me facilities the growth in my knowledge on assessment was conducting an environmental assessment and a case conference in a course called Issues in Assessments for children and Families. Within this class I was able to understand the importance of reliability when you are assessing children. You need to have consistency for the test to be valid and accurate because when one person assess an environment or child they might missed things or did not notice something. By having multiple people assess the same environment or child you are able to compare and contrast your results. In this course I learned what factors and variables you would need when considering or designing an assessment for children. You can’t just assume that one assessment will work for the all children. We have to always never remember that all children are different regardless if they are the same age or older. I also learned how to interpret all the data and results you get from an assessment in a case conference. This was very helpful because when a parent sees the actual result they are not going to understand it.

 Assessment and research can be seen as similar but they are two different concepts. Assessment is data that is collected from multiple sources to make changes and decision about children and programs. When professional look at this data they can make informed decision about the child development, education process, or diagnosis delay. On the other hand, research is when you investigate phenomena within your field. There are two types of research qualitative and quantative. Qualitative research is when you are taking a research and you are finding patterns and relationships among the variables. Quantative research is to conduct generalization results. Research is to advance the knowledge in a discipline by confirming your hypothesis; having data and gaining new information that will help professional expand their knowledge.

One most important thing that I have learned about assessment is how to be able to design an assessment and understanding the different assessment. I learned that when you are designing test you have to know how to write a true and false question, a multiple choice question, and essay questions because they way you word affects how the child will understand and will affect the outcomes. For instances, if cannot have too many true questions or vice versus. You want to make it equal. The goal of the assessment is to see where the children are at and not to trick them. Being able to understand the various assessments that are out there and how to use them was really important because I learned that in order to use some assessments you have to be trained or you have to follow a certain procedure. As you are assessing a children you need to gather information from various resources such as teachers, parents and/or friends depending on what you are assessing the child because you have to see how multiple factors are affecting that child.

An area of assessment that I struggled with was measurement. I struggled with this because there are many types of validity and they are so similar that sometimes I couldn’t distinguished them. For instances, there is content validity, criterion-related validity, convergent validity, and it keeps on going. I struggled with validity because in the courses that I took we would just talk about them for a short period of time and I feel like we need to focused more with examples and be able to use it, just like we did with reliability. Validity is very complicated because as soon as you start to understand you started learning about others one and it just confused you, at least in my case. I would definitely want to grasp these concepts because I plan to take my career in the path that I am going to be using psychometrics in many situations.

I demonstrated my understanding on child and environment assessment by using the DRDP on a child throughout the semester in my supervised Practicum class on toddlers. With the DRDP I was able to use my observational notes that I took of the child and place it on an evidence table for each measure it applied. Then I was able to place the child developmental level for each measure. As a rather all this information I was able to write it in a narrative form. In this narrative it included all the information about that child and a parent or guardian will be able to understand my findings. This assessment looked at all the different domains of the child and it help us determine what this child succeeds in and what this child needs improvement on.

I perform an assessment on children and the environment in an assignment called environment assessment in a course called Issues in Assessment for children and Family. This assignment was based on environment assessment that emphasized the importance of evaluating the classroom environment and school climate. We used a tool called Classroom assessment scoring system and we transfer our data into a table. My partner and I assessed a toddler’s classroom in the Associated student Child Development Lab and then we rated our results to see how consistency we were. Then we wrote a reflection paper on the assessments and on the results. With this assignment we were able to assess the relationship and interaction the child had with the teachers and the environment.