

SLO I: Foundations of Child Development
*Students will demonstrate knowledge of the theoretical
and empirical foundations of the discipline.*

Individual Outline

This SLO deals with the theories and research that guide how we explain children's development and family experience. Theories guide us to respect the bond within families and home practices, they guide how we foster optimal development. Many theories have been around for a while and have been empirically tested. This SLO also deals with how we as professionals interpret current research and findings and how we allow these methods and procedures to guide our practice. This SLO expects that students understand the role of research and the method through which one interprets it.

As a student in Child Development at Chico State, I have learned much about theories so crucial in explaining children's behavior and development. However, more than simply learning facts and theories, I have learned how to practically apply them to real-life interactions with children and make those interactions more impactful and meaningful for both myself and children. I have condensed these concepts into practical strategies that aid me in my everyday work with children. I apply what I've learned so second-naturedly, that I don't think explicitly about theories and theorists in my work on a regular basis.

Growth in using and understanding these theories came through primarily hands-on experience. Once I was exposed to classrooms with children, I was able to think of real examples as I learned about theories in classes they described. For example, as I was learning about Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and scaffolding, I was also observing the preschool class and scanned the classroom for instances of scaffolding. Scaffolding is the concept of giving children only as much help as they need

to be able to be successful in a task themselves. This allows children to experience success in tasks that would normally be too much for them. This builds children's confidence and autonomy as they, "grow into" the full sized tasks. The obvious example in the preschool class at the time I observed were the pitchers used during meal times. Children are given milk in a small pitcher to practice pouring their own milk. Once they acquired these skills, they moved onto using the large pitcher themselves. Now, two years later with substantially more experience in preschool teaching under my belt, I am able to identify and initiate more complex forms of scaffolding on a daily basis. I also see the benefits of scaffolding in the development of children's personal autonomy and initiative in the classroom which is interconnected with Erikson's Psychosocial Stages that state that autonomy and initiative are what children of this age are learning to master.

I work in the preschool room during drop offs every morning. I observe how different parents interact with children as they are separating for the day. Some children consistently have a hard time letting go, and some have an easier time. Because of what I've learned about attachment theory and child temperament, I realize the importance for children of stable adult relationships. Being a student staff in preschool has been so much fun because of my consistent schedule; I am there every single morning. I have developed many close bonds with several children simply by being the person that helps them say goodbye every morning. Some children insist that I stand next to them as they say goodbye, using me as a secure base as they let go of their primary attachment figure. Other children have me sit with them as they transition into the school day.

In the future, I expect to work in a school setting. My current goals include elementary school teaching, school psychology, and school administration. In these

fields, it is vital for workers to understand factors of children's home environment, including attachment, stress, and parental involvement. Understanding ZPD, which will allow teachers to tailor experiences to where children are academically and developmentally, will be the cornerstone of any effective lessons. In elementary school this will look different than preschool, focusing more on academics than socio-emotional development.

Research shows the link between early socio-emotional development and academic success later in life. This is the basis for the rationale for preschool education. However, not all children have the privilege to attend preschool and many go without this socio-emotional education. I would like to continue growth in Child Development Foundations by learning how to teach socio-emotional skills, including coping and self-regulation skills, to early elementary school children who may not possess these skills coming out of Kindergarten.

Assignments

For this portion of the assignment, I will focus on my growth in ability to summarize research literature and write concisely. In Methods of Inquiry, I learned the logic and structure of a research paper and the role of a literature review. To practice, pairs of students reviewed literature in the form of Writing Assignments, the assignments were combined to form the literature review of a research paper. In this assignment, six scholarly sources were reviewed totaling about five pages. I reviewed half, and my partner reviewed half. The review was discretely divided by article, and each article's method, goal, and results were clearly identified. Through this assignment, I learned how to evaluate an article's purpose by identifying hypotheses and rationales. I also learned how to efficiently search long empirical articles for key bits of information relevant for a literature review.

A year later, in *Child Development Practice: Children and Families*, I developed my skills in concise writing and reviewing literature. I conducted a separate literature review independently to gain a deeper understanding about service learning as it relates to college internship courses, such as those offered by the Child Development major at Chico State. My goal here was to understand the implications and consequences of service learning for recipients and administrators of services. This review was divided, not by article, but by concepts, demonstrating my growing understanding of the practical application of a literature review. I reviewed and cited five sources myself while keeping the writing under five pages. As I developed my understanding of literature reviews, I was able to pull out information more relevant for the purpose of the review, rather than what was simply required by the assignment. This review was included in a portfolio with a series of other documents that included interviews with program directors, children's surveys, and surveys from current and previous interns. The final section of the review contained a reflection of the found research as it corresponded with child development internships.