

SLO II: Child and Environmental Assessment

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

Individual Outline

This SLO deals with assessment as it pertains to children and their learning environment. Their learning environment contains the physical environment and teachers, as well as the interactions between children and between teachers and children. This SLO expects that students will become knowledgeable in different assessment techniques. Differing techniques include quantitative data, or quantifiable data such as frequencies, ratings, and other tallies, and qualitative data which records events using words and descriptions. All of these techniques are used by students to assess children's development and the quality of their environment in order to reach some conclusion about the objects being assessed.

I have grown tremendously in understanding the value and importance of assessment. Good assessment can provide lots of valuable information to parents, children, teachers, and other stakeholders. As a taxpayer, I have a stake in a lot of public education. I appreciate that the institutions that receive this money are held accountable through regular and rigorous assessments.

I have grown in this area by gaining frequent exposure to assessment tools and methods. Every Child Development class that I've taken has contained some elements of assessment and reflection. In Adolescent Development I distributed surveys and conducted interviews with a parent and teen. In Observational Techniques and Child Development Practicum I developed note taking skills and providing recommendations to parents. In the three internship classes and placements I implemented curriculum and assessed effectiveness based on previously determined goals and objectives.

Research is the systematic collection and analysis of data to draw connections and conclusions between constructs. The goal of research is that results would be ideally generalizable to larger populations. Assessment, however, uses similar methods to gain insight about one, specific program or institution, and is generally conducted for the purpose of bettering a program or providing more information about the program. Results are not generalizable and are typically only relevant to those involved with the program.

I have learned that good assessment is hard. In my Assessment Issues class, I learned just how taxing and draining conducting assessments can be through the use of the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) for Pre-K. After the second cycle of observation for this tool, I felt drained and was tempted to finish quickly. This attitude could potentially compromise the scoring of the results. Through this, I have come to understand the importance of training individuals to conduct assessments with valid and reliable results. I have learned that it takes a great deal of personal discipline to be a good assessor.

I have struggled to understand the more numerical and statistical components of assessment, including reliability and validity. I frequently mix up the two, but I understand that both are significant and crucial to good assessment. The impression I get from the concepts of reliability and validity is that assessment tools are very difficult to create.

I would like to continue growing by completing more assessments, and by conducting a wider variety of assessments. I am interested in School Psychology and am interested in learning about the tools used to assess children in school as well as tools used daily or yearly by teachers.

Assignments

In Observational Techniques in the spring of 2014, I was first introduced to the process and objective of descriptive note taking as a means to describe movements and behaviors of children. The first document, a motor checklist included in the case study completed for Observational Techniques contains comments by the professor such as, “how?”, “body?”, and “feet?” indicating that more descriptive evidence was needed to describe the exact movements of the child. During this time, I did not yet understand the importance of this nuanced information. When I took Child Development Practicum the following year, I gained exposure to the Desired Results Developmental Profile- 2015 (DRDP- 15). Familiarizing myself with this tool provided the context I needed to understand the value of specific and clear writing in note and evidence collection. The culmination of my work with the DRDP- 15 was an entire completed profile on one child. The pages from the evidence table included for this assignment were taken from the Physical Health and Development portion of the DRDP to demonstrate my growth in note taking and in descriptive writing about physical movements.