

Reflective Narrative 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.

Students will implement and reflect upon knowledge they know about assessment. They will reflect upon any problems that may result from assessment and conduct research that is both valid and reliable. Qualitative and quantitative data will be gathered about children and their surroundings through objective observations.

I have grown a lot in my understanding of child and environmental assessment. In my first child development class, Observational Techniques (CHLD 251), I began learning about objectivity and how to objectively assess children in their environment. I was just beginning so my notes weren't very descriptive and sometimes, although rarely, had some opinionated statements. They were short and vague and I didn't really know exactly what I was looking for while observing. After lots of practice in not only my 251 class but also other classes soon after, the quality of my observation notes and understanding of objective assessment grew. In my child development practicum class (CHLD 392) I completed a DRDP, which consisted of more than 40 observation notes. These notes were descriptive, objective and really show my growth from where I started.

Although research and assessment may seem very similar, they are actually very different. Research is conducted to gain new information or to support or replicate previous research that has been conducted. From research you gain facts, quantitative data and qualitative results, that you are able to apply to people outside of the study sample. For example in my "Methods of Inquiry in Child Development" class (CHLD 353), we learned about the different types of research and wrote a research paper based of

previous research and quantitative data that was collected and analyzed. In contrast, assessments are conducted to learn and teach. Results from an assessment will not be generalized to a population but will be used to improve the individual or program about which the data was collected. For example in my “Issues in Assessment for Children and Families” class (CHLD 440), we conducted an assessment in a preschool class. We observed and rated the environment and the teachers and gave suggestions as to how they can improve in certain areas.

The one most important thing that I have learned about assessment is the results are not generalized to a population. At first I kind of put assessment and research together and figured their methods and designs were one in the same. I thought the results from an assessment could be used as research and used to improve things and people outside of the study sample. Now I know that assessment is very different from research and is used to improve learning and teaching for specific individuals or programs.

An area of assessment that I have always struggled to understand and no matter how many times it is explained to me, continue to misunderstand is validity vs. reliability. I know the gist of the two, for example validity is how well the test measures what it was supposed to measure and reliability is how consistent the results of an assessment are, but I am still struggle to understand how to apply it to the assessment and the different types of validity and reliability that there are.

I plan on continuing to grow in my knowledge and experience with assessment because I will most likely end up working in a setting where assessments are performed such as a hospital or teaching setting. I may not necessarily be conducting assessments about children and their environment, but I could be apart of or be helping conduct for

example a staff evaluation. No matter what I decide to do in the future I have no doubt that my knowledge about assessment will continue to grow and I will continue to gain more hands on experience.

Assignment #1

The first assignment I selected that documents my knowledge of child and environmental assessment is my objective individual child observation notes from CHLD 251. This is when I was first learning what assessments were and how to conduct them. For this assignment, I assessed one specific child and wrote down objective observation notes about that child. I chose this assignment because it shows a starting point for how much I've learned. These notes aren't very descriptive and are somewhat vague but they get the point across and are objective, which was the main goal of the assignment. I applied the little information I had learned about assessment and completed the assignment.

Assignment #2

The second assignment I chose was my DRDP observation notes. When comparing this assignment to the last, it is apparent how much I have grown in my knowledge of child and environmental assessment. These notes are detailed, objective and include quotes and interactions with other children as well. When completing this assignment and these observations, I knew exactly what to look for and writing the notes came naturally to me. I didn't need a template or directions; I simply wrote what I saw. This assignment is one of the best examples of how much I have grown.