

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.*

Narrative Purpose: This student learning objective focuses on how to assess children in a variety of assessment techniques such as through qualitative and quantitative and how to improve the lives of children through the results. This student learning objective is about gathering data in order to better understand what is and is not working in a child's environment and what can be done to fix it.

I have grown in a numerous amounts of ways through my Child Development classes. When I first began my Child Development courses, I never realized the importance of assessment in a child's development. When I took my observation techniques course, I was able to learn its importance to understand the child's learning processes. After that, I continued this in my child practicum class where I had to assess one child in the class. This gave me real insight of how children develop through the desired results developmental profile where I observed a child within a classroom during my internship and saw where she was at developmentally in all four domains. This showed me that there is a difference between research and assessment and how one can improve a situation based on the results of an assessment done within the classroom.

I do understand that there is a difference between research and assessment which is something that I did not understand before taking my Child Development classes. Assessment is a way to see how a child is doing developmentally and with the results you are able to make the changes needed to improve the child's life. Through program assessment, you can see how well the program that was implemented is going and whether it is helping the child developmentally. By contrast, research focuses on gaining fundamental knowledge about children and does not focus on a specific thing or person. Through research you are analyzing the data that was gathered and seeing if your hypothesis is supported. Based on the results, you can compare and contrast what you found to previous theories to see if there is any correlation. Both research and

assessment are focused on gaining information, but they differ in what one does with the information. While assessment focuses on improving the lives of children and families, research is solely there to seek out evidence to prove if one's hypothesis is true or false. In my research methods course, I learned how to gather data, develop different types of quantitative and qualitative methods in order to test my research topic, and how to ensure that my research would remain unbiased. In my observation techniques class, I began to learn how to observe children through checklists and write notes objectively. When I got to my child practicum course, I learned how to do a desired result developmental profile and was able to assess a child's development throughout the semester.

I think the most important thing that I have learned in assessments would be how crucial it is to have it within in a classroom. Each student is different in the ways that they learn. I think if we can find ways to accommodate to their needs and make improvements to the classroom environment when necessary it would be a good idea to implement these changes to help the children developmentally. Before taking Child Development classes, I would have never realized how important assessment was to a classroom and for the students within it until I did my inquiry in my child practicum course. In this course, I realized that there were significant changes in children's development and how things changed for the better by making environmental changes.

For me, I took my assessment class online so I feel like I didn't learn too much about assessments. I think what is difficult for me is knowing what the child is capable of doing and then not being able to get any documentation of the level that I believe they are currently at in that point in time. For instance, in my observation technique class, I had to observe from a one way mirror and had to patiently wait for the child to do a specific skill or ability that I needed to

check off from my list. I know from experience when trying to get my desired result developmental profile done in my child practicum course, I had to manipulate certain situations in order to have a better chance of the child doing a certain skill and so I could document his or her level. For example, if I needed the child to complete a fine motor skill, I would suggest doing an arts and crafts activity where as when I was in the observation room, I didn't have this type of advantage.

In order to continue growing in my knowledge of assessment, I would like to constantly be looking to see how I can improve children's lives developmentally and continue documenting and writing objective notes on children in order to see what I can do to help them in any way possible. I also think that it is good to have some background knowledge of what is assessment as I have a better understanding of it. In the future, I may have a job where I will need to know what assessment is and I think that at least knowing the basics will help me with my everyday life within the job.

Assignments

In my observation techniques class, I had to write a lot of objective notes. For my first assignment in this course, I had to choose 5 children in a preschool classroom and describe what they looked like. Instead of putting any kind of judgement into how I observed the child, I just directly observed and stated what happened. Through this assignment, I learned how to do systematic documentation where I wrote the appropriate heading with the name of the child, the date, the location in the classroom in which the situation occurred, and the time. At the end of the assignment, I had to write out the description of the child that I would do all of my assignments on. This assignment displayed my first understandings of how to write objective notes and

helped build the foundation of how to write more objectively later on in my higher level Child Development courses.

In my child practicum course, you are able to see that I made a lot of progress from writing objective notes on a child in observation technique class to writing several objective notes on one child throughout the semester. In this assignment, I had to use the desired result developmental profile to assess one of the children in the classroom and then state at what level they were at on the spectrum for each desired result developmental profile item on the list. You are able to see how much I advanced from my observation techniques class to my child practicum class as I had to document all of the items that my specific child did for each desired result developmental profile. Within this course, I was constantly taking objective notes on two children in the classroom each week so the teachers could tell the children's parents about their progress within the classroom. I had to understand each measure in the desired result developmental profile and find an example of something that the child I was observing did and write an objective note regarding it.