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| ECERS Paper |
| Nikita Skinner & Breanna Cutler |
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**Introduction**

The “Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale” partner observation took place in the observation booth of the Modoc classroom at California State University, Chico. Observations were on November 1st from 1:45-3:20pm and November 8th from 1:50-2:45pm. During the first observation, there were 5 staff and 22 children. There were 5 staff and 19 children during the second observation. The head teacher on duty was Cate. Observers 1 and 2 used the ECERS to evaluate the classroom. The ECERS was designed for preschool and kindergarten classrooms, and is therefore developmentally appropriate for the Modoc (preschool) room. The scale includes a variety of items including room arrangement, space and furnishings, equipment, supervision, staff evaluation, and curriculum. All of the items were scored by observers 1 and 2. The center is open for 9 hours and 45 minutes, or 3:15 for the substantial portion of the day. The observers observed for approximately an hour and a half, which could have affected the outcome of the scores. The observers strived to be as accurate as possible given their allotted time.

**Body**

Observer 1 rated that there was “soft furnishings in addition to cozy area,” while Observer 2 rated that there was not “soft furnishings in addition to cozy area.” This indicator is placed under Item #3, Furnishings for Relaxation, 7.1. Both observers rated the same throughout this item, however, on indicator 7.1, they rated differently. This difference in scoring could be accounted for by the detail orientation of the observers. Observer 1 must have seen or known of other furnishings besides the cozy area that Observer 2 did not. Observer 2 is a student worker in the area of observation, thus she may have a better understanding of what is and isn’t in the room. Observer 2 may also have considered her knowledge to be sufficient, without looking around the room to see there was other “soft furnishings” in the room besides the cozy area.

Observer 1 and 2 also rated differently on Item #5, Space for privacy, indicator 5.1 regarding “seclusion for 1 or two children.” Observer 1 rated that there was seclusion for 1 or two children, while Observer 2 rated there was not. Observer 1 in this case, noticed that there was an outside area for seclusion as well as the inside cozy area and possible other corners of the room where children could be secluded. Observer 2, as mentioned earlier is in ASCDL often and may not have seen children secluded in other areas besides the cozy area. The difference in perspective, may account for the difference in scoring. Neither observer was allowed in the room for observation, but rather in a secluded booth where not everything is visible.

Item #28, Promoting acceptance of diversity, was another area of difference. Indicators 7.1 and 7.2 were both scored “No” by observer 2. Observer 1 may have scored differently due to differences in opinion of how diversity is included in the classroom. Observer 1 also may have 7.1 “Inclusion of diversity as part of daily routines”- Observer 2 recalled daily routines of the classroom through personal experience, and did not feel that diversity was included daily. Although there were some items (dolls of different races, books, etc) that exemplified diversity, observer 2 did not recall diversity through interactions or activities on a regular basis.

7.2 “Activities included to promote understanding and acceptance of diversity”- The same reasoning is true for this indicator. Due to personal experience in the classroom, observer 2 had a different thought process than observer 1.

 Item #29, Supervision of gross motor activities, indicator 7.2 was scored differently. Observer 2 marked “No” while observer 1 marked “Yes”. This indicator is “Staff help with resources to enhance play” For this indicator, observer 1 may have noticed staff behavior/involvement that observer 2 did not. This could also be due to personal opinion rather than an objective observation of the behavior (or lack thereof). Observer 2 based her score off of the examples for the indicator (i.e. staff set up obstacle courses). She did not see staff members setting up anything relative to gross motor skills. Staff that were outside with children were supervising, but were not observed to encourage gross motor skills. It is possible that observer 1 noticed something inside while observer 2 was focused on outdoor activities.

**Summary**

Through the course of this assignment Observer 1 has learned a variety of techniques, material, and knowledge of the ASCDL. This assignment has tested the ability of the observer to watch carefully and objectively. Some techniques learned were the ability to score the ECERS and calculate substantial portion of the day. Material learned was what constitutes child sized furniture, exceptional and appropriate classroom environment, health practices, and safety practices. Observer 1 has also learned the intricacies of a preschool age classroom. The ASCDL has many guidelines to follow in order to be an appropriate space for children. This assignment has shown the observer how to objectively observe then score an Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale. The Scale took many hours to complete and is comprehensive in its rating of an early childhood environment. Through this process of sitting in an observation booth to complete this scale, observer 1 has learned that she would like to have been in the classroom in order to get a better perspective on how the classroom is run and all that it has.

Observer 2 learned about the ECERS for the first time while completing this observation. The scoring method and the process were new to observer 2, so she learned through experience. Observer 2 learned that “environment” does not consist only of the furniture and space provided. When evaluating a classroom environment, other things should be considered, such as atmosphere or mood in the environment, safety/health hazards, adult as well as child provisions, and adaptations for disabilities. This assignment gave observer 2 more practice with objectively observing. It was difficult to remain objective and unbiased due to affiliation with the classroom as a staff member. Observer 2 learned how to calculate substantial portion of the day and subscale scores. The observer also gained experience with critical thinking. She had to think critically about her scoring choices, and think critically about the differences between observers’ scores. Human error, subjectivity, or a simple lack of proof can account for the way different people evaluate environments.

Observers 1 and 2 worked together and equally divided the tasks for this assignment. It was interesting to see the differences and the similarities as the assignment was completed. Both observers now have more experience and knowledge about environmental assessment.

**Table**

Mean Subscale Scores

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| --- | --- | --- |
| 6.12 | 5.62 | 1. Space & Furnishings
 |
| 6.33 | 6.5 | 1. Personal Care
 |
| 6.0 | 6.5 | 1. Language-Reasoning
 |
| 5.33 | 5.11 | 1. Activities
 |
| 6.6 | 6.8 | 1. Interaction
 |
| 7 | 7 | 1. Program Structure
 |
| 5.67 | 5.67 | 1. Parents & Staff
 |

Observer 1 Observer 2