

Norma Osorio
Prof. Dr. Royal B. Fisher
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The Commentary Paper

I had an opportunity this semester to observe children in their learning environments and to observe what developmental domains look like experientially. I observed a toddler, a preschooler, and a school-age child in different environments. I chose Jared the school-age child to write about his development.

Cognitive Development:

1- Jared is having a conversation with his friend. Jared said, "it's easy to build a rocket." This demonstrates his communication skills, his ability to build friendships, and his ability to use manipulatives to represent something else.

2- He told the teacher that his grandma speaks Spanish. This demonstrates his memory skills, his ability to recall stories and his communication skills.

3- Jared was choosing each piece of the legos pieces to build a house and a car. He displays the ability of classification of objects, the use of tools, and creativity.

Language:

1- Jared was able to initiate a conversation with his teacher. He demonstrates his communication skills, his vocabulary skills and his comprehension skills. He used completed sentences.

2- While Jared was playing with Legos he put the dog inside the car and told his teacher “the dog wants to go for a ride”. This demonstrates his vocabulary, his use of eye contact, and he speaks clearly.

3- When Jared asked his teacher if he could go to the manipulative area, and waited for her answer. This demonstrates his ability to take turns, his communication skills, and his ability to follow directions.

Emotional:

1- Jared was playing with his classmates sharing Lego games. This demonstrates his relationship with peers, his impulse control, and his ability to form friendship.

2- Jared was able to do his homework by himself. This demonstrates independence, self regulation, and self discipline.

3- Jared told his classmate it is easy to build a rocket. This demonstrates his self-esteem, his play skills and his motivation to participate in play. .

Social:

1- Jared was able to follow the routine during his afterschool program. This demonstrates his ability to cooperate in a group setting, his ease with transition, and his ability to follow directions.

2- Jared was sitting at the table with two classmates talking and laughing. This made evidence of his social skills, his ability to form friendships, and his empathy for his peers.

3- Jared told her teacher about his grandma. This demonstrates his attachment with his teacher, his ability to interact with others, and his ability to recall events.

Motor:

1- Jared walked to the manipulative area and back to his table. This demonstrates his walking ability, his balance, and his reflexive movements.

2- Jared took his notebook, a pen, and a pencil to do his homework. This demonstrates his ability to hold writing instruments, write sentences, and hand-eye coordination.

3- Jared ate his snack and drank water from a cup. This demonstrates his ability to swallow food, his ability to feed himself, and his facial muscle strength to chew his food.

Sensory processing:

1- Jared was able to read and write when he did his homework. This shows his vision ability, touching skills, and his vestibular skills.

2- Jared ate his snack. He demonstrates his ability to recognize when he is hungry, his tasting skills, and his smelling skills.

3- Jared asked his teacher if he can go to the bathroom. This demonstrates his bladder/bowel sensation skills and his independence to take care of his personal needs..

Activities Of Daily Living:

1- Jared was eating his snack at the after school program. This demonstrates his ability to feed himself, and his ability to use a spoon and a cup.

2- Jared put his jacket on. This shows his ability to get dressed by himself, his ability to recognize his belongings and his mobility skills.

3- Jared was sitting at the table and he got up and walked to the bathroom. This demonstrates his ability to sit, his ability to walk by himself and his ability to use the bathroom by himself.

My Aspects of Culture:

Economy:

The economy was a factor that may have an impact on my development. The school that I attended many years ago taught children the basics of reading, writing, social and natural science, mathematics, and art. It was an elementary school from first to six grade. After six grade, kids needed to go to another town to continue their education. Very few families had the resources to send their children to continue their education.

Culture:

The Mexican culture has a strong value for the family. As long as I remember most families gave preference to sending males to school over girls. Until now many people still believe that women should not pursue a professional career. In many cases, if a woman gets married and has kids, it is very common for that woman to quit her professional career to stay home with the kids.

Religion:

I grew up in a catholic family. I think religion has a big impact on how parents treat their children. Most religions talk about gender differences and purpose in life. On the other hand, it helped me to have faith that there is someone up there that has the power to help me in all situations in my life. This made me a strong person. It also helped me to develop social skills. By reading the bible I learned about moral, ethics, and many other aspects of being a good citizen.

Transportation:

Transportation was a big issue where I used to live. For this reason everything was complicated. The city where we could buy food, clothing, school supplies, etc. was an hour away

from where we lived. When the government wanted to sponsor an enrichment program the teacher had to stay in town because there was transportation to commute back and forth.

Food:

The type of food we used to eat may have had a major impact on my development. The diet consisted of a lot of fresh mainly organic vegetables and fruits. We had meat only once a week. I don't remember drinking fresh milk on a daily basis. I loved vegetables and fruits. I think mexican food is delicious and has good nutrition.

Celebrations:

We have many celebrations in my country. The most important are; The Mexican Independence, The Day of The Dead, and Christmas. To celebrate the Mexican Independence, my school used to do a parade with big images of the heroes who fought for it. And of course there was a lot of traditional food. "The Day of The Dead " is a national celebration. People remember and celebrate the life of the person who passed away. It is a family celebration full of food, drinks, colorful and fun. People make an altar or ofrenda (is a table full of their favorite food, drinks, fruits, or anything the person who passed away used to like). This made a big impact on my cultural identity.

Comparison Of Development:

Ann from infant toddler and Troy from pre-school.

Differences:

language: Ann used sounds, short sentences and body language to communicate. Troy is able to use complete sentences, has a wider vocabulary and comprehends language.

Social/emotional: Ann finds it difficult to share her toys. And she will cry if someone grabs a toy that she wants. Troy in contrast is able to play and share toys with classmates. And he understands that he needs to wait for his turn to play.

Activities of daily living: Ann is not able to dress herself. And she needs help when she uses the bathroom. Troy is able to dress and undress himself, and he needs no help to use the sanitary.

Similarities:

Motor/Fine Motor : Ann and Troy can walk, turn and roll over. They can feed themselves, they are able to walk up and down the stairs. Both of them can hold crayons. They can hold writing instruments, pass objects hand to hand.

Sensory Processing: Ann and Troy are able to use their vision, hearing, tasting, touching, and smelling.

Setting Comparison:

The three settings I observed were similar in many ways. For example, all of them had tables, chairs, a daily schedule, emergency signs, library, artwork on display, crayons, paper, paint, and other manipulative toys. The furniture was child size and had adequate materials and supplies.

The differences between the setting of an infant/toddler classroom and pre-school and school age classroom are as follows. In the infant/toddler classroom there are a lot of colorful age appropriate toys. Most of the furniture is at the children level. There is a changing table. And

a lot of open space. The classroom provides an environment for children to walk around, to climb, to touch, to feel free. This is good for their development.

In the preschool classroom there was no changing table. There was less open space. Instead of toys there were table games, a sign with classroom rules. The environment is focused on getting ready for kindergarten.

In the young school age classroom was a projector and big board. There were no cubbies. The children carry a backpack to keep their materials and the books they need in class. The setting is focused on more advanced learning.

The setting for the infant/toddler classroom provides an environment for children to walk around, to climb, to touch, to feel free. This stage of development is the sensori-motor where children learn by interacting with real people and objects. This is good for their development.

Young school age classroom settings have the conditions for children to engage in a more advanced learning.

Conclusion:

To observe children in their environment was a very enriching experience. I learned about what to expect from children at different stages of their development. I learned about the purpose of the environment in each classroom. It helped me to better understand the similarities and differences of the setting. In addition, writing about my own culture was an enhancement experience as well.

It was difficult to write in detail everything I observed. And to write the comparison between the three observations was challenging for me. However, everything I learned in class

and through the observations of the children help to acquire ideas to implement in my work. And it changed my personal expectations of what to expect from young children.