**Developmental Assessment**

My developmental assessment took place at Westview Elementary school in Platteville, Wisconsin. The school climate was warm and welcoming. The staff was very helpful and friendly, making it a great learning environment. My placement was in a colorful second grade classroom with 25 wonderful students. The students sat in tables of four creating a comfortable and interactive classroom. There was a carpet and smartboard in the front of the room, which was great for whole group discussions. I was able observe one particular student and watch him grow throughout my time working with him.

I chose one of my second grade boys, who is seven years old, to do my developmental assessment on (I am going to call him Child A for confidentiality purposes). I was able to get to know this student particularly well because he was in my Leveled Literacy Intervention group. This group was created to bring students up to grade level reading competency. Child A didn’t have a learning disability or an IEP. He was just a little behind in reading and struggled with math as well. He was an awesome student to work with because he loved school and worked harder than any other kid I have ever worked with.

Child A’s physical development didn’t change much during the time I spent with him because he was physically well developed when I met him. His large motor skills were more developed than his fine motor skills. I observed his large motor skills at recess, where the students were moving around all the time. He ran around easily and was one of the best soccer players. This was also observed in gym class and on wellness day, where I noticed his large motor skills were above most of his classmates. I could tell he preferred physical games and activities because he was good at them. Child A was very competitive, so he had the drive to do well at any physical activity he was participating in. When he was given an opportunity to be active, Child A loved it and that had to do with having well developed large motor skills.

Child A showed improvement in his fine motor skills, but still has room to get better. At the beginning of my placement, he was sloppy with cutting, pasting, and writing. For example, when he wrote in his math journal, I often had to ask him what he was writing because it was messy. As time went on, Child A’s fine motor skills continued to improve. For example, we made stockings my last week at my placement, and his was neat and I could tell he was very proud of it. His improvement had to do with practicing the tasks that had him using small motor muscles, such as cutting and writing. It also had to do with the pride he took in his school work. Child A can still improve on some of these small motor skills, with continued practice and hard work.

Next, I am going to discuss Child A’s cognitive and language development. He demonstrated development of his knowledge and abilities in reading. I was able to see first-hand his improvement in reading because I taught him during Leveled Literacy Intervention (LLI). Child A began reading at level H, which is below grade level. The books he is now reading are at level K, which is at grade level. I felt like this was a huge accomplishment, and it was rewarding for both of us. During the time of my placement, his accuracy as reader has greatly increased and his vocabulary has expanded. Child A can still improve on his fluency at level K books, but that will come with time and practice.

In math, I have also observed Child A increase his knowledge and abilities. He now has the important foundational skills developed completely, which will help expand his math skills. These skills include adding, subtracting, recognizing patterns, and understanding how to count money. Child A still asked for help on word problems because he needed help deciding what skill he needed to use to get the answer. With guidance, he can get decided what skill is needed to solve the problem, but eventually he will have to be able to do this on his own.

An important aspect of cognitive and language development is evidence of memory and comprehension. In reading, Child A has progressively developed memorization and comprehension skills. He has memorized many high frequency words, in order to strengthen his reading skills. I have observed this when working with him in LLI because he is no longer mixing up words like “a” and “the.” In math, Child A has developed his memorization skills as well because he doesn’t have to add or subtract using his fingers anymore. His comprehension has also taken great strides. He can now not only retell a story, but he can also compare parts of the story to his life. Child A has improved both in comprehension and memorization, which has greatly contributed to developing his overall cognitive and language skills.

By examining Piaget’s stages of cognitive development, at the age of seven, Child A should be at the Concrete Operations Stage. During this stage, a child can reverse operations and they think more logically, but they are limited to thinking about concrete objects. Child A has developed in math so that he can easily reverse simple problems and think logically about the patterns he sees. For example, he knows that 7+3=10 and 3+7=10 as well. From there he is able to figure out that 10-7=3. Piaget says that students at this age should be able to think logically. I have observed this when asking Child A to retell stories. He is able to logically go through the story in sequential order and tell me what he has read. Child A is also able to answer questions based on facts that he has read. Overall, he is at the appropriate stage for his age according to Piaget stages of cognitive development at the Concrete Operations Stage.

When Child A was interacting with others his use of language changed depending on the environment he was speaking in. When he was talking in front of the whole class, he was very soft-spoken. He would not give an answer, unless he knew it was correct. When he did give a response, it was usually very short. When Child A was in a casual environment, such as at recess, he spoke much louder with more confidence. He did not always use perfect grammar, but he was able to carry good conversations. For example, one time I heard him say, “We was going to the park.” Although, he doesn’t always use proper English, it is important he continues to have conversations to help him develop his oral language skills.

Next, I am going to discuss how Child A has developed emotionally and socially. His identity continued to emerge throughout the semester. The week when I really saw him come out of his shell was when he was the “superstar” of the week. He worked with his mom to write up a presentation all about himself. He spoke clearly and confidently as he told the class about himself. I was in the back of the room, and stopped what I was doing to listen to him speak because he was so sure of himself. Child A is still quiet in some social situations, but he is friendly and his identity will continue to emerge.

Child A is emotionally well developed from what I have observed. He doesn’t get in fights with others, besides little arguments about someone taking his eraser or something simple like that. He doesn’t get overly frustrated even when he doesn’t get something right away. His personality is very calm and soft-spoken, but at the same time he is hard working. He seeks help and never gives up on school work.

Child A interacted exceptionally well with others. He didn’t have one best friend in the class, but he got along with everyone and was well liked by the class. Child A was in a group with three other students, where he was cooperative. He was able to settle little disputes and only tattled a couple of times on others (tattling was a big issue in our room). Child A interacted and communicated well with teacher. He was respectful to me and the other teachers. He was also not afraid to ask for help. He was soft-spoken, as stated above, but he was still able to communicate any problems he was having. Child A had no discipline issues because he was quiet in class, which made him a teachable student.

Vygotsky has this idea of Scaffolding, which refers to teachers gradually releasing the responsibility to the students. Child A responded okay to scaffolding in math, but struggled at times. My placement teacher would do whole group math work and explanations, then release the students to do individual work. Sometimes Child A needed extra explanation (one-on-one), but then he was able to figure it out. In LLI he responded very well to scaffolding. We would re-read stories from the previous day. Child A would practice on his own and re-read the story more accurately and fluently after we released the responsibility to just him. Scaffolding and releasing the responsibility was great way for Child A to gain confidence in his skills.

Erik Erikson believes children of a sense of initiative and industry. Students should need to start taking initiative by accomplishing tasks and facing challenges. They should also develop a sense of industry by learning new skills. Child A did a fantastic job taking the initiative by asking questions to learn new skills or review old ones. He had no problem asking several questions throughout a class period. One day, the teacher said if anyone was struggling to stay in the front with me for extra help. Child A took the initiative to work with me, in order to understand what we were working on. I admired his will to accomplish his school by taking the initiative to get it done.