Introduction

For this project, I interviewed three different people of three different ages. The ages ranged from six to eighteen years old. I gave my interviews all in person and all in different locations. I took my notes on my computer. I asked each individual eight questions. The questions I asked were evaluating the cognitive, physical, social emotional and area of interests in these individuals.

My first interview took place with my 12 year old brother, Jeremy. Jeremy is in seventh grade. The interview took place sitting on the couch in our family room. We were both very comfortable with the environment because it is our house. Jeremy typically doesn’t like to help me with things so, it would be interesting to see what his answers would be.

The next person I interviewed was my six year old cousin, Colton. The interview took place at his kitchen table. I don’t know Colton as well so, it was going to be more of a challenging interview. Luckily Colton is very easy going.

The last person I interviewed was my boyfriend Nate. Nate is 18 and fits into the adolescent age. I interviewed him in his dorm room when I visited him one weekend. He was the easiest to interview, because we know each other so well.

The purpose of doing this project is to get a better understanding of the different stages of child development with three different age groups. Before I started this project I thought my biggest challenged would be my brother because he likes to give me random answers. My questions were all different for the different age ranges, but they all entailed the same subject just reworded.

Interviewing Process

For my first interview, my brother. I already knew a lot about him so, I tried to gear my questions toward more of his interests. I asked all three of my participants the same type of questions just in a different way. The only exception to that was with their area of interest. Everyone had two separate questions about their area of interest. The first question I asked was an easy and simple question:

Me: “What do you like to do on your free time?”

Jeremy: “ I like to watch TV and play games on my computer.”

I started with this question because I knew it would be an easy way for him to open up to me. This question helped me understand what he likes to do and helped me measure what he likes to do. When I got to questions about school, his response was montoned and he didn’t seem to care about what he was doing in school. I found this out by, a couple questions:

Me: “Do you spend a lot of time on homework every night?”

Jeremy: “yes, about three hours daily.”

Me: “Is that helping you get good grades?”

Jeremy: “Nope”

Me: “Why, would you say you’re not challenging yourself enough, explain?”

Jeremy: “Yep, but that’s because I just don’t care”

These questions evaluated Jeremy’s cognitive stage because, it shows how he’s growing in intellectual ways. This showed me that he doesn’t care about school, but more about what his after school activities are. Which seem to be just playing games in his room. The cognitive stage is described as, “development involving the ways that growth and change in intellectual capabilities influence a person’s behavior.” (Feldman) In middle childhood children are going through the third stage of Piaget’s Theory of Cognitive Development, this is called the concrete operational stage . This stage spans throughout the middle childhood stage and is how children's logic is formed. The concrete operational stage is where children start thinking logically and their thinking becomes more sophisticated. (Kendra Cherry, Sep. 21, 2018) Luckily I know Jeremy very well so, i’ve seen him grow up and how even though he does not care about school currently his thinking is still getting more intelligent. Jeremy used to not even do his homework, now i’m seeing a huge improvement in his performance at school.

The last set of questions I asked Jeremy pretainted to his physical development stage. physical development is described as, “development involving the body's physical makeup, including the brain, nervous system, muscles, and senses, as well as the need for food, drink, and sleep.” (Feldman; Child Development 8e) I figured out what Jeremy thought about his physical health by asking,

Me: “How tall are you?”

Jeremy: “ I think around 5’10”

Me: “How tall are you compared to your other classmates?”

Jeremy: “I think i’m a little taller than the average student, but there are a lot of students the same height as I am.”

From being at Jeremy’s different school functions and meeting some of Jeremy’s friends, I have noticed that Jeremy is one of the tallest guys his age. The reason Jeremy might be taller than his other classmates is because he is older for his grade. Jeremy’s typically of the oldest in his class because, my mom didn’t want him to be the youngest in his grade because he was a premature baby. Premature babies typically have problems with learning, getting along with others, communicating with others and taking care of themselves. (March of the dimes, October 2013)

With all the questions I asked I realized what Jeremy’s true area’s of interest were. I saw he doesn’t like going to school, but he doesn’t mind doing homework and learning new information. He likes to workout just with his friends, doing simple things like pushups and light running. He also loves playing video games, but with his friends.

My next interview was with my boyfriend Nate. I found that he was the easiest to work with because he is eighteen, in college and really wanted to help me with my project. I started out the interview with asking about college:

Me: “How is college going right now?’

Nate: “Truly not great, it’s not how I thought college would be”

Me: “Why would you say it isn’t going how you thought?”

Nate: “Because I’m not making as many friends as I thought and I don’t like the dorm i’m in”

Me: “Are you at least getting good grades?”

Nate: “Yes, i’m not doing as well as I did in High School, but overall I’m doing well in my classes”

Me: “ Since you’re doing well what would you say helps with that””

Nate: “I try to study a little bit a day and not wait till the last minute for my assignments”

After listening to Nate’s responses, I realized he is the farthest developed out of all the people I interviewed. This makes the most sense considering he is the oldest and in the adolescent stage. Throughout the interview I realized Nate was in the realistic period which is, “the stage in late adolescence and early adulthood during which people explore career options through job experience or training, narrow their choices, and eventually make a commitment to a career.” (Feldman; Child Development 8e)

For Nate’s Cognitive and Social Emotional development it seemed that he was far developed, but one thing that stood out to me was how he was very unhappy in college. This could be caused because college is a new and scary place for anyone. Trying to find your place is very difficult for anyone. Nate is doing very well in college, but his issues revolve around and his social side of development. With living in a new place adolescents are driven to try to make new friends and worry about what everyone thinks of them. At the same time they are trying to distance themselves from their parents to gain independence. (Feldman; Child Development 8e)

For Nate’s Physical development I still wanted to check about how he was compared to other people his age so, I asked:

Me: “How tall are you and do you like the height you’re at right now?”

Nate: “5’8 and I used to not be, but I grew about six inches last year and at least i’m not that short anymore”

Nate is around the average height of a man, but it seems that he went through an adolescent growth spurt last year which is, “a period of rapid growth in height and weight during adolescence.” (Feldman; Child Development 8e) Nate also mentioned how he doesn’t exercise as much as he used to in High School. This could be because with college there’s a lot more work than High School and not enough time to work out. He says now he plays racquetball in the gym but, how it is mainly just to have fun.   
 Lastly I interviewed Colton, he was the youngest and was the one I was most worried for. I started out the interview with simple questions on what his interests are,

Me: “What is your favorite activity to do?”

Colton: “Going outside and playing with friends”

From this I realized how I would gear the rest of the interview, I then went into asking questions about school and what he does outside of school:

Me: “What is your favorite part of school?”  
Colton: “My favorite part of school is recess because I like to play with my friends”

Me: “Do you and your friends like to exercise?”

Colton: “ No”

These questions helped me measure his social emotional and cognitive development because when Colton told me that he didn’t exercise I knew that wasn’t true because I know he plays football and soccer. This also shows me that Colton is currently not interested in the learning aspect of school, but more the social interactions between his friends. This is completely normal for children in the early childhood stage. According to Psychology Today’s article, “Why a Child’s Social-Emotional Skills are So Important” by, Joe Magliano he states that children during early childhood development should start acquiring the basics of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision making skills. These skills are important because they will help children later on in life in their academics and professional lives. I continued to evaluate his social emotional stage by asking,

Me: “What makes you happy?”

Colton: “My family makes me happy and also the presents I get when it’s christmas and my birthday”

Me: “What makes you sad”

Colton: “When daddy tells me it’s time to go to bed and it’s only 7, also when I don’t get to watch my favorite tv show Doc McStuffins.”

From this I observed that Colton is very social with his interactions with his friends and family. He loves the social aspects of playing sports with his friends, but also watching TV with his family.

Lastly in Colton’s interview I asked him the same sort of question that I did for the others which is something pertaining to their height. This time I asked:

Me: “How tall are you?

Colton: “45 inches”

Me: What do you think the average height is of someone your age”

Colton: “I think my friends are also as tall as me”  
 I noticed that Colton was not hesitate at all throughout the interview. One thing I noticed when I was leaving the interview was how Colton and his mom would tap on their hearts and look at each other. This was a symbolic function to show they loved each other.

Discussion

After interviewing all three participants I realized there were many variations of how they would answer. For their physical development everyone of them was in a different stage in their life. I figured this out by asking each one of them about their height and how they felt they were compared to others. Oddly enough Jeremy was the tallest, then Nate and Colton was the shortest. One thing I noticed about their physical development is that they all liked to exercise just in different ways. Comparing their cognitive abilities I asked them all questions about school. I noticed that they all seemed to enjoy school, but Colton enjoyed the social aspect more than the learning portion of school. Jeremy enjoyed doing homework and learning, but didn’t enjoy actually going to school. For Nate he just seemed like he was doing what he can to be successful in college.

One difference I noticed between everyone was their social emotional stage. For Colton he was super happy with everything in his life. Nate on the other hand was not as happy with his life. He seemed a little depressed about where he was in his life. Jeremy just simply didn’t care, but I think that is solely because he is a middle school boy just trying to figure himself out.

According to Piaget, he has four main points to understand what happens during cognitive development. These are, Schemas, Assimilation, Accommodation and Equilibration. First a schema is described as, “both the mental and physical actions involved in understanding and knowing. Schemas are categories of knowledge that help us to interpret and understand the world.” (Kendra Cherry, October 15, 2018) When children take in new information into account, for example when Colton goes to school and learns more about his fractions he is assimilating his new knowledge with knowledge he's already learned. When modifying schemas because of new experiences it is known as accommodation. How children can move from one stage to the next is called equilibration. (Kendra Cherry, October 15, 2018)

Vygotsky’s theory was also present in all the interviews I composed. Vyogky’s theories, “stress the fundamental role of social interaction in the development of cognition, as he believe strongly that community plays a central role in the process of making meaning.” (Saul Mcleod, 2018) In other ways social interactions begins the process of cognitive development. Children tend to pick up on how their family, peers and teachers act. Therefore they begin to act similar to them.

Even though there were challenges throughout the interviews, I feel that I made a good comparison to Vygotsky’s and Piaget’s theories. If I had the opportunity to go back and make new observations I probably would have asked my participants the same questions because at times it was hard to compare answers when my participants didn’t have the exact same questions. Overall the “Three Ages Project” taught me more about the how the different stages of development work in actual people.

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