Violet Willis

April 24, 2017

EDUC 245-50

3 Ages Project

“I have neither given nor received help on this assignment nor am I aware of any infraction of the Honor Code”

**Abstract**

This paper is used to provide more information on the three topical areas of development. Three different individuals were interviewed, one from each of the three main stages of development. Each interview contained three or four questions on each different area of development. Each interviewee will then be connected and compared to different theorists and their corresponding perspectives.

**Introduction**

Three separate interviews were conducted for this project. Christopher, a six-year-old boy in the Early Childhood stage of development, Julia, an eleven-year-old girl in the Later Childhood stage of development, and Emily, an eighteen-year-old girl in the Adolescence stage of development. Christopher and Julia were chosen because they were the interviewer’s cousins and Emily was chosen because she was a high school friend of the interviewer. Each interview was conducted in person and the responses were recorded in a practically word for word manner. These interviews were conducted in order to further assess and find real world examples of the theories and perspectives found in Child Development by Robert S. Feldman. As a future teacher I found this helpful to better understand how students grow and develop in all different areas.

**Interviews**

Feldman explains the three different topical areas of Child Development, physical, cognitive, and social development. He defines physical development as “examining the ways in which the body’s makeup—the brain, nervous system, muscles, and senses, as well as the need for food, drink, and sleep—helps determine behavior” (Feldman, 4). He defines cognitive development as “seeking to understand how growth and change in intellectual capabilities influence a person’s behavior” (Feldman, 4). Lastly he defines social development to be “the way in which individuals’ interactions with others grow, change and remain the same over the course of life (Feldman, 4). The information found in each interview provides further understanding of the three topical areas of development.

When asked questions regarding physical development, Christopher gave vague responses. He gave a couple examples of exercise and why it was important, but it was not until he was asked cognitive questions that he began to give more detailed and informative answers. When asked to give reasons why he feels he is unique he said “I like helping people with things […] God made me this way.” When asked about the social aspect of his life, Christopher began to think about his answers more thoroughly. He discussed the reasons he liked his friends and why it was important to share. He said “[Sharing] is showing that you’re being nice. Being nice gets you more friends.” Christopher gave the bare minimum amount of information and often required more prompting in order to relay more information. He clearly has more room to grow in all areas of development.

Julia’s responses gave a little more insight to her growth and experience over the years. She gave similar responses to the questions regarding physical development. She had further understanding of the importance of exercise, “Getting outside and exercising is important to be healthy.” When addressing her social life and the importance of different social aspects she had more experiences to go by. She said “[Having friends] is good for your social life. Without them you’d be lonely […] Sharing is important because you don’t want to be greedy. It makes you happier because you get to help other people.” When it came to the cognitive and social aspects of development she had deeper answers. When asked what love meant to her she responded with “Love is when you have a really strong connection. You relate in a lot of ways so you love each other.” Christopher said he did not love his friends, he just liked them, but Julia has had more experience and has developed deeper relationships with her friends and explain that she did love her friends.

Emily’s answers provided even more detail and explanation reflecting her life experience. Both of Emily’s answers to the social and cognitive development questions were well thought out and explained thoroughly. When asked to describe the characteristics of her best friend she said “she’s such a nice person and she always listens and doesn’t judge me and she’s super lovable and kind. She’s always there for you whenever you need her.” Emily’s answers reflect more on the personality aspects of her friend rather than the physical traits and the similar interests they may have, like Julia and Christopher discussed in their responses. Emily’s response when asked about her definition of love was “Love is warm. Love is compromising; protecting them by doing what you think is best even if it hurts you or them. Love is something really nice. Love is always caring for someone and respecting their opinions and beliefs even if they differ from your own; putting their needs before yours and making sure you’re there every step of the way.” Emily has had more experience forming deep connections and mature relationships and she has also felt the pain of losing someone she loves which provides her with more knowledge of understanding what real love is. When describing herself she was able to explain more of the cognitive and personality aspects of herself. She said “I had ADHD, so random outbursts happen often. I think I’m funny sometimes…” She was a little more apprehensive about giving characteristics about herself compared to Julia and Christopher who seemed to have more self-confidence than Emily.

**Discussion**

Each of these interviewees gave different answers to each developmental area. However, as the ages increased the answers became more detailed and distinguished. For Christopher, he seemed to have the most understanding of the social aspects of life as well as a foundation of cognitive ideals. Julia seemed very evened out in her development in each of the topical areas, perhaps physical more than others. Emily had a solid understanding of all the topical areas. She gave mature answers and was able to fully explain her thoughts and feelings.

Bronfenbrenner’s theory of the bioecological approach relates well with the results of the interviews conducted. His approach explains the concept of having different levels of environments from which one is influenced. As an individual grows they are continuously influenced by all the levels of their environment. As they grow and develop, their levels are influenced as they change atmospheres and encounter more experiences.

Some answers are not congruent with Bronfenbrenner’s approach; all of the responses regarding physical development were similar in many ways, in a sense, proving that one’s physical development does not change as the different levels change with one’s environment.

It has been found that social development can somewhat be linked to an individual’s cognitive development. As an individual associates and interacts with other’s both their social skills and their cognitive abilities are developed. California’s Learning and development Foundations (2017) explain in great detail this relationship. They write “Professionals working in child care settings can support the social-emotional development of infants and toddlers in various ways, including interacting directly with young children, communicating with families, arranging the physical space in the care environment, and planning and implementing curriculum” (Socio-Economical). Having these interactions early on helps individuals develop a foundation for not only their social abilities, but they begin to explore more cognitive ideals as well.

**Recommendations and Conclusion**

Christopher has the most room for improvement and growth in his development, especially since he is only six. It is important for him to continue to be exposed to new situations in which he can grow in all areas of development. Cognitive and social are the two most important areas for this, physical will mostly happen naturally. As an individual goes from the early development stage to later development the development of their social skills becomes more prevalent. The first few years of a child’s education are crucial to the proper development of both their social and cognitive abilities. Ellen S. Peisner-Feinburg (2001) explains this in the collaborative article published on the Wiley Online Library. She writes, “Observed classroom practices were related to children's language and academic skills, whereas the closeness of the teacher – child relationship was related to both cognitive and social skills, with the strongest effects for the latter” (Relation of preschool). The classroom setting gives students an environment to grow in their cognitive abilities as well as their social skills. It is important for teachers to understand the role they play in a child’s development. The relationship they build with a student can affect their social development.

Each of the three topical areas of development are prevalent in the lives of every person, the individuals interviewed were of no exception. While their responses were not surprising, it is clear where they are in their stages of development as well as gives more understanding of some theories. It was occasionally difficult to get enough information from some of the individuals interviewed, but that was easily solved with a few follow up questions. Since these were first hand interviews, I believe that these observations are very valid. The interviews were conducted face to face giving that extra involvement of being able to read the individual as the interview took place. The only thing still unknown and further researched would be the effect of ADHD on development. The last participant, Emily, mentioned that she had ADHD, but no questions were ever brought up on how that may have affected her development, thus sparking an interest to ask more questions and research that area closer.

Works Cited

California Learning and Development Foundations (March 7,2017). *Socio-Emotional Development Domain.* Retrieved from http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/re/itf09socemodev

Ellen S. Peisner-Feinburg, Margaret Burchinal, Richard Clifford (September 2001). *The Relation of Preschool Child-Care Quality to Children's Cognitive and Social Developmental Trajectories through Second Grade.* Retrieved from http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/1467- 8624.00364/full.

Feldman, R. S. (2015). *Child Development* (7th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.