

# Psychology

Family



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Introduction to Psychology Written Assignment 03/31 Introduction to Psychology Written Assignment Like most behaviors in the study of developmental psychology, a child's ability to perform in the classroom is a complex interaction between genetic and environmental factors. Some factors, like a high baseline of learning capacity or an environment conducive to learning, increase a child's ability to score high on tests. Other factors, like a learning disability or a distracting environment, decrease a child's ability to perform. The focus of some psychologists' work is to determine what these factors are and to what degree they help (or hinder) a child's ability. Shield and Dockrell (2008) found that schoolchildren exposed to various kinds of environmental noise performed significantly worse on standardized tests than those children who were not exposed to noise. Additionally, as children got older in the cross-sectional study, the effect was greater. This effect of noise on test scores was consistent between children of different language abilities, special education needs, and social class. From this study, one can gain a clearer picture of the maximum noise in a classroom that still maintains a high level of academic achievement for children. Another physical causal factor on child performance is the use of technology. Increasingly, schools utilize computers in the classroom to enhance learning. However, technology tends to reduce motivation in the classroom, which in turn reduces learning ability (Brand, 2010). In terms of nurture, children can be helped or hindered by the attitude that their teacher has toward their capability. In Gregory (2000), one can see the effect of how the teacher thought the author was "stupid" and "a troublemaker" (p. 144). Children internalize these kinds of attitudes. In addition, children tend to internalize their at-home experiences in terms of basis their beliefs in their

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abilities on how their parents treat them or express feelings toward them. This can negatively affect a child, or positively, depending on their home life.

2. From the ages of seven to twelve, the psychoanalytic psychologist Erik Erikson identified a psychosocial crisis that stands at the fundamental level of a child's existence. It is a stage in which the child is beginning his transition into adulthood and therefore feels the need to become industrious (or "competent") as opposed to the whimsical notion of all-day play. Children are becoming far more individualized than at previous stages of their life. They begin to grasp more abstract concepts that adults understand intuitively, such as space and time. Reading, writing, and speaking become primary learning tasks and moral decision-making becomes available. As a result, children will use this time to start disobeying their parents, who they increasingly see as equals to themselves (Isabella & Diener, 2010). Erikson imagined that self-confidence develops primarily through this stage, especially since children are developing a sense of independence and individual identity. He used this idea to justify using activities that allow children to enhance their intellectual capabilities through language, mathematics, and art. Praising children for their accomplishments is essential in allowing children to develop that self-confidence. If they are not praised, then they tend to develop a feeling or attitude of inferiority relative to their peers. This is where the distinction between inferiority and competence comes into play. In Gregory (2000), one can once again see the effect of berating a child into embarrassment by a teacher, which the student looked up to. During this crucial stage in a child's development, according to Erikson, it can prove detrimental if a teacher does not take the right steps to ensure the child is praised for his achievements. In one

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instance, the teacher compliments his ability to make money. However, once the teacher forgets to call on him at one point. This is a huge blow to his self-esteem overall. By refusing to listen to the narrator, the teacher is downplaying his existence, which is the opposite of what the teacher should be doing. 3. In the New York Times on April 1, 2011, it was reported that certain illnesses are more prevalent among older homosexual adults than they are among heterosexual adults of the same advanced age. Among the problems more likely to be faced by homosexuals in their old are related to chronic physical pain and mental health (Rabin, 2011). The finding came from the California Health Interview Survey, which is the United States' largest health survey. It gathered data collected in 2003, 2005, and 2007 in conjunction with the Center for Health Policy Research at the University of California, Los Angeles. Particularly in the 50- to 70-age bracket of gay and bisexual men, rates of high blood pressure, diabetes, and physical disability were reported, along with a 45 percent higher likelihood of psychological distress and an extreme rate of HIV/AIDS. These results were mirrored in the older lesbian and bisexual women sample in the survey. Part of the conclusion of the study is that it is important to raise awareness of these health complications within the wider homosexual community of California (Rabin, 2011). One thing in particular that one should be critical of is the bias of this research. Overall, it sounds very negative directed toward the homosexual community, so before accepting the results on face value, it may be important to question why the study was conducted in the first place, who funded the research, and how does the research play into the extensive debates over gay marriage in California. All of these questions are relevant in the context of a politically relevant piece of medical research.

Another consideration one ought to make before accepting these results is whether the New York Times sensationally reported the results of the research, or whether it is an accurate picture of what the researchers actually concluded. One could find out this information by researching its source: the actual health policy research brief released by the UCLA Center for Health Policy Research (2011) Works Cited Brand, L. (2010). The effect of technology on attention and concentration within the classroom context. Johannesburg: University of South Africa. Gregory, D. (2000). Shame. In D. Sattler, & V. Shabntay, *Psychology in Context: Voices and Perspectives* (pp. 143-145). Boston: Houghton-Mifflin. Isabella, R., & Diener, M. (2010). Self-representations of social and academic competence: contextual correlates in middle childhood. New York: Association for Childhood Education International. Rabin, R. (2011, April 1). Disparities: Illness more prevalent among older gay adults. Retrieved April 2, 2011, from The New York Times: [http://www.nytimes.com/2011/04/05/health/research/05gay.html?\\_r=1&ref=health](http://www.nytimes.com/2011/04/05/health/research/05gay.html?_r=1&ref=health) Shield, B., & Dockrell, J. (2008). The effects of environmental and classroom noise on the academic attainments of primary school children. *The Journal of the Acoustical Society of America*, 123, 133-144. Wallace, S., Cochran, S., Durazo, E., & Ford, C. (2011, March). The health of aging lesbian, gay and bisexual adults in California. Retrieved April 2011, from UCLA Center for Health Policy Research: <http://www.healthpolicy.ucla.edu/pubs/files/aginglgbpb.pdf>