

Cognitive development and psychosocial development

[Psychology](#), [Psychotherapy](#)



Case Study1: Cognitive Development and Psychosocial Development

The first case study shows Ms. Arlington's as she interacts with Noah who is a child in her kindergarten class. This particular case gives an interesting perspective on how the views of Jean Piaget and Erik Erickson may be understood in respect to situations in the real world. The view of the situation that Piaget would most likely adopt is that Noah struggles to come to terms with the objects and relationships that exist within his environment. He does this through the apprehension and processing of new information. Erickson's view would most likely be along the lines of placing Noah in a developmental stage in which growth is attained through meeting and overcoming crises (Piaget, 2000, p. 115; Woolfolk, 2007, p. 26, 67).

The Theory of Cognitive Development propounded by Piaget places Noah in developmental stage known as preoperational (Bybee & Sund, 1990, p. 65; Piaget, 2000, p. 44). This preoperational stage of development grants Noah the ability to make directional judgments as a method of facilitating the carrying out of basic processes toward a predetermined result. However, at this stage it is difficult for Noah to conceive the perspective of another human being, since he still retains a certain amount of egocentrism (Woolfolk, 2007, p. 30). An example of this difficulty with transferring points of view is found in his conception of the "bunny around the tree song" that he learns at school. He uses this song as a mnemonic device to help him recall the steps for tying his shoes. In this way he demonstrates his ability to think linearly as a method of getting from loose to tied laces. Yet, the assimilation and accommodation concepts taught by Piaget also find examples here

(Woolfolk, 2007, p. 29). Noah is already familiar with a similar song sung by his mother known as “Bunny foo foo.” This song exists within his schema before the teacher sings him the new bunny song. Once the new song is being sung, it immediately triggers a response in his brain that allows him to make the connection between the two songs and then modify it to accommodate the new ideas found in “Bunny around the tree.” This represents the child’s cognitive ability to adapt lessons from one context to another (Piaget, 2000, 59).

After being given a minor amount of prompting, Noah comes to the realization and understanding of individuals’ ability to fill more than just one role in life. The schema that he uses to understand the multiple roles of his teacher is the fact that his own father is known to occupy the position of father as well as fireman. Only after this realization is Noah able to grasp the fact that his teacher might also be someone’s mother (Erickson, 1980, p. 39; Piaget, 2000; p. 59, 60). However, the schema to which Noah applies is not automatically stimulated as at this stage Noah finds it difficult at this stage to see things from another person’s perspective (Erickson, 1993, p. 86). For the example in which he sees Ms. Arlington only as his teacher, one finds that he doesn’t think about her having any other role outside of the one she plays in his world. It is she who has to direct him to the idea of his father that lay in his schema. She points out the fact that though his dad plays the role of father, he also becomes a fireman in certain context. Therefore, the lesson is extended to include the fact that his teacher may also occupy the role of someone’s mother. Egocentrism is evident in the manner in which Noah responds at first to the idea of Ms. Arlington’s filling different roles. This

stage is also described by Piaget and mention made of the centred nature of the Noah's ego (2000, p. 13). However, his extension of the concept of dual roles illuminated by his father demonstrates again the ability of the child to take lessons from one context and apply them to another (Piaget, 2000, p. 59).

The place that Erickson would grant Noah at this level would be the psychosocial stage of Initiative versus Guilt (Erickson, 1993, p. 53, 255). The learning, understanding and execution of independence is crucial at this stage, and no must adjust to the need for more assertion without becoming overly aggressive in the process (Woolfolk, 2007, p. 67). Encouragement from Ms. Arlington comes in the form of promoting the proper development and balance of these behaviors. She does this through encouraging him to learn and to become more and more independent through learning. In so doing, he makes use of his ability to query situations in order to avoid or combat over-defensive attitudes. She also reinforces his importance by finding common ground before disagreeing with Noah. Therefore, she accedes that the songs are both about bunnies, but proceeds to point out where they deviate. She also does this through sharing stories about her own knowledge of the song, so that she might reinforce his perspective. This teaches Noah that although there are many things that he has not grasped, he has the chance to learn (Erickson, 1993, p. 219).

Case Study 2: Identity, Parenting Styles, Heath, and Wellness

Ideas can be brought to bear upon the case of Alexa and Mandy. These women and their problems fall into categories based on age and type of

problems they face. They may be categorized according to developmental stages and parenting styles. The developmental category into which both ladies fall, according to the ideas propounded by Erickson, is the Identity versus Confusion stage. This comes about as a result of the large degrees of pressure that each currently undergoes. They both strive to identify with a certain group or individual (Erickson, 1993, p. 261; Woolfolk, 2007, p. 67). Alexa senses the need to become identified with Quinn, as she desires to find herself worthy of him. Mandy too senses a need, but her need is to be seen and regarded as important within her given social context. These women both attempt to achieve this level of identity through their actions as a method of establishing a platform on which to construct the rest of their lives (Woolfolk, 2007, p. 67, 70).

The stressful and convoluted situations that Alexa faces give the impression that should these circumstances persist, Alexa would end up testing its limits until something drastic takes place. She may eventually be discovered lying or committing some other infraction that forces her to a point where she must accept the assistance from her parents. The majority of teenagers are found to behave in ways that are similar to this, and this form of rebellion is usually succeeded by an understanding (in later years) of the intentions of their parents. This particular example of Alexa is reminiscent of the theory of identity posited by James Marcia as it regards moratorium (Woolfolk, 2007, p. 71). Alexa appears to be struggling with her ability to choose morally, as she seeks to become identified with her boyfriend Quinn. She currently regards the relationship with Quinn more highly than she does the moral principles

she has been taught. This reflects a normal stage, as she encounters alternatives and learns to make the proper choices.

The parenting style that is adopted by Alexa's parents is authoritative and is adequately defined by Baumrind in the theory on parenting (Baumrind, 1971; Woolfolk, 2007, p. 74). Alexa makes Mandy aware that at one point in the past she had enjoyed an relationship of openness and trust with her parent. She had enjoyed the warmth they showed to each other and the level of communication that they achieved as a family unit. However, her teenage years have brought with them the appearance of a stricter attitude by her parents toward her. Such concerns that they have for her as a teenager have caused them to give her a curfew and check on her while she's at her friend's house. Yet, they also seem to be accepting of her growing autonomy and need for individuality. This can be seen through their willingness to speak to Mandy's parent about arranging a sleepover. The fear that Alexa shows about asking for a curfew extension is not based on her belief in her parents' irrationality. Rather, she knows that such a request would warrant a very good explanation—one that she does not have. She desires to be with Quinn very much, and lying presents itself as an opportunity that will grant her what she desires. However, maturity will also take care of some of these problems, as she will become more capable of dealing with difficult situations and more deserving of increased trust.

The parenting style exhibited by Mandy's parents is one described by Baumrind as neglectful (Baumrind, 1971; Woolfolk, 2007, p. 76). The statement made by Alexa that "they never seem to be around" is very

telling. Mandy is able to engage in any activity she desires without having a meaningful discussion with them about it beforehand. However, this means she must also put up a fight in order to gain their attention—which is elusive. This is important in the identity struggle that Mandy faces, as she too wants to fit in somewhere and most likely feels alienated within her family. The expectations of her parents are not clear to her; therefore, she struggles even to know what they expect of her (1971). It is likely that her tattoos and eating disorder stem from an attempt to get the attention of her parents. Therefore, the theory of identity diffusion best describes the developmental situation Mandy faces, as without parenting she expresses no moral sense of responsibility or subjection to authority (Woolfolk, 2007, p. 71). The eating disorder also demonstrates a lack of self control that has been inculcated by her parents' indulgent and laissez-faire treatment of her.

Case Study 3: Diversity in the Classroom, Teaching Strategies

Both teachers in this case study are apparently unaware of the fact that their lessons were discriminatory as it regards gender. It has been shown through numerous studies that girls demonstrate a higher level of self efficacy when it comes to reading ability than do boys. In a similar way, boys tend to show greater self efficacy in their mathematics and science abilities (Woolfolk, 2007, p. 89). The result of this is that each tends to perform better in the activity with which they are more comfortable. Ms. Jackson's lesson could be adjusted in light of the tendency that boys have toward greater activity. Therefore, she could plan lessons to make them more interactive (Woolfolk, 2007, p. 181). Such interactive lessons may include the performance of a scene in a play, or the illustration of a book. Role plays may also be done.

Mr. Davidson's class also suffered from a lesson that proved too focused toward the abilities and learning styles of one particular gender. Science classes are generally filled with boys who have a natural inclination toward the subject, and teachers generally pay more attention to them. Mr. Davidson needs to be made aware of this and adjust his behavior and lessons to be more inclusive of the girls in his labs (Woolfolk, 2007, p. 180). In service of this, he may consciously time the students' usage of the equipment in the laboratory so that the girls are accorded equal time using them—as has been suggested to Ms. Jackson by Marcia.

The thinking processes possessed by boys and girls are different, though studies show that this difference does not show itself fully until beyond the years they spend in pre-school. Physical development is the most apparent area in which gender differences can be noticed. However, psychological issues regarding physical development are also prevalent. Girls are more likely to be greatly concerned about their appearance and are more likely to develop eating disorders (Woolfolk, 2007, p. 65). However, stereotypes are to be avoided as much as possible within the educational setting. The so-called "gender-appropriate" roles are often learned by children through "gender schema" rather than spontaneously developing based on their gender (Woolfolk, 2007, p. 178). The comment made by the parent that "boys will be boys" (negatively) demonstrates precisely just how such roles can be communicated to children, and such a parent should be counseled about the undesirability of gender discrimination.

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