EDPSY 251 STANDARDS PAPER

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Adolescence is a period in life that holds many opportunities for change, growth, and development. As a future English teacher, these changes are of the utmost importance to me. Currently, I am interested in teaching at the middle school level because I am very interested in changes individuals go through during early adolescence. I want to be a positive influence on the lives of these students during this pivotal time period. This is not to say that I would not be interested in teaching high school as well, but for the purpose of this paper I decided to focus my efforts on adolescents at the middle school level. Adolescent development can be divided into two categories, development that is dependent on the adolescents themselves and development that is dependent on the influences of others upon the adolescent. This paper will focus first on the independent aspects of development including identity development, personality establishment, cognitive processes, gender exploration, and moral development, then on the influence of family.

First, identity development plays a key role in the overall development of adolescents. Erikson organized this development into eight stages that extend through the entire lifespan. One of these stages is identity versus identity confusion, which occurs during adolescence. During this stage, individuals are faced with the task of identifying who they are and who they hope to become. This is a stage where individuals try on different roles, relationship types, and experiences to determine what suits them best (EAG1: K1). Erikson believed that many adolescents go through a "moratorium", or a period of withdraw from their traditional responsibilities, during this stage. Instead of focusing on others around them, adolescents turn inward during this time period, seeking self-understanding. If an adolescent has successfully navigated through this stage, he or

she will emerge with a nuanced, coherent identity. If he or she does not successfully

solve the crisis, however, he or she will suffer identity confusion, characterized either by

withdraw from peers or family or by full immersion into the world of peers. Full

immersion would inevitably result in the loss of the adolescent's own identity. Erikson's

theory shows that the more successfully an individual resolves this crisis, the healthier

development will be. This is not to say that having difficulty navigating this stage is a

catastrophe, rather, it is a turning point marked by possibility and potential (Hopkins,

2000).

In my future English classroom, I can apply the knowledge I have gained from

Erikson's theory in many ways. I could create a "virtual reality" world, where

community members holding many different positions and occupations come in to my

classroom (EAG2: P2). My students would spend time interviewing and getting to know

these community members. Then, students would each pick one community member to

mentor them through a series of scenarios that occur in the "real world". Some scenarios

would relate to particular occupations, while others would be more general, such as

balancing a checkbook. Finally, students would write a report detailing their experiences

of "trying on" different adult occupations and identities. I will provide a safe and

supportive environment within my classroom where students can experiment with many

identity roles (EAG1:P2). Also, I plan on using my understanding of identity versus

identity confusion while picking texts for my students to read. I can choose texts that

feature individuals struggling with concepts of the self and identity (*Tuck Everlasting,*

The Giver, etc.) to make my class more relatable and applicable for my students

(EAG1:D2).

Personality establishment correlates closely to identity development and also is a major contributor to successful adolescent growth. The Big Five factors of personality, developed by multiple personality psychologists, break apart personality characteristics into five different supertraits: openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism (emotional stability) (EAG1: K1). The different levels and combinations of each trait work together to form an individual's personality. Most studies of The Big Five factors of personality have been conducted with adults, however, there are many studies focusing on adolescent development (Heaven & Ciarrochi, 2008; Hendriks & others, 2008; Soto & others, 2008). One main finding suggests the importance of conscientiousness in determining an adolescent's adjustment and competence levels (Roberts & others, 2009). High levels of conscientiousness are linked to better interpersonal relationships (Jensen-Campbell & Malcolm, 2007), better grades (Noftie & Robins, 2007), and even longer lives (Martin, Friedman, & Schwartz, 2007). These five personality traits are not completely stable in adolescence, and changes in personality may be linked to identity exploration (Roberts & Caspi, 2003; Roberts, Wood, & Caspi, 2008).

I can use my knowledge of the Big Five Factors of personality theory to foster an environment for positive personality growth in my future classroom. One way of achieving this goal would be to offer morality and life-skill development opportunities within my classroom (EAG1: P2). This could be accomplished through reading texts that focus on moral questions or by weekly journal writes about the use of different life-skills. I would work hard to encourage growth in levels of conscientiousness in my students by teaching them organizational skills, careful reading techniques, and disciplined classroom

behaviors. Another essential piece of my teaching techniques that will flourish from my

knowledge of the Big Five factors of personality theory is the idea of providing different

opportunities for students who have strengths in different supertraits (EAG1: P1). For

example, when assigned a project, my students will have the opportunity to work alone or

in groups, fostering an environment that is productive and suitable for both introverts and

extroverts. I would expect those high in extroversion to succeed in group work and those

that score lower on the extraversion scale to feel more comfortable working alone

(EAG1: D4).

Logically, as a future teacher, I am also very intrigued by the cognitive

development of adolescents. Vygotsky proposed a theory stating that knowledge is both

situated and collaborative, meaning that the distribution of knowledge focuses on both

working with people and also the environment. The environment individuals can work

with includes textbooks, artifacts, and tools (Gauvain, 2008; Holtzman 2009; EAG1:K1).

His theory suggests that group work may be beneficial to student learning. The zone of

proximal development (ZPD) is a key component of Vygotsky's theory. The ZPD

describes a range of tasks individuals can successfully complete on their own to tasks

individuals can successfully complete with help from adults or higher-skilled peers

(Levykh, 2008; Wertsch, 2008). Formal schooling is not the only institution that helps

children develop cognitively. Peers, parents, and the surrounding community also

influence learning and development (Rogoff et all, 2007). Scaffolding, which involves a

more knowledgeable peer or adult providing help for the student through methods such as

physical assistance, breaking the task into smaller pieces, providing encouragement and

motivation, and providing feedback on development and performance, is also crucial to understand when applying Vygotsky's cognitive theory.

I can apply many aspects of this theory in my classroom as a future English teacher. First, I realize that many students may learn best by working in groups. I could develop and implement a project in which students, while working in small groups, research a particular topic that is interesting to them and then compile data for a group presentation and an individual paper (EAG1:P1). Second, I plan to implement the use of ZPDs in my classroom through reading comprehension tests. Then, I could compile reading groups with individuals with different levels of comprehension so the higher level students could work as "peer tutors", raising others' ZPDs (EAG1:D3). These more knowledgeable peers would be scaffolding other classmates by providing assistance through the learning process.

Gender exploration and gender roles are other chief aspects of adolescent development. The social role theory focuses on gender differences that are the result of the contrasting roles of males and females in society (Eagly, 2000, 2009). Developed by Alice Eagly, this theory focuses on gender identification and development as the result of socialization, rather than biological dispositions (EAG1: K4). Males typically hold higher status, hold positions of greater power, and yield power over more resources than females in cultures all around the world (Betz, 2006). Females tend to perform more domestic tasks, earn lower incomes, and spend fewer hours in paid employment. According to Eagly, as women adapt to a lifestyle of fewer power roles and experiences, they exhibit less dominant, more cooperative personality traits than men. Therefore, the

division of power and status is a large contributing factor to the gender differences in assertiveness, power, and nurture (Eagly, 2009).

Parents and teachers also heavily influence social roles and gender development. During adolescence, parents tend to allow boys more independence (Papini & Sebby, 1988) and urge them to excel more in mathematics and academic areas (Eccles, 1987), while encouraging daughters to be more obedient and responsible. In the classroom, teachers are more likely to mark male students as slow to learn or learning disabled, problematic, or trouble makers and therefore spend more time watching and interacting with males than females (DeZolt & Hall, 2001). This bias in the classroom leads females to be less confident in their educational abilities and future career options (Myra & David Sadker, 2005).

In my future classroom, I plan to use my knowledge of the social role theory to create an equal environment for both male and female students. I want to show my students that gender roles are not absolute and that both males and females can become anything they desire to be (EAG1: D2). To implement this idea, I could bring in guests from the community that occupy careers that are typically gendered to the opposite sex, for example, a male nurse or a female construction worker. Students could spend time talking to these community members about working in careers that are typically stereotyped toward the opposite gender. Then, my students will create an oral presentation to give to the class about the future career they hope to hold, which will encourage my students to consider the full range of possibilities for their futures (EAG1: P2). This may break down social role barriers that may exist for males and females. Also, I will work diligently to combat the issue of gender biases in the classroom. By

recognizing each student is unique in his or her needs and learning styles, I will work to ensure every student gets equal attention and care on the level he or she needs (EAG1: D3).

Also, moral development contributes to the overall well-being and well-roundedness of adolescents. The service learning approach to moral development focuses on educating students through the promotion of social responsibility and service to the community (EAG1: K1). Through this approach, adolescents volunteer their time in community related activities such as tutoring, visiting nursing homes, cleaning up parks, working in hospitals, etc. The main purpose of implementing service learning in schools is to encourage adolescents to become less self-centered and more strongly motivated to help others (Catalano, Hawkins, & Toumbourou, 2008; Hart, Matsuba, & Atkins, 2008) (EAG1: K1). It has been proven that service learning works best when students are given some choice in the volunteer opportunities in which they participate and when students are given an opportunity to reflect upon their participation in service learning (Nucci, 2006). Benefits of service learning include increased goal setting, higher grades, higher-self esteem, and a higher level of self-understanding (Eisenberg & others, 2009).

In my future English classroom, I plan to implement a program that involves service learning. My students will have a service requirement for my class and be able to choose where and how they volunteer (EAG1: P1). They will keep a service journal detailing their involvement in their activities and reflections on their experiences. This journal will allow them a place to work on creative, expressive writing and a place for them to really reflect on their volunteer positions. Each student will be allowed to orally

share a journal entry with the class if they choose. I plan to also create two or three

service opportunities for the whole class to participate in throughout the school year

(EAG3: D2). Requiring students to become involved in service activities at a young age

encourages them to continue volunteering in high school and throughout the rest of their

lives (EAG1: D1). Students are capable of participating in service learning in a way that

is accessible and interesting to them personally.

Finally, adolescent development is not only a personal process; it is a process that

is fostered by parents, peers, schools, and the community. Parents and family members

play crucial roles in determining how their adolescent(s) will develop. There is an

abundance of research surrounding the proper way to parent adolescents and the

dimensions of competent parenting (Bornstein & Zlotnik, 2008). Diana Baumrind's

research states that parents should develop rules and be strict, but also show affection

toward their children (Baumrind, 1971, 1991). She highlights four different parenting

styles that are associated with adolescents and their social behaviors: authoritarian,

authoritative, neglectful, and indulgent (EAG1: K4). These parenting styles are dictated

by the corresponding amounts of lovingness and demandingness expressed by the

parental figure.   Authoritarian parenting is a punitive style in which the parent places

firm requirements and restrictions on the adolescent and allows for very little verbal

persuasion. Authoritative parenting encourages adolescent independence but still

provides restriction on adolescent activity. Neglectful parenting occurs when the parental

figure is very disengaged from their adolescent and very uninvolved in their life. Finally,

indulgent parenting occurs when the parent is highly involved with his or her adolescent

but places few controls upon them. The authoritative style is related to the most positive

aspects of development; however, different parenting styles work better in different cultures. For example, the authoritative parenting style seems to be the most successful for adolescent development in the United States, but in Asian countries, the authoritarian style seems to yield the most success (Steinberg & Silk, 2002). The authoritative parenting style may yield these desired results in our culture because of the verbal give-and-take associated with this style, which allows adolescents to express their viewpoints. This allows for adolescents to better understand social relationships and the requirements for being socially competent.

Knowledge about the different parenting styles can definitely benefit me as a future teacher. I will have to interact with my students' parents during parent/teacher conferences, extra curricular activities, and regularly through newsletters, phone calls, and emails (EAG6: K3). Understanding that parents use different styles in rearing their children may help me understand how to connect and relate with different parents. This will also benefit my interactions with students, as a child that grew up in an authoritarian household will expect different behaviors and attitudes from me than a child who grew up in an indulgent household (EAG6: P3). Also, knowing that the authoritative parenting style is the most successful style in the United States will help me structure the rules for my classroom. I will provide boundaries and guidelines for my students, but also encourage their independence and contributions to classroom policies (EAG1: P2). This could be implemented through allowing students to contribute to the writing of the classroom rules and giving them the privilege to contribute to picking "punishments" for different infractions (cheating, late work, etc). This will foster a give and take environment in which students feel their voices are valuable and heard.

Reflection

INTASC Principle 2 states that the teacher understands how children learn and develop, and can provide learning opportunities that support a child's intellectual, social, and personal development. Through my experiences in my adolescent psychology class, along with my experiences in other pre-service teacher preparation courses, I have learned a lot about these developmental processes of adolescents. However, I am only in my second semester at Ball State University, and I know there is a plethora of information for me still to learn. I feel like I have a good understanding about the broad concepts of adolescent development, however, I would like to learn more about adolescent development in the context of families and how to differentiate instruction for students with special needs that will be mainstreamed into my classroom, along with gifted and high-ability students.

I believe my current strengths lie within creating a classroom environment that is conducive to positive relationships, benefiting the development of my students. The application ideas I created for this paper are mainly group related and focus on real world experiences and issues, such as volunteering and meeting with leaders of the community in which my students live. I know that I can create a classroom where students feel safe experimenting with new ways of thinking and learning and sharing ideas with one another. Through this open classroom, I hope to develop personal relationships with my students and hope that they develop these relationships with each other, strengthening the community of the classroom and offering a support system for intellectual, social, and personal development.

My current weaknesses involve knowing exactly how to best encourage the intellectual development of my students. As a future English teacher, my college course schedule contains many English classes, but very few methods courses on how to actually teach English. I know, as I get further along in my program, more opportunities for methods courses will arise, but I feel like right now I know the content, but I do not know the best ways to teach the content. This might also be something that I must learn for myself in the classroom setting. I have started to combat this weakness by volunteering at Northside Middle School this semester and getting into the classroom and working with students. Learning how to best cover material to satisfy student needs is a task that I will be working and learning about for the rest of my career.

To better understand my students and their developmental levels, I have set three professional development goals for myself. First, I hope to improve my knowledge about family relationships and their impacts on adolescent development. To accomplish this goal, I could enroll in the "Families" course offered by the Family and Consumer Sciences Department at Ball State University. This course would broaden my understanding of families and relationships and help me learn to understand how much of an impact parents truly have on their children. Also, I believe continuing my volunteer work at Northside Middle School will broaden my understanding of parenting styles and their impacts on adolescents. Second, I am very interested in learning more about differentiating instruction for students with special needs that will be mainstreamed in my classroom and also students who are gifted. I hope to obtain a gifted and talented (high abilities) education license and certificate from Ball State as I pursue my Masters degree to professionalize my license. Finally, I would like to learn more about how personality

development influences adolescents in the school setting. I could enroll in the

"Personality" class offered by the psychology department to expand my knowledge of

different personality theories.

STANDARDS CITED

Standard #1: Young Adolescent Development.

The early adolescence generalist understands the range of developmental characteristics of early adolescence within social, cultural, and societal contexts and uses this knowledge to facilitate student learning.

EAG1:P1 creates learning opportunities that are appropriate and challenging for all young adolescents.

EAG1:P2 creates positive classroom environments where developmental differences are respected and supported and where individual potential is encouraged.

EAG1:P3 adapts curriculum, instruction, resources, and assessment to provide for the range of differences in young adolescents.

EAG1:K1 understands the major concepts, principles, theories, and research of young adolescent development (physical, social, emotional, cognitive, and moral).

EAG1:K4 understands the social, cultural, and societal context in which young adolescents develop.

EAG1:D1 appreciates the natural life progression of which early adolescence is a part.

EAG1:D2 is positive, enthusiastic, and committed to students in this developmental period.

EAG1:D3 respects and appreciates the range of individual developmental differences.

EAG1:D4 holds high expectations that are realistic for individual students' behavior and learning.

Standard #2: Healthy Development of Young Adolescents

The early adolescence generalist demonstrates an understanding of the risk behaviors of young adolescents and the changes in family setting and society that affect their development by establishing a learning environment that promotes positive, productive, healthy development.

EAG2:P2 engages students in activities related to their interpersonal, community, and societal responsibilities.

Standard #3: Middle School Philosophy and School Organization

The early adolescence generalist understands the philosophical foundations of developmentally responsive middle schools and the unique school organization these schools employ and can work successfully within these organizational features.

EAG3:D2 is committed to the creation of programs responsive to the needs of adolescents.

Standard #6: Family Involvement

The early adolescence generalist has a thorough understanding of the role of the family in a student's educational development and is able to use this knowledge to assist and support both young adolescents and their families in the young adolescent's education.

EAG6:P3 establishes and sustains mutually respectful and productive relationships with parents in order to promote student learning and well-being.

EAG6:K3 understands the need for involving the family in the students' learning.

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