

Case Study Report

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For

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Introduction:

This is my second year to be attending Angelo State University, and also my second year to be living in the town itself. When I came upon this assignment I immediately knew whom I would choose to observe. Since moving here in the fall of 2015 I have been babysitting for a family that I have known my whole life. The mother of the child I chose for this assignment is the daughter of my parent's life long friends. Reed just recently turned seven and is bursting with energy. He has dirty blonde hair, blue eyes, and is Caucasian. Reed attends elementary schools in a small town about fifteen minutes from San Angelo. While attending school he socializes with children his own age and learns along side his peers on a daily basis. I believe this is a fantastic way to grow and develop. Reed is involved in many community sports leagues. He enjoys playing football, soccer, basketball, and loves to run track. He is currently playing in a basketball league where he attends two practices a week with one scheduled game per week. His parents attend every game and take time to practice with Reed at home. I was fortunate enough to catch some of his games, and even practice with him myself.

Physical Development:

Reed weighs in about fifty-six pounds and stands about four feet two inches. He currently is above the average height and weight for his age group (Average Height and Weight Chart-Babies to Teenagers, 2016). Reed is a very active and social child, whom loves to play basketball or throw the football with his friends in his neighborhood. Every time that I observed Reed had to complete his homework before he was able to watch television or go outside and play. While he did his homework I observed his writing

skills. I know that Reed is a very bright child, but I was very surprised when watching him as he did his homework. He wrote very legibly and neat for his age, and he rarely asked for any outside help. I was absolutely amazed by him and feel as if he exceeds his age group intellectually.

Cognitive/Intellectual Development:

I believe that Reed is in the Concrete-Operational stage of “Piaget’s Cognitive Development Model” (Woolfolk, 2016, p.47-51). The Concrete-Operational stage begins about first grade (7 years) and goes to early adolescence around 11 years olds. This stage is most known for “hands-on” thinking where the characteristics of the stage are the recognition of the logical stability of the physical world; the realization that elements can be changed or transformed and still conserve many of their original characteristics; and the understanding that these changes can be reversed (Woolfolk, 2016, p.49). Using the Conservation Tasks located on page 50 of Woolfolk, 2016, Figure 2.4, I used the examples given and tried them on Reed to get a better understanding of what he truly understood. I also implemented some of the hands-on activities with him. First, I tried the example with the amount of water in each glass. This seemed to confuse him, and he could not quite comprehend the idea that the two different containers had the same amount of water. I asked him to pour the water himself. When the hands-on part was added he was able to grasp and understand that the glasses contained the same amount of water despite the height difference. Reed seemed to understand compensation fairly well. He was slowly able to understand that the apparent change in that the glass was narrower but still contained the same amount of water as the initial glass (identity). During the experiment I happened to notice that Reed was speaking to himself and visualizing the

components of the experiment. This is apparent use of private speech. Private speech is a form of language critical for cognitive development due to the expressiveness and questioning. Reed often began to question what happened during the reversal stage when we would pour the water from the narrower glass back into the original. I noticed that when he physically got to pour the water that the private speech stopped. "Language in the form of private speech (talking to yourself) guides cognitive development," stated Vygotsky (Woolfolk, 2016, p.59). As I poured the water from glass to glass Reed used private speech as an aide to understand what was happening, but when he poured the glass of water himself the hands-on portion served as the aid. Vygotsky was correct in which Reed demonstrated his confusion when using private speech to understand what was happening. Reed had to get ready for practice before we were able to try any more examples. He asked if we could do the rest together the next time I was babysitting him. I told him that was a wonderful idea. Before Reed went to change his mother asked him to put the glasses up and clean up the water that had spilled on the counter during the water transfer. I believe that Reed is a rather gifted child and is highly above his cognitive age group. According to Leonora Cohen, the most important things we can give gifted children are the tools of further learning (Cohen 1987, p.36). I would have to agree, and say that Reed grew from the examples were tools were provided. I observed him putting the glasses up himself, which showed me more about his cognitive level. He also knew to get a paper towel, wipe up the counter, and then throw the paper towel in the trashcan. I strongly believe that Reed is classified as the Concrete-Operational Stage of Piaget's Model.

Linguistic Development:

Language is an important skill, which takes many years to develop and is constantly evolving. Reed's mother is a major influence on his reading. She told me that she is constantly asking him to read things around him. He now does this on his own, so I really think her way of promoting reading is great. This is such a great thing to do for any child. I believe that this will increase his linguistic skills, and help him succeed academically and socially in the future. Reed has been raised to treat others with respect, but sometime like any child he forgets to use the manners he has been taught. The majority of the time he says, "yes ma'am," "no sir," and "please and thank you" when having a conversation with anyone especially an adult. I strongly agree with how his parents have raised him to speak to others. I noticed that he understands pragmatics, and often enjoys carrying on conversations with others. He is also very good at taking his turn in conversations.

Emotional/Personality Development:

The word gender usually refers to traits and behaviors that a particular culture judges to be appropriate for men and for women (Woolfolk, 2016, p.230). Reed unquestionably depicts a clear gender identity as a male. He is very involved in sports, and hopes to one day become a professional athlete. He told me that he was not sure what sport he wants to go pro in, but if he had to choose now it would be basketball or football. He admires many professional players such as Tony Romo and Peyton Manning. Reed is very optimistic when it comes to his athleticism, and believes he can only get better. He is also aware of the gender roles around him because I asked him if he likes any girls or if there are any cute girls in his class. He gives a typical answer of "gross, girls have cuties." He enjoys doing things with his father like fishing, hunting, playing sports, and

mowing the lawn. Reed told me that he cannot wait to be big, so he can be just like his dad.

Social Development:

Erickson's eight stages of psychosocial development sets up a framework that highlights the emergence of self, the search for identity, the individual's relationship with others, and the role of culture throughout life (Woolfolk, 2016, p.94). I would have to include Reed in the fourth stage, Industry versus Inferiority (Woolfolk, 2016, p. 95). Reed is seven and is enrolled in his local elementary. This is my reasoning for placing him in the fourth stage. According to the Erickson's Eight Stages of Psychosocial Development chart on page 94, the important event is school. The description for this event is described as, "The child must deal with demands to learn new skills or risk a sense of inferiority, failure, and incompetence" (Woolfolk, 2016, Table 3.3, p.94). I observed the sense of inferiority while watching him play basketball. When he did not make a shot or turned the ball over he would often become angry and tried to put his blame on others. I asked his mother how he reacts after games he has lost a game. We had both discussed the fourth stage of Erickson's psychosocial stages. She told me that he was upset about his outcome and hung his head after losses.

Conclusion:

I felt very fortunate to have observed a very talented, bright, outgoing, well-rounded boy. Reed is an intelligent seven year old that only continue to climb the ladder of excellence. I feel as if I have learned a lot about this specific age group. Not all boys of this age group are classified exactly as Reed is, but I now have a better understanding of what I can expect. Through this case study I have learned many ways to observe a child,

and ways to also grow a child. This will help me in my future classroom because I think you really have to get to know a child before you can teach them to their best ability. I also have a greater understanding of why parents are such a huge part of a child's education.

References:

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