Educational Psychology
Case Study: Development
Your Name

Overall Description

Jeff is an adult male whose age is somewhere in the forties and identifies as himself as Caucasian. He is a Leeward Community College instructor and considers himself to be middle class. He comes from a family of educators, and education was always highly valued and encouraged in the house.

Jeff has two older brothers and are relatively close despite everyone living so far away from each other. Currently, Jeff lives in town, but is considering a move more central because his wife is an instructor at Windward CC.

His schooling was in a California public school, and Jeff completed his higher education at UH Manoa. Jeff started teaching in 1989 as a physical education instructor at a private K-8 grade school, but most of his background is as a secondary science teacher. He moved to the islands in 1994.

If Jeff could be any animal, he would most likely be a “golden lab” because they love the water and probably get the most belly rubs of any of the dog species (although many might argue that fact!).

Jeff’s latest hobby is sailing, and he bought a 22 foot sailboat a few years ago, and has been trying to learn ever since. He says that he has hit the dock a few times already, so he says that he probably needs some lessons. Watch Jeff’s “Day of the Dolphin Video” for his encounter with some dolphins while sailing off Diamond Head.

Pictures and videos are great!
**BRAIN Development**

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| According to the Woolfolk text (12th ed), the expectation of an adult brain (over 21) is that it is completely developed. This means that his brain has undergone two pruning stages, first as an older child (around age 10 or 11), which removed any unused or weak brain neurons and synapse connections, and then as a young adult (around ages 15-21), which removed any unused or weak brain cells and connections in the pre-frontal cortex (thinking part of the brain).

This also means by removing those unused or overproduced brain cells or connections, the remaining connections, especially in the limbic system (emotions) and cerebral cortex are what determine how an adult thinks and feels.

Despite that fact, an article in Live Science has determined that not only does the adult brain still grows brain cells, those cells may be linked to life-long learning. So, an old dog (or adult) can still learn new tricks! | Jeff is definitely into life-long learning, but stated that he sometimes has trouble recalling information or remembering names of folks and experiences a “tip-of-the-tongue” phenomenon.

He thinks that this may be due to concussions he experienced playing football for six years as a teenager, or it may be due to just getting older and that brain processes slow down (fluid intelligence) as one gets older.

However, Jeff thinks his crystallized intelligence (long-term memory) remains intact. Besides that memory issue, Jeff’s brain development appears to fall within the expected development in terms of regulating emotion and behavior, planning, and motor skills.

He doesn’t get angry easily, he plans out everything and makes reasonable decisions. (his wife may disagree with that last statement, however! : ) | A teaching strategy that will help support Jeff’s difficulty with memory is associating information he wants to remember with a song or music.

Video: Say it with a Song: Music to Help Memory

This video of a grade teacher who uses simple tunes like “Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star” or “Jack and Jill” and then associates it with concepts taught in class like what is a noun, pronoun, or adjective.

Sing below to the tune of Fara Shaka

“What is a pronoun?”

“What is a pronoun?” (point to He)

“Now you know!”

“Now you know!” |

**Accurate information is definitely supported when you use the concepts/vocabulary listed in the instructions. (Underlining the terms helps!)**

**Don’t forget to support information with viable citations and resources (links must work!)**
### COGNITIVE (PIAGET) Development

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<td>According to the Woolfolk text 12th ed., Piaget stated that the expected cognitive development (thinking) for adults should be at the level of formal operational thought. At this final stage of development, an adult can perform what Piaget called hypothetical-deductive reasoning, and can think in the abstract and consider a variety of possible answers to a solution.</td>
<td>To test whether Jeff is at formal operational thought, I gave him a hypothetical situation called “Truth Tellers and Liars” to solve. Although he was not able to get the correct answer, he attempted to solve the problem by breaking it down into smaller chunks. This is a sign of deductive reasoning, which Piaget states is part of this level of cognitive reasoning.</td>
<td>A teaching strategy that will help support Jeff’s ability to support his opinion is to enhance his debating skills.</td>
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<td>Piaget believed that our thinking develops as a result of our schema (our existing knowledge about the world) being challenged with some new information that creates a state of cognitive disequilibrium (challenges our beliefs). The schema returns to equilibrium when a person has an opportunity to figure out the new information without the help from a more knowledgeable person (e.g., teacher).</td>
<td>To further test Jeff, I asked him his opinion about Hawai’i’s new rail system. He gave me an answer that focused mainly on how much money it cost, and when I countered that statement with other considerations, we had a mini-argument (which Jeff lost!). However, this tells me that Jeff can consider different possibilities to an answer.</td>
<td>Video: Using Debate to Develop Thinking &amp; Speaking Skills</td>
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<td>This disequilibrium doesn’t resolve itself until the schema can assimilate and accommodate the new information and this is what causes our thinking to grow in complexity. If the schema doesn’t do this, then the information is ignored and our level of thinking remains the same.</td>
<td>That skill, along with deductive reasoning, demonstrates to me that Jeff’s cognitive development is at the expected development of formal operation thought stage.</td>
<td>This video of a high economics teacher asking her students to debate whether Social Security should be privatized (a good question should create cognitive disequilibrium).</td>
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To reach in-depth, need 4 sentences or bullets. This section is 6 sentences long!

Interviews are also great ways to find out if Case Study is at expected development!

Don’t forget to make a statement if your Case Study is within the “expected” development!

Don’t forget to describe the teaching strategy with at least 4 sentences/bullets to make it in-depth! (This example is 4 sentences)

Check your video chosen – does it really support the particular development?
While Piaget believed that thinking developed without the help of an expert, Vygotsky believed the opposite and that a more knowledgeable person was essential in cognitive development, which he termed as **sociocultural theory**.

According to the Woolfolk text (12th ed.), Vygotsky states that a person’s thinking develops when s/he has the opportunity to talk to an expert or use cultural tools (e.g., books, internet, social media) and both have the opportunity to co-construct new ideas together.

He believed that it is through this language interaction that generates a person’s thought, and he believed that children start out by talking out loud or collective monologue (see video) as a way to regulate their understanding of the world (private speech). Vygotsky believed that as children encounter experts in the society, these teachers would take them from their current thinking (zone of proximal development) and scaffold them to higher thinking with guidance and support. Eventually, this private speech moves inward and becomes our inner dialogue (voice inside our head) (Woolfolk text, 12th ed).

In Vygotsky’s sociocultural theory of cognitive development, there are no fixed stages like in Piaget’s theory. However, Vygotsky states that whenever a task is difficult, a person should begin talking out loud as a way to regulate his/her thinking.

Thus, I gave Jeff an “intelligence test” to see how he might respond under timed conditions, and I actually observed him start to mutter to himself on a few problems. This tells me that Jeff’s zone of proximal development is being reached and that he would need help if the problem gets any harder.

I did ask Jeff whether he prefers to work alone on a problem or have a teacher help him. He said that he likes to try a problem first, and then get help if he can’t figure it out. However, he said that he uses the internet quite a bit to find help, and so Jeff relies a lot on cultural tools to learn.

I would definitely state that since Jeff has developed inner speech and has lots of experience interacting with cultural tools and experts in society. So, I believe that Jeff is within the “expected” level of cognitive development according to Vygotsky for an adult.

A teaching strategy that will help Jeff strengthen his cognitive development according to Vygotsky is to pair him up with a more knowledgeable peer to solve a problem.

**Video:** [Math Homework Review: Peer Teaching](#)

This video of a 3rd grade math teacher who pairs students that don’t understand a particular math problem with those who do understand the math problem.

She has the student pairs work together until the struggling student feels confident to share his/her answer with the whole class. If the student still doesn’t get the solution, then he or she goes back to their “expert” partner and seeks more assistance until the student can solve it on his/her own.
# SELF & SOCIAL Development

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<td>According to the Woolfolk text, Bronfenbrenner would expect that an adult’s social development will be influenced by relationships (microsystems) with parenting styles and family structures. If social development is “normal”, then the adult would hopefully have authoritative parents and have developed secure attachments with others.</td>
<td>Jeff says that he has a good relationship with his family, and his parents were mostly authoritative parents growing up. However, his parents fought often, and as a result Jeff became more withdrawn socially and found solace in being on his own. He describes himself as a nice person and easy to get along with. Growing up, he identified with anyone that was self-reliant, and this eventually resulted in Jeff travelling the world for a few years.</td>
<td>A teaching strategy that will help Jeff develop social skills is to participate in a peer conference for feedback on work. Video: <a href="#">Peer Conferencing</a></td>
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<td>The adult’s social development would also be influenced by how well s/he resolved Erik Erikson’s 8 stages of psychosocial development. Adults in their 40s should be at the “Generativity vs. Stagnation” stage where a person is trying to feel like s/he is contributing to society. If a person is feeling stagnate, then s/he starts to become more self-absorbed and begins looking for meaning somewhere else.</td>
<td>Jeff is currently in Erickson’s “Generativity vs. Stagnation” stage and feels that he has passed successfully through the stage because he loves his work and makes a contribution to society.</td>
<td>This video of a 7th grade teacher who shows his students how to do a peer conference and how that can help their writing. He has the students get together and after one of the students read the paper, the other student has to write something nice about the paper, suggest an elaboration of a sentence or paragraph, and then ask questions. He provides a clear model of how to do this.</td>
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<td>Much of an adult’s sense of self was developed in the adolescent years where the ultimate goal is identity achievement (pursuing own life path). It is expected that this life path cultivates a strong self-concept where the adult feels good about the life path (self-esteem), and believes that s/he can handle any challenges that might arise (self-efficacy).</td>
<td>Jeff states that he has a strong self-concept academically, he likes being a good student (self-esteem), has a lot of self-confidence in completing academic work, and specifically feels he has high self-efficacy for his work.</td>
<td>Although the teacher thinks of the strategy as a way to get students to think critically about writing, I believe that the steps he teaches his students in the process of doing that are really invaluable social skills. In the video, the students use those skills to communicate ideas in a way that doesn’t hurt the other students’ feelings and to get them to improve their work. Definitely a life skill for developing socially!</td>
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**Table Notes:**

- **Microsystems:** Relationships with parenting styles and family structures.
- **Authoritative Parents:** Parenting style characterized by high levels of control and affection.
- **Secure Attachments:** Emotional bonds that are mutually satisfying and positive.
- **Erikson’s Stages:** Developmental stages proposed by Erik Erikson that describe changes in individuals over the life span.
- **Generativity vs. Stagnation:** Stage of psychosocial development in early adulthood where individuals aim to contribute to society.
- **Self-Esteem:** Positive self-regard and self-worth.
- **Self-Efficacy:** Belief in one’s capability to produce designated levels of performance that achieve defined tasks.

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**Video:** [Peer Conferencing](#)
### MORAL Development

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<td>According to the Woolfolk text, an adult should have the developed the ability as a child to take on the viewpoint of another person (theory of mind - perspective taking ability) and have developed empathy for other people. If this ability never develops, then these people might be diagnosed as “autistic”. See video of an autistic man discuss his view of theory of mind development.</td>
<td>I gave Jeff the Kohlberg morality scenario (Heinz), and his response scored him at Post-Conventional. This means that Jeff believes that morality is a grey area, and that morality is subject to the situation. This also means that Jeff could hold contrasting viewpoints that become moral to him under certain conditions. For example, Jeff might align himself with Democratic social entitlement programs such as the AAT program, social security, etc. and then might align himself as a Libertarian where the individual’s right outweigh the influence of the government (e.g., fining MacDonalds for producing high fat content food). In addition, I gave Jeff a simple empathy test <a href="http://www.noanxiety.com/tests/empathy-test.html">http://www.noanxiety.com/tests/empathy-test.html</a> to measure how Carol Gilligan might view Jeff’s morality. Jeff scored high on the empathy test, which according to Gilligan, represents high morality. She believed that the ability to feel someone’s experience including your own is the true test of morality because we don’t harm or act out against another person or ourselves if we truly understand everyone’s experience. Thus, I can state that Jeff is at the expected level of moral development for an adult.</td>
<td>A teaching strategy that will help Jeff develop his perspective-taking ability is to participate in a peer conflict resolution or peer mediation training. Video: Peer Mediation This video of Maui high school students who explain what peer mediation is and what to do during peer mediation. Video starts with two students fighting who get to choose peer mediation over going to the principal’s office. Then the video takes you through the steps of peer mediation – tell your side of the story without interruptions, get suggestions, and then discuss what each person is willing to do to work it out.</td>
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As we develop our sense of “right or wrong” or moral reasoning, Kohlberg’s theory states that we go through 3 levels. The level that an adult should be at is the postconventional level where morals are determined by “socially agreed upon standards” (stage 5). This means that “right” is determined by social conventions rather than an absolute rule that must be obeyed (stage 4).

Gilligan saw morality as a continuum along empathy and caring. She would expect adults to make their moral decisions based upon society’s expectations, but also on their own expectations. Taking everyone’s perspective into account, including our own, before making a moral decision is the ultimate level of morality according to Gilligan.