

Application of Development using Research Theory

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My career plan is to become a special education teacher and work with younger children who have different disabilities and cultures. It is my dream to work with these children and help them to achieve what others believe to be impossible. These students are able to do anything that they set their minds to with the right help. I want to work with younger children because I feel that is where I can make the most impact and help them to catch up to their peers sooner in order to benefit them more later on. Children soak up information and modeling like a sponge, so it is imperative to get a hold of these students at a younger age. I hope to be the difference in my students' lives that helps them to achieve their goals. It is another hope of mine to create relationships with the parents of my students so that I can better understand what they need and want to achieve. In this paper I will discuss four specific developmental concepts; physical, cognitive, social, and emotional and how it applies to my future career.

The physical development of the child plays a part in how the child will grow based on growth of the body and brain. The physical side of development can either be a hindrance or help in the advance of the child. The cognitive side of development is probably the most important as it pertains to the brain and how that develops. The brain is what controls everything and tells your body how to operate. The development of the brain creates connections that allow

knowledge, memorization, and physical functions to all operate properly. The social aspect of development plays a huge role despite the controversy of nature vs nurture. Without socialization a child has no idea how to function in society or cognitively develop skills learned through their environment and interactions. Emotional development is driven from social and cognitive development. A child's emotional development is just as imperative to their health as physical development is. Emotion is what drives people to do the things that they do and have the confidence to even do them. In InTASC standard 2, "The teacher uses understanding of individual differences and diverse cultures and communities to ensure inclusive learning environments that enable each learner to meet high standards," this ensures that all student needs are being met and no one is being excluded or overlooked.

The physical growth of a child determines how the child will grow and develop in future years to come. During birth oxygen deprivation, or anoxia, can occur, causing physical as well as cognitive disabilities. Anoxia is inadequate oxygen supply at birth which can lead to more severe consequences (Berk & Meyers, 2015, p. 133). Disabilities such as muscular dystrophy, cerebral palsy, epilepsy, etc. can occur due to lack of oxygen in the brain during birth; as it kills brain cells within the brain and nervous system depending on how long they go without oxygen. One in 500 children have cerebral palsy and 10% of those children experienced anoxia (Berk & Meyers, 2015, p.133). Anoxia usually occurs when a child is born breech (feet first), or when the umbilical chord detaches from the child before birth.

Anoxia applies to my career in the sense that the children who experience it at birth and develop a disability become my future students. Anoxia is just one way that children can develop disabilities and it doesn't only cause one disability. As a special education teacher I will have to

learn different types of interventions to help these students (InTASC standard 2a). If they have an episode during class or start acting out I will need to use various techniques to help combat the behavior. As a teacher I can use practices such as, assessing each students present levels of performance to identify and prioritize the most important instructional targets, defining and task-analyzing the new knowledge or skills to be learned, designing instructional materials and activities so the student has frequent opportunities to respond in the form of guided and independent practices, and providing and then fading prompts and cues so the student can respond to naturally occurring stimuli (Heward, 2013, p. 124).

Cognitive growth deals with how the student will learn and understand what is going on or being presented to them. Piaget's Cognitive-Developmental Theory is the stages children go through cognitively as they develop and grow older (Berk & Meyers, 2015, p. 201). All children go through these stages, except children with autism, they go through them at a much slower pace. Children with Autism seem to grow up "normally" at first, but once they reach 12 to 15 months, the parents begin to notice oversensitivity to sounds or touch (Heward, 2013, p. 250).

Piaget's Cognitive-Development Theory applies to my future career in the sense that as a teacher I will need to help my students to develop cognitively through teaching them social norms and concepts. According to InTASC standard 5 a teacher must "understand how to connect concepts and use differing perspectives to engage learners in critical thinking, creativity, and collaborative problem solving related to authentic local and global issues." As a teacher I will be able to use Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) to help me take different perspectives. ABA is a scientific approach that helps the teacher to evaluate and conduct appropriate lesson plans for each student (Heward, 2013, p. 253). Within my lessons I will look at each student and see what their interests are to get them involved (InTASC standard 5o). Puzzles or games can be

incorporated into my lessons in order to get them interested in the material and to help keep their attention.

According to InTASC the teacher needs to “work with others to create environments that support individual and collaborative learning, and that encourage positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self-motivation.” This is to ensure healthy social development as well as maintaining healthy relationships.

Social development is key in any child’s life, as it deals with how they interact with the world around them. Peer Sociability is a child’s ability to function among peers in society and make friends (Berk & Meyers, 2015, p. 365). This is vital in special education due to the fact that children with disabilities tend to have a hard time functioning in a social setting and make friends. Students with disabilities are also more likely to be bullied or taken advantage of in school or at home. The National Autistic Society reports that 40 percent of children with autism and 60 percent of children with Asperger’s syndrome have experienced bullying (Society).

As a teacher I can create a social story, a graphic that shows them what to do in any situation they face in life such as tying their shoes, to help them learn what is socially acceptable and what steps they need to take in order to do a task. The issue of bullying is a very known issue, especially among the special education community. As a teacher I will have to pay attention to their behavior and their family’s behavior to make sure that everything is going well with them, and that I don’t need to investigate a problem and report it (InTASC standard 3k). If a dramatic change in behavior occurs I will need to see what the cause is, because I will have students with behavioral disorders. These students change behavior quite often and need to be monitored as much as the rest of my students and suffer the most socially.

InTASC standard 1 states that the teacher is to “understand how learners grow and develop, recognizing that patterns of learning and development vary individually within and across the cognitive, linguistic, social, emotional, and physical areas, and designs and implements developmentally appropriate and challenging learning experiences.” Emotional development plays a huge part in a child’s life, socially, cognitively, and physically. The emotions and how they develop determine a child’s behavior and how they react to daily issues. Self-esteem is a key factor in a child’s emotional state and development. It is one’s view of their self and how they judge them self (Berk & Meyers, 2015, p. 359). Self-esteem is typically lower in children with disabilities, which causes them to be less social and bigger targets of bullying.

As a teacher, helping my student to see their potential can make an impact on their self-esteem. As a teacher I can help them focus on what they feel they need to improve on in order to help them feel better about themselves. Whether it is grades or a social aspect, I can work with my student to improve on daily skills in order to feel good about performing tasks. I will also work closely with the parents to ensure the lessons are going well and the children are improving (InTASC standard 1k). Having the parents know what I am teaching their children will help them to know what is going on in class and can get the parents to become more involved with their child’s learning, creating a better and higher self-esteem through the family dynamic.

To be a good teacher you need to have a deep understanding of the kinds of students you are teaching and how to help them develop and grow. This information will help to further my career in the sense that I will have a better understanding on what my students are going through and how to help them. I understand that I have more to learn before I become a professional special education teacher, but I feel that I do have a deep understanding of the principles/standards I will need to use in my career. I feel confident that I can implement them in

my day to day teaching. I do believe that my biggest weakness at this point is my inexperience and lack of knowledge on the various methods and how to use them within a classroom. To improve on this, I will contact other professionals or previous professors for advice as well as communicate with the families to see what they feel is best for their child. I also believe it is important to get a feel for what the student personally wants to accomplish so that I may either create lesson plans to help my students or at the very least do research and talk to the parents on how to help the student achieve these goals.

Works Cited

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