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PY-101 Psychology

Learning Activity #5

Beal College

The concept of nature versus nurture states that we are either influenced by nature, or our biology and genetics, or by nurture, our environment and culture. This is also known as psychology as the nature vs. nurture debate. Psychologists have researched to understand how our genetic makeup, biological factors, and environmental factors, such as culture, parents and peers, contribute and shape our personality and traits. Certain environmental factors tend to contribute to how we express particular traits. Plato and Descartes believe that certain traits are born inborn, or occur naturally despite the factors of the environment. Others, such as John Locke suggest that our minds are “tabula rasa” (Cherry, 2020, p.1), simply stating, our minds beginning as a blank slate, then from experiences, we grow into the person we are. Then, we have Empiricists whom believe that everything we learn results in most of our behaviors and characteristics. However, behaviorists believe that our actions and behaviors are determined from conditioning. Theorists, such as John B. Watson believe that, regardless of our culture, or our genetic backgrounds, we can be trained or learn to do anything. Researchers developed theories to help us understand the debate of nature vs. Nurture. (Cherry, 2020) (Spielman et al., 2014)

Chomsky invested in a theory, this concept revolved around language acquisition device, or LAD, this theory states that children are born with instinctive mental capacities, this allows for children to both learn and produce language. Environmental factors can also influence behaviors, such as how one parents their children are learned experiences. This is also known as learning through observation. Albert Bandura also created a theory around learning and observing called the social learning theory. By observing other’s behaviors, children's behaviors can be easily influenced. This was tested using the Bobo Doll, in this experiment, Bandura demonstrated that children can learn aggressive behaviors by watching others acting with

aggression. It is even said in modern times that neurotransmitters can influence our behaviors. With all being said, I think most researchers agree that it is both our hereditary genetics, and the environmental factors that both play a huge role in influencing our traits of personality and our behaviors. (Cherry, 2020)

My position on this paper through my own experience is that I am much more influenced by nature than I am nurture. However, I do believe that it is both, genetics and environmental factors to influence our behavior. Especially as a mother, I tend to parent a lot of the same ways that my parents raised me. Some of this due to observing the behaviors of my parents as a child and perhaps some of it is due to the cultural normality of parenting in today's society. I also believe that I am a lot of who I am because of what I have learned and the experiences I have been through. For me, it is hard to say, now that I put it into perspective that I am influenced more by nature than nurture. Had it not been for the events that had taken place, and the experiences I had gone through, I would not be who I am today. A strong effaceable woman, learning more about life each day as I go. A lot of what I learned was through my parents and peers, the right and wrong choices, how to make a mistake to learn from it, and also how to be a mature adult. The knowledge I successfully retained was learned in large part to my peers but also from environmental factors. Other things that I have learned not to do because of biological genetics, like how to be healthy due to heart disease running through my family. I think I also learned how not to be an aggressive person by observing though with aggressive behaviors, seeing what trauma it does to family and peers. I would have to agree that it does in fact take both nature and nurture that influence the behaviors and personality traits of an individual.

References

Cherry, K. (2020, June 03). What to Know About Nature vs. Nurture. Retrieved October 11, 2020, from <https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-nature-versus-nurture-2795392>

Spielman, R., Dumper, K., Jenkins, W., Lacombe, A., Lovette, M., & Perlmutter, M. (2014, December 08). Psychology. Retrieved September 10, 2020, from <https://openstax.org/details/books/psychology>