Unit 6 Essays

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Adolescent Psychology

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Chapter 10: Question 1

Among the many different types of instruction approaches, there are two that have significant importance within education and impact student learning. These two approaches are the constructivist approach and the direct instruction approach.

The constructivist approach is learner centered and emphasizes the importance of students actively constructing their knowledge and understanding with guidance from the teacher. In this type of instruction approach, the role of the teacher is to aid students in understanding the content by guiding them through discovery and monitoring their progress. They are not supposed to our information into student's minds, rather it is the student who makes inferences and explores the world of educational content. The constructivist approach advocates for students to be active learners and take control of their own learning and education. Within this approach, collaboration is encouraged, where peers rely on each other and work together to know, understand, and apply information. The teacher provides them with the opportunities to do this successfully and then guides them in their learning.

The direct instruction approach is the complete opposite, as it is structured and teacher centered. This approach requires more of a passive role in students where learning time is maximized by pure control from the teacher. The teacher spends a lot of time on academic tasks where there are high expectations for student progress. Critics of this approach believe that this type of instruction does not challenge students to think critically and creatively, but rather keeps them in a box. I believe that the constructivist approach and the direct instruction approach should both be used simultaneously in the classroom. Some content will require direct instruction while others will leave room for the constructivist approach.

Chapter 10: Question 2

The No Child Left Behind Act has created a foundational guideline for schools when it comes to what students are and aren't learning. This act has implemented state mandated tests in which students are tested on what they should be learning. The purpose of these state tests is to keep schools and educators accountable for teaching the educational content that is required. The test measures whether or not students are meeting the appropriate learning objectives. Among this act, there are pros and cons that make it useful to provide a baseline and dreadful for educators all around.

The advocates of these tests add to the pros of the No Child Left Behind Act by stating that it will have positive effects such as improved student performance, an increase in time spent on subjects that are being tested, high expectations for all students, identification of poorly performing schools, teachers, and administrators; and improved confidence in schools as test scores rise.

There are a lot more people who add to the cons of the No Child Left Behind Act by stating that these tests will do more harm than good due to the fact that the competence of the test provides a very narrow view of student's skills. Critics argue that a single test can not be the sole indicator of student progress. These people believe that in order to properly measure student progress and achievement, many measures should be considered such as tests, quizzes, projects, portfolios, classroom observations and so on. They also state that these tests are not able to measure creativity, motivation, persistence, flexible thinking and social skills, all of which play a major role in student achievement and success. Critics also believe that without state tests, teachers can spend less time drilling students and having them memorize isolated facts, and

spend more time on developing critical thinking and skills that they will use throughout the rest

of their lives.

Chapter 10: Question 5

When adolescents enter high school, the risk of dropout increases. Dropout rates have been seen as a serious educational issue as well as a societal problem. This is because adolescents enter the adult world with serious educational difficulties which can severely affect their economic and social well-being.

There are many reasons as to why adolescents may find themselves dropping out of school. One reason is school related problems. Adolescents who have been suspended and expelled normally account for a large number of the dropout rates. Along with this, the students who just plainly don't like school will fall into this category as well. Another reason is economically related. Twenty percent of dropout rates account for students who quit school in order to work full time. This may be because they are from a certain culture that expects them to help the family financially, or that their family is in desperate need of another income. Students in low-income families are more likely to dropout for this reason. Another reason for dropping out of school is poor parental relationships. Within this, students may experience a lack of support from their parents that can hinder their educational performance. This can look like not providing them with the school supplies they need to succeed, not being involved with the school or teacher, or not being involved in their personal educational journey like not providing them help with homework. Another reason is that an adolescents social group may be others who have also dropped out of high school, which can encourage the individual to also want to drop out. Lastly, female related reasons for dropout include pregnancy and marriage. Dropout programs such as the I Have a Dream Foundation prevents dropouts in communities all over the country.

Chapter 10: Question 6

Classroom management is one of the most important aspects of schools because it provides the educator with a means of ensuring optimal instruction time as well as efficiency of transitions with the classroom. Classroom management is the means by which a classroom is able to function properly and less chaotic. Among the many classroom management techniques and strategies there are three general categories of classroom management strategies. These are authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive.

The authoritative classroom management strategy encourages students to be independent thinkers and doers while still involving effective monitoring. Authoritative teachers engage students in a verb give-and-take and show them that they care about them. Within this, these teachers also declare limits when necessary by clarifying rules and regulations, and establishing these standards with the input of the students. The students in a classroom as such tend to be self-reliant, delay-gratification, get along well with their peers, and show high self-esteem.

The authoritarian classroom management strategy is restrictive and punitive. The focus of this kind of classroom is on keeping order rather than on instruction and learning. Authoritarian teachers place firm limits on and controls their students with little verbal exchange. Students within this classroom environment tend to be passive learners, fail to initiate activities, express anxiety about social comparison, and have poor communication skills.

The permissive classroom management strategy offers students considerable autonomy but provides them with little support for developing learning skills or managing their behavior. This type of classroom tends to be chaotic leaving little room for instruction. Students of these classrooms tend to have inadequate academic skills and low self-control.

Chapter 10: Question 9

Learning disabilities are defined as challenges with understanding and comprehending spoken or written language. Students who struggle with learning disabilities can have difficulties in listening, thinking, reading, writing, or spelling. Among this the rate of students with learning disabilities has increased greatly over the years. Two learning disabilities are extremely common for adolescents to experience in their classmates. These are reading disabilities and ADHD.

Eighty percent of students classified with a learning disability have some sort of reading problem. Among the broad term of 'reading disability' come smaller subsections that represent the different kinds of reading disorders an adolescent can have. Dyslexia is the impairment of an individual's ability to read and spell; Dysgraphia is the disability that involves difficulty in handwriting in which students may write slow or illegible; Dyscalculia is the disability that individuals experience in math which includes difficulty in mathematical computation and understanding of math terms. Among these three different types of reading disabilities, adolescents in the classroom may come across classmates with these disabilities more often than they think.

ADHD is the most common learning disability within the classrooms today. ADHD is so common partially because students may be overidentified for this due to behavioral issues that may be unrelated to ADHD. Students with ADHD experience inattention, hyperactivity, impulsivity, and poor emotional regulation. Boys are more commonly diagnosed with this disability as compared to girls and due to a boy's natural hyperactivity, this is a reason for misidentification. Students with ADHD are usually medicated using Adderall. Among this disability, adolescents should be aware of this disability in order to handle it properly.

Chapter 11: Question 12

Within education, motivation is a concept that teachers are always trying to instill into children. There are two types of motivation: extrinsic and intrinsic. Extrinsic motivation involves the external incentives such as rewards and punishments. Intrinsic motivation is based on internal factors such as self-determination, curiosity, effort, etc. among understanding motivation it is important to note some ways to make sense of it. Two ways to make sense of specifically intrinsic motivation are self-determination and personal choice, and cognitive engagement and self-responsibility.

Self-determination and personal choice emphasizes the idea that students want to believe that they are doing something because of their own will, not because of external success or rewards. In this idea, personal satisfaction is enough for students to motivate themselves. Within this, students in the classroom who are provided choices in activities and what to do with them, and were encouraged to take personal responsibility for their behavior had higher achievement gains and were more likely to graduate from high school than their counterparts who had no choice. Along with this, when teachers encourage independence within the classroom, adolescents are better able to develop self-determination.

Cognitive engagement and self-responsibility are key aspects to achievement in that it encourages students to take control of their own learning and be responsible, similar to the approach above. Within this, teachers need to create an environment that encourages students to persist and master ideas rather than checking off a task to get a grade. In order to keep students cognitively engaged, the teacher must infuse educational content into real-world scenarios and student interests. Students are more motivated when they can relate to the ideas they are learning.

How an individual views the challenging circumstances they face can play a huge part on the personality and mindset development of an adolescent. Among this an adolescent can choose to look at their circumstances a way for them to learn and grow or they can view it from a place of self-pity. Among this, how an adolescent views their circumstances plays a huge part in their achievement, their ability to persist, and their motivation. There are three types of orientation within mastery motivation. These are mastery orientation, hopeless orientation and performance orientation.

Mastery orientation is task oriented. Adolescents who have this, do not focus on their ability or look only at the desired outcome, rather they concentrate on learning strategies and engaging in the process of achievement. These individuals, when faced with difficulty, will try and retrieve strategies that worked for them in the past and use those to overcome the present difficulty. Adolescents with hopeless orientation often seem trapped by the experience of difficulty and then attribute their difficulty to a lack of ability. Adolescents who struggle with this mentality often say things like "I'm not very good at this" even though they have demonstrated their ability and had success in it at a prior time. This can lead to anxiousness which causes their performance to worsen. Adolescents with performance orientation are focused on winning, rather than an achievement outcome which leads to the idea that happiness comes from winning. This often leaves these individuals feeling like failures when they do not win.

A mastery orientation is directly related to intrinsic motivation because they have a desire for achievement whereas someone with a performance orientation is more extrinsic motivation

for the reward of winning. All of these orientations play a part in creating attributions for

adolescents and as well as play a part in defining their self-efficacy.

Setting goals is an important aspect of achievement because it provides an individual with a means of persistence and strive for success in the face of difficulty. Not only do goals play a huge part in life, but they also have a significant impact on the classrooms. When an individual sets goals for themselves, it allows them to do anything possible in order to achieve that goal. Setting goals creates persistence, patience, determination and motivation in whatever the adolescent is striving to do.

Within goal setting there is a wrong way to do this. It is vital for adolescents to choose goals for themselves that are attainable, realistic, specific, and challenging. For example, a student should not set a goal for themselves that is only attainable under a certain condition or a goal that is blurred such as "I want to be successful". A goal that is blurred can be subjective, rather adolescents need to specify what they are interested in being successful in. If adolescents set blurred or unattainable goals, they may never be able to achieve this goal which can lead them to feeling like a failure.

Adolescents can set short term goals and long term goals. Both types of goals are essential to achievement and every adolescent should have both simultaneously. For example, I could say that I want to move to Florida when I graduate as a long term goal but I need to have short term goals like getting a 4.0 this semester or beating my highest amount of digs in a volleyball game. Having both goals allows the adolescent to be successful in many aspects of life. Within this, adolescents should make an effort to set challenging goals for themselves. Ones that encourage them to move outside of their comfort zone to achieve something bigger than

themselves. Within this it is vital to keep goals realistic with expectations that are not too great.

Goals are a key aspect to adolescent achievement.

Motivation in adolescents is a common topic especially in high school and moving into college. Fostering motivation in adolescents is a challenging concept for educators, one that becomes even harder when there are a number of obstacles standing in the way. Among the many types of obstacles that could arise, there are three that are repeated cases among many adolescents today. These are procrastination, perfectionism, and anxiety.

Procrastination is a common barrier for adolescent achievement. It is the means of which adolescents wait until the last possible minute to complete a task or assignment. There are many reasons as to why adolescents wait until the last possible minute. These include fear of failing, poor time management, difficulty in concentrating, fear and anxiety, negative beliefs about their abilities, personal problems, boredom, and unrealistic expectations and perfectionism. Some common behaviors presented by adolescents who struggle with this are ignoring the task hoping it will go away, underestimating the work and overestimating their abilities, spending endless hours on non productive tasks, self-deception of abilities, doing low-priority tasks because they tend to be easier, and believing that minor delays won't hurt.

Perfectionism is another barrier that keeps adolescents from achievement. The strive to be perfect and never making a mistake can take a toll on someone's mental health and can be highly stressful. Adolescents who are perfectionists often set excessively high, unrealistic goals they can't reach which often leaves them feeling worthless. They become very self-critical, which can lead to an increase in anxiety leading to trouble focusing and achieving.

Anxiety is another barrier to achievement that is usually caused by some sense of fear and apprehension. Worrying is normal but when this becomes to fill the thoughts of an

adolescent it can hinder success. Anxiety can lead to a negative self image and thoughts that

consume them.

Choosing a career is an important part of adolescent development as it creates a game plan for the rest of their lives. There are many factors within an adolescents life that can sway their decisions within choosing a certain career path. Some of these factors include socioeconomic status, parental and peer standards, schools, and gender.

Socioeconomic status plays a significant role in swaying the career choice of an adolescent. This is due to the fact that most career ares educational in nature, meaning that students most likely need to go to college in order to choose certain careers. This is a huge factor on those who come from lower SES and do not have the access or opportunities to make this happen. Therefore, they may choose a career path that is more accessible to them.

Parents and peers also have a large effect on the decisions adolescents make in their career plan, especially parents. Some parents are the driving force that push students to go into a certain career, having high expectations. They can also sway their children's career decisions just based on how they present information about occupations and values, as well as through experiences. Peers can also have an affect on career choices in the sense that students often gravitate towards friends that have the same expectations for themselves as they do.

Schools also play an important role in career choice because the school environment is the first place students encounter the world of work and they are the only institution that can provide students with the means necessary for career education. Along with this, the schools can encourage their students to continuously do better in order to get into a good college.

Lastly is gender which plays a huge part in the type of careers that adolescents choose. Girls tend to take on more nurturing roles which can lead them into careers such as teachers and

nurses. Along with this, some careers have been stereotyped as being male dominated such as business careers, which can hinder women from wanting to pursue that career. Not to mention that it wasn't normal for women to even pursue careers until recent years.