

Hanane Moussali

ECE 110/ 091L

Prof. Mindi Reich-Shapiro

Fall 2020

Analysis and Commentary Paper

Introduction:

For this analysis and commentary paper, I chose to focus on Samantha, from my Preschooler (3-5) Observation Summary Paper. She is about 4-5 years old. In the video, Samantha looked happy and healthy girl. She was wearing white and black striped pants, a white T-shirt and a clothespin attached to it, black and pink sneakers with white socks. She has white skin, a slender body, black medium-long hair, side high ponytail hairstyle using a purple elastic hair band, she has a round face, chubby dimpled cheeks, long eyebrows, big black eyes, a small nose, prominent ears, Slightly downturned mouth, and baby teeth. I choose to focus on Samantha because I like her positive energy, her initiative, and persistence. I also chose this video because I like to work with the age group.

Developmental Skills, Processes, and Milestones:

Observing Samantha building the tower using wooden building blocks, show that she has developed her skills in different domains.

Cognitive development: Samantha can use tools to engineer and solve problems; at this age, children love to use blocks to build bridges, stairs and all sorts of architectural buildings, Samantha is building a tower. She can differentiate shapes, from all the shapes in the block

center, Samantha can recognize and pick the same shape (rectangular prism). She also understands the concept of tall, Samantha told Sara in the video that “mine is going to be taller.” Overall, in this video, we can tell that Samantha has mastered problem-solving with materials, and concepts such as shapes recognition, tall, and balance.

Language/Literacy: Samantha’s expressive language is age-appropriate; she can speak very clearly; she also uses the future tense “mine is going to get taller.” And knows basic grammar, she uses pronouns such as possessive pronoun “Mine”, object pronouns “It”, and Subject pronouns “I”. That makes her capable of maintaining a conversation with others. Samantha also mastered the receptive language, When Sara Called Samantha to show her the castle, Samantha stopped, and looked at Sara, and responded to her, Samantha also responded to the teacher when she told Samantha that “the tower will fall dawn” Samantha looked at the teacher and responded, “No it’s not”.

Emotional/Self-regulation: In terms of temperament, Samantha showed a good level of persistence, it took her more than six minutes to build the tower, and she did not give up, even though she was told that the tower will fall. She also has a good activity level, Samantha moves actively to collect the blocks, and uses all her body parts to manage to stack up the blocks. Besides, Samantha demonstrated a sense of self-concept, she has her own opinion that (her tower is going to be the tallest, and it is not going to fall), she did not let the teacher or Sara’s Opinions influence hers.

Social interaction with adults/peers: Samantha is capable of sharing and cooperating with others, she did not mind when Sara tried to put the block on top of the tower. She showed good

interaction with others, by answering and smiling and showing interest in interacting with Sara and the teachers. Lastly, Samantha showed appropriate behavior in context, when asked to stop and start cleaning up.

Physical; fine and Gross motor: Samantha can move smoothly around. She can walk, stand, skip, sit, bend without any help or issues. She uses her hands and fingers to grab and place the blocks on top of each other, with one hand holding one block and the other hand placing a second block on top of the tower. She can coordinate her hand movement and put the block in a balanced way. Overall, Samantha can use and coordinate her gross and fine motor skills.

Developmental theories:

Piaget's Cognitive development stages: According to Piaget's cognitive development theory, Samantha is in the preoperational stage, since she is 4-5 years old. Her thinking and cognitive skills continue to develop as she gets older and as she interacts with the world around her. By the end of this stage, Samantha will develop a basic understanding of other minds. I notice Samantha can make blocks (object) stand for a tower (real life), which, is according to this theory, represent Symbolism representation. I also notice that Sara and Samantha are engaged in a parallel play, each one has her private world, however, by the end of the observation Sara joined Samantha and they both enjoyed playing together, according to Piaget's theory, Egocentrism declines as the child get closer to the concrete operational.

Erik Erikson Social-emotional stages: According to Erikson's theory of social Emotional development, an individual's negative or positive personality relies on each stage through his life span. From birth to adulthood, Erikson said that failure to accomplish one stage will result in a

delay in the personality of the child. In this video, from the eight stages described by Erikson, I can tell that Samantha is in the “Initiative vs Guilt” stage. Samantha took the initiative to build a tower and transform her thoughts into reality. I also notice how Samantha was testing the acceptance of her behavior as mentioned by Erikson, Samantha was building the tower, and at the same time looking at her teacher and trying to find out if her behavior was acceptable or not. The teacher, on the other side, was aware of the importance of this stage, and allowed Samantha to test her idea, and didn’t require self-control, she would have simply told Samantha to stop because this may be dangerous or this won’t work, which may lead to guilt, but instead, she supported her initiative and her curiosity.

Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological System Theory: Looking at the context of the video, and from Bronfenbrenner’s point of view, Samantha is the center of a complex system of relationships. Besides her family, the classroom is one of the immediate environmental settings that have a direct impact on Samantha’s development, the microsystem. Samantha is developing her knowledge by interacting actively in the classroom with her peers, teachers, and objects. According to Bronfenbrenner, not only Samantha will be affected by her peers and adults in the classroom, but she may also have an impact on other’s behaviors and beliefs. So it is a reciprocal relation.

Vygotsky Sociocultural theory: Based on Vygotsky’s theory the video illustrates the social constructivism approach, according to this approach, Samantha’s cognitive development constructs through social interactions with others, in a classroom setting where the role of the teacher is to guide, support, and scaffold the child to help him advance in his Zone of Proximal Development. My ECE professor, Dr. Reich-Shapiro mentioned that “Sara looks more skilled and

cognitively advanced than Samantha; Sara's castle is more complicated". also, Sara noticed that if Samantha's castle fell, it's going to fall on her castle, which makes Sara's Space visualization quite accurate, she also counted to twenty-one. That makes me think about Vygotsky's idea of how children learn from more skilled peers. Being with Sara, Samantha's learning will be positively influenced and will help Samantha advance in her ZPD.

Cultural influences on development:

We live in one of the most diverse cities in the world, being aware of the cultural influences on development is a must for a teacher. The individual's beliefs, values, assumptions, and behaviors are shaped by the environment and the culture of each child.

I think the following factors had an impact on my development:

Family composition: I grew up in a house that has a mom, dad, and siblings, which makes me believe how important a family is, and how I learned from my older sister, she was and still my role model, and how my parents shaped my personality, I learned from my mom how to cook and to be a loving mother, and from my dad how to give without expecting any rewards.

Social Class/Education: I grow up in a working-class family. Where education is highly valued. which made me passionate about education, and despite my age, I decided to go back to college, because I believe through education people can develop and maintain their intellectual capabilities.

Language: when I was in my parents' house, everyone spoke the same language, and that was the language of my school as well, so it was easy for me to adapt.

Gender: Gender had a big impact on who I am. I grew up as a female in a patriarchal society, where men have the power, privilege, and freedom at the expense of women.

Ethnicity and race: as a kid, these two aspects did not have much impact on my development, since the society wasn't diverse, but the diversity took different aspects, a regional aspect, depending on the region we were from our culture and beliefs differed.

For Samantha, according to my research the name Samantha is the feminine form of Samuel, which means Flower in Greek. Originated from England. So, I assume that Samantha's ethnicity will be White and European American. She is female, and she speaks and understands English very well. This information may give us an insight into Samantha's Culture and background. In terms of spiritual practice, I think Samantha's religion is Christianity.

Comparing development at different ages/stages:

For this section, am going to refer to Samantha's observation summary paper and infant-toddler observation summary. (I named the boy Jason for the sake of this paper).

Cognitive Development: According to Piaget's cognitive development Samantha and Jason are exploring the physical world using their senses, and they both continue to construct ideas about the word and are curious. However, their way of doing so is different, Samantha being in the preoperational stage, is now able to hold her attention on one activity for 10-15 minutes and she can understand concepts such as time and size. On the other side, Jason is in the sensorimotor stage. He likes to move quickly from one activity to another and enjoy throwing things for fun.

Language Development: According to Heath Study, Samantha and Jason are both from a Maintown family, where reading is valued, where literacy events take place on many occasions, both children are likely to learn how to talk through reading. Samantha now can speak clearly, use more complicated sentences, she can use pronouns and future tense. Jason can make sounds cry or smile to communicate, he can also point and raise his arms if he wants to be picked up.

Social-Emotional Development: Samantha and Jason enjoy increased independence and can understand more than what they can do. However, I notice in the video that Jason still looks towards his mom to get a sense of security and care since he is at the stage of trust vs Mistrust (Erikson). Samantha is in the third stage Initiative vs Guilt, so her personality is getting toward more independence and purpose and soon competency.

Physical Development: Jason can sit well without support, he can crawl on his hands and knees, and he pulls himself to stand while holding to something. Samantha can run, jump, sit, and stand without help, and she has developed better eye hands coordination. Both, Samantha and Jason will continue to develop their gross and fine motor skills through physical movements and hands-on activities.

Comparing how settings may influence behavior

Samantha's observation took place in a block center in a preschool setting, where she has access to blocks and other small toys, and where she can create and bring her ideas to life under her teacher's supervision. Jason's observation took place in a daycare setting. There are toys that are safe for his age, the room is thoughtfully set up for him to move about and explore. But Jasmin (Elementary observation Summary paper) took place in a playground, which is an outdoor

setting, with different recreational equipment. I think the setting has a huge impact on the child's behavior. The way Jasmin was playing in the playground was different than Samantha and Jason and the skills that Samantha or Jason are getting are different from Jasmin's. depending on the setting children can develop different skills, in the playground children are more likely to develop more their gross muscles and physical skills, with fewer restrictions from adults, they can scream run, and make loud noises. In a classroom setting, children develop more their cognitive and social skills with more restrictions, like, no running is allowed, or speak quietly. Therefore, each setting has a different influence on the child's behavior and learning.

Conclusion:

Observing children through the course of this class made me think about children's development as an integrated constructive process. Children learn by exploring the world around them and interacting with others and using their senses. but way before that, they learn when they still in their mother's womb, which made this class's experience amazing. The womb is the first environment that affects the child's development, the unborn child can be affected by teratogen, also the food a pregnant woman consumes since their bloodstream is physically connected. according to (Thomas and Chess 1977) every child is born with an innate temperament that will determine later the child's attachment style therefore his personality and behavior. And as soon as the child is born, he starts his journey with a "cry" to let everyone know that he/she is here and ready to learn and grow, so we better be prepared. Piaget, Vygotsky, Bowlby, Erikson, Bronfenbrenner, Montessori, and other philosophers and educators have contributed to the study of child development more deeply and thoughtfully. And despite some differences in their theories, they all agree that the child is the center of the learning process and that the environment has an impact on shaping the child's belief, learning,

behavior, and perception. As Early Childhood Professionals, we must be aware of the importance of guiding, supporting, and scaffolding children's knowledge, affording a thoughtful environment, where children can physically and actively move and explore. Every child is unique, Samantha's genes, her parents' and teacher's response to her temperaments, and her environment, from the microsystem to the chronosystem (Bronfenbrenner), have contributed to shaping who she is today.