

FINAL SUMMARY

Final Summary Paper: Comparison of Preschool-Aged and Young School-Aged Children

ECE 110-071L

Natasha Harrington

FINAL SUMMARY

Intro

For my focus child, I chose Dulce from the video “Focused Observations, Chapter 3 Observation Practice #5.” Dulce is a preschool-aged child. She has medium-toned skin, was taller than the other students, had dark hair in a long braid, and wore a long-sleeved shirt with print and a red scarf. I plan to teach kindergarten, so I chose her as my focus child in part because of her age (which would have been close to four or five) and also because she is bilingual. It is helpful for me to watch how her teacher mixed both Spanish and English in their interactions.

Developmental Skills and Processes

Cognitive Development

Dulce engaged in dramatic play with the other children in the video and the teacher. She created narratives about her dog (that his head hurt and he was going to take a walk outside but he would burn in the sun) and used the materials for their intended purposes (put toy stethoscope to doll’s head; measured doll’s head with a measuring tape; applied imaginary cream to stuffed dog’s head).

Language Development

Dulce spoke clearly and in full sentences. She spoke in Spanish, while the teacher and other students spoke primarily in English (her teacher sometimes repeated what Dulce says in a mix of English and Spanish to clarify Dulce’s meaning and usually asked her questions in both English and Spanish). She replied to questions and directions that are asked and given in English in a way that indicates that she understood their meaning.

Emotional Development

FINAL SUMMARY

Dulce played happily (smiled and spoke in happy tones of voice). She appeared excited to talk about her dog. She gasped when she was startled at a loud noise behind her.

Social Development

Dulce engaged in conversation with the teacher throughout the video, responding to questions and volunteering stories about her dog. She shared her stuffed dog with another student and kindly asked the other student to take care of her dog for a little while. My interpretation is that she seemed to have very well-developed social skills.

Physical and Motor Development

Dulce stood throughout most of the video and moved her arms and hands somewhat. She manipulated stethoscope and pretended to apply cream to stuffed dog's head. Her gross and fine motor skills appeared to have developed typically for her age.

Activities of Daily Living

No activities of daily living were present in the video.

Theorists

Cognitive Development (Piaget)

Dulce is in the preoperational stage of development, which is defined by the ability for symbolic representation. This is very apparent in the video, as Dulce and the other children engaged in dramatic play throughout the video. Dulce used a stuffed dog to represent a real dog; used toy medical equipment to represent real medical equipment; and squeezed a toy tube of medicine onto the dog's head then pretended to apply an ointment that was entirely imaginary. She also created narratives about the dog (that he was sick and that he liked to go for walks, but would burn up in the sun).

FINAL SUMMARY

Social Development (Erickson)

In Erickson's social development theories, Dulce is at the stage of initiative vs. guilt (3.5 to 6 or 7 years). In this stage, it is important for adults to encourage creativity and play. While the teacher is guiding the play to a degree, the children are free to explore their own ideas and create their own stories about their behavior. This will help to move successfully through this stage, giving them a sense of purpose.

Socio-cultural (Vygotsky)

Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory deals with the scaffolding of learning through giving hints and asking open ended questions and with the zones of proximal development. The staff member in this video scaffolds the children's play by asking them open-ended questions that encourage them to expand on the narratives they have already created about their dramatic play. Dulce answers these questions with elaborations on her previous statements/stories. She mostly understands the tasks, and her understanding is further enhanced by the teacher's questions, putting her in the second and third levels of proximal development.

Ecological Theories (Bronfenbrenner)

Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory of development states that "childhood development is influenced by the personal, social, and political systems in which they live." The theory includes microsystems (direct influences on children), mesosystems (interconnections of and interactions between different microsystems), exosystems (indirect influences on the children), and macrosystems (society and cultural influences on children). Because this is a short video, the only ecological system that is directly observable is the microsystem of the child

FINAL SUMMARY

interacting with a teacher at school. Family-school communication (mesosystem) about the child's home language is possibly inferable from the teacher's use of Spanish.

Behaviorist Theory (Skinner, Watson, Bandura)

Behaviorist theories (classical condition, operant conditioning, and social learning) state that "traits are acquired through experiences within environments," and "adults shape behavior through positive reinforcement." The behaviorist theory most present in this video is Albert Bandura's theory of social learning, which states that children imitate those around them and that rewards make imitation of behavior more likely. To implement this theory, the teacher models the positive behavior she wants the children to engage in by participating in dramatic play and speaking kindly and patiently. The children in the video imitate her behavior by engaging in the dramatic play and also speaking kindly.

Comparison: Development of Children

I will be comparing the preschool video to the young school-aged video. I called focus child in that video "Chelsea" and I will be comparing her development with Dulce's.

One area in which the development between preschoolers and young school-aged children is apparent is in their social development. Dulce plays side-by-side with her peers and engages with them by sharing toys and speaking with them, but she does so primarily when guided to do so by the teacher. Although the young school-aged video takes place during quiet work time, Chelsea engaged with each other children and the teacher of her own accord. I would extrapolate from this that during play times, the children may engage in fully collaborative play that is self-initiated.

FINAL SUMMARY

In both videos, the children exhibit advanced fine and gross motor skills. They stand, walk, and manipulate small objects. In the young school-aged video, Chelsea also carries objects. The movements of the children in the young school-aged video appear smoother and more graceful.

Both children showed advanced language skills, both receptive and expressive. They spoke in full sentences that clearly communicated their ideas and they demonstrated understanding of their teachers' instructions and questions. In the young school-aged video, Chelsea and her peers show improvement in diction and speak more concisely, whereas in the preschool-aged video, Dulce speaks in a more stream-of-consciousness manner.

Comparison: Settings

In the preschool video, we do not see the entire classroom. The part we do see has only a table, cubbies and storage in the background, and one poster. There were not many colors and the decorations were sparse. The video featuring young school-aged children showed more of the classroom, which had tables, chairs, rugs, dividers separating different learning centers, and many colorful wall hangings. It had many materials and decorations and maintained an organized appearance.

While it is not possible to give a complete analysis of the classroom in the preschool-aged video, from what is visible in the videos, the classroom in the young school-aged video was much more engaging and welcoming. I would speculate that this is helpful in making the children feel excited to be in the class and piquing their interest in different learning centers. It also seems like having a delineation between centers while still allowing easy movement between them would help children focus on the task they are working on.

FINAL SUMMARY

Conclusion

Watching the videos while learning about different stages and areas of early childhood development allowed me to observe the children and their behavior more analytically. In the past when watching children, I would engage with them in different types of play and I enjoyed the ways they worded things and thought differently from adults. Having more information to process how and why they behave differently allows me a new perspective and gives me strategies to better help each child develop their unique skills, interests, and ways of perceiving the world. Specifically, it was helpful for me to watch a practical application of the strategies of communicating with multilingual children that I've been learning about. I was struck by Dulce's advanced receptive language skills in English, even while she expressively communicated only in Spanish. I have also been interested in seeing examples of learning centers, since the first two videos I observed did not display clear learning centers, and I was uncertain just from reading about them how to implement them in practice. The young school-aged video showed a very well-designed classroom that will help me in visualizing descriptions going forward. These observations have helped me to understand the subjects we have learned in class through seeing concrete, real-life examples. I am looking forward to being able to observe in-person classrooms for longer periods of time. Learning about and observing the stages and areas of development in young children will set a good basis for continuing my education in the field of early childhood education.