**Course Learning Journal**

Class discussions, researching and reading for this assignment have widened my knowledge and understanding of the foundations of parent education and guidance and assisted in my personal development and interactions with my husband and son. I now have a better understanding of the interactions between parent and child and the ways in which each develops along the way. At this stage of the master's programme, I have a firm grasp on avenues to research material for assignments. I am constantly researching and reading to widen my knowledge and develop better research skills. In my daily duties of interacting, supervising, managing, and leading staff, I can implement most of my newfound knowledge to assist the staff under my charge and open new avenues for effective communication to take place while solving problems and preventing conflicts from escalating by being self-aware from the knowledge we gain each day to maintain integrity. With the knowledge and skills gained from parent education and guidance, I became more aware of the ways I can interact with my son and my understudies at work because they are like my children as well.

My reading is more balanced as I become versed in finding research material for the readings entries and my courses in general. I have been using google scholar, guestia, jstore and books from my personal library that I have collected over the past ten years to source reading material. Improvement is always required generally because we live in a changing world and communicating with others on certain matters can be easy as well as difficult at times due to knowledge barriers especially when conversing about the different styles of parenting. I am more informed about parent education and guidance to assist in building my family and counselling those around me. I particularly took an interest in the theories that I was familiar with through various psychology courses while growing up and implemented a few of the disciplines into my life. I have grown to believe that at times I implement techniques from various theorists. In my early studies of psychology, I came across Albert Bandura encouraging me to strongly believe that we learn by modelling the behaviour of others, especially adults.

Social learning theory by Albert Bandura 1925, claims that children learn from interaction with others through observation, modelling and imitation. Social learning theory which takes into account an individual's attention, memory and motivation is also known as the link between behaviourist and cognitive learning theories. Through the parent-child interaction, the child observes behaviours which is stored in their memory, they later mimic such behaviour when they deem it appropriate to do so because they are pulling experiences from cognitive, behavioural, and environmental influences with others. As Bandura's study progressed, he observed that the environment, behaviour, and one's psychological processes (personality) shaped behaviour, because he believed in "reciprocal determinism”, meaning that the world and an individual behaviour influence each other (Newman, B. M., & Newman, P. R. 2015).

I learned that John Bowlby (1958, 1988), in his study of infant-caregiver attachments, made observations of the ethological characteristics of child development. Based on his observations he was able to make solid conclusions on the relationship between children and their caregivers' attachments towards each other. He stated that children have innate capabilities of smiling, cooing, and crying and their general innocence brings about an instant reflex from adults to care and comfort them due to sympathetic responses. These innate responses create set expectations between child and caregiver, the child expects to be cared for and the adult has an inner sense to take responsibility to comfort the child. This ethological development is especially important and helpful for new parents and caregivers, they learn as they go along. The methods learned in this attachment prepare caregivers for future roles with the child or children, as the caregiver is better equipped to handle the needs of growing children and put the learned strategies into action automatically due to the life cycle of the child (Newman, B. M., & Newman, P. R. 2015). I observed this first-hand while interacting with my son. He expected us to protect him as rightly we should because he trusted us to look after his wellbeing. At the slight feeling of being sad or scared, he would run to his dad or me expecting to be pampered. This gives comfort to him and us knowing that we are there for each other. It’s a feeling of deep love and security that nothing can shatter. We tend to also be on the alert for unnecessary tantrums or bad behaviour while interacting with others.

The psychoanalytical theory developed by Freaud assesses individuals with sexual and aggressive behaviours. Children who tend to show early signs of aggressive behaviours have to seek psychological assistance to determine the underlying problems before the issue prolongs and the child becomes too frustrated to take counselling to remedy the issue. The theory takes the assumption that every child has sexual and aggressive tendencies and finds unique ways to display them, however, there are those who may show it more aggressively than others and this has to be looked at closely to prevent destructive behaviours. Throughout the lifecycle from childhood, adolescence, and adult life, sexual aggression tends to drive and further develop an individual's fantasies, self-concept, social behaviours, problem-solving skills and reproductive behaviours with their partner. The unique aspect of the psychoanalytical theory is that psychologists place emphasis on child behaviour and childhood experiences and the relevance of shaping an individual's thoughts, emotions and behaviour in adulthood. The theory takes into account the primary relationship the child develops such as mother and child, father and child and their role in the child's gratification and needs. Children who show aggression at an early age have to be closely monitored by their parents to prevent any type of self-destruction. Parents are taught to develop strategies such as closer monitoring of the child, love and attention, family time, reward and recognition. Parent’s goals for their children are to raise a healthy child mentally, emotionally and physically, they are saddened to know that their child is hurting and they cannot do much to elevate their pain.

Erickson, Kohlberg and Piaget all present relatable distinctions of the key areas in human development. Erickson takes on an emotional approach that gives clear distinctions to each stage of development from newborn to puberty, he believed that the age of the individual also determines the stages in which they are. Each stage of development often overlaps as an individual transcends from one stage to another. Kohlberg presents his theory on a moral front in that children obey rules and regulations set and enforced by others to avoid punishments for the wrongdoing of their actions. Piaget’s mental approach shows how a child’s moral code is developed by their idea of what is right and wrong. He speaks about biological maturation and environmental experiences, in that as children mature so too does their moral judgement based on their interactions. My husband and I have noticed this type of development with our son, as he matures so does his interactions with others.

Jean Piaget's theory of cognitive development states that children's development takes place at four different stages of their mental enhancement. Sensorimotor stage from birth to 2 years old, infants and toddlers develop knowledge and skills from sensory activities and observing their surroundings and the objects in their environment. Children's experiences in this stage are based entirely on reflexes, senses and motor responses to the people and objects around them speeding up their growth and learning. During this short space of time, children learn several physical actions such as laughing, playing, crawling, walking and love. It’s at this stage that children learn their native language and begin interacting with others in the surrounding mimicking them as they continuously learn from them. Preoperational stage from 2 to 7 years old, although language would have been developing in the sensorimotor stage it is within this stage that language develops further and the child begins to make full statements and understand fully what is asked of them. Children in this stage have a good understanding of pretend play but may still have problems with logical thinking and reasoning in some complex instances. The concrete operational stage is from 7 to 11 years old, children within this stage are becoming logical thinking and are better able to employ their logic to decipher complex issues, they also take into account the feelings of others and not just their own and get what they want as when they were younger. Children begin to understand that not everyone would think and feel the same way as they do, they learn that they have their own identity, thoughts, feelings and opinions which adds to their uniqueness. The formal operations stage is from 12 years old and upwards, where children begin to use increased logical thinking, critical assessments and abstract reasoning of more complex ideas than in their younger years. Piaget states that children don’t acquire more information as they develop, there are drastic changes in how children would view and think about the world. Parents want the best for their children and they tend to create an environment at home for them from birth for them to learn and develop healthy attachments by showing them love, care and affection while teaching them the basic principles of communication. Adults teach their children from their acquired pool of knowledge and skills from their interactions through their development process, they begin to learn new things as a parent and further develop strategies as they go along because in most cases their thinking evolves as well (Piaget, J., & Inhelder, B., 1966)

I agree with Piaget's theory in that he emphasises what I grew up experiencing in my cultural sphere learning new things from interactions with others. I later internalised these concepts and ideas and compared them with what I already knew from my interactions with my parents and what they taught me. I then adjusted my beliefs accordingly and this assisted in shaping my self-concept from an early age.

I am now at a place in my life where I am a mother of a little boy a role that I take seriously, I intend to use my moral, and religious beliefs and self-concept to teach my children about acceptable behaviour in society and play a pivotal role in their future development. I want my family to be able to process right from wrong in this rapidly changing society while still maintaining a healthy self-concept, to one day teach their children what they have learned and carry on the culture of learning and intelligence in their own way.

Some research suggests that children are always competing to be like their parents and they become frustrated when they are dismissed as playful. They seek validation from their parents for like-minded behaviour. Individuals who are young and lack a well-developed self-concept may experience problems according to Steffenhagen, R. A., & Burns, J. D. (1987) “people are born mentally, socially, and physically inferior to their parents; it is through socialization that they rise to some degree of equality but not superiority. A person's behaviour is greatly influenced by their way of life, attitude, and values. Having positive contact with individuals in society, whether at work or in social settings, contributes to one's self-concept and increases one's self-esteem. If the case were the opposite, we would experience poor self-esteem if we frequently deal with unfavourable interactions. Individuals become more social, change from having a normal to a healthy personality, and immediately have more self-esteem when their goals are practical and attainable”. This approach is extremely useful in the workplace where teamwork is of utmost importance in producing successful end results, however, this can be implemented into the home and schools.

Baumrind, whose study on the four parenting styles shows enough evidence of logical development for children within the same age groups. Baumrind parenting styles, authoritarian, authoritative, permissive and neglectful showed a great deal of present-day parenting with authoritative parenting being the best parenting style among the four. Authoritative parenting style generally produces the best behavioural outcome in children. Baumrind research showed that pre-schoolers raised by authoritative parents​ are happier and more contented because they develop independence and self-reliance with excellent social skills. The toddlers in this age group have good emotional regulation and self-control because their parents taught them it's better to communicate what they want rather than throw tantrums. Children within these age groups are now afraid of new environments and often socialize with peers with a sense of acceptance and warmth. They are very competent and assertive for their age, expressing maturity when their parents communicate with them, even in instances when they are told not to behave a certain way (Baumrind, D., et al. 2008). My son would be entering pre-school soon and I aim to utilize Baumrind’s techniques to mould him into an amazing child.

I am always seeking avenues for additional knowledge in every aspect of our lives for the fundamental growth of self and others, to grasp ways for effective communication skills and human behaviour because it's crucial to implement controls for the various types of individuals we come across daily in relation to parent education and guidance. As I continue to implement the knowledge and skills gained from this programme, I am confident that I will improve drastically in all areas of my studies and interactions aiding in the further enhancement of my communication skills, confidence, parenting skills and pursuit of additional knowledge towards building self-concept. I have started teaching once again, this knowledge would allow me to identify situations where I can source additional knowledge and implement ideas for greater thinking for individuals to gain an understanding that they are knowledgeable enough to pivot themselves around any situation to become successful at what they do. Making others self-aware of their hidden intelligence enables them to contribute towards teamwork, and prevents each member from aggravating their teammates which may be demotivating to them and hamper production, reducing morale and causing conflicts.

Being a part of the delta design group of learning, I understood the concept of speed reading more intensely because the learning design in this course allowed us to cover a wide area of reading and research in a short space of time. The group work and discussions taught us the value of working together towards a common goal. Reaffirming in the course communication skills the concept of the Johari Window and self-disclosure further reemphasised my understanding of myself and how I communicate with others. Self-disclosure is our actions of making others notice us and how they can perceive us in a certain way. The Johari Window, developed by Joseph Luft and Harry Ingraham, is a device that illustrates self-disclosure in communication which filters into cooperation with others and their safety. The Johari Window shows degrees of openness and self-awareness, it is divided to show the parts of the self we can see and share with others and the parts of the self that are public. I believe that this concept makes us aware of others and teaches us about their personality in the same way we would look at ourselves and become aware, we also become aware of others around us. This is especially useful for gaining knowledge of human behaviour in the workplace and when studying social sciences like psychology, sociology, criminology and in recent times parent education and guidance.

In every context we communicate, there is a communication climate set for each and it is usually the individuals who are communicating with each other that would set the climate. Discussing an intense matter the climate would be one of hostility, whereas, couples in love or parent and child would be in a calm and gentle communication climate displaying love and kindness hence anger and conflict vary in each climate. Everyone has a responsibility as a human being to do right by another human being but that’s not the case in most societies. If we take the time to care for and educate others, especially children they will feel the love they need while growing and ultimately become amazing individuals.

I am knowledgeable enough now in human behaviour, parent education and guidance and have the ability to determine what promotes knowledge and effective communication skills to prevent conflicts and abuse towards others and how well I can work with my husband, son and team at work based on my understanding of them and how they communicate. I have already started implementing most of what I learned during this course with my staff, assisting them to change and enhance the ways in which they investigate situations to gain knowledge and communicate as well as curbing conflicts in their personal lives with their spouse and children. This course has allowed me to be a better asset to my family, my team and the organization.

Even while I am at the workplace, my subordinates are in my care which makes me their caregiver in a way. I attempt to foster an environment of caring and compassion for each other. I believe that employees are to be treated with respect and as a leader, I limit stressful situations because I want my staff to be happy and comfortable in my presence and at work. I would appreciate it if others could treat my children in the same manner. Going forward I am more conscious of my thoughts, according to Haanel, C.F. (2011) “ knowledge gaining and consequent power is what determines growth and evolution. The recognition and demonstration of knowledge is what constitutes power, and this power is spiritual power, and this spiritual power is the power which lies at the heart of all things; it is the soul of the universe. This knowledge is the result of man’s ability to think; thought is therefore the germ of man’s conscious evolution. When man ceases to advance in his thoughts and ideals, his forces immediately begin to disintegrate and his countenance gradually registers these changing conditions."

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