

Bridges Conference 03/31/06
Dr. Garbarino

Kelly Reese-Notes

Perspectives in examining children and development:

1. An ecological perspective on human development

-Looking at developmental science, rarely a cause and effect that works the same way in every situation; as context changes, including historical context, the solution changes.

EX: Once asked 40 years ago what the best way was to produce happy and successful children. The answer then was permissive parenting. Now, 40 years later it was found that permissive parenting was the worst solution.

Which is right? It depends on the environment and context.

-Intellectual way to approach science-don't want to over-generalize

-Fixed human nature becomes unraveled depending on context

-Context we are concerned about not simply family or schools, but also macroeconomic and microeconomic systems, etc. Only way to demonstrate multidisciplinary system is take experts from each field.

+ Not so much poverty that is connected with adolescent violence as it is economic inequality.

2. Chaos Theory:

-In both the physical and social context everything is composed by complicated, interconnected systems; there are always unanticipated effects

-Butterfly Effect

+ Will never be possible to have programs set in motion without human knowledge to re-direct when butterfly effect takes place

-Must look at context and realize that it opens up possibilities due to these unanticipated effects.

3. Political/Social Context

-A lot of "lamp post" models: look at the easy areas but don't delve into the dark areas

EX: Scared straight videos, such as showing kids a tape of prison, scare them away. Didn't eliminate delinquency, it actually made some cases worse.

-Want to take the easy way out, not willing to walk up the dark road to deal with the core issues and a general disdain for research and theory

+ Programs fail because origins do not come out of research but rather good intentions

4. Resilience

-Arises from research that shows if you put kids in a bad situation and go back 6 months later, 85% are okay because they are resilient

-People tend to look at resilience as a trait independent of context- this is a problem, it must be looked at in terms of context; resilience in terms of context must be approached radically

Kimberly Low Notes

Power Ball 1: Joke about judge calling together multidisciplinary team and asking what $2 + 2$ is...

- Dr. G is ambivalent towards the law...says we spend too much time on certain issues
- His approach is an “ecological perspective on human development”
 - This is in part a scientific stance...no simple cause and effect relationship that affects everyone the same
 - Means nothing is fixed—very empowering
 - But also frustrating b/c solutions may change
- 1920’s...Simons...what kind of parenting produces the happiest most competent kids? Answer was permissive...but 30 years later a study found this was least effective
- So which is it...answer depends on the CONTEXT!
- Freud’s problem was over-generalizing
- Chaos theory: Reality (physical or social) composed of so many systems that interplay—so complicated you cant even know of all the systems...Always unanticipated effects b/c of all the systems...butterfly effect
- It will never be possible to set programs to run mechanically—will always need a human component
- Slow diligence to look at the context...not just these exist but those that could exist
- Still more to capture...a political/social dimension...

Power Ball 2: Lamppost joke

- Many problems are lamppost...great techniques but steer clear of the dark (ex-scared straight)
- Levin—“nothing so practical as a good theory”
- To do good practice you must be grounded in a deeper understanding. (ex- home visit initiative with prenatal mothers)
- One core theme that emerges is to understand the concept of social toxicity...just as with physical toxicity there is social toxicity...some children are psychosocial asthmatics (just more psychologically susceptible)
- Idea- kids can be as bad as the environment lets them be!!!
- Progress by understanding central importance of risky thinking in kids
- Kenneth Dodge—social cognition of risky thinking
 1. Hypersensitive to negative social cues
 2. Oblivious to positive social cues
 3. Narrow repertoire of aggressive behavior
 4. Reached conclusion that aggression is successful
- So if abused and have these 4 thinking patterns, greater risk of conduct disorder
- Cultural scenarios are what does the damage...a crazy person is no more crazy than the environment lets them be

Resilience: has to be approached radically!

- WWII study- if regular US soldiers stayed in war for 60 days, how many had psychiatric casualties? 98%.
- Is this resilience deficiency disorder? Is the other 2% stronger? No—the 2% were psychopaths!
- Not all psychopaths are sociopaths (ex- FBI snipers—they are pro-social psychopaths)

Saturday: Session II: Frank Cervone

- 2 current projects:
 - One is an educational campaign to promote that every child should be in school, the right school, and finish school (not touching on this today)
 - 2nd is an Outcome Measurement for the Practice of Law for children...focusing on this today
- What is success? What is success in a child abuse case? A convicted dad? Convicted mom? Treatment? Probation?
- Must realize there are outcomes all along the way...the little battles
- Remarkable that many child centers don't have database systems
- His database program includes goal setting, fields for problems, schools, etc...very extensive
- Issue of causality: This program not trying to show causality...just trying to describe...allows us to have the very best feedback
- Q: Is this for your shop, or practice in general?
- A: Both...really just felt the profession needed it
- Audience really receptive to and excited about this idea
- Fandacaro: this system is a natural laboratory...great statistics
- Share...can this be a universal tool?