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Writing Assignment One

In the Editorial: Reconsidering data-driven decision making – a personal journey and advice for teachers written by Mary Renck Jalongo, she brings the reader through three important stages a person may go through from being a teacher to becoming a researcher. The three stages in order are negative acceptance, recognition of the need to change attitudes about research and the better you: an intelligent consumer. After the three stages comes the final stage of universal affirmation of research. Jalongo brought the reader through a personal journey of how she developed respect for the process of research.

The first stage of Jalongo’s journey is the period of negative acceptance. In negative acceptance a person believes that they are not proficient enough to conduct research. A person may want to give up because they believe that a research methods class is too difficult to understand and does not pertain to their life. This is exactly what happened to Jalongo when she was 21. She took a research methods class with a professor who was memorable for all the wrong reasons; in simple words he was a complete stereotype for a psychology professor. In an assignment she had to compute the mean, median and mode for date, then rank the level of intelligence of children. This assignment made Jalongo feel unconnected to research methods; she believed that research did not connect to her life. For Jalongo the stage of negative  
acceptance was an important stage to endure, in order to become focused on  
a larger goal.

The second stage in the journey is the recognition of the need to change attitudes about research, or as Jalongo calls it the “get over it” stage. A person starts to be aware of the need for a transformation and is beginning to believe in the need for research itself. During this period of Jalongo’s life she was a doctoral student taking a statistics class. The class was tough, but in the end this statistics class geared her toward believing that research was in her reach of ability.

The third stage is the better you: an intelligent consumer, the purpose of this stage is to understand the reason to learn about research and how it can relate to the researchers life. Also it helps to know that the research you do can be used in a productive way. During this stage Jalongo realized that research is not all about statistics that being able to write clear and concise answers was also a great achievement. She was able to realize that everyone struggles, whether you are a genius in statistics and have trouble writing or a great writer and need to continually practice at statistics. Jalongo stayed in this third stage for years before being able to finally  
reach the final stage.

The fourth and final stage of Jalongo’s personal journey is the universal affirmation of research. Jalongo did not reach this stage easily; it took her years to achieve the ability to see the applicability of what she had learned for others. She stated, ‘‘Everyone needs to know something about research and research can improve professional practice” (Jalongo, 2006). While now that Jalongo, herself teaches the graduate-level research course, she finds herself now in the challenge to facilitate others to reach the universal affirmation stage.

In the article Personal and scientific sources of knowledge about children written by Shirley Moore and Catherine Cooper, challenges the reader to look at personal knowledge about children and the scientific approach of research on child development. Children are the center of our society whether it is parents, teachers, or doctors. Adults have the inherent responsibility to advance their civilizations by protecting and understanding children’s developmental growth. First in Moore and Cooper’s article, the techniques of how a child study is used by researchers and practitioners to create and achieve information about children will be compared. Then, “two issues will be given special attention: the use of the laboratory setting in research, and the researcher’s approach to questions about the causes of behavior” (Moore & Cooper, 1982). On the other hand our personal experiences and also observations are a very important part of us as individuals.

Personal experiences are eyewitness accounts by the person; the incident may be unique to us and helps us generate our own theories about the development of children. The key feature of a personal experience is that the person must build this belief through their eyes. Since an experience is built through your own eyes, when a disagreement with another person occurs, there is no source to cite of why it is correct. There is not a way to verify your experience is the better of the two because it is seen through your eyes only. Also because your average day person is not experienced is noticing different traits, there is the ability to perceive the wrong emotion while watching a child.

When facing scientific knowledge, there are many precautions and steps that must be taken place to ensure the validity of the study. For example; a study must be able to be recreated, a full description of the children in the study must be provided: age, socioeconomic status, and ethnicity. Research greatly differs from a personal observation by that way that information is expressed in numerical value, done by statistical procedures. When using a scientific means to observe there are countless different methods to use two examples are; the controlled setting of a laboratory, and a naturalist setting of the child’s daycare. The reasons and purposes of scientific research are to answer the vast amount of questions that people seek every day. Individuals seek knowledge and scientific research is meant to be a logical investigation to establish facts and truth about what we know to be true.

There is an important distinction to be made of casual relationships and correlations. A casual relationship is where, “the experimenter has actually recreated the effect” Correlational data is where a researcher, “assesses the extent to which variables appear to be related in some systematic way.” Positive and negative correlations are the two main categories of correlational  
research in literature. A researcher can determine if a correlation is truthful by, if it is statistically significant. This is concluded by, “if the relationship between variable is clearly greater than would occur by chance even though it might be far from perfect” (Moore & Cooper, 1982). While a casual question can be provoked to start correlational research; a person cannot assume that a correlation will cause something to happen or because of the correlation it was caused by a subject.

Personal knowledge and experiences are important for a person to have the hands on experience needed to help guide a child through life for anyone living or working with children. We individually perceive how an infant is developing correctly by when they; crawl, take their first steps, and say their first words for example. These are widely known developmental steps in an infant’s life. An individual’s personal experiences tell them their child is developing correctly; although; when a problem occurs in development a person may turn to doctors. There has been countless amount of research done on the development of infants. A parent then will turn to the research provided, professional help present to help guide their own view on the matter. We as humans can make a personal experience to generalize the situation at hand, while the research can help provide specific details and meanings of the circumstances we are dealing with.

References

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