

THE ADOLESCENT CASE STUDY

Goals:

- To look carefully at a developing adolescent to understand his or her social, psychological, cognitive, and academic development in school and non-school contexts and to evaluate the interaction between these areas of development.
- To examine how different social systems -- school, peer groups, family -- influence the concerns, identity development, thinking, and learning of the growing adolescent.
- To apply insights and principles from research on adolescent development and learning to a specific case.
- To learn to see and interpret the world from another's perspective.

Tasks:

You will examine how a developing adolescent thinks and reasons, interacts with others, and views him/herself as a maturing person and part of a social group. How does he or she learn? What motivates him or her? What are her/his concerns, attitudes, and beliefs, as well as behaviors?

Choose a student who poses a puzzle or questions for you, not someone with whom you identify strongly. It might be useful to select a student from a different social, cultural, language, racial, ethnic group, and/or gender background from your own.

You will collect data about your student from a number of sources, including:

- observations of the student in school and non-school settings, including the home,
- interviews of the student,
- shadowing the student throughout a school day,
- a cognitive assessment of the student's learning,
- examination of the student's cumulative folder, and
- analysis of samples of the student's work.

During the course of ED 240 and the practicum we will be working together on strategies for observing, interviewing, shadowing, and assessing your student's learning. You will keep detailed, nonjudgmental observations of the student between September and November. We recommend keeping a notebook or setting aside a section of your log for this purpose. In your case study report, you will link your observations and analyses about your student to the readings you have been doing in ED 240 and to the practicum.

You will have the opportunity to review case studies written by other students who have previously engaged in this kind of study. You will also have the opportunity to have your case study reviewed by a peer and by a faculty member before completing the final version. Your Penultimate draft will be due no later than **November 18**, to be given to your peer case consultant and faculty reader. You will also receive a case to review on that date. On **November 30**, we will hold case conferences during the practicum so that you can ask questions of the colleague whose case you have reviewed and discuss your own case with your case consultant. You will receive feedback on your case from a faculty reader as well.

You are encouraged to revise your case following the case conference and additional feedback. Final versions of the case study are due **December 16, 2013**.

Assessment Criteria for Evaluating the Case Study

1. Does the case study provide a clear, thorough, detailed picture of the young person's thinking and learning, physical development, social interactions, social / emotional development, and views of him/herself (e.g. identity development)?

- Does it promote understanding of the student as a thinker and a learner?
- Does it illuminate how the student behaves as a social member of a classroom, peer group, family, or other social system(s), what roles he/she assumes, and how she/he views her/his niche?
- Does it provide a sense of how the young person is developing a view of him/herself, his/her possibilities and aspirations, affiliations and memberships, and constraints or limitations?
- Does it help the reader understand what motivates, inspires, and concerns this young person?

2. Does the case provide an adequate understanding of the contexts within which the student is operating and how these influence his or her development?

3. Is the description careful, detailed, and nonjudgmental? Are data kept distinct from analysis?

4. Does the analysis integrate observations across the areas of development to suggest how they interrelate?

5. Is the discussion and analysis grounded in and informed by research and theory on adolescent development?

6. Does the analysis use data to substantiate statements and conclusions? Does it examine patterns and relationships among various pieces of data? Does it describe carefully while avoiding labeling?

7. Does the analysis pay attention to concerns of role group identification, gender, cultural or racial/ethnic identity, and other socially-constructed self-perceptions where they are relevant?

8. Is the paper well written: easy to read and well-structured, with proper use of spelling, grammar and other conventions? Does it meet acceptable standards of academic writing and scholarly referencing?