

Culture, Identity & Education

Identity & the development of the self

Feedback on homework

- Cults and their leaders
- The Manson family
- Joe Jones and 'Jonestown'
- Branch Davidians
- Children of God

Point for reflection

- To what extent are we as human beings able to shape our own identity?
- Influencing factors include - economic, social, cultural and political influences versus individual agency
- Also the role of different relationships in our lives
- Established relationship between culture and learning – would this be different in different parts of the world?
- Think about how learning experiences have influenced attitudes towards learning
- Those learning experiences were influenced by culture – this would be different in different parts of the world

Think about your own skills and competencies



Which do you feel are most important?



Make a list of those that you feel would be fundamentally important to pass to future generations.



How are do those differ from hunter-gatherers

Hunter gatherers

- Cultural knowledge:
- How to hunt
- Collect plants
- Find and build shelters
- Look after family
- Gender division
- How was this taught?
- How is this different from today?

Today

- Cultural knowledge:
- Schools, instructors etc
- Different roles and paths in society
- Need to learn specific skills
- Innovation means that new skills are needed

Significant
innovations that
have influenced
social and
cultural change

What do we mean?

They emerge from or a response to specific
historical and geographical contexts

The Cognitive Revolution (70,000 BC)

The Agricultural Revolution (10,000 BC)

The Scientific Revolution (1500 AD)

Task

Research

Look at three inventions – choose three you think are important in terms of social/cultural change.

Consider possible stimulus/consequences of inventions

Task

- Can you think of any other recent innovations that have had an effect on any other factors?:

Work in groups to create a list

You may use the internet to help you

Erik Erikson (1968)

4 aspects of identity:

- Religion
- Sex (gender identity)
- Politics/ethnic identity
- Vocation

Technology and emphasis have changed yet these four aspects are still important

Religious identity

"At the moment religion's not that important. I guess when I get older it might become more so, but right now being with my friends and having fun and being a teenager is more important to me" (cited in Smith, 2005).

- Happy to go along with the faith that parent's/friends favour

Sexual/Gender identity

• *sex* and *sexual* refer to biological male/female characteristics and *gender* refers to cultural and social characteristics.

• Gender identity usually leads to gender role and sexual orientation

• Adolescents feel strong sexual drives, but many are not sure how and with whom to express them. That is why gender identity, gender role, and sexual orientation all become issues during adolescence (Baumeister & Blackhart, 2007).

Political/ethnic identity

- Young people not old enough to vote- therefore why are politics important?
- Ethnic identity: group history, parent's perspectives and own experiences = teenagers struggle to find own identities while remaining close to their roots

Vocational identities

Vocational identity in the twenty-first century is usually postponed until age 25 or later:

- few teenagers can find meaningful work (Csikszentmihalyi & Schneider, 2000).
- most available jobs are quite different from what they were a generation ago, making foreclosure difficult.
- the required skills for many vocations take years to attain, which makes selecting a vocation at age 16 premature.

Identity vs Identity confusion

- Adolescents are faced with numerous choices (deciding – who they are, what life is all about, how they are going to live).
- Gradually realise they are responsible for own life and have to determine what that life will be
- Identity achievement – needs to reflect on goals/values set by parents/culture and accept/reject some

Consider

How may a young person feel if:

- They had to move to a different country
- most teenagers will express gender identity in ways that blend in with the range of social norms and gender stereotypes. How would a young person feel if gender identification that felt true to them did not fit within their culture's expectations for male and female?

Bicultural: the ability to function in more than one culture; usually the dominant culture and the culture of your heritage.

Acculturation: adjusting behaviour to meet the expectations of your new environment.

Marcia 1996

- Built on Erikson's principles
- But deemed that adolescent stages do not consist of identity resolution nor identity confusion
- Depended on how much the adolescent has explored and committed to an identity in a variety of life domains (e.g religion, gender role, vocation, etc)
- balance between identity and confusion lies in making a *commitment* to an identity.
- Research looked at occupational role, beliefs and values, and sexuality.

Marcia: Two key parts to theory

Two distinct parts form identity:

Crisis:

When old values and choices are being re-examined

Commitment

End outcome of crisis is commitment – the commitment made to a certain role

Marcia's Identity Statuses

- **Identity achievement** occurs when an individual has gone through an exploration of different identities and made a commitment to one.
- **Moratorium** is the status of a person who is actively involved in exploring different identities, but has not made a commitment.
- **Foreclosure** status is when a person has made a commitment without attempting identity exploration.
- **Identity diffusion** occurs when there is neither an identity crisis or commitment

Key points

- Those who have made a strong commitment to an identity tend to be happier and healthier than those who have not.
- People can experience identity crisis's at different points of their lives not just in adolescence
- Identity crisis more common today than in Erikson's day –why?

Personal, Social and Cultural influences

Cognitive influences:

Young people who have mastered formal operational thought and can reason logically are now able to imagine and contemplate future identities

Parenting influences:

Parental relationships can affect progress of forming an identity. May feel rejected by parents and struggle with relationship.

Scholastic influences:

Attending FE can help young people to choose solid career path and form identity, however, may fall behind in the shaping of 'real world' identity (e.g politics and religion)

Cultural historical influences:

Influenced by surroundings; years ago sons of farmers became farmers, now the choice is much wider

"Between the stimulus and response, there is a space and in that space lies our freedom and power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom."

Victor Frankl



• *'The bodies we inhabit also offer boundaries and structural constraints as well as being sites for the presentation of identities.'* (Woodward 2002, p. 3)

• *'Where large areas of a person's life are no longer set by pre-existing patterns and habits, the individual is continually obliged to negotiate life-style options. Moreover - and this is crucial - such choices are not just 'external' or marginal aspects of the individual's attitudes, but define who the individual 'is'. In other words, life-style choices are constitutive of a reflective self'* (Giddens 1992, p. 75)

• John Locke and the 'sovereign individual', the dominant principle of Western ideology

TASK

• Working in pairs write down what you think about the image you present of yourself. Think about appearance, personality, character traits etc – be honest!!

• Now write down the same but for your partner. How do they present themselves and how do you see them?

• Compare notes, where are there similarities and differences of opinion?

• Why do you think that is?

Charles Cooley the 'Looking-glass self'

- The self is centralised in the everyday and in language, especially personal pronouns
- The self needs to be observed in the social context
- Importance of how we think of ourselves and what others also think of us



- *'The essence of the self, as we have said is cognitive: it lies in the internalized conversation of gestures which constitute thinking, or in terms of which thought or reflection proceeds. And hence the origin and foundations of the self, like those of thinking, are social.'* (Mead, 1934 p. 173)
- Self-consciousness as the core of the self but not enough by itself, needs to be based in society
