

Educational Psychology 212 Group Project Guidelines

The purpose of this project is to help you understand the relevance and applicability of the developmental theories covered in this class. For this project, you will work in groups of about 6 students. The goal of the project is to have you along with the five other members of your group interview 6 individuals, two from each of the following three age groups: 3-5 yrs, 6-9 yrs, & 12-16 yrs, and relate your findings to three major developmental theories covered in this course: Piaget's Cognitive Developmental Theory, Erikson's Personality Development Theory, and Kohlberg's Moral Development Theory.

The overall project is worth 70 points. The project consists of:

- 6 interview reports, worth 10 pts each
- A comparative paper, worth 10 pts

The **due date** for the project is indicated in the schedule section of your syllabus.

To begin, you should develop a good understanding of the theories involved in this project. These theories are covered in chapters 2 & 3 of the textbook. It is crucial to have a good understanding of these chapters before you begin planning your project. The project plan should be **very specifically related to the three theories listed above**.

Next, you and your group will work on developing a project plan. Think of relevant things to look for in your observations and of appropriate interview questions and/or exercises for each of the three age groups. Be certain to develop the interview experience so that each child feels successful, regardless of his/her level of functioning (no 'right or wrong' answers needed or indicated, for example).

You should develop about 9-12 questions/activities/observations (at least 3 for each of the three theories) for use during each of the six interviews. Two children should be interviewed from each age group using the same set of questions. This way you can assess individual variability within each age group. Whenever possible, you should also use questions that are similar across the age groups so that you can better assess the changes that occur with age.

Once your project plan has been approved, you can begin interviewing the 6 children in person. Each group member should interview one child. You **must get permission** from the parents/guardians of each child before the interview/observation is conducted. Permission slips upon which you need to secure the parent/guardian signature are attached to this handout. Don't use full names when referring to the children you interviewed/observed in your report. Their full names should only be written on the permission slips.

You should spend no more than 1 hr. with each individual. Remember to explain that you are working on a project for your class and that the main purpose of the assignment is to help you see the relationship between textbook information on development and the development of real individuals. You **should not offer advice** or attempt to make any psychological evaluations of the individuals interviewed—you are not qualified to do so.

When you complete an interview, write a report on it. Each of the 6 interview reports you hand in should have a **consent form attached** to it and should follow the structure described below.

After the interview reports are done, write a comprehensive paper that pulls together the information gathered by all members of the group. The comprehensive paper should follow the format described below. You need to demonstrate good understanding of child development and developmental theories in the comprehensive paper. The paper will be graded on depth of analysis and quality of reflections as well as completeness.

When you turn in the project, you will be asked to rate the effort that you and each other member of the group put into the project. Average % effort will be computed for each group member and the individual project grade will be determined based on it.

Interview Report Structure and Grading Criteria: (Follow this format for each of the 6 reports)

- Begin each report with the following general information: the first name and age of the child interviewed, date interviewed, the context in which the interview/observation took place, and length of time spent with the child. Each report should be organized by theory. Discuss the child's cognitive development first, then personality development, then moral development. For each theory, the report should list the specific questions presented to the interviewee. Each question/activity listed should be followed by the interviewee's exact response to it.
- For each theory assessed, indicate whether what you observed/heard seems to be in line with what you would expect the individual to do/say based on the theory or not. At which stage/level does the child's response place him/her? why? Be specific and justify any statement you write with evidence from the interview and from the theory. (6 pts.)
- Provide your predictions about the past and/or future development of the child you interviewed. Your predictions should not simply reflect your personal opinion. They should be clearly derived from, and supported by, the theory. (2 pts)
- Address the following questions: Did you encounter any problems in collecting information? Do you feel you obtained good data? What would you change if you were doing this interview again? (2 pts)
- Each of the six interview reports should be about 4-6 pages long and must conform to the "Guidelines for Acceptable Form for Assignments" specified in your syllabus.

Comparative Paper Structure and Grading Criteria:

- Begin the paper with a discussion of the developmental similarities and differences you observed in each pair of same-age children using cognitive, psychosocial, and moral development information. What factors do you think account for these 'within-group' differences, or lack thereof? (3 pts)
- Discuss the developmental similarities and differences you observed across the age groups using cognitive, psychosocial, and moral development information. What factors account for these 'between-group' differences, or lack thereof? (3 pts)
- Address if, overall, each of the developmental theories seems to be validated or invalidated by what you observed. If need be, suggest your own theory(ies) that would be more valid for the group of children you observed? (2 pts)
- Conclude the paper with a discussion on the ways you might use this developmental information in your personal life and/or teaching career. Reflect on how this project helped you become more responsibly engaged in the world. (2 pts)
- The paper should be 3-6 pages long, and must conform to the "Guidelines for Acceptable Form for Assignments" specified in your syllabus.

Informed Consent Form

My name is _____. I am a student in an Educational Psychology course at Concordia College, Moorhead, MN. As part of the requirements for this class, I am conducting a research project. I would like your child to take part in my research by allowing me to interview them. The research deals with validating three developmental theories that we studied in class by interviewing/observing children of various age groups, to see if the theories provide valid descriptions of the cognitive, psychosocial, and moral development of children.

If you and your child agree that your child may participate in my research, I will meet with your child in a place of their choice and conduct one interview with them that will last less than an hour. The interview will involve some questions, activities, and observations related to cognitive processing, personality development, and moral reasoning. I will make handwritten notes during the interview that I will then use to compile an interview report and project paper.

All of the information that I obtain from your child during the interview will be kept confidential. I will not use your child's full name in any reports of my research; only the child's first name will be used. Your child's full name will only appear on the signed consent form, which will be given to my professor, Dr. Mona Ibrahim, to keep in her records.

There are no known risks associated with my research. There is no foreseeable direct benefit to your child from the research. I hope that the research will benefit society by providing me, as a future teacher, with training in using developmental theories to interpret and predict child behavior.

Your child's participation in this research is voluntary. He/she may refuse to take part. If your child decides to take part, he/she may refuse to answer any questions and may stop taking part in the study at any time.

Please discuss this research and the information in this permission form with your child. If you or your child have any questions about the research, you may telephone me, _____, at _____ or contact me by e-mail: _____@cord.edu.

If your child agrees to take part in the research, and you agree to let him/her, both of you should sign the second page of this form. **Please keep this first page for your future reference.**

If you or your child have any questions regarding your treatment or rights as a participant in this research project, please contact my Educational Psychology professor, Mona Ibrahim, at (218) 299-3299 or e-mail her at Ibrahim@cord.edu.

Thank you!

PARENT/ LEGAL GUARDIAN'S PERMISSION TO ALLOW CHILD TO PARTICIPATE

I have read the first page of this form and discussed it with my child, and agree that my child may take part in this research.

Parent/Legal Guardian's Signature

Date

PARENT/LEGAL GUARDIAN'S NAME (PLEASE PRINT)

CHILD'S ASSENT TO PARTICIPATE

I read or had the first page of this form explained to me and I agree to take part in this research.

Child's Signature

(For children capable of giving written assent, otherwise verbal assent will be secured)

Date

Child's Name (Please Print)