

I Remember When, or Do I?

Episodic memory is for specific events in a persons life.” (Kalat 2011) These memories can be retained for a lifetime due to a conversation, emotion, or senses that lead to a unique event or that is of significance to the person(s) experiencing it. Episodic memories can last a lifetime, are different for each person experiencing the event, and are often inaccurate.

I raced down the walkway full of energy, excited to get in the house and tell my mom about my day at school. I was seven years old and full of life and vigor. I flung open the front door and ran in to greet my mother. But the room felt solemn and waves of misery pierced my ears. Something was wrong. On the sofa sat my mother with puffy red eyes, sniffing and at the same time trying to muster up courage from the depths of her soul. Pastor Reginald was sitting next to her with his hand on her back. He looked up at me and gave me the “it’s going to be ok eyes”. Sheer nerves pierced my body. I felt a painful hot and cold chill run up and down my arms and neck. What had happened? I ran to my mother and threw my arms around her. “What’s wrong?” I asked. “What’s wrong?” Try as she may, my mother could not find the words within her to tell me. She began to cry again and I turned to the pastor’s wife, Blanche, who had just brought us home from school. “What’s wrong?” I repeated. Blanche looked down on me. Her eyes welled up and she hugged me and then stepped back. “Your father is not coming home,” she said. I froze and felt no emotion. There were no tears or sadness. Just sheer shock and disbelief. “My father was dead”, I thought silently. I immediately ran to my mother and again hugged her tight. “It’s going to be ok mommy.” I said. I glanced over at my sister sitting on the second sofa. She just sat there in silence and said nothing. “How?” I asked.

Blanche looked at me with a puzzled face. “What happened to him?” She then realized I had thought my father was dead. “Oh Nigel, your dad has just moved out.” “He’s not coming home, but he’s ok,” she continued. “Oh.” I said with bewilderment. “Ok.” Only then did I feel the grief from what I had understood as the loss of my father. My parents had split, but due to the nature of the conversation, I felt a delayed and excruciating pain associating my father’s death.

Research shows that the best episodic memories are important and unique events. This event is one of the most memorable moments of my life. But I asked myself, “why so strong of a memory”. One of the answers to this is the fact that it’s considered an episodic memory. According to Jones (2009), episodic memories are like movies we carry with us. They are due to unique events and we tend to remember first events better than subsequent similar experiences. However, these memories may not always be 100% accurate. “Many of our long-term memories may be quite inaccurate. In some cases we can be lead to ‘remember’ things that did not even occur.” (Jones, 2009)

My sister, Scarlett, is 2 years older than me. Scarlett does not have any specific memories from this day. I asked her if she could give me her perspective on what exactly happened that afternoon, but she said she did not remember. She did not even remember that the pastor and his wife were the ones with us when we found out my father had moved out and left my mother. Allen, Kaut, and Lord (2008) state that, “emotions serve as contextual cues for episodic memory.” Their research gives reason to why I am able to recall the events so clearly. The emotions associated with thinking my father had died were extreme and therefore I remember the day clearly. Scarlett is not a very emotional person. She is calm and takes things

in strides, but I've never seen her get too worked up over stressful situations. In the past, I thought she just harbored the pain deep down inside. However, after writing this paper, I've come to the conclusion that the event did not affect her much.

It is possible that I filled in the blanks. "Episodic memories are more fragile than semantic memories. If you don't play tennis for a few years, you will still remember the rules, but your memory of particular tennis games will fade." Thus the emotion I felt is clear as day, but the actual events leading up to that emotion are fuzzy. I would go as far as to say they could be inaccurate. I do not relive this memory often and therefore, it's possible to forget most of it. So the correctness of the memory or assumptions made over time has to be considered. Our memories serve as a reminder of events in our lives that put us where we are today, but they do not always include specific and accurate details. (Jones, 2009)

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Unit 2 Research Paper - Example 2

One of my strongest episodic memories is of my experiences on September 11, 2001. I chose to analyze this memory, not only because of how vividly I remember it, but because most people remember it vividly, and because the events that took place that day were recounted over and over long after the events took place.

In September 2001, I was a senior in high school. I woke up that morning and began my usual morning routine, preparing for my day at school. I said goodbye to my mother, who was leaving on her way to work, my father having gone to work already several hours before. After her departure and a quick breakfast, I hopped into the shower. As a teenager I usually had the radio on while I showered. While shampooing my hair I heard the deejay speaking to someone on the phones about a plane that had been flown into the World Trade Center. “That’s not a funny joke,” I thought to myself. “These radio personalities are taking things too far.”

After my shower I got dressed, went to my parent’s bedroom and turned on the TV, to confirm to myself that what I had heard was only a joke in poor taste. Immediately I discovered that I was wrong; this was no joke. During the time between when I had showered and turned on the TV the news broke that the second plane had hit the second tower. With growing horror I watched that plane fly into the skyscraper, its twin already burning, over and over. Soon after, the camera zoomed in to show people jumping from the burning buildings hundreds of feet to their deaths, and I ran to my parent’s bathroom to vomit.

I called my mother. I had to tell her what I had seen three times before I was able to get it all out slowly and coherently enough for her to understand. Stunned by the news herself, she

shakily told me to calm down and go to school. Comforted and calmed by my mother's words, I finally collected myself, and made my way to school.

The halls were buzzing when I arrived. There was a TV tuned to the news in almost every classroom. I soon became amazed and sometimes disgusted at the reactions of my classmates. Just outside my first class two of my friends were giggling and making fun of what had happened. I was completely appalled at their behavior and told them so in words I won't bother to quote here. My best friend at the time was a pale withdrawn version of herself, explaining that her cousin worked in the Pentagon, and their family had not been able to reach him. Needless to say very little educating went on that day. The memory of the remainder of the day is a somber blur of newscasts and a growing unease amongst not just the students but the teachers and administration.

The events of that day were novel for me; I had never experienced an attack on US soil or such a monumental threat to national security. They changed my life, as I saw many people where I was living in Las Vegas lose their jobs to a sudden drop in tourism, and have never boarded a plane in the same manner since. This memory has everything it needs to be a strong episodic memory. The first moments at the beginning of the day, my shower, and seeing the TV footage afterwards, are extremely vivid, while the rest of the day fades away in my memory. I have absolutely no recollection of September 10th, 2001, or September 12th for that matter. I believe those moments are the most vivid because those were the moments when my emotional pain, physical nausea, and mental shock were at their greatest. I can say with great certainty that I ate raisin bran that morning, because I remember how it tasted coming back up. But the moments after, my day at school, how well do I recall them this long after they occurred?

I called a close friend of mine, named Ramon, also a senior in my high school present during the events of September 11th, to get his account of the day. Our memories generally coincide, however, he did not find out about the occurrences until nearly halfway through the day (Sperling, 2010). This gives his memory of the day a much different tone.

He admits to me that he in fact had been giggling and laughing with my friends a few moments before I chastised them, although at the time he had no idea what had happened, only that there had been a plane crash somewhere and that school was apparently barely in session. In his first class, the instructor simply told the students that she would not be teaching, and that they were to keep quiet while she watched TV in her office. Ramon's version of the day is a loud and confusing one, where he floated along unknowing what the hubbub was all about (Sperling, 2010).

The difference of perception at the time has given us two separate memories of the day. I knew before ever reaching school what was happening, and had in fact been horrified enough to become sick by what I saw. My day at school was quiet and somber, sorrowful, with undercurrents of fear. Ramon had no idea what had happened, and his day at school was noisy and confusing (Sperling, 2010).

Knowing that the way we were feeling that day has given different memories of the same place at the same time, causes me to consider that everything I have learned and felt after has had an impact on the memory as well. September 11th is now an infamous day. It is my generation's "Where were you when..." memory as was the Kennedy assassination and the moon landing for generations before mine. Having seen so many movies, news clips, reenactments, and hearing so many others' versions of the story, do I really remember that

morning as detailed as I believe? It is entirely possible that I had not yet seen the second plane crash that morning while I was still at home, for example, but after seeing it repeated so many times since, that I have spliced this memory where it fits in my account of the morning. It is possible that, as stated in the unit hand out, “the process of remembering itself, taking into new events and history since last recall, may alter our memories (Jones, 2009).”

At fifteen months to thirty-two months after the OJ Simpson murder trial verdict was announced, college students were surveyed about how they heard the news, and their answers were compared to answers that they gave three days after. After fifteen months, 50% of the memories were highly accurate, with 11% containing major errors or distortions. After thirty-two months, only 29% were highly accurate, with 40% containing major errors or distortions. (Buffalo, Schmock, and Squire, 2000). If the memories of a college student begin to majorly distort within thirty-two months, what would the effect of eight years have on my memory of September 11th, 2001?

Regardless of how accurate my recollection is I will always remember my morning on September 11th. It was a shocking new experience that changed my life forever. There are still even today consistent reminders and new stories to remind me of how I felt at that moment. While these reminders may keep the memory alive, they may also skew the memory itself, but as long as my memory as a whole is still functioning, some version of that day will live on inside my mind, because of the huge impact it had on my life.

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Violence in the Media

I believe people make their own choices and they choose what they want to do. They tend to blame other things around them when they do wrong. Many people blame violence on movies, television, video games and other influential things; it seems like it is just taking the easy way out. Most of the time, the media is the excuse for unacceptable behavior. At some point, people are going to have to accept responsibility for their own actions. It has been a huge controversy whether violence is triggered by television shows, video games, and movies, or are there other factors that play a part in violence today? This is what we will discuss in this essay.

I grew up watching crime television that had violent scenes and scenarios in them such as CSI, Law & Order, and America's Most Wanted. I was allowed to watch these shows when I was young because in the end, the "bad guy" always got caught. I believe this infused in me the sense of consequences. I knew at a very young age that there is a consequence for everything I did, whether good or bad. My parents instilled in me a respect for authority; from respecting my elders, to respecting the police. In a sense, I believe that watching those crime shows helped me realize the importance of obeying the laws. As stated by Professor J.R. Jones, "when others are punished for committing crimes it is supposed to act as a deterrent, stopping others from committing similar acts." Specifically, these police shows are meant to be a disincentive to violence and criminal activity.

There have been and will continue to be many researches, studies and articles to try to prove whether or not violent behavior is triggered from aggressive or gory movies etc. One

article gives a positive and negative look on how video games affect children. On the positive side this article states that “video game playing introduces children to computer and information technology.” On the other hand, they say that “practicing violent acts may contribute more to aggressive behavior than passive television watching. Studies do find a relationship between violent television watching and behavior.”

There are many reasons for violence in our society today that did not necessarily exist in the past. You might ask, “Why are people so much more violent than they use to be?” This question is more difficult to answer than you might think. But I will start off by saying that there are so many factors that contribute to aggression. Today, most people possess highly technical things that others would never have dreamed of possessing. Many studies have tried to prove the impact that violence in the media can have on young children. If you think about it, can anything really be done to stop people from buying violent films and games? It is part of our society and there is not much we can do about it. The most proactive way to spend our time would be to talk about it with our children and make them fully aware of the consequences of their actions. Only then will they be more likely to not engage in violent behavior.

Our textbook, Introduction to Psychology, affirms that “children who watch violent programs frequently, beginning when they are young will become more violent over time, in contrast to similar children who watch less violence” (Kalat 52). An experiment was used for two groups of adolescents to see if they behaved differently under different circumstances. One group was given non-violent films and cartoons to watch, and the other group was given very violent films. They interviewed them later in their adult life and found that the ones who watched the violent films during the experiment still watch them. But the experimenters found

that there was little difference in the two groups. “Apparently, watching violent television predicts future violence to a modest degree” (Kalat 53). As you can see, even in the book there are different views on how children are affected by violent movies. There is never absolute proof of anything.

It has been said that a lot of violence can be avoided by parents talking to their children. I know this from experience. As I stated earlier, my parents told me about violence and its consequences. They also explained when it was acceptable to use violence, such as for self-defense and protection. Many people have gotten the two mixed up; they believe that violence is a good way to solve their problems. Violence is utilized when they feel threatened (this could be either good or bad), angry, tired, scared, frustrated, jealous, etc. The list goes on only because there are more and more excuses for aggression in our society. People feel that it is a “dog eat dog world” and that in order to survive they must be forceful. Ultimately, there is no real evidence on whether children are directly influenced by violence on television, movies, and in video games.

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French Phonology, Proactive Interference and Me

Every human culture has language and barring dramatic interruption, such as brain damage or abandonment, every child learns at least one. The very definition of being “human” may be centered upon humanity’s capacity for language, which supersedes the un-ruled communication skills of lower animals (J.R. Jones, 2011, p.16). Researchers, like Noam Chomsky, have taken a Nativist approach and assert that based on children’s lack of difficulty learning language they must be born with an innate “Language Acquisition Device (LAD)” or “language instinct” that is a built-in mechanism for language acquirement (Kalat, 2011, p. 301). Such views suggest that the human brain is hardwired for language from birth and that language acquisition is a natural part of the early maturation for our species, but what about later in life?

Studies support that there is an “optimal period” during early childhood when a language is more readily acquired (Kalat, 2011, p. 303). However, the beginning and ending of this “optimal period” is “gradual” and there is “no sharp age cutoff” where language is suddenly more difficult (Kalat, 2011, p. 303). One’s aptitude to learn a language is strongest in childhood and diminishes with age, yet the capacity is not limited to childhood.

Even though the brain is hardwired for language, it is not consigned to a single language and retains lingual plasticity throughout life. It is not impossible to learn new languages in adulthood it is just a more difficult and different process. This rings true with my own experiences regarding language acquisition. I readily learned to comprehend and speak English as a toddler. I heard it spoken to me, recognized its sounds, learned its words, internalized its

rules and later learned how to formally describe those rules during elementary school.

According to Susan M. Gass writing in *Second language acquisition: an introductory course* this makes English my “native language (NL)” or “first language (L1)” meaning that it is my primary language, since it is the first one I learned at an early age (Gass, 2008, p.7).

I have had the opportunity to learn three additional second languages without ever achieving fluency. Gass states that any language learned after the L1, is generally referred to as a “second language (L2)” regardless if it is the third or fourth acquired (2008, p. 7). I was forced to take Spanish classes in high school as a teenager (14-15 year old). I was neither interested in nor motivated to master a novel language at that time. In my early 20’s I completed an American Sign Language (ASL) course to fulfill an academic breadth requirement. In my later 20’s I was compelled to learn French in the hopes that the experience would make it easier for me to achieve academic success in the future. This essay will focus on my most recent effort to learn a foreign language, namely French, and will reference how my Spanish learning experience affected it.

All of my experience with learning a L2 falls within a category called “foreign language learning” this term is applicable, since my acquisition attempts occurred in my native country inside a classroom (Gass, 2008, p.7). Thus, they were academic pursuits with a very small ratio of fluent participants (one teacher) and several non-speakers (30+ students). This differs greatly from learning a foreign language in a country where it is spoken, which would afford extensive interaction with native speakers and the presence of contextual cues to aid in phrase interpretation. Instead, my education was centered on reading a textbook and marginally augmented by vocal recordings and verbal classroom activities. My exposure to the written

vocabulary and grammar presented by my textbook was contingent solely on how much time I was willing to spend studying it, while oral and audio exposure was very limited. Thus, I became comfortable with written French and found the language more daunting to hear or speak.

Through willingness to study and repeated written exposure, I could make great gains in my ability to compose simple statements and read French. I was learning to use syntax and “surface structure,” the grammar that is conveying “deep structure,” which is the meaning (J.R. Jones, 2011, p.16). Since Spanish and French are Romance languages, they share some common surface structures.

My previous language learning experience with Spanish both aided and hindered my acquisition of French. There is a resemblance in the way in which verbs are conjugated, where adjectives are placed in relation to nouns and both languages assign masculine and feminine gender to objects as well as subjects. Due to my knowledge of Spanish these foreign concepts, rules and non-English patterns were familiar and more easily assimilated. In contrast, I experienced “proactive interference” a phenomena when “previously remembered material interferes with the retrieval of subsequently remembered material” (J.R. Jones, 2011, p.8). It was as if my brain was set to a foreign word/phrase default mode. All my mind could do was search for a “foreign word for ____” so a Spanish word would appear. It took additional effort to distinguish the foreign “French word for ____”. Likewise, during classroom exercises, simple phrases would come to mind in Spanish first, and this would throw me off and delay my ability to distinguish the appropriate French statement, even though I was now in my late 20’s and years had passed since I took that Spanish class as a teenager. Nonetheless, the novel

vocabulary was relatively easy to grasp and my greatest difficulties involved making and distinguishing sounds. According to Kalat, “adults learn the vocabulary of a second language faster than children do, but children learn the pronunciation better” (2011, p.303).

A valid comparison between foreign language acquisition during my teen years and then in my later 20's is hindered by the fact that I was not motivated to learn Spanish. I did not really try to learn Spanish or invest as much energy into its acquisition as I had with French. However, unlike my L1 learning experience, in both L2 instances I struggled with pronunciation and phonology. Phonology involves knowing what sounds are possible in a given language; this involves both recognition as well as production of phonemes and an understanding of how these sounds go together (Gass, 2007, p.8). Phonemes are units of sound that build to become morphemes, units of meaning (Kalat, 2011, p. 307).

The phonetic range of each language is unique. From the beginning children are capable of producing “approximately 70 different vocalizations” not all of which are valid phonemes for English (J.R. Jones, 2011, p.40). As caregivers pay special attention to certain sounds they are established as part of the native language and those that are not included will drop out of the child's repertoire (J.R. Jones, 2011, p.40). It has been a common misconception that these phonemes are lost forever. Recent research presented by Dr Paul Iverson of the UCL Centre for Human Communication, at the "Plasticity in Speech Perception 2005" workshop suggests that these sounds can be relearned to some extent (University, 2005).

Dr. Iverson reports that “the difficulties we have with learning languages in later life are not biological” they are centered on our experience, which has taught us to ignore certain sounds and that “given the right stimulus, the brain can be retrained” (University, 2005). This

stance is supported by two studies jointly worked on by Dr Paul Iverson and Dr Valerie Hazan, UCL's Department of Phonetics and Linguistics that involved the testing of 63 native Japanese subjects in Japan and London (University, 2005). The participants completed a 10-session training course, before and after which, the subjects were given a number of perceptual tests to evaluate their perception of acoustic cues (University, 2005). The Japanese subjects improved their recognition of l's and r's by an average of 18% (University, 2005). This is salient since the sounds we associate with r's verses l's in English do not coexist in Japanese phonology. The subjects' gain in acoustic recognition supports that is possible to retune how the brain processes non-native speech sounds (University, 2005).

Although I encountered English first and learned early on to disregard sounds that are not included in its phonology, learned ignorance of phonemes can be overcome. Second language acquisition requires rigor and training to reassign meaning to these discarded sounds. If I had continued taking French courses or perhaps had the opportunity to be immersed in the language, I would have been able to become more familiar with the language's phonology. Like the Japanese subjects, it is probable that I would be able to recognize the solely pure vowels or monothongs (single sound per syllable) utilized by French speakers and also assimilate an understanding of the three front rounded vowels ([y], [ø],[œ]) that do not appear as phonemes in English (IE Languages, 2011). Likewise, if I had continued to pursue French it would gain dominance as a foreign language in my mind and surpass Spanish's influence. The strength of proactive interference would surely fade, especially since in more advanced French classes I would have moved beyond the remedial information previously encountered in Spanish class. Even though, I did not achieve French fluency in my later 20's, adult second language learners

can overcome both foreign phonology and proactive interference if they are willing to put in the work needed to retrain their minds.

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Second Language Acquisition

Demand in bilingual speakers is rising worldwide. According to U.S. News and Report, Interpreter was one of the top 50 careers for 2011. The demand ranges from pharmaceutical inserts and instruction manuals to textbook writing. Translators are needed in healthcare industries. (ConsumerAffairs.com, 2011). Many people have a chance to study a foreign language in their lifetime. However, many of them cannot speak a second language well enough to be hired as a professional. As I am one of many people who studied a foreign language, becoming fluent in English has been one of my goals for years. I learned English in Japan. The Japanese are notorious for not being able to speak English despite time they have spent for learning the language. Japanese students start to learn English from the first year of junior high and continue to the third year of high school, a total of six years. And some people continue to study another four years while in college. Yet, many Japanese do not achieve fluency in English. Why do so many people, including myself, struggle to become fluent in English?

Reformists in Japan are suggesting that children should start to learn English from primary school as compulsory education. Concerned parents in Japan are sending their child to private English schools from an early age. I was thirteen when I started to learn English, which was equivalent to elementary level in the U.S. Much of lessons involved reading, writing, spelling and memorization of textbooks. While these lessons are all necessary and important, it would be better to learn like young children do; by starting with simple songs and the identification and pronunciation of written words first. From previous studies regarding age and language acquisition, a second language is easiest in early childhood, especially while acquiring first language (Kalat, 2008). One of the reasons is that children are able to distinguish nuances in sound that adults tend to miss (London, 2005). In case of the Japanese, we have a difficult time pronouncing “r” sound, and cannot distinguish between “r” and “l”, or “b” and “v”. While I enjoy listening to the sounds we don’t have, trying to make those sounds is a different story. I still cannot pronounce some English words like ‘thoroughly’ or ‘brewery’ yet.

Another reason why it is better to learn a second language in early childhood is, according to Dr Paul Iverson of the UCL Centre for Human Communication, that language learning becomes harder because of our first language warping our perception, and we tend to see things based on our native language, and that ‘warps’ the way we see foreign languages (London, 2005). However, Dr. Iverson says that it is possible for adults to change ‘perceptual warping’ through training to make learning a second language easier (London, 2005). He believes the brain can be retrained if given the right stimulus. A study was conducted to see if it was possible to retune how the brain processes speech sounds. 63 native Japanese subjects were retrained to hear the difference between r's and l's. Also similar tests were conducted in London on Sinhalese and German speakers. It was a 10 session training course and a number of perceptual tests were given before and after to evaluate their perception of acoustic cues. In the Japanese study, some improvements were seen in their recognition of l's and r's by an average of 18%. This study supports the view that the brain can be ‘retuned’ (London, 2005).

From my own experience, culture has lot to do when learning second- language. The culture we live in and the language we learn to speak both influence how we act and how we perceive things. For example, Nancy Sakamoto was born in the United State. She married to a Japanese man and lived and taught English in Japan. According to Mrs.Sakamoto the reason why many Japanese people cannot speak English, especially in conversation, is not because of their lack of English language ability. She discovered that Japanese people don't know how to play ‘conversational ball games’ (Sakamoto, 2001). A Western-style conversation is like a game of tennis, or volleyball. If she serves a ball, which represents a topic, she expects you to return the ball to her whether you agree with her or not. She expects you to add something such as a reason for agreeing or examples, or disagree with her or even to question her. On the other hand, A Japanese –style conversation is like bowling. Everyone takes a turn politely and watches until the ball gets to the end of the alley. Then the next person stands in line, using a different ball, in other words, a different topic (Sakamoto, 2001). Mrs.Sakamoto concludes that if you have been trained to play one game all your life, it is hard to switch to another even if you know the rules. Certainly, it is not easy for me to play ‘conversational ball game’, and this is the most difficult and challenging aspect of becoming fluent in English for myself.

According to Chomsky, we all have Language Acquisition Device within the brain. Thus, it would be a matter of how we activate it rather than just knowing it is there, and hoping it works. Overall, there is no doubt that early childhood is the best time to learn a second language. For those who didn't, there is still hope. The stage theories explain that following a necessary sequential order is more important than reaching a certain stage at what age (J.R.Jones, 2011). Therefore, a second language learner should follow the order of language development stage; phonics and letters, and sound spelling. Unfortunately, many language programs skip these important stages when learning a second-language.

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Unit 2 Research Paper - Example 6

Well I was a senior in High School. It was a Friday night and everyone was heading to the Varsity football game. This was not just a normal Friday night with football, but after the game there was going to be a school dance. My friends and I were planning on going to the football game and then leaving early to go back to a friends' house and drink before going into the dance.

We went to the football game and had a really good time. Our team was winning 24-13 when we left to go back to our friends' house. We started to drink and get a little drunk. We all were ready to head to the dance. We piled into the car and headed back to our school where the dance was. We walked up to the door and some of the group got in. It came down to the last couple people in our group when the campus patrol stopped us and said he could smell alcohol. Two others and myself were taken up to the office where they gave the three of us a BAC test. We all got suspended for a week for being intoxicated.

I was so mad at myself for following the group when I knew it was a bad idea and that we were going to get caught. I got pressure from my peers to drink because it was going to make the dance that much better. I told them that I didn't want to drink and that I did not want to get caught. They started saying, "Come on, everyone is doing it" and "Don't be a wimp". (Kaplan, 1999) It made me feel like I was being excluded from the group. "Teens who act a certain way because they believe their friends expect that from them are feeling peer pressure, whether or not the expectation is linked to a threat of being left out." (Kaplan, 1999)

The consequences were exactly what I thought they were going to be if I were to get caught. After my week suspension I came back to school and everyone in the group came up to me asking what happened, what did I do for a week, and how sorry they were that I was the one that got in trouble after I said I thought it was a bad idea in the first place.

Peer pressure social pressure by members of one's peer group to take a certain action, adopt certain values, or otherwise conform in order to be accepted. (Dictionary.com) Kids these days are being influenced much more from their peers than their own parents. This should be the other way area. Parents have gone through peer pressure during their teenage years and they now know how it affects each individual. I wish my parents had sat me down before my incident and told me that underage drinking was wrong and no matter what anyone says. Also adults should tell their children what to say or do if someone is pressuring them to do something they know is wrong or goes against their better judgments.

We have to remember that social pressure and peer pressure can be both positive and negative. Peers can and do act as positive role models. Peers can and do demonstrate appropriate social behaviors. Peers often listen to, accept, and understand the frustrations, challenges, and concerns associated with being a teenager. (Focusas.com, 2004) A powerful negative peer influence can motivate a teen to make choices and engage in behavior that his or her values might otherwise reject. Some teens will risk being grounded, losing their parents' trust, or even facing jail time, just to try and fit in or feel like they have a group of friends they can identify with and who accept them. Sometimes, teens will change the way they dress, their friends, give up their values or create new ones, depending on the people they hang around with. (Focusas.com, 2004) From reading this article I have a better understanding of both sides

of social pressure and peer pressure.

After researching more on the topic of social pressure and peer pressure I can see why I went along with the group even though I knew it was it was really against my better judgment. But as I think back to High school and the group of peers I had I don't think I would go back and change my friends for anyone else. Even though they got me in trouble and got me kicked out of school for a week they still had a positive effect on me. They helped me through tough times. Sometimes helped me with homework and studying in subjects I had trouble with. One mistake doesn't alter my feelings towards my peers because I knew they were sorry for what had happened and still accepted me as part of the group.

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Unit 2 Research Paper - Example 7

My Experience with Intelligence

Intelligence is a subject I really never gave much thought to until I started having children. Even then, it wasn't something I was overly concerned about. Sure, I wanted my kids to be smart, productive, and happy individuals, but average intelligence is all I really wanted. But, my first child had different ideas. He was about 3 when we realized he could read. We were driving down the road and he read the pizza sign on the local Pizza Hut, we thought it was just logo recognition, so when we saw another sign that said pizza and he identified it as the word pizza, we started questioning him about other words on signs and he was able to read many of those basic words. We had not done flash cards with him or any other "extreme" parenting techniques to teach him to read early, we had just read to him, sang him the ABC's and sat him in front of the TV to watch Sesame Street. He stunned his kindergarten teacher and did very well in most subjects, though his fine motor skills were lacking and he definitely struggled with saying his R's correctly. In the second grade he scored in the 99th percentile on the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills (CTBS) and then was given the Otis-Lennon test in the third grade and given the label of gifted. Because of these test scores, College Board, the SAT people offered him the opportunity to take the SAT in seventh and eighth grades to further determine his level of intelligence and have been following him academically ever since then.

So, you would think this kid has it made, scoring so well in multiple areas of intelligence, having no problem in school and life, but that would be a wrong assumption. My son is very intelligent and his scores early on showed that he has intelligence in multiple subjects: math, language, and reading. But the older he got, the more he focused only on things he was

interested in, history and writing, and his later testing reflected the neglect of interest in areas of math and science. He also continually struggled with lack of motivation, being bored, not feeling challenged. Not until he started attending his UCSD upper division classes did he feel like he was learning new things, and even then it was hit and miss. He has never been a straight A student. It was always a constant battle to get him to do his work, turn it in, and care about things he wasn't interested in.

On the other hand, my daughter, two years younger, never scored well on these standardized and intelligence tests. She has always scored at proficient levels or sometimes even below proficient. However, she graduated with honors from high school, her speech was above her brother's level when they were 2 and 4. She can maintain her life in an organized and efficient manner, accomplishing the tasks she needs to succeed in school and work without much intervention from her parents. She knows how to work hard, study, and achieve success in her life.

So, who is smarter? I perceive them both as smart individuals. My son is almost like a walking encyclopedia. My daughter is a successful, well-rounded young woman. I value my son's intelligence because I know not many people can accomplish the things he can accomplish if he puts forth the effort, but will struggle in staying focused and doing the menial, yet necessary tasks to run his day to day life. I value my daughter's intelligence because I know she will get through life being productive and happy and being able to manage all aspects of her life, though getting the degree she wants will be a struggle for her in passing her more challenging classes with good grades.

Due to my experiences with my children, I believe there are multiple forms of intelligence. Dr. Robert Sternberg's triarchic theory of intelligence seems to reflect best an explanation in the differences I have seen in my own children's intelligence. According to Indiana University's website, Human Intelligence, Sternberg is quoted as saying, "'I define [intelligence] as your skill in achieving whatever it is you want to attain in your life within your sociocultural context by capitalizing on your strengths and compensating for, or correcting, your weaknesses. (Plucker, 2003)'" His theory states that there are three forms of intelligence: creative, analytical (academic), and practical. My son has an abundance of academic intelligence, a fair amount of creative intelligence, and struggles with practical intelligence. My daughter seems to be more endowed with practical knowledge and an average amount of creative and analytic intelligence. While no theory is 100% accurate, my personal experiences are supported by this theory. As stated in Han S. Paik's paper posted on personalityresearch.org, "Sternberg's theory does not have a biological basis to it, and that detracts from its validity. But that may also be its strength. The theory does not focus on the brain and biological functions, but on different social situations. Therefore, the theory applies to different social situations and environments, as none of the other theories does. But, given that there still is a substantial debate about the nature of intelligence, and no one theory is accepted by all, there is still room for improvement on any given theory. (Paik, 1998)"

So, is my son's high level of intelligence a good thing? The jury is still out. How he chooses to use this gift will determine the value of his intelligence. If he is able to be productive and happy in life, while helping others and striving to be the best person he can be, then his intelligence is a good thing. As will be my daughter's normal level of intelligence, if she

chooses the same kind of productive, happy, helpful life. “As Kant proposed . . . intelligence is neither good nor evil. It is more a question of either the general morality of the individual or situational factors. It is the use of to which intelligence is put, or lends itself to, that determines whether it is good or evil (Jones, 2011).”

My children have taught me so much about life, about the abilities we are born with and those that we learn. I am thankful for the lessons I’ve learned about accepting and loving people for who they are and encouraging each person to be the best unique individual they can be.

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