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**CUI 4031 Teaching and Learning Environments: Case Study Analysis**

**Part 1: Introduction**: Which student will you write about? (In other words, which case did you choose?) What three theories/approaches have you chosen to assist in understanding/explaining the student’s actions, and possible thinking and feeling?

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| I chose to write about Emile, and will apply the theories of Vygotsky, Bandura and the effects of physical factors on learning. |

**Parts 2-4:** **Case Analysis using Three Child Development Theories**

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| Theory Name | **Elements of the theory relevant to the student (case)**  (Describe the **elements of the theory** that led you to choose it for understanding this student.) | **Connections between the theory and the student (case)** (What are specific ways the theory helps explain (illuminate) the student’s action(s)?) Make reference to specific aspects of both the case and the theory. | **Next steps—Instructional or classroom management moves**  Imagine that you are the teacher of this student. **As a result of your analysi**s (previous two columns), what three instructional and/or classroom strategies would you try next? List them here. | **Rationale**  Why (based on the connection between the theory and the student) did you choose these strategies? |
| Theory 1  Name: The Role of Social Interaction in Learning (Vygotsky) | Collaboration with peers plays an important role in learning, and allowing students space to cooperate without immediately providing answers is effective (Mooney, 2013). | Emile is struggling in Biology, and the teacher takes a very direct approach to supporting his learning. However, the case also emphasizes that Emile spends much of the class drawing – presumably not otherwise interacting with peers. Emile is not pursuing, and the teacher may not be providing, sufficient opportunities and impetus towards social learning. | I would identify peers who are more comfortable with the material, and pair them with Emile during group work. The teacher has been waiting for Emile to engage *with him*, but “To support children’s social learning, teachers can provide many opportunities for children to help one another” (Mooney, 2013, p. 54). | Emile has already shown resistance to direct interventions by the teacher – including one which assumes a deficit framing – so he may be more willing to engage with peers. |
| Theory 2  Name: Self-Efficacy (Bandura) | The ability to learn is shaped in large part by the student’s perception of their ability to learn, and student’s self-perception can be changed through a variety of interventions (Bandura, 1977). | Emile is clearly disengaged from the class, and does not have the confidence to defend himself to his teacher when he frames Emile’s behavior through a deficit framework. Indeed, the teacher’s intervention, which he may believe demonstrates concern, could in fact further reduce self-efficacy. | I would seek to identify interventions that could build Emile’s self-efficacy. This could include persistently framing Emile’s (and indeed all students’) mistakes as productive opportunities (NASEM 2018) and asking Emile direct questions the teacher knows he knows the answer to (Bandura, 1977). | Bandura’s self-efficacy theory is, I think, a much better lens for understanding students’ self-perception than concepts of self-esteem. Self-efficacy emphasizes belief in one’s concrete ability to perform certain tasks, not abstract ideas of intelligence and performance. Because the target concepts are concrete, concrete interventions are effective. |
| Theory 3  Name: Physical Factors | A student’s physical health can have major effects on their ability to learn. Sleep presents a major challenge, especially for adolescents, and lack of sleep can impair the fundamental processes of learning (NASEM, 2018). | Emile is frequently falling asleep in class. He also displays reluctance when asked to explain why he isn’t paying attention. If Emile isn’t getting enough sleep, his struggles in the class could reflect the “attention problems both in and out of school” described in NASEM (2018, p. 31) | This is an issue that lies somewhat beyond the classroom. It may be necessary to communicate with Emile’s parents and suggest to them strategies for supporting adequate sleep (USDHHS, 2018). | Physical health can be one of the biggest factors influencing learning and also the one least within the purview of the classroom teacher. It’s important to cooperate with families to help address these issues. |

**<Go to next page for Part 5>**

**Part 5:** **Reflecting on using theory *for* teaching**: In four-five sentences, describe specifically how using theories to think about a student affected your understanding of the student and the situation. What did you learn? New insights? Ideas for strategies? What limits do you see to this way of thinking?

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| Theories offer teachers an opportunity to break down classroom issues and see beyond the “stereotypical” beliefs about why a student may or may not be succeeding. It can also allow teachers a moment to step back and remove themselves from the immediate situation and reflect on their approach. The teacher in this case study sought to find out why Emile was disengaged by asking him directly – but the question itself could be part of the problem, something that only becomes clear when the situation is taken as a whole.  On the other hand, it’s important to remember that no one theory – or group of theories – can completely encapsulate a student’s life. There will always be confounding factors and external influences, and it’s up to teachers to take those as they come. |

References:

Bandura, A. (1977). Self-efficacy: Toward a unifying theory of behavioral change. Psychological Review, 84(2), 191–215. https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-295X.84.2.191

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