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Parenting as a Life Story



Parenting

Parenting has been investigated extensively over many years typically using methodology such as Baumrind's parenting styles, which categorizes four different parenting styles (Lee et al, 2006). However, the research that is proposed today is regarding the life story of parents as a whole as opposed to trying to categorize individual experiences. It will ask what makes that parent who they are today and how did their life journey evolve to create the type of parenting they subscribe to now? The original aims of the research were to explore an individual's perception of their childhood, which may have been affected by their parent's illness. This idea is still involved with the research but has subsequently been built on to incorporate many types of obstacles that may be present in someone's life. The research now aims to incorporate all individual experiences.

Bioecological Theory

The Bioecological model created by Bronfenbrenner (1979) is used to enable an insight into the developmental processes of an individual including environmental factors, the individual's perceptions and characteristics and relationships that affect the course of development as a person (Bronfenbrenner, 1999). In other words, the Bioecological theory concentrates on interactions ranging from the Micro systems to the Macro systems of the individuals and creating a developmental effect (Bronfenbrenner, 1999). Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological theory will be drawn upon to gain insights into the entire lifespan of the individual and ultimately what makes them into the parent they are today.

Narratives

The information gathered will be told in narrative form to create a life story of the parent and hopefully gain an insight into each individual's parenting experience. Lodico & Voegtle (2005) argues that it is important to developmental researchers to look at the individual as a person rather than a pattern on a grand scale much like in quantitative methods. Therefore, the opportunity to be able to explore individual life stories and tell it as such, is a priority to enable an insight into individual lives and ultimately make sense of these experiences (Mitchell & Egudo, 2003). The application of narratives in research promotes understanding, constructs of identity, reasons for decision making (Mitchell & Egudo, 2003) all of which are relevant in this investigation.

Rationale

This research aims to explore individual's development throughout their lives and how they deal with the role of parenting as a possible consequence of these experiences. The information gathered and conveyed in narrative form (life story) will hopefully contribute to new understandings in parenting theory.