

# Psychology

Mrs. Riddle

## Lesson 13 Social Development Erik Erikson

### Objectives

- To investigate the conflicts of the adolescent stage of development
- To examine Erikson's stages of psychosocial development
- To identify the major crisis that occurs at each stage of psychosocial development

Social development is a very broad topic that includes the work of many psychologists. Social development is a lifelong process with changes occurring at each stage of development from birth to old age. Erik H. Erikson developed a theory that spans a person's life, dividing the process into eight stages. At each stage, there is a crisis that should be solved and a set of tasks that should be accomplished. If a person successfully solves the crisis and completes the tasks, then movement to the next stage is less stressful. One of Erikson's greatest contributions to psychology is his focus on adolescence and his description of its task in finding one's identity.

Students explore their world of adolescence and examine its crisis and tasks. Further, they deal with the issue of whether adolescence is, by nature, a time of stress and storm. While examining the eight stages of psychosocial development, students cite the crisis of each stage.

Bring back your complete assignment when school resumes, class discussion will follow.

## Erikson's View of Adolescence

Read the selection about Erik H. Erikson's view of adolescence, and answer the questions that follow. You may need to use another piece of paper. Be prepared for class discussion.

Erikson's fifth stage of psychosocial development concerns the crisis of identity versus role confusion, which typically occurs during adolescence. Erikson suggests that during adolescence young people try to define themselves within their world and want to feel as though they belong in certain groups, yet they want to see themselves as unique and different from the group. According to Erikson, having an identity means being able to define and accept oneself and know what one wants to be in life. The person is committed to achieving goals and realistically evaluates his or her ability to achieve these goals. Further, Erikson believes that a person who has solved the identity crisis has developed values and is true to them.

Adolescence is a time of storm and stress for some teens because of the decisions that have to be made before maturing socially and psychologically and moving to the next stage of adulthood. These decisions regarding career, financial and emotional independence from parents, and mate selection often create uncertainty and result in identity confusion. To combat this confusion, adolescents may try on many different roles, make decisions too soon, and fall in love. However, Erikson believes that people cannot make these decisions wisely and cannot really be in love until their identities are clear. Erikson and other psychologists think there are certain tasks that need to be completed while establishing an identity. These tasks include accepting the physical changes that puberty brings, relying more on peers, moving away from parents for social and emotional support, establishing dating relationships, and making decisions related to career goals.

Although many adolescents feel they have established their identities by the end of high school, their identity is tested upon completion of high school when they go to college or to the workplace and form new friendships. According to Erikson, these events challenge once again adolescents' views of themselves. Formation of self-concept and self-esteem are the real markers of the transition to adulthood.

1. What are three characteristics of establishing an identity?

2. What does it mean to have an identity?

6. What are some of the identity tests that adolescents face as they near completion of the stage?