

The development of Peer Relations



ISSUES

- nature of peer relations
- functions of peer relations
- parental influences

Friendship

- Who become friends?
- What is a friend?
- Number and quality of friendships?

Who become friends?

- Children who are similar
- In middle childhood this means NO CROSS GENDER friends!
- Boundary regulations for interacting with the other gender.

“Cootie Rules” (Sroufe, 1993)

- 10-11 yr olds
- summer day camp
- peer ratings
- counselor ratings

When is cross-gender contact Okay?

- The contact is accidental.
- The contact is incidental.
- The content is in the guise of some clear and necessary purpose.
- An adult compels you to have contact.
- You are accompanied by someone of your own gender.
- The interaction or contact is accompanied by disavowal.

“Cootie Rules” (Sroufe, 1993)

- Children who were LOW on boundary violations and...
- active at maintaining boundaries
- rated most popular by PEERS...
- and counselors!

What is a friend?

Early childhood

Momentary physical playmates

“We’re friends, right?” means “We are playing together”

What is a friend?

Early childhood

“Why do you like a friend?”

- > Common activities
- > “She’s fun”
- > Propinquity
- > Possessions

What is a friend?

Middle Childhood

- Evolves from one-way assistance
 - “plays the games I want to play”
- To fair-weather cooperation
 - “we share games with each other”

What is a friend?

Early adolescence

- To intimate, mutually shared relationships
 - “tell each other everything”
- Emotional involvement, psych intimacy
- Reciprocity, exclusivity

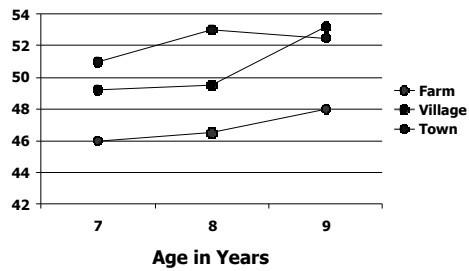
Functions of Peer Relations

- Peers
- Friends
- Crowds & cliques

Functions of Peer Relations

- Acquire social skills
 - communication
 - cooperation
 - perspective-taking (Hollos)

Hollos, 1975
Role-taking task



Functions of Peer Relations

- Moral reasoning
 - Piaget - "games with rules"

Functions of Friendship

- Companionship
- Instrumental aid
- Validation
- Self-worth
- Reliable alliance
- Self-knowledge & knowledge of others
- Affection, intimacy, self-disclosure
- Prototypes for later romantic relationships

Functions of Friendship

- Changes with age
–Sullivan - "chumships"

Functions of Friendship-Early

- Maximize excitement in play (fun)
- Emotional regulation/organization

Functions of Friendship-Middle

- Learn about behavioral norms
- Learn self-presentation and impression management
- (anxiety re: friendships emerge now)

Functions of Friendship-Late

- Self-exploration
- Integrate logic and emotions

Parental Influences

- Facilitators
- Managers
- Childrearing practices
- Parent-child relationships

Facilitators

- Select neighborhoods, schools
- Teach strategies
- Intervene

Managers

- Arrange “play dates”
- Sign child up for activities

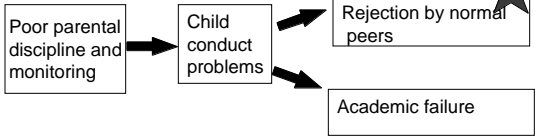
Childrearing Practices

- Patterson’ Model
- Prosocial behavior
- “behavioral style”
- Emotional communication

Patterson's Developmental Model of Antisocial Behavior

Early Childhood

Middle Childhood



Eliminates critical socialization opportunities

Parent-Child Relationship

- Attachment relations
 - Does early attachment affect later relations?
 - Depends on stability of family situation
 - Stress induced vs stable pattern of behavior
 - Example: Aggression

In-class #12

1. Give one example of what a friend is for:
 - a. Early childhood
 - b. Middle childhood
 - c. Early adolescence
2. Give two ways that peer relations contribute to development (e.g., social, moral or cognitive)

Peer Relations in Adolescence

Crowds

- What are crowds?
- Developmental changes in crowd structure
- Functions of crowds

Crowds

- Collections of adolescents identified by the interests, attitudes, abilities, and/or personal characteristics they have in common
- based on reputation, not “who one hangs around with”

For example...

- popular, jock, brain, normal, druggie, outcast (Brown, et al., 1993)
- preppies, normals, brains, dirtballs, outcasts, floaters, hybrids, unknowns (Clasen & Brown, 1985)

Crowd Portrayals

- “Oh, year; they all wear these tight-fitting jeans and sit around the commons in between classes like they own the place!”
- “They all wear glasses and ‘kiss up’ to the teachers, and after school they all tromp uptown to the library, or they go over to somebody’s house and play some stupid computer game until 9:00 at night...”

Note that--

- membership is not always obvious or exclusive
- most deny exclusive membership in 1 crowd
- some crowds are “not observable”

Social Type Rating (B. Brown, 1989)

STEP 1

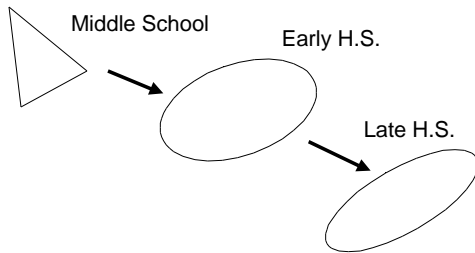
- School administrators identify students who represent cross-section of student body
- students interviewed in small groups (same grade, gender, ethnicity)
- each group derives list of crowds
- each participant list 2 males/2 females prominent in each crowd

Social Type Rating (B. Brown, 1989)

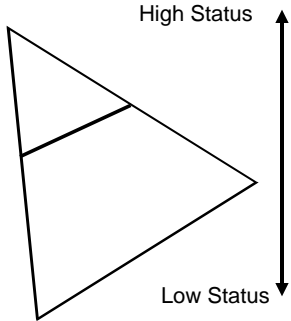
STEP 2

- from lists, drew a stratified sample of students (pref. to most freq. Listed)
- "Social Type Raters"
- with a friend, each rater placed each student in their grade in a crowd
- each student rated by at least 10 raters

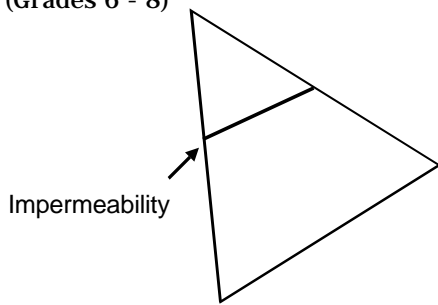
**Evolution of peer group structure
(Kinney, 1993)**



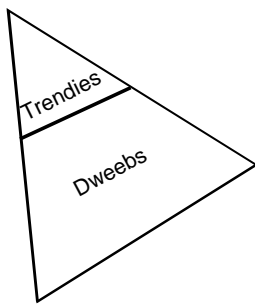
Crowd Structure in Middle School
(Grades 6 - 8)



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Crowd Structure in Middle School
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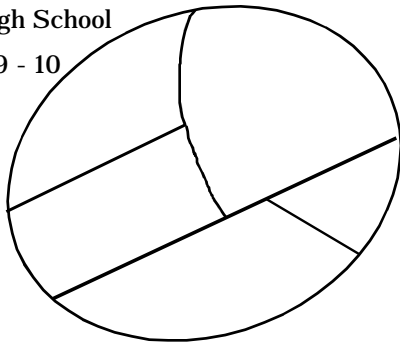


Nerds in Middle School(Kinney, 1993)

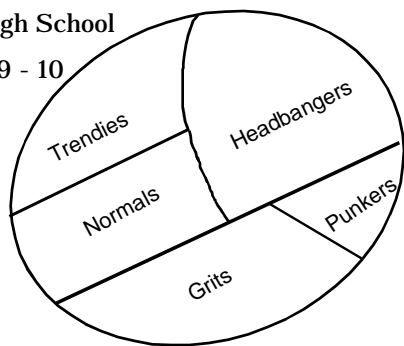
Ross: And middle school--.
Ted: We were just *nerds*. I mean--.
Ross: Yeah--
Ted: people hated us.
Ross: well, they didn't hate us, but we weren't--
Ted: popular. Which was either you were popular or you weren't.
Ross: In middle school it's very defined. There's popular people and unpopular people. It's just very *rigid*. You were either popular or unpopular. That's it.

Ted: And there wasn't people that were in between.
Ross: Oh no!
Ted: You had just one route, and then there was the other. And we were the other, and basically you were afraid of getting laughed at about anything you did because if you did one thing that was out of the ordinary, then you were laughed at and made fun of, and wouldn't fit the group at all, and then, of course, you were excluded and then you didn't even exist.
Ross: You got nuked, so to speak.

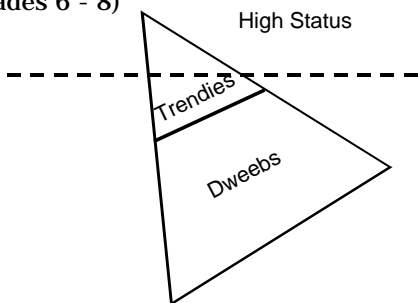
Early High School
Grades 9 - 10



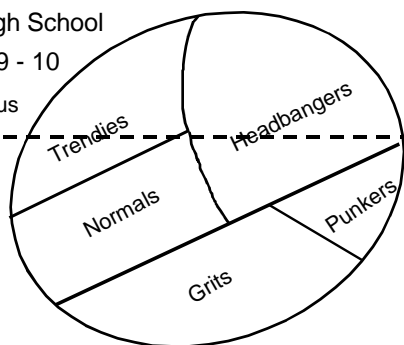
Early High School
Grades 9 - 10



Crowd Structure in Middle School
(Grades 6 - 8)



Early High School
Grades 9 - 10
High Status



Transition to High School (Kinney, 1993)

Ross: We were goons in middle school--We're not as shy anymore-

Ted: Exactly. I got the attitude when I moved from middle school to high school that I don't give a damn what people are gonna think. Because in middle school you're always afraid of offending someone.

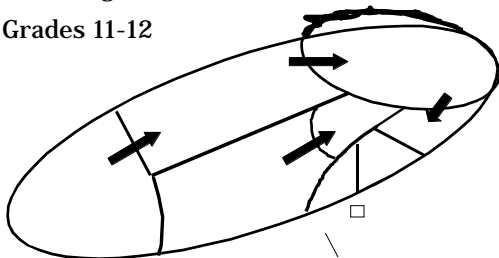
Ross: And there wasn't anyway for us to get out of it anyway__.

Ted: And once you get to high school, if you can find some crazier upper-class people and hang around with them, the possibilities are limitless. I mean we

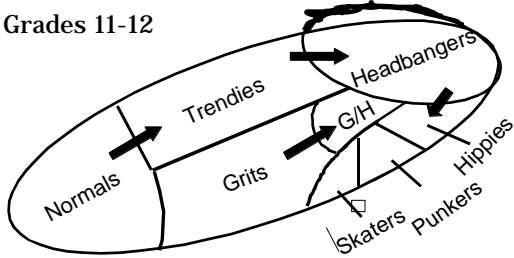
Ted: got here, we met some crazier upper-class people [through a minor sport], who just basically gave us the idea, "Go ahead. Go for it!"

Ross: ...Don't worry about it so much. Stop being so self-conscious.

**Later High School
Grades 11-12**



Later High School
Grades 11-12



**Developmental Changes in
Crowd Structure**

- Less hierarchical (flatter)
 - teens grow frustrated with snobiness
- Increasingly differentiated
 - peak in “major” crowds at 8-9 grade
- Increasingly permeable
 - early adolescence find crowds reassuring;
older adol. stifling
 - over half change affiliations over 2-yr-
period (less likely to change with age)

Caveats...

- Not representative of adolescent experience in small, stable communities (rural)
- In ethnically diverse schools, groups also defined by ethnic status

Function of Crowds

- foster development of identity or self-concept
 - “social identities”
 - norms regarding social interaction
- structure social interactions
 - “channel” teenagers toward some peers and away from others
 - influences nature of relationships

Allocation of Weekend Time

	Brains	Drug	Jocks	Outs	Pops	Others
Weekend time spent with:						
Closest friends	2.8	3.1	2.9	2.6	3.0	2.8
b/gfriend	2.7	3.2	2.8	2.8	3.0	2.8
friend group	2.2	2.7	2.7	2.2	2.7	2.3
peer crowd	1.7	2.3	2.0	1.8	2.2	2.0
family	2.7	2.0	2.1	2.3	2.0	2.2
alone	2.4	2.0	2.1	2.3	2.0	2.2

Self-Reported Characteristics of Romantic Relationships

	Brains	Drug	Jocks	Outs	Pops	Others
% w/b/gfriend this year						
	58	94	84	60	88	73
% current b/gfriend						
	28	64	46	33	55	40
Duration (in mos.)						
	5	10	7	6	8	5
Hrs. per week						
	8.9	13.7	9.2	11.0	13.6	10.7

Academic Values						
	Brains	Drug	Jocks	Outs	Pops	Others
GPA	3.6	2.8	3.2	2.7	3.2	2.9
Imp.	4.2	3.3	4.2	3.4	3.9	3.8

Why "crowds"?

- Provide structure during period of transition?

In-class #13

1. How does the formation of crowds change from middle school to early high school to later high school?
2. How might parents influence what crowd their child becomes a part of?
