

In Conversation

with Jeffrey Jensen Arnett and Lene Arenett Jensen

JEFFREY:

My name is Jeffrey Jensen Arnett. I'm a developmental psychologist and a senior research scholar at Clark University in Worcester, Massachusetts.

LENE:

I am Lene Arnett Jensen, and I'm a senior research scientist at Clark University.

JEFFREY:

What's distinctive about our text is that we take a cultural approach to development. And that has two aspects. One is that we contained an abundance of research from cultures all over the world. And we find that students respond very positively to it. They're fascinated by the ways people can be different. The second aspect is that we try to teach students to think from a cultural perspective. Evaluating any research they read about for whether or not it takes culture into account.

LENE:

I grew up in Denmark as a child. Together, we have also lived in a variety of different countries. We draw on that personal experience to think culturally ourselves, and to see research through a cultural lens.

JEFFREY:

So for example, in the chapter on infancy, we talk about sleeping arrangements for infants. Now most of our students have grown up in a family where it's just assumed that the kid comes home from the hospital and they have their own room. Actually, that's a really unusual way to care for infants. In most families around the world, infants sleep alongside their mothers at night. It's a contrast to students' usual experience, and it opens their minds to the range of what's possible.

LENE:

Because we have international students, because we have students of very diverse backgrounds from within the United States, it just really opens up for all of them to share those different experiences with one another.

JEFFREY:

I think if there's one thing we've learned about how to teach students, it's that they learn better through active learning. It's much more effective if they can engage with it. Interact with it in some way. And that's what Revel does so effectively. On virtually every page, there's something to interact with.

LENE:

You'll be sitting and reading, and then there will be an interactive feature of some kind. And so you stop, and you're doing something, and you think about what you've read.

JEFFREY:

Maps, for example, where students don't just look at a map on a page. They actually interact with it. We also have lots of Revel videos. Many of those are very vivid and open students' minds to new ways of thinking.

LENE:

It's not just cognitive that you are stimulating students with those interactive features in Revel. I think it's emotional too. Sometimes you're surprised when you see them. Sometimes you think it's sort of funny. Sometimes you might be a bit fearful. And I actually think that makes materials much more memorable.

JEFFREY:

Students really want to be inspired. Suddenly learning something they had never suspected existed now becomes part of their way of thinking of the world. That desire for that inspirational experience I think has always been there and is still there.