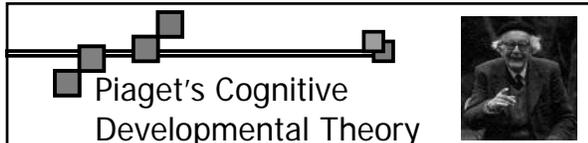


Theories for Child Development: What are they and why should you care?

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Friday, August 26th, 2005

Covering: Lifespan Developmental Theory, Psychoanalytic Theory, Erikson, Behavioral and Social Learning, Piaget, Info-processing, Evolution, Ecological Theory, Vygotsky, Dynamic Systems

Know: What is the theory? How is it similar and/or different from other theories? How can the theory be applied to child development? What are some strengths and weaknesses of the theories?

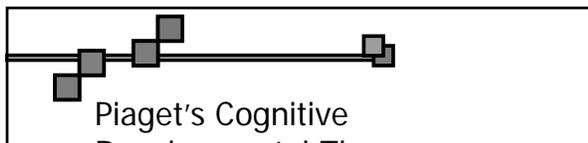


Piaget's Cognitive Developmental Theory



www.mefrik.com/~bondak/
102/history/piaget.html

- Children *actively* construct meaning about their worlds
- Piaget's theory is stage-based, or discontinuous
- see Table 2.2 in text



Piaget's Cognitive Developmental Theory

- Premise for his theory –
 - Adaptation
 - Assimilation
 - Accommodation
- To adapt, children create cognitive 'schemas'
- Goal: To reach 'equilibrium'

Piaget's Cognitive Developmental Theory

- Stages (discontinuous)
 - Sensorimotor (birth-2yrs)
 - Preoperational (2-7yrs)
 - Concrete operational (7-11yrs)
 - Formal operational (11+yrs)

Piaget's Cognitive Developmental Theory

- Uniqueness - children are active learners, focuses on internal and external environments
- Problems -
 - Underestimated the age periods, may depend on task
 - Does not address cultural differences.

Ex: Thailand's Moken Tribe escape the Tsunami



www.piaget.de/panoramal/0.1518.gpsd3d.4403...

Class Activity: FOR POINTS

- In groups of 2-3
- Introduce yourselves! – name, major, hometown, etc.
- Take out piece of paper, place names on it
- Think of as many snow-related words you can think of in 1 minute.

- The Eskimo and Inuit have over 200 actual words for snow. Why?

Source: <http://library.thinkquest.org/3816/snowdictionary.html>

- **Arhur** Falling snow
- **Api** Snow not wet touched by wind
- **Det Thtok** Snow so deep snowshoes are required
- **Natagonaq** Snow surface of rough and coarse particles
- **Qali** Snow that sticks to the branches of trees
- **Saluma Roaq** Snow surface of very fine particles
- **Siqoq** Snow blowing along the ground
- **Upski** Snow changed by wind into a firm pile
- **ah-ki-lu-kak** Soft snow
- **ah-put** Snow in general
- **i-gluk-sak** Snow house
- **i-yak-go-vak-jvak** Snowflake
- **kag-mak-sak** Snow used for insulating snow houses
- **ka-hik** Snow is falling
- **ki-mik-vik** Snow that falls evenly
- **ku-ah-li-vuk** Snow that freezes when it falls
- **mang-uk-tuk** Snow that gets softer
- **ma-sak** Wet snow
- **msu-yak** Deep and soft snow
- **piek-tuk** Drifting snow
- **pu-ka** Snow that is like salt and doesn't stick
- **sa-ki-ut-vuj** Snow that falls straight down

Class Activity – For POINTS!

- Get in groups of 2-3 people
- Answer the following T/F questions:
 - History, Theory, and Research Strategies

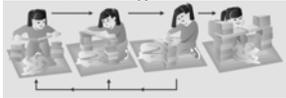
The psychoanalytic perspective emphasizes understanding the unique developmental history of each child.

- According to Freud, the id reconciles the demands of the external world and the conscience.
- According to Erikson, the ability to resolve a basic psychosexual conflict at each stage of development determines an individual's healthy or maladaptive outcome.
- John Watson believed that adults could mold children's behaviors by carefully controlling stimulus-response associations.

- Traditional behaviorism emphasizes the role of observational learning in development.
- Both behaviorism and social learning theory have been criticized for underestimating children's contributions to their own development.

Information-Processing Theory

- Focus on cognitive psychology
 - lab-based method for predicting *how* children process and learn information
- Create a flow chart
- Try to figure out what *strategies* children use to learn



Information-Processing Theory

- Uniqueness:
 - Children are active learners
 - Continuous
- Problems:
 - Too much lab
 - Too much focus on linear learning

Ethology & Evolution Theory

- Behaviors that are adaptive to promote survival of a species
- Imprinting in animals
- Sensitive period in humans
- Examples: language development

Genie



<http://www.feralchildren.com/en/language.php>

Ethology & Evolution Theory

- Uniqueness:
 - Continuous & Discontinuous
 - Based on observation
 - Focuses on adaptive behaviors
- Problems:
 - Too broad, not enough research

Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory

- How cultural practices are transmitted
- Primary focus on social interaction between children and experts to transmit
- ****Zone of Proximal Development***
through
- ****Guided Participation****

Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory

Uniqueness:

- Focus on culture
- Focus on internal *and* external forces to promote child learning (socially mediated)
- Stress importance of adult influences
- Continuous and discontinuous

Problem:

- Not much focus on biology (nature)

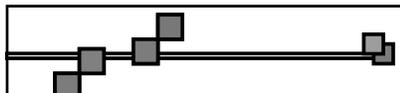
Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner)

- Focus on contextual influences on child development from different 'societal layers'
- Related to lifespan developmental theory
- NOT just infant and parents
- Change over time

Ecological Systems Theory

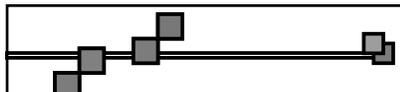
Know the different levels and provide examples of each.

EX: Role of fast food industry? Politics? Health Care System? Values?



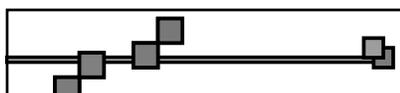
Ecological Systems Theory

- Uniqueness:
 - Continuous and discontinuous
 - Considers culture
 - Considers wider levels of influence
 - Global
 - Internal and External Environment mutually interdependent
- Problems:
 - So broad, hard to study and verify (ex: fast food, video games, etc.)



Dynamic Systems Theory

- Continuous and discontinuous...but see development as a web
- Different trajectories for different children
- AS development occurs, see how the web changes (genetic, social, cognitive, physical influences)



Dynamic Systems

- Uniqueness:
 - Continuous and discontinuous
 - Considers biological forces
 - Considers development AS change or transition is in progress (i.e. language)
 - Considers individual differences in development
- Problems:
 - * Very abstract and hard to measure in humans
 - * Have to capture change as it occurs naturally
