

# Piaget vs vygotsky essay



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Piaget vs. Vygotsky: Comparing and Contrasting “ Strategies of Cognitive Development” and “ Sociocultural Theory of Development” The Swiss Psychologist, Jean Piaget, and the Russian Psychologist, Lev Vygotsky were both interested in the learning and development, specifically among the children. Their theories show that they are both constructivist in their approach. Both of them believe that cognition is a mental construction; that children learn by fitting new info together with that which they already know.

And both believe that there are things that are out of a child’s range of understanding. However, the two differ in their specific and key ideas. In a nutshell, Piaget believes that development precedes learning, while Vygotsky believes that learning precedes development. For Piaget, children progress through the universal and consecutive stages of cognitive development and that there is no skipping of any of these stages. He emphasizes that no matter how brilliant the child is, if a thing is outside his schema (or understanding), he could never understand that very thing.

He also believes that children learn through acting upon their surroundings and their surroundings have nothing to do with their learning process. For him, it is just the child who is discovering. The process of knowledge acquisition in Piaget’s theory is more of dialectics (thesis-antithesis-synthesis). Children learn through forming and re-forming ideas - that is Piaget’s “ Adaptation” (assimilation and accommodation). On the other hand, Vygotsky claims that cognitive development emphasizes social interaction; that learning is the internalization of the language and the actions of others.

When a child receives help in solving a certain problem, he may be able to utilize better strategies in the future if the same problem arises. For Vygotsky, children learn because of history and symbolisms - of culture. Children, he says, value the inputs of other people around them and of their environment. Thus, the process in his theory is that of a dialogue (communicating with others). This is why language is very much important in his theory. And for Vygotsky, those things beyond the child's understanding are in the " Zone of Proximal Development".

These things could be made available to the child's understanding, given proper help and assistance (read: " scaffolding"). With these, it is clear that Piaget's theory requires just a little, if not nothing, of teacher's intervention because the child is the one who is always in action. This, I guess, is very much applicable in the pre-school. While Vygotsky's theory promotes guided discovery in the classroom - a strategy that (as I see it) is applicable in the first grade, where children have certain differences in their background knowledge (e. g. about reading, writing, etc. ).