

The views of piaget and gesell on how development occurs

[Technology](#), [Development](#)



Although they stand at opposite poles, both have recorded facts useful to parents and professionals alike. Piaget's contributions to learning theory and intellectual development have helped shape many educational programs in our schools, while Gesell's schedules of behavior development are still used as clinical and diagnostic tools by many pediatric developments. (Moneywort, 2007) While they have contributed a tremendous amount of knowledge about growing infants and children, we will be analyzing their main theoretical views on child growth and development as well as discussing the differences between the two.

Gesell's theory on developmentally said that the child's growth or development is influenced by two major forces: The environment and the action of the genes. Gesell called this process maturation (Grain, 2005). He observed that a child's development occurred in a fixed order through a series of stages. This is an outstanding feature in maturational development. (Gale Group, 2001). By observing how an embryo adhered to a specific order in its own development, Gesell proposed that a child post natal development also followed a strict specific order (Grain, 2005).

His concept of maturation allowed him to see that just like a baby learns to run by first sitting, then standing, then walking, the principles of maturation also have a "rate" of development that is controlled by internal genetic mechanisms (Grain, 2005), and the forces of environment that are so important in the growing and developing of a child have a positive and direct effect only if they are in tune with the inner maturational principles.

Therefore, he opposed any instructional efforts on placing a child ahead of "

schedule"; when the time is right, the child will simply begin to master the task through his/her own inner urges. Until then, teaching will be of little value and will only create tension between the child and the caregiver (Grain, 2005). Therefore, Arnold Sells theories on how developmental changes occur were based on a maturation view stance, that is, his theory of development is that heredity promotes unfolding development in a predetermined series; almost like a timetable development. Piaget developed his curiosity in childhood development while at working in the Binet Laboratory in Paris.

While in assignment to conduct intelligence test on children, Piaget became bored in scoring children's answers right and wrong, as required by intelligence tests. But he became very fascinated on the wrong answers given by younger children. He found that their mistakes had a consistent pattern and speculated that they were not "dumber" than older children or adults, but that they were thinking in an entirely different way (Grain, 2005). It was through these events that he began to notice that children at distinct ages had certain answers wrong.

And so Piaget quickly abandoned the standardized tests, which he said forced children to respond in an artificial channel of questions and answers (Grain, 2005). As a result, Piaget "devised a more open-ended clinical interview which encourages the flow of spontaneous tendencies. He also spent many hours observing children's spontaneous activities. The point was to suspend his own adult preoccupations about children's thinking and to learn from the children themselves" (Grain, 2005, p. 113). Piaget's

research in developmental psychology had one distinctive and unique goal: How does knowledge grow?

His answer was that growth of knowledge is a progressive instruction of logically embedded structures superseding one another by a process of inclusion of lower less powerful logical means into higher and more powerful ones up to adulthood. Therefore, children's logic and modes of thinking are initially entirely different from those of adults (Smith, 2000). Piaget claimed that children were in charge of the construction or the building of their own knowledge and that construction was superior to instruction (Gordon and Browne, 2004).

Piaget thought that educators should provide a stimulating environment and have the children explore. Teachers should watch and also interact with the children, but they should let the children find and experience new ideas and knowledge on their own. (Grain, 2005) One of Piaget's major contributions is what is known as the general periods of development. He found four major general periods or stages of child development (Grain, 2005, p. 115):
Sensori-Motor Intelligence (birth to two years). Babies organize their physical action schemes, such as sucking, grasping, and hitting.
Pre-Operational Thought (two to seven years).

Children learn to think but their thinking is illogical and different from that of adults. Concrete Operations (seven to eleven years). Children develop the capacity to think systematically, but only when they can refer to concrete objects and activities. Formal Operations (eleven to adulthood). Young

people develop the capacity to think systematically on an abstract and hypothetical plane. When considering the previous stages of development, it is important to keep in mind that Piaget's recognized that children go through their stages at different rates, so he attached little importance to the ages.

Another important thing is that he did not think that the stages were genetically determined (Grain, 2005). Interested in studying the contributions of Piaget and Gesell and in different ways of putting together their findings (Kaufman, 1971). While both men contributed a tremendous amount of knowledge about the growing child, many people find themselves confused between the differences between the maturations and interactions view stance that Gesell and Piaget based their theories on (Divvies et al. , 2002).

According to Divvies, the interactions (or cognitive-developmental) stream " is based on the idea that the dialectic or interactions process of development and learning wrought the student's active construction should be facilitated and promoted by adults" (2002). Whereas, " The romantic maturations stream is based on the idea that the student's naturally occurring development should be allowed to flower without adult interventions in a permissive environment" (2002). Another major difference between Piaget and Gesell is the interplay role of nature and nurture (Thiele and Adolph, 1992).

Rather than focusing on the importance of one over the other, Piaget, in his theory of cognitive development, focused on models in which each stage of a developmental process is defined not only by innate characteristics but also

by increased receptivity (or "readiness") toward certain environmental factors. (Gale Group, 2001). Robert Eagan compares the two models of human behavior development as follows: "The growth readiness model, which has been associated in previous times with such theorists as G.