

Interactive processes and cognitive development



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Interactive Processes and Cognitive Development This paper encompasses a discussion about cognitive development in regard to children and the process that encompass child development. More specifically, Lev Vygotsky's key ideas on Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) will be presented and compared to Jean Piaget's theory on child development. Erikson included child development in his classic theory and it is undisputable that this point in an individual's is significant to their development and how they develop through all of life's stages.

There are many theories and ideas regarding the process and stages of the cognitive process of child development. One such theory is the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) by Lev Vygotsky. Vygotsky professes that there is an actual zone for development and this zone consists of a gap " between a learner's current or actual level of development determined by independent problem solving and the learners emerging or potential level of development." Schaffer (2006 p 46)

The key to what Vygotsky professed is that this zone or gap is imperative to development. It contains the set of knowledge that the learner has the ability to learn at that time. However, the learner at that time does not comprehend that these things are just out of their reach. Schaffer (2006, p 181) It is the point in child development where the learner is challenged to learn.

Jean Piaget has a theory regarding child development and the cognitive processes that are involved. Piaget was concerned with knowledge and how it is obtained just as Vygotsky was. Rather than being a zone that prompted or challenged further gaining of information Piaget's theory's key concept was that knowledge grows. In one respect this is essentially what Vytgosky's (ZPD) theory professed. According to Piaget said, " that the growth of

knowledge is a progressive construction 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." (1969, p 173)

The significant point of Piaget's theory is that because of this growth in knowledge the learner's or child's logic and methods and approaches of thinking are at the start completely different from those of adults. Piaget referred to his view as "constructivism," He called this process constructivism for the reason that he believed that the acquisition of knowledge is a process of continuous self-construction. While the child is constructing this knowledge, Piaget (1969, p 186) Piaget's theory understood there to be an interface or communication between heredity and environment, Piaget labeled this premise "interactionism".

Both of the theories are concerned with how a child develops and primarily how the cognitive process in the brain promote learning. Both of the theories has valid and significant points and view the cognitive process of learning as a process. Vygotsky's theory took a more biological nature while Piaget's theory integrated a child's environment into the learning process and a child's development. Both of the theorists believe that child development and the cognitive processes that encompass it do take place in steps. Vygotsky believes that children develop their cognitive skills when they reach a particular level of knowledge that leaves a gap in the process and they are then challenged to learn more. Piaget feels that knowledge grows during development and both nature and nurture are factors in the process, especially the child's environment and interactions.

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