

The piaget constructivist classroom education essay

[Education](#)



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Introduction

Education is the process of acquiring knowledge by an individual after studying particular subject matters that provides an understanding of something. It has always been viewed as a vital element of society, indispensable to its change, progress and development. Human civilization has always placed a premium on educational values, although the curricula and content of education persistently evolved with history, society, cultural as well as economic requirement. According to Winch and Gingell (2008), philosophy of education is important activities; that the search to explicate, understand and criticize the foundational ideas which underpin particular disciplines and our everyday life is a task worthy of pursuit at the highest intellectual level. It is a term used to define an approach to education based on the planning of courses and curriculum, policies pertaining to education and programs that are used to encourage personal and academic achievement. The focus of this essay is compared and contrast the

educational philosophies of Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky. Analyzing the philosophy of each, and whilst not arguing that one theory is truer than the other, discovering the comparisons between the two through evidence and facts, gained through a variety of sources and asking questions of each theory throughout. Piaget and Vygotsky were two important scholars that contribute to cognitive development theories. They were remarkably important contributors towards the cognitive maturational component. The way children learn and mentally develop play a crucial role in shaping their learning assessment and abilities. Through a deep understanding towards their mental growth, it will provide teachers with opportunities to assist student the unique requirement of each child. In addition, both Piaget and Vygotsky are regarded as constructivist. Bartlett and Burton (2012) pointed out that constructivism is predicated on the idea that people make their own sense of things in a unique way. It is a new approach to education that claims human is better able to understand the information they have constructed by themselves. Meece (2002) states in her book, they believed, " children must construct their own understandings of the world in which they live"(p. 121). Their research within the realm of cognitive development had led to the development of educational philosophies. Piaget proposes four major cognitive stages in child's cognitive development including sensorimotor, preoperational, concrete operational and formal operational. The thinking process of a child varies for each developmental stage with its own significance. He convinces that a child can not miss a stage as each is necessary for cognitive development. For example, a child at preoperational stage is not yet has the capacity to conceptualize abstractly and needs

concrete physical situations. On the other hand, Lev Vygotsky is well known for his theory of social constructivism. Arora (2010) proposes that his theory emphasizes on learning and development is two depended activity that enable students with mentally developed in the form of socialization and education. Learning process occurred when the child first interacts with the social surroundings on an interpersonal level and then internalizes the experience.

Piaget constructivist classroom.

In Piaget constructivist classroom, a variety of activities must be provided to challenge students to discover new idea, increase their readiness to learn and construct their own knowledge. CD-ROMs, Video disks, projector and simulation software enhance learning, while telecommunication tools, like e-mail and internet, provide context for dialogue within the classroom leading to the social instruction of knowledge.

Vygotsky constructivist classroom.

In Vygotskian classroom, activities such as reading or writing workshop, collaborative learning and games that provide stimulation can be implemented. In addition, my lecturer always assigned her students to make a presentation for the group project incorporated into classroom activities. It is one way to stimulate interaction between teacher-student and student-student as well as exposed student to project work on problem analysis. Both Piaget and Vygotsky include social interaction as the central idea of their theory. Piaget in his theory always emphasizes on cognitive development of a child. However, throughout his career, he frequently talks about social

factor. According to Piaget's view, the child cognitively constructed as much an adaptation to the social environment as to the physical. According to Winch and Gingell (2008), Piaget states that peer interactions are crucial to the child's construction of social and moral feelings, values as well as social and intellectual competence. In addition, teachers' assist is also required in the Piaget constructivist classroom. Meanwhile, Vygotsky has talked a lot about the social factor as part of the mental constructed. Vygotsky stress on the role of learning by the child through social interaction with the educator. The tutor may become the model behaviors and provide verbal instructions for the child. In explaining this, he refers to this interaction as a cooperative or collaborative dialogue. Thus, the child will find that it is easy for them to access learning by the instructions provided by the teacher, internalizes the information in order to regulate their own performance. Both Piaget and Vygotsky agree with the necessity of the teachers. Piaget proposes that children best learn in their own environment. Arora (2010) pointed out in her book, Piaget states that social interaction takes place mainly to move a child away from egocentrism. In essence, a child in the preoperational stage can not be taught to comprehend the liquid volume experiment as she does not possess the mental procession of a concrete operational child. Schemes involve mental representations of objects, principal as well as people that are part of children's cognitive development. These schemes can be altered upon what Piaget called as assimilation and accommodation. According to Santrock (2011), assimilation occurs when children incorporate new information into their existing schemes. Accommodation associated with adjusting one's existing knowledge to what is discovered. When someone

reaches the processes Piaget called equilibrium, assimilation and accommodation, a new stage of development is developed. In order for a child to learn the notion of conservation, a child must initially strive with the idea that the liquid amount in the cylinders has not changed. After accommodating the new knowledge, equilibrium occurs, and the child may advance to a new cognitive stage which is concrete operational. Meanwhile for Vygotsky, he emphasizes the Sociocultural Theory of Development which express that students obtain information and best learn through social interactions and their culture. His theory provides a big difference from Piaget's theory that indicate children act on their environment to learn. According to his theory, we communicate and socially in contact with others to assimilate the sense of culture morality of our society. Vygotsky also proclaims that human activities occur in cultural settings and cannot be conceived apart from these circumstances. Therefore, our culture assists to mold our thinking ability. Social interactions enable us to move one step closer toward individualized reflection. Whenever a child acquires help through this mechanism, he will develop a more competent ability for better strategies in the future essential for educational purpose. Another Vygotskian principle from the sociocultural perspective is scaffolding. Scaffolding accommodate student with hints for problem solving in their life. While Piaget proclaims that the student does not yet have the mental structures to solve such a problem, Vygotsky would offer encouragement or strategies, in the form of scaffolding, in order for the student to attempt the problem. In order to master a range of task that is too difficult, the adults take their responsibility to assist children with the task. This is a term used

by Vygotsky to describe Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). Meece (2002) states that Vygotsky's term Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) was used to refer the difference between what children can do on their own, and what they could do with the assistance of others. Vygotsky indicates that interactions with adults and peers within this zone enable children to move into a higher level of cognitive functioning in the classroom. He emphasizes on the importance of cooperative thinking that take place in the decision making process. This approach provides students with paired together or involve in a small group activity whereby teacher's task is to maintaining student's motivation and competence in order to achieve the instructional goal. On the other hand, Piaget's theory advocates that activities perform by children is in line with their cognitive abilities. The ZPD proposes by Vygotsky however challenges the child to commit tasks beyond their mental potential. In accordance with his theory, Piaget's classroom promotes that teacher should adapt the classroom environment to match the level of the child's developmental level of motor operations. In addition, the teacher also acts as a role to facilitate with the advancement to the next stage of cognitive development. The child is limited by their four stages of development that include sensorimotor, preoperational, concrete operational and formal operational. Meece (2002), in his book explains that Piaget's cognitive development theory is based on a child's innate ability to productively think on their own. As they biologically mature and develop the capacity to adapt to their environment, the transition to the next cognitive stage occur. Children assimilate and accommodate their current schema to fit the new information presented in the classroom.

Summary

Although Piaget and Vygotsky have radically different viewpoints about cognitive development in child, they emphasize on constructivist point of view and indicate that students are not passive in their own knowledge. Assistant from teacher play a vital role that stimulate and generate constructive learning in student. According to Meece (2002), the role of a teacher is not only to educate, but also as important organizers, stimulators, guides and supporters of learning. A great contribution of Piaget to the theory provide students with curriculum in order to enhance their mental precession trough learning concepts and logical steps. In addition, his suggestion that children are capable at learning according to specific stages of cognitive development assist teacher to organized their student well. Vygotsky on the contrary stress on the role of cultural interaction in the classroom. Winch and Gingell (2008), in their book pointed out that Vygotsky believes that knowledgeable adults can help student learn even if they are not at the specific stages as stated by Vygotsky. Piaget and Vygotsky are contradict in viewing the cognitive development, however for the sake of education, teacher can incorporate both theory for better teaching strategy outcome. Teachers must take into consideration the social and cultural background of the student before preparing the lesson plan. Using Piaget's theory, the student must be at the correct stage of development in order use and understand the knowledge at hand. But, Vygotsky says that even if the child is not at the correct stage of development then a knowledgeable adult or teacher could influence the child and help him get to a level beyond what his level would otherwise indicate.