

# Two pages 10

Psychology



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Learning Beyond Piaget's Last Stage of Cognitive Development The myriad of opportunities available for learning is ours for the taking. Never before has knowledge been so accessible! Being a lifelong learner is a choice anyone could take (Kungu & Machtmes, 2009). Learning can be derived not only from schools but all around us.

Piaget's Stages of Cognitive Development ended in the adolescence stage. However, it does not stop there. As long as one is breathing, he continues to learn, grow and develop. Hence, new cognitive development is absolutely possible even during late adulthood. Malcolm Knowles (2007), known as the Father of Andragogy or adult education has formulated his own Andragogical Theory of Adult Learning as the art and science of helping adults learn. It is organized around the notion that adults learn best in informal, comfortable, flexible and nonthreatening settings. As an adult pursuing her specialization in General Psychology, such information is very useful and assuring for me because usually, learning is assumed to thrive only in the four walls of the classroom.

Embarking on cognitive development in adulthood requires great motivation because of all the present responsibilities shouldered by the adult learner. Adult learners have a deep need to direct their own learning, possessing a pride and learning style that suits their own personalities. As people mature, individual differences increase with age. Accepting these assumptions of how adults learn, Carl Rogers (1969), a humanistic psychologist further details the process of humanistic learning. He claims that the learner is personally involved in a holistic way. His or her feelings and cognitive aspects are deep into the learning experience.

The motivation to learn is affected by the reinforcements to learning namely <https://assignbuster.com/two-pages-10/>

intrinsic motivation or the inner drive to learn which leads to personal fulfillment; extrinsic motivation, which consists of rewards such as high grades or a prize for performing well; social reinforcement, an example of which is praise and approval from significant persons in an individual's life; and achievement, or the attaining of the learning goal. Having an interplay of the four kinds of reinforcement is the most effective way to motivate a learner to pursue more knowledge and acquire more skills (Stoll, L., Fink, D. & Earl, L., 2003).

Continued cognitive development into late adulthood is something worth encouraging to make people more productive even in their golden years. My specialization in Psychology can help people develop the right attitude and behavior in pursuing life long learning.

#### Learning from Lifespan Development

Learning about lifespan development and the theories that explain each stage has made me more aware of how interrelated our experiences are. Whereas before, I took each stage as separate with its own distinguishing characteristics, I now see it as a continuum and not merely overlapping stages. One stage leads to another, linked by threads of significant experiences and memories.

The expression “from womb to tomb” became more meaningful to me in this course. Although I was aware that prenatal development exists, it became more ingrained in me that a mother's experiences during pregnancy have direct impact on the fetus. That is why I have a better regard for pregnant women, as they carry within them lives that are full of potential. I realize that coming up with a theory takes much consideration of various factors. It is interesting that the theories explaining life stages were

categorized into different developmental aspects: Piaget's for cognitive, Erikson's for psychosocial and Freud's for psychosexual, and they have stages from infancy onwards. Before, I just saw these theories as separate bodies of work by great psychologists and this was their contribution to the field. However, upon applying them in lifespan development analysis, I recognize that they actually work together to explain patterns of behavior expected of each developmental stage.

If at the beginning of the course, I was made to expect that life is not free from conflicts as one goes through the developmental stages, then I might have developed a negative attitude towards life. However, the course made me understand that such conflicts are essential to one's growth and development. Every conflict is an opportunity to learn how to resolve it. I also learned that unresolved conflicts at earlier life stages will have its effect on later life stages, so it is critical that conflicts are resolved early on.

Besides, it builds character.

All the learning that I have derived from this course is very applicable to my intended career as a psychologist. Not only should I be adept at theories and its application to practical situations, but I should understand how people respond to various stimuli at every stage of life. Knowing about lifespan development would be a great advantage in counselling other people to deal with their own personal issues.

#### References

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