

# Piaget vs vygotsky - theories of cognitive development

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Piaget Vs Vygotsky -Theories of Cognitive Development Piaget Vs Vygotsky - Theories of Cognitive Development Jean Piaget gained a clear understanding of children through interacting with their daily activities. He observed, listened, and communicated with them as they undertook their assignments. This marked the start of his study on children development. He came up with a theory that had a huge influence, especially in educational theory. As Piaget puts it, a child's development is established through several stages, where a single stage symbolizes a qualitatively unique type of thinking. A child in the first stage has a dissimilar level of thinking with a child in the second, third, or fourth stage. Transitions from a particular stage to the next are very fast, with the stages following an invariant series. An essential feature of Piaget's theory is that the stages happen universally, where every individual has to go through despite their diversity but in exception of their age, a factor on which the stages are founded upon (Mooney, 2000). The theory further illustrates that a child interacts with his or her environment; children cannot learn without interacting with their immediate surroundings, making mistakes to learn from. Children are described as "lone scientists" who have cognitive mechanisms to gradually learn individually (Piaget, 2000). However, maturity must play a big role in increasing their capacity to understand worldly issues. Certain tasks can only be undertaken if the children are psychologically mature. Moreover, maturity is not attained smoothly rather, their thinking "takes off" sometimes to move entirely into new capabilities and regions. To make the stages clear, Piaget divided them according to their age limits. The sensory-motor stage lasts from birth to two years, where a kid

differentiates himself from objects and begins to behave intentionally. The pre-operational stage whose duration is from two to seven years is characterized by learning and using language and words, but thinking remains egocentric. He can also classify objects using single features. Concrete operational comes third at age seven to eleven. The kid can reason, attain conservation of numbers, and categorize objects such as according to size. Lastly, the Formal operation stage at the age of eleven and above is associated with a child who can reason about abstract proposals and test theories systematically. He is more concerned about the future and ideological issues.

Lev Vygotsky thought that children could not learn on their own; they need encouragement and assistance from adults. More so, their interaction with the environment is not a major requirement. Children use “ dialogues” to socially interact and relate with others to get a know-how of the cultural values expected by the society. Unlike Piaget who believes in nurture by the surrounding, Vygotsky perceived that cultural settings are the major building blocks (Mooney, 2000). Culture shapes the cognition of a child. Social interactions are what make people to have individualized thinking. To him, a child is only able to solve future problems if he passed through the process of co-construction while interacting during shared activities. This is the process that transforms into internalization, and finally into independent thinking. Most importantly, language development is a key concept in Vygotsky’s theory. Scaffolding should also be considered to provide the learner with tactics to solve problems in future.

Although the two theories contrast, they give vital views to educators,

particularly on cognitive development. Each theory makes sense but Vygotsky's is more appropriate especially to a school-going child. Ideas such as dialogue, co-constructed knowledge, socio-cultural issues, and dialogue are essential in a child's knowledge acquisition. Social interactions are more important in shaping a child's mind than merely his activities.

#### References

- Mooney, G. (2000). Theories of childhood: An introduction to Dewey, Montessori, Erikson, Piaget & Vygotsky. Boston: Redleaf Press.
- Piaget, J. (2001). The psychology of intelligence. New York, NY: Routledge.