

Explain the development of perception in children

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Topic: Lecturer: Presentation: Introduction Some theorists argue that children are born with a mind which is an empty slate while others argue that children are born with innate qualities. This is a debate that has been going on for several decades but whatever the case, it is worth noting that children do not perceive the world the same way as adults do (Sigelman & Rider, 188). The things they perceive and the manner in which they perceive them is very different. So what is perception and how does it develop in children? Is it learnt or is it inborn. This will be the subject of this paper. It is worth noting that perception does not develop in isolation rather it is influenced by other developmental factors of children such as motor, sensory and cognitive development. I will argue that perception develops through maturation and that it is an aspect of cognitive development. As such, development of perception will be explained using Piaget's stages of cognitive development. Eleanor Gibson and Richard Walk performed an experiment known as the 'visual cliff' and observed that all human senses are present at birth and function to some degree (Sigelman & Rider, 174-188). What children are unable to do at this stage is to make sense of the environment or to interpret the sensory inputs and this is where perception comes in. Children at birth are able to do simple reflexes such as sucking, grasping objects and following them with eyes but cannot interpret them. We have different senses such as vision, hearing, touching, smelling and tasting but children must be able to interpret and attach meaning to the things we sense in the environment. To do this, children need to perceive. So what is perception? Perception is the process of recognising and interpreting sensory information or input (Sigelman & Rider, 174). They also contend that " everything we do depends on the ability to sense and perceive the world around us" (174). <https://assignbuster.com/explain-the-development-of-perception-in-children/>

According to nativists, perception is not learnt but innate capabilities and maturation drive perceptual development. However, learning schemas and cognitive input is necessary to develop perception.

The first stage according to Piaget is sensorimotor. At this stage, children have learnt simple reflexes such as sucking and grasping and as time goes on they start focusing on purposeful behaviour, that is, they repeat interesting behaviours such as sucking hands (Rathus, Veenvliet & Maheu, 1976). They also discover the relationship between the body and the environment and separating activities such as looking and reaching. They also learn cause-and-effect behaviour by distinguishing the fact that some behaviours are rewarding thus repeat them to see what happens. They also learn to use different means to achieve ends such as using sticks to bring things closer (1977). At an early stage, objects removed out of sight of the child are out of mind too but as time progresses they begin to recognise that objects removed out of sight still exist and as such start looking for them in a concept Piaget referred as object permanence (1977).

The second stage is the preoperational stage whereby children learn to use words and symbols to represent objects and relationships but they cannot manipulate them. Their world is not the same as adults and focus on one aspect of a situation at a time. For them similar objects are identical hence all women are mummy while all men are daddy (Rathus et al. 1977). Children are also egocentric as they cannot accept other people's perspectives other than their own. They believe that everyone thinks as they do. They also have difficulty in classifying objects into groups. Children also show animism; they attribute life and consciousness to physical objects. These objects are assumed to have human qualities such as thoughts and intentions. They also

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believe that events are human inventions thus for them the sky is blue because someone painted it (178). This is what Piaget referred to as artificialism. Also these children have not learnt different dimensions of objects in what is called conservation.

The third stage is concrete operation which begins at 7-12 years. Here children are able to focus on different aspects of problems and different object dimensions hence learn conservation and reversibility. They are less egocentric as they appreciate other people's opinions (Rathus et al. 178). Children think logically about actual physical objects and not abstract ideas and are able to classify and compare objects. The last stage is formal operational whereby children can think logically about abstract ideas, form hypothesis and test them (Rathus et al. 179). At this stage, they have mastered conservation and thus focus on multiple aspects of a situation to solve a problem. They can also derive rules from general principles.

References

Rathus, Spencer A., Veenvliet, Scott G and Maheu, Shannon J. Psych. Ontario: Nelson Education, 2012.

Sigelman, Carol K and Rider, Elizabeth A. Life-Span Human Development. 7th ed. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 2012.