

Quadrant II – Transcript and Related Materials

Programme: Bachelor of Arts (First Year)

Subject: Psychology

Course Code: PSG 101

Course Title: Child Psychology

Unit: Unit 3 – Early and Middle Childhood

Module Name: Cognitive development: Developmental theory of Piaget

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Notes

Introduction

Changes in a child's mental capabilities and capacities through time are referred to as cognitive development. Cognitive development theories are concerned with how children form their thoughts. Piaget was particularly interested in how children's thinking develops from birth through young adulthood. Piaget explains how thinking evolves through the stages of childhood. Biology and experiences, he explains, have an impact on cognitive growth. Piaget believed that cognitive development takes place through **four fundamental stages**. To advance to the next level, all children must go through these stages.

Sensorimotor Stage: (0—2 Years)

Preoperational stage: (2—7 Years)

Concrete Operational Stage: (7—11 Years)

Formal Operational Stage: (11 Years —Adulthood)

Processes of Development

Some of the main aspects that determine how children learn and grow, according to Piaget, are as follows:

Schema: Schema is a term that refers to both the physical and mental aspects of knowledge and knowing. We have a mechanism for organising information in our minds, according to Piaget, and we do categorise information and experiences in our mental system. Schema refers to the Mental System and its categories. At each level of development, the schemes are different.

Adaptation, according to Piaget, is the process by which we adjust to our surroundings. Adaptation is divided into two subprocesses:

Assimilation is the process of taking new knowledge or information and fitting it into an existing schema.

Accommodation: Occasionally, we find that an old schema does not support new data. We usually do two things in such a case. We first change the existing schema, and then we construct a new one. Accommodation is the term for this procedure.

Equilibration: The process of a child attempting to strike a balance between assimilation and accommodation. This process is known as equilibration.

1. Sensorimotor Stage.

This period starts when the infant is born and lasts until the child is roughly two years old. The Sensorimotor Stage is named from the fact that children's thinking is influenced by their senses (seeing, hearing, moving, touching, and tasting) as well as motor activity. Sucking and grasping are reflex responses that the new born has. Infants develop the concept of object permanence at this time. This refers to the belief that objects and events exist even when they can't be seen,

heard, or touched. Learning to reverse actions is an important accomplishment in the Sensorimotor phase. The child observes and imitates what is going on around him or her. The ability to think and remember begins to develop.

The Sensorimotor Stage is divided into six sub-stages

Stages of Reflex Activities (0—1 month): Inborn reflexes assist the child in comprehending his or her surroundings.

Primary Circular Reactions (1—4 months): Sensations and schemas get coordinated in this stage. Whatever children do in this stage, they tend to do it repeatedly as they derive pleasure from it. For example, if a toddler begins sucking his or her thumb, he or she will continue to do so since it provides a comforting.

Secondary Circular Reactions (4—8 months): Younger youngsters become more intent on completing tasks. They repeat their actions to get a response from the environment. For example, they put things in their mouth, for example, then repeat the process with a variety of objects.

Coordination of Reactions (8—12 months) At this age, children begin to understand the distinction between purpose and means. They devise strategies for achieving their objectives. They try to generalise what they've learned and apply it in different situations.

Tertiary Circular Reactions (12—18 months): This is a trial-and-error stage. Children are curious about the world around them. They make mistakes, which they then repeat. They repeat a lot of actions to get the attention of their caregiver.

Internationalization of schemes (18—24 months): Children begin to place a greater emphasis on mental rather than physical activity, and they start thinking

about objects. At this age, they show the ability to recognise object permanence. Even if the toy is not visible, they search for it.

2. Preoperational Stage (2 to 7 Years). This stage is called Preoperational because the children have not yet mastered the ability to perform mental operations. During this stage, children's thinking is guided by what they observe rather than logical ideas. This stage is divided in two parts. Symbolic Function (2-4) and intuitive stage (4-7).

The main characteristics of the stage involve:

a. **Symbolic function.** During this stage the child develops the ability to think using symbols and signs.

b. **Egocentrism.** During this stage children believe that their way of thinking is the only way to think.

c. **Animism.** Children tend to refer to inanimate objects as if they have life-like qualities and are capable of actions.

d. **Lack of Conservation.** It refers to the understanding that certain properties of an object remain the same despite a change in their appearance.

e. **Centration** – The focusing of attention on one characteristic to the exclusion of all others.

3. Concrete Operational Stage (7 to 11 years). A child's primary priority at this age is the integration and stability of his cognitive systems. They are able to categorise tangible objects. Children have rational thinking skills, but their reasoning is limited to physical objects. During this stage, children learn several things about conservation, including classification (grouping objects into categories), seriation (arranging objects in sequential order) based on one aspect, such as size, weight, or volume.

4. Formal Operational Stage (11 & above). The advent of rational thinking and reasoning characterises this period. This is the last stage of Piaget's cognitive development. Children at this age can think abstractly and understand the combination and coordination of numbers and variables. Children move ahead from concrete objects to abstract concepts. Children in this stage use the formal operations problem-solving strategy in which an individual begins by identifying all the factors that might affect a problem and then deduces systematically. Piaget called it hypothetico-deductive reasoning.

References

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