

Quadrant II – Transcript and Related Materials

Programme: Bachelor of Arts (Third Year)

Subject: Psychology

Course Code: PSD 105

Course Title: Developmental Psychology

Unit: 03

Module Name: Childhood: Intellectual Development

Name of the Presenter: Dr. Mukta Karamadi

Notes

Early childhood (2-6 years): Preoperational Period

- The second of Piaget's four periods of cognitive development.
- He called early-childhood thinking ***preoperational*** because children do not use logical operations.

Preoperational intelligence

- Piaget's term for cognitive development during early childhood between the ages of 2 and 6;
- It includes language and imagination, but logical, operational thinking is not yet possible at this stage.

Symbolic thought

- Major accomplishment of preoperational intelligence
- Allows a child to think symbolically, understanding that words can refer to things not seen and that an item, can symbolize something else

Helps explain animism

Animism

- Involves belief that natural objects and phenomena are alive
- Is related to egocentric reasoning
- May be involved with rational as well as irrational ideas

Obstacles to Logic

Piaget described four limitations that make logic difficult until about age 6:

- centration, focus on appearance, static reasoning, irreversibility.

Centration

- Is the tendency to focus attention on one characteristic to the exclusion of all others.
- Eg. Centration is most clearly evidenced in young children's lack of conservation

Egocentrism

- Literally means "self-centeredness."
- Egocentric children contemplate the world exclusively from their personal perspective.

Focus on appearance

- A characteristic of preoperational thought in which a young child ignores all attributes that are not apparent.
- For instance, a girl given a short haircut might worry that she has turned into a boy.

Static reasoning

- Thinks that nothing changes. Whatever is now has always been and always will be.
- Believing that the world is unchanging, always in the state in which they currently encounter it. Eg. Many children cannot imagine that their own parents were ever children.

Irreversibility

- A young child thinks that nothing can be undone.
- A thing cannot be restored to the way it was before a change occurred.

Conservation and Logic

- Piaget highlighted several ways in which preoperational intelligence disregards logic.
- A famous set of experiments involved **conservation, the notion that the** amount of a substance remains the same (is conserved) despite changes in its appearance.
- Preoperational child fails to conserve

Vygotsky: Social Learning

- Vygotsky emphasized that each person's thinking is shaped by other people's wishes and goals.
- He emphasized the social aspects of development, a contrast to Piaget's emphasis on the individual.

- Vygotsky noticed the power of culture, acknowledging that “the culturally specific nature of experience is an integral part of how the person thinks and acts”

Mentors

- Vygotsky believed that cognitive development is embedded in a social context at every age (Vygotsky, 1934/1987).
- He stressed that children are curious and observant. They ask questions—about how machines work, why weather changes, —and seek answers from more knowledgeable mentors.
- Vygotsky believed that all individuals learn within their **zone of proximal development (ZPD)**, an intellectual arena in which new ideas and skills can be mastered.
- *Proximal means “near,” so the ZPD includes the ideas children are close to understanding as well as the skills they can almost master but are not yet able to demonstrate independently.*
- **Scaffolding**
- Temporary support that is tailored to a learner’s needs and abilities and aimed at helping the learner master the next task in a given learning process.
- How and when children learn depends, in part, on the wisdom and willingness of mentors to provide **scaffolding**, to help them within their developmental zone.