

Quadrant II – Transcript and Related Materials

Programme: Bachelor of Arts

Subject: Psychology

Course Code: PSD 105

Course Title: Developmental Psychology

Unit: III – Cognitive Development

Module Name: Early Adulthood: Cognitive Growth and Higher Education – Part 02

Module No: 25

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Notes

EARLY ADULthood: COGNITIVE GROWTH AND HIGHER EDUCATION

Cognitive Stages

Postformal Stage: - Some theorists have pieced together cognitive changes in young adults and proposed a new stage of cognitive development, postformal thought, which is qualitatively different from Piaget's formal operational thought. Postformal thought involves understanding that the correct answer to a problem requires reflective thinking and can vary from one situation to another, and that the search for truth is often an ongoing, never-ending process.

Postformal thought also includes the belief that solutions to problems need to be realistic and that emotion and subjective factors can influence thinking. As young adults engage in more reflective judgment when solving problems, they might think deeply about many aspects of politics, their career and work, relationships, and other areas of life. They might understand that what might be the best solution to a problem at work (with a co-worker or boss) might not be the best solution at home (with a romantic partner). Many young adults also become more sceptical about there being a single truth and often are not willing to accept an answer as final. They also often recognize that thinking can't just be abstract but rather has to be realistic and pragmatic. And many young adults

understand that emotions can play a role in thinking—for example, that they are likely to think more clearly when they are in a calm and collected state than when they are angry and highly aroused. Researchers have found that young adults are more likely to engage in this postformal thinking than adolescents are. But critics argue that research has yet to document that postformal thought is a qualitatively more advanced stage than formal operational thought.

Creativity

Early adulthood is a time of great creativity for some people. One early study of creativity found that individuals' most creative products were generated in their thirties and that 80 percent of the most important creative contributions were completed by age 50. More recently, researchers have found that creativity does peak in adulthood and then decline, but that the peak often occurs in the forties. However, qualifying any conclusion about age and creative accomplishments are (1) the magnitude of the decline in productivity, (2) contrasts across creative domains, and (3) individual differences in lifetime output.

Even though a decline in creative contributions is often found in the fifties and later, the decline is not as great as commonly thought. An impressive array of creative accomplishments occurs in late adulthood. Any consideration of decline in creativity with age requires consideration of the field of creativity involved. In such fields as philosophy and history, older adults often show as much creativity as when they were in their thirties and forties. By contrast, in such fields as lyric poetry, abstract math, and theoretical physics, the peak of creativity is often reached in the twenties or thirties.

There also is extensive individual variation in the lifetime output of creative individuals. Typically, the most productive creators in any field are far more prolific than their least productive counterparts. The contrast is so extreme that the top 10 percent of creative producers frequently account for 50 percent of the creative output in a particular field.

References

1. Santrock, J.W. (2011). *Life Span Development*. (13th Ed). New Delhi: Mc Graw-Hill College.