Children's Development Theories in Psychology

The scientific study of children began in the late nineteenth century and blossomed in the early twentieth century as pioneering psychologists sought to uncover the secrets of human behavior by studying its development. Two early scholars, John Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau proposed theories of human behavior that are the direct ancestors of the major theoretical traditions of developmental psychology today. Locke, a British empiricist, adhered to a strict environmentalist position, that the mind of the newborn is a tabula rasa ("blank slate") on which knowledge is written through experience and learning. Rousseau, a Swiss philosopher who spent much of his life in France, proposed a nativistic model in his famous novel Emile, in which development occurs according to innate processes progressing through three stages: infancy, childhood, and adolescence detailing some of the necessary progression through these stages in order to develop into an ideal citizen. The importance of learning more about human development is significant as "Knowing about other people and their circumstances can help us live and work with them more effectively. Therefore, to get a full picture and systematize knowledge about this subject, studying major human development thinkers is essential.

The. Psychoanalytic. Approach. to. Human. Development. Sigmund Freud's stage theory of psychosexual development grew out of his psychoanalytic approach to human personality and psychopathology. In treating his adult patients' difficulties, he searched their early development and detected the origins of problems in childhood that continued through adulthood. Freud proposed a series of psychosexual stages that people experience as they mature and effectively progress through these stages to obtain a healthy personality. If difficulties or struggles ascend at any stage, the persons can become fixated at that stage and spend their strength in managing conflicts of previous stages in adulthood. Freud believed that personality developed through a series of childhood stages in which the pleasure-seeking energies of the id become focused on certain erogenous areas. During the five psychosexual stages - the oral, anal, phallic, latent, and genital stages, the erogenous zone associated with each stage serves as a source of pleasure with each stage of development being marked by conflicts that can help build growth or stifle development, depending upon how they are resolved. If these psychosexual stages are completed successfully, a healthy personality is the result. If certain issues are not resolved at the appropriate stage, fixations can occur and the individual will remain "stuck" in this stage.

Since Freud did not include the influence of culture on personality development, Erik Erikson extended his concepts and emphasized the evolution of the ego and the influence of culture and increased Freud's five psychosexual stages into a sequence of eight psychosocial stages, embracing infancy through adulthood. Erikson's theory covered the entire lifespan, from infancy through late adulthood, as opposed to Freud, whose last stage ended after adolescence and stated that people may not progress through these stages in the same order, and some stages may be limited to certain cultural and historical contexts. However, many find his stages to be a useful summary of social tasks across the lifespan.

These are (a) Stage 1: 1st year of life: children are completely dependent on others and a basic attitude of trust or mistrust is formed at this time when babies are given warmth, touching, love, and physical care. Mistrust is caused by inadequate or unpredictable care and by parents who are cold, indifferent, or rejecting and may later cause insecurity, suspiciousness, or an inability to relate to others, (b) Stage 2: 1-3 years , children express their growing self-control by climbing, touching, exploring, and trying to do things for themselves, (3) Stage 3: 3-5 years children move beyond simple self-control and begin to take initiative. Through play, children learn to make plans and carry out tasks while parents reinforce initiative by giving children freedom to play, ask questions, use imagination, and choose activities. Feelings of guilt about initiating activities are formed if parents criticize severely, prevent play, or discourage a child's questions, (d) Stage 4: this stage is about building skills and confidence, full of trial and error, but an important part of growing up. It's when kids begin to figure out that they can actually do things—whether it's playing a sport, learning an instrument, or getting good grades. How kids manage this period of development helps set the stage for how they'll deal with challenges and successes later in life, (3) Stage 5: Adolescence, during which adolescents explore their independence and develop a sense of self. It is characterized by asking questions such as "Who am I," and learning more about your own goals, values,

and beliefs, (f) Stage 6: the individual feels a need for intimacy in his or her life. After establishing a stable identity, a person is prepared to share meaningful love or deep friendship with others. Failure to establish intimacy with others leads to a deep sense of isolation. This often sets the stage for later difficulties, (g) Stage 7: Middle adulthood where an interest in guiding the next generation provides emotional balance in mature adulthood, a quality called by Erikson as generativity expressed as caring about oneself, one's children, and future generations. A person's concerns and energies must broaden to include the welfare of others and society as a whole. Failure to do this is marked by a stagnant concern with one's own needs and comforts. Life loses meaning, and the person feels bitter, dreary, and trapped (Friedman, 2004) and (h) Stage 8: Late Adulthood refer to people who have lived richly and responsibly develop a sense of integrity (self-respect) that allows them to face aging and death with dignity. If previous life events are viewed with regret, the elderly person experiences despair (heartache and remorse) and consequently, life seems like a series of missed opportunities. The person feels like a failure and knows it's too late to reverse what has been done. Aging and the threat of death then become sources of fear and depression.

The. Constructivist. Perspective: Jean Piaget's stage theory of cognitive development revolutionized our view of children's thinking and learning while his interest lay in children's knowledge, their thinking, and the qualitative differences in their thinking as it develops. In his view, children "construct" their knowledge by building schemas, or mental models. To Piaget, knowledge grows through processes of assimilation, in which people evaluate and try to understand new information based on their existing knowledge of the world, and accommodation in which they expand and modify their mental models based on new experiences. Piaget hypothesized a sequence of stages of intellectual development which characterize the normal order of levels of understanding through which children progress during their development. Every stage signifies how children per form intellectually. These stages have been categorized as (1) the sensorimotor stage (birth to 2 years); (2) the pre-operational stage (2 to 7 years); (3) concrete operational stage (7 to 11 years); and (4) the stage of formal operations (from 11 or 12 years through adulthood). The ages for each stage are only an estimate because children progress through these stages at their own developmental rate. According to Piaget (1963), individuals advance from one stage of development to the following based on four major influences: maturation, experience, social transmission, and equilibrium or self-regulation. Collectively, these four influences control children's cognitive development. The maturation or educational processes need to be integrated to be effective.

The. Socio_Cultural. Perspective¿ Although Lev Vygotsky was born in the same year as Piaget and was a Russian psychologist interested in how children's thinking developed. He and Piaget both believed in the importance of the child being actively involved in their learning, but Vygotsky differed from Piaget in that his sociocultural theory focused more on social influences and how cultural tools transform one's thinking. Vygotsky did not propose a series of stages like Piaget. Vygotsky thought that learning was a social process. First, children interact with others and then integrate the information they obtain from the social interaction into their mental structure. The children's cultural development emerges at the social level and then at the individual level, which is first between others (interpsychological) and then inside each child (intrapsychological). This process relates similarly to voluntary attention, to logical memory, and to the develop ment of concepts. All the advanced functions originate as actual relationships between individuals. Vygotsky contributed numerous additional important concepts that provide an understanding of children's learning. Possibly the renowned zone of proximal. development (ZPD) is Vygotsky's best concept. According to Vygotsky, it is "the distance between the actual development level (of the learner) as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance, or in collaboration with more capable peers. As children are allowed to stretch their skills and knowledge, often by observing someone who is slightly more advanced than they are, they are able to progressively extend this zone. Scaffolding, on the other hand, refers to temporary supports that more skilled people provide to help children advance in their cognitive and physical skills. This support can be provided in many different ways, such as modeling or asking questions, and is used across different subjects and age groups.

A. Read the text and choose the right answer.

1. What was the main goal of early psychologists in studying children?
A. To improve educational methods for children
B. To uncover the secrets of human behavior by studying its development
C. To develop new psychological therapies for adults
D. To determine the genetic factors affecting children's behavior

2. According to John Locke, what is the mind of the newborn like?
A) It is pre-programmed with innate knowledge.
B) It is a blank slate upon which knowledge is written through experience.
C) It is filled with natural instincts that guide development.
D) It is a passive observer of the environment.

3. How did Rousseau's theory differ from Locke's?
A) Rousseau emphasized the importance of environmental factors.
B) Rousseau believed development is guided by innate processes.
C) Rousseau proposed that children develop purely through social learning.
D) Rousseau was focused on the role of education in development.

4. What is the main idea behind studying major human development thinkers?
A) To create a standardized theory of human growth
B) To understand human behavior across different cultures
C) To help us live and work with others more effectively
D) To prove that human development is strictly biological

5. What concept did Sigmund Freud's psychosexual stages of development focus on?
A) The development of cognitive abilities through childhood
B) The environmental factors shaping personality development
C) The role of social interactions in personality formation
D) The impact of childhood experiences on adult personality

6. What happens if conflicts from Freud's psychosexual stages are unresolved?
A) They lead to greater social success in adulthood.
B) They create fixations that can affect adult behavior.
C) They speed up the progression of development.
D) They have no significant impact on adulthood.

7. How did Erik Erikson expand upon Freud's theory?
A) By focusing only on childhood stages
B) By eliminating psychosexual stages in favor of cognitive stages
C) By including cultural influences and expanding stages to cover the entire lifespan
D) By proposing that personality is fixed after adolescence

8. What is one key characteristic of Erikson's Stage 1 (Infancy)?
A) Development of independence through exploration
B) Formation of trust or mistrust based on care and warmth
C) Achievement of academic and athletic skills
D) Establishment of a stable sense of self and identity

9. What happens during Erikson's Stage 5 (Adolescence)?
A) Children learn to be independent and develop a sense of self.
B) Individuals explore their independence and ask questions like "Who am I?"
C) People establish meaningful relationships with others.
D) Adults focus on guiding future generations through their experiences.

10. What is Erikson's Stage 8 (Late Adulthood) concerned with?
A. Creating a meaningful life through work
B. Finding deep intimacy and relationships with others
C. Helping the next generation achieve success
D. Developing self-respect and facing aging with dignity

11. What does Jean Piaget's theory of cognitive development focus on?
A) The role of social interactions in children's development
B) The stages of intellectual development through which children progress
C) The impact of genetic factors on children's cognitive abilities
D) The emotional development of children throughout their lives

12. According to Piaget, what are the two processes through which children construct knowledge?
A. Assimilation and accommodation
B) Maturation and social transmission
C) Scaffolding and zone of proximal development
D) Identification and introspection

13. What is Piaget's concept of "assimilation"?
A) The process of adjusting one's mental models based on new experiences
B) The process of integrating new information into existing mental schemas
C) The process of learning from social interactions with others
D) The process of achieving balance between learning and development

14. How did Lev Vygotsky's theory differ from Piaget's theory?
A) Vygotsky emphasized the role of social interaction and culture in learning, while Piaget focused on stages of individual cognitive development.
B) Vygotsky believed that children learn passively from their environment, while Piaget argued for active learning.
C) Vygotsky did not believe in the importance of social transmission, unlike Piaget.
D) Vygotsky proposed specific stages of development, while Piaget did not.

15. What is Vygotsky's concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)?
A) The gap between a child's current abilities and their potential abilities when guided by an adult or peer
B) The distance between a child's emotional needs and their cognitive capabilities
C) The difference between independent learning and dependent learning
D) The mental models a child constructs on their own