

Importance of the Early Years of Life

Psychologists of different persuasions agree on the importance of early years, but describe it differently.

- Sigmund Freud
 - Freud's emotional stages:
 - Oral
 - Anal
 - Phallic
- Erik Erikson
 - Erikson's life stages:
 - Basic Trust vs. Basic Mistrust
 - Autonomy vs. Shame and Doubt
 - Initiative vs. Guilt
- Jean Piaget
 - Piaget's intellectual stages:
 - Sensorimotor stage
 - Preoperational stage
- Lev Vygotsky
 - Vygotsky's analysis of the development of language and thought:
 - Natural
 - Naïve
 - External Relations

Contrast of the Piagetian and Vygotskian Views on Development

- They both agreed that development is a joint product of both physical maturation and social-cultural experience.
- Role of environment on cognitive development:
 - Piaget: the environment is relatively passive. Development occurs with a child's active engagement with the environment.
 - Vygotsky: the environment has a tremendously active role.
- Direction of development
 - Piaget: from the egocentric to the social.
 - Vygotsky: from the social to the egocentric.

Areas of Cognitive Development Discussed Within This Video

- **Reasoning**—based on the work of Jean Piaget
 - **Deductive reasoning**—the ability to come to a specific conclusion based on a general premise.
 - Used by adults and older children.
 - Using deductive reasoning, one defines words and similarities with generalities.
 - **Transductive reasoning**—most commonly refers to linking one event to another.
 - Used by young children.

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- Using transductive reasoning, one defines words and similarities based on personal examples.
- Illustrated by charming interviews with young children.
- **Perception**—based on the work of David Elkind
 - Field effects dominate the perceptions of younger children.
 - Younger children do not have sufficient perceptual regulations to allow them to shift their focus from figure to ground, or vice versa.
 - Illustrated by Dr. Elkind presenting abstract drawings to children of various ages.
- **Language Acquisition**—based on the work of Lev Vygotsky
 - Speech and thought have separate developmental paths in early life, and then intertwine.
 - Stages of the relationship of language and thought:
 - *Natural*: During infancy.
 - ♦ Thought is sensorimotor. Early language is not representational, but learned responses to social cues.
 - *Naïve*: During toddlerhood.
 - ♦ Children demand names for things; this is the first real link between thought and language.
 - *External relations*: Starting about age 3–4 and continuing into the early primary school years.
 - ♦ Thinking and speech start to merge.
 - ♦ *Private (egocentric) speech* eventually leads to internal thought.
 - ♦ *External sign/operations* like lists, mnemonic devices, and manipulatives allow children to regulate their own thought.

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Related Films Also Available from Davidson Films

This is one of six films in Davidson Films' "Constructivism" series. The other titles are:

- *Adolescent Cognition* (1999) 30 Minutes
- *Concrete Operations* (1993) 25 Minutes
- *Morality: Judgments And Action* (2002) 31 Minutes
- *Scaffolding Self-Regulated Learning in Primary Classrooms* (1996) 35 Minutes
- *Using What We Know: Applying Piaget's Developmental Theory in Primary Classrooms* (1991) 35 Minutes

Other related films include:

- *Building Literacy Competencies in Early Childhood* (1996) 31 Minutes
- *Erik H. Erikson: A Life's Work* (1991) 38 Minutes
- *How Children Learn* (1997) 23 Minutes
- *Human Brain Development: Nature and Nurture* (2007) 30 Minutes
- *Nourishing Language Development in Early Childhood* (1996) 31 Minutes
- *Play: A Vygotskian Approach:* (1996) 26 Minutes
- *Piaget's Developmental Theory: An Overview* (1989) 25 Minutes
- *Vygotsky's Developmental Theory: An Introduction* (1994) 28 Minutes

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