

## Lev Vygotsky's Social Development Theory

### Social Development Theory Basic Premises :

- Social development theory should focus on underlying processes rather than on surface activities and results, since development activities, policies, strategies, programs and results will always be limited to a specific context and circumstance, whereas social development itself encompasses a potentially infinite field in space and time.
- The theory should recognize the inherent creativity of individuals and of societies by which they fashion instruments and direct their energies to achieve greater results. It should view development as a human creative process, rather than as the product of any combination of external factors or objective instruments that are created and utilized as the process unfolds and whose results are limited to the capacity of the instruments. Society will discover its own creative potentials only when it seeks to know the human being as the real source of those potentials.
- The implication of this view is that even though it may be influenced, aided or opposed by external factors, society develops by its own motive power and in pursuit of its own goals. No external force and agency can develop a society.

### Social Development Theory:

#### 3 Themes and 3 Principles

### Basic Themes of Vygotsky

1. Social interaction plays a fundamental role in the process of cognitive development. In contrast to Jean Piaget's understanding of child development (in which development necessarily precedes learning), Vygotsky felt social learning precedes development. He states: "Every function in the child's cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level, and later, on the individual level; first, between people (inter - psychological) and then inside the child (intra - psychological)." (Vygotsky, 1978).
2. The More Knowledgeable Other (MKO). The MKO refers to anyone who has a better understanding or a higher ability level than the learner, with respect to a particular task, process, or concept. The MKO is normally thought of as being a teacher, coach, or older adult, but the MKO could also be peers, a younger person, or even computers.
3. The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). The ZPD is the distance between a student's ability to perform a task under adult guidance and/or with peer collaboration and the student's ability solving the problem independently. According to Vygotsky, learning occurred in this zone.

### Three Principles:

- Application of the Social Development Theory to Instructional Design
- Instructional Strategies and Their Implementation in Instruction
- The Effectiveness of the Social Development Theory in Achieving Its Goals

## **Description of Three Principles**

### **1. Application of the Social Development Theory to Instructional Design**

- Requires the teacher and students to play untraditional roles as they collaborate with each other.
- Learning becomes a reciprocal experience for the students and teacher.
- The physical classroom would provide clustered desks or tables and work space for peer instruction, collaboration, and small group instruction.
- Thus the classroom becomes a community of learning.

### **2. Instructional Strategies and Their Implementation in Instruction**

- Scaffolding and reciprocal teaching are effective strategies to access the zone of proximal development.
- Scaffolding requires the teacher to provide students the opportunity to extend their current skills and knowledge. The teacher must engage students' interest, simplify tasks so they are manageable, and motivate students to pursue the instructional goal.
- Reciprocal teaching allows for the creation of a dialogue between students and teachers.
- beyond answering questions and engage in the discourse
- The teacher and students alternated turns leading small group discussions on a reading. After modeling four reading strategies, students began to assume the teaching role.

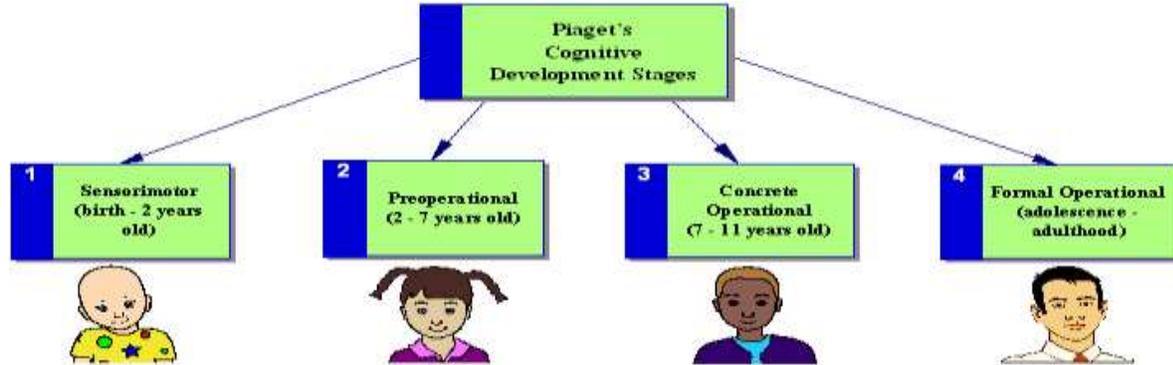
### **3. The Effectiveness of the Social Development Theory in Achieving Its Goals**

- Vygotsky's social development theory challenges traditional teaching methods. Historically, schools have been organized around recitation teaching. The teacher disseminates knowledge to be memorized by the students, who in turn recite the information back to the teacher (Hausfather, 1996).
- By using Social Development, the student and teacher essentially have a shared role. By expressing your ideas and/or to your students and allowing them equal input, reaching goals set will be easily obtainable

### **Making Connections: Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky**

- In education, if we can further cognition through social development, and vice - versa, we are then preparing students for society; which are far bigger than the walls of education. Before we can reach social preparation, we must first find ways to develop social strategies in our schools.
- Vygotsky's Social Development Theory is very similar to Jean Piaget's theory of social development. Where Piaget tried to categorize the development into four stages of cognitive growth: sensory motor, preoperational, concrete operations, and formal operations, Vygotsky implies that social development is so complex, and that it should be studied from birth until death. However, in combination with each, both theories could be utilized to develop a classroom curriculum around.

## Piaget's Cognitive Stages:



### Sensory-motor (Birth-2 yrs)

Differentiates self from objects

Recognizes self as agent of action and begins to act intentionally: e.g. pulls a string to set mobile in motion or shakes a rattle to make a noise

Achieves object permanence: realizes that things continue to exist even when no longer present to the sense (pace Bishop Berkeley)

### Pre-operational (2-7 years)

Learns to use language and to represent objects by images and words

Thinking is still egocentric: has difficulty taking the viewpoint of others

Classifies objects by a single feature: e.g. groups together all the red blocks regardless of shape or all the square blocks regardless of color

### Concrete operational (7-11 years)

Can think logically about objects and events

Achieves conservation of number (age 6), mass (age 7), and weight (age 9)

Classifies objects according to several features and can order them in series along a single dimension such as size.

### Formal operational (11 years and up)

Can think logically about abstract propositions and test hypotheses systematically

Becomes concerned with the hypothetical, the future, and ideological problems

- Notice how Piaget’s cognitive development stages go from pre –school through college.
- As teacher, if we could design our classrooms to stimulate social growth and cognition, we can then prepare them for a society where social interaction is key to survival.

Where Piaget’s theory shows where levels of cognition begin, and what the student’s mind is capable of, when inserting Vygotsky’s theory we can then begin finding ways to achieve stimulated learning around social development.

### Activities to Learn and Discuss

#### **Activity #1: Breaking down the Themes and Principles**

##### **Group 1: Discuss First Theme and Principle**

- Social interaction plays a fundamental role in the process of cognitive development. In contrast to Jean Piaget’s understanding of child development (in which development necessarily precedes learning), Vygotsky felt social learning precedes development. He states: “Every function in the child’s cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level, and later, on the individual level; first, between people (inter - psychological) and then inside the child (intra - psychological).”

##### **Instructional Strategies and Their Implementation in Instruction**

- Scaffolding and reciprocal teaching are effective strategies to access the zone of proximal development.
- Scaffolding requires the teacher to provide students the opportunity to extend their current skills and knowledge. The teacher must engage students' interest, simplify tasks so they are manageable, and motivate students to pursue the instructional goal.
- Reciprocal teaching allows for the creation of a dialogue between students and teachers. beyond answering questions and engage in the discourse
- The teacher and students alternated turns leading small group discussions on a reading. After modeling four reading strategies, students began to assume the teaching role.

##### **Group 2: Discuss Second Theme and Principle**

- The **More Knowledgeable Other (MKO)**. The MKO refers to anyone who has a better understanding or a higher ability level than the learner, with respect to a particular task, process, or concept. The MKO is normally thought of as being a teacher, coach, or older adult, but the MKO could also be peers, a younger person, or even computers.

##### **Application of the Social Development Theory to Instructional Design and Principle**

- Requires the teacher and students to play untraditional roles as they collaborate with each other.
- Learning becomes a reciprocal experience for the students and teacher.
- The physical classroom would provide clustered desks or tables and work space for peer instruction, collaboration, and small group instruction.
- Thus the classroom becomes a community of learning.

### **Group 3: Discuss Third Theme**

The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). The ZPD is the distance between a student's ability to perform a task under adult guidance and/or with peer collaboration and the student's ability solving the problem independently. According to Vygotsky, learning occurred in this zone.

#### **The Effectiveness of the Social Development Theory in Achieving Its Goals**

- Vygotsky's social development theory challenges traditional teaching methods. Historically, schools have been organized around recitation teaching. The teacher disseminates knowledge to be memorized by the students, who in turn recite the information back to the teacher (Hausfather, 1996).
- By using Social Development, the student and teacher essentially have a shared role. By expressing your ideas and/or to your students and allowing them equal input, reaching goals set will be easily obtainable

### **Introduction of Jean Piaget**

#### **Activity #2 Piaget's Cognitive Stages: Compare to Vygotsky and how the Cognitive Stages in comparison to Piaget**

**\*Can we categorize the cognitive stages to that of how education is designed?**

#### **Group 1: Discuss Second Stage**

- Learns to use language and to represent objects by images and words
- Thinking is still egocentric: has difficulty taking the viewpoint of others
- Classifies objects by a single feature: e.g. groups together all the red blocks regardless of shape or all the square blocks regardless of color.

#### **Group 2: Discuss Third Stage**

- Can think logically about objects and events
- Achieves conservation of number (age 6), mass (age7), and weight (age 9) Classifies objects according to several features and can order them in series along a single dimension such as size.

#### **Group 3: Discuss Fourth Stage**

- Can think logically about abstract propositions and test hypotheses systematically
- Becomes concerned with the hypothetical, the future, and ideological problems

## Application: Implementing Vygotsky's and Piaget's theories

### Activity # 3 Role Play: Finding ways to implement Social Development in Marching and Concert Band

Pick out from each group a leader – They will assume the role of section leader in the marching band. All others will assume the role of student.

#### Marching Band

Method # 1:

- Assigned tasks for the leaders to focus on during rehearsal
  1. Group one focus : Marking time – One inch off the ground, while keeping the upper body still
  2. Group Two focus: Step offs and arrivals – know when step off is, and know how many steps there are between charts
  3. Group Three focuses: Playing in tune, and with tone – Tune up as a section. Don't over blow, and use proper air support as you play. Listen around you to make sure you are playing within your section, then within the band
- Have the leaders report back and teach the other student, the information I gave them
- Ask the others to how informative the delivery was

Method # 2:

- Assigned the leaders two different groups and have them teach the same methods within their new groups

The idea is to have the students become teachers with me in close proximity to facilitate and help out with any question. By stepping back and letting the students utilize their social skills to teach their peers, they have now had to process what they have learned, and put into a manner of how to teach it. By doing this more and more, as the students in your program, grow so to will their social ability, developing well rounded students.

#### Concert Band

It seems that when the marching season is over, we shy away from utilizing leaders. Now, the idea is we have our first chairs players, who are viewed as being leaders, but the idea of how interactions between individuals change. If we can implement the same idea of students becoming the teachers on the day we have sectionals...imagine the social and cognitive development students could gain?

**Method # 1:**

- Assigned tasks for the leaders to focus on during rehearsal
  4. Group one focus : different types of phrasing, two, four, eight. When to breathe during a phrase.
  5. Group Two focus: Rhythmic accuracy. Break down certain passages by clapping. Playing slow then fast.
  6. Group Three focus: Dynamics. Following the natural contour of the line, and really pay attention to the implied dynamics.
- Have the leaders report back and teach the other student, the information I gave them
- Ask the others to how informative the delivery was

**Method # 2:**

- Again, assign the leaders two different groups and have them teach the same methods within their new groups

### **Further Readings**

**bell Hooks** – *Teaching to Transgress*

**Carol Rogers** - *Freedom to Learn*

**John Dewey** – *Freedom to Learn*

**Theodore Brameld** - *The Use of Explosive Ideas in Education Culture, Class, and Evolution*

### **Bibliography**