**Lesson Two: Developmental Theories**

**Sigmund Freud**

**Objectives: At the end of this lesson, you will be able to**

**1.    Define theory.**

**2.    Describe Freud's theory of psychosexual development.**

**3.    Identify the parts of the self in Freud's model.**

**4.    List five defense mechanisms.**

**5.    Describe five defense mechanisms.**

**6.    Appraise the strengths and weaknesses of Freud's theory.**

**7.    List Erikson's eight stages of psychosocial development.**

**8.    Apply Erikson's stages to examples of people in various stages of the lifespan.**

**9.    Appraise the strengths and weaknesses of Erikson's theory of psychosocial development.**

**10.Compare and contrast Freud and Erikson's theories of human development.**

**11.Describe the principles of classical conditioning.**

**12.Identify unconditioned stimulus, conditioned stimulus, unconditioned response, and conditioned response in classical conditioning.**

**13.Describe the principles of operant conditioning.**

**14.Identify positive and negative reinforcement, and primary and secondary reinforcement.**

**15.Contrast reinforcement and punishment.**

**16.Contrast classical and operant conditioning and the kinds of behaviors learned in each.**

**17.Describe social learning theory.**

**18.Describe Piaget's theory of cognitive development.**

**19.Define schema, assimilation, accommodation, and cognitive equilibrium.**

**20.List Piaget's stages of cognitive development.**

**21.Describe Piaget's stages of cognitive development.**

**22.Critique Piaget's theory of cognitive development.**

**23.Describe Vygotsky's sociocultural theory of cognitive development.**

**24.Explain what is meant by the zone of proximal development.**

**25.Explain guided participation.**

**26.Describe scaffolding.**

**27.Compare Piaget and Vygotsky's models of cognitive development.**

**28.Describe Bronfenbrenner’s ecological systems model.**

**The objectives are indicated by the reading sections below.**

**What is a theory? (Ob1)**

**Students sometimes feel intimidated by theory; even the phrase, “Now we are going to look at some theories . . .” is met with blank stares and other indications that the audience is now lost. But theories are valuable tools for understanding human behavior; if fact they are proposed explanations for the “how” and “whys” of development. Have you ever wondered, “Why is my 3 year old so inquisitive?” or “Why are some fifth graders rejected by their classmates?” Theories can help explain these and other occurrences. Developmental theories offer explanations about how we develop, why we change over time and the kinds of influences that impact development.**

**A theory guides and helps us interpret research findings as well. It provides the researcher with a blueprint or model to be used to help piece together various studies. Think of theories are guidelines much like directions that come with an appliance or other object that required assembly. The instructions can help one piece together smaller parts more easily than if trial and error are used.**

**Theories can be developed using induction in which a number of single cases are observed and after patterns or similarities are noted, the theorist develops ideas based on these examples. Established theories are then tested through research; however, not all theories are equally suited to scientific investigation.  Some theories are difficult to test but are still useful in stimulating debate or providing concepts that have practical application.  Keep in mind that theories are not facts; they are guidelines for investigation and practice, and they gain credibility through research that fails to disprove them.**

**Why do we do what we do? Exploring Motivation**

**Freud’s Psychodynamic Theory (Ob2)**

**We begin with the often controversial figure, Sigmund Freud. Freud has been a very influential figure in the area of development; his view of development and psychopathology dominated the field of psychiatry until the growth of behaviorism in the 1950s. His assumptions that personality forms during the first few years of life and that the ways in which parents or other caregivers interact with children have a long-lasting impact on children’s emotional states have guided parents, educators, clinicians, and policy-makers for many years. We have only recently begun to recognize that early childhood experiences do not always result in certain personality traits or emotional states. There is a growing body of literature addressing resiliency in children who come from harsh backgrounds and yet develop without damaging emotional scars (O'Grady and Metz, 1987). Freud has stimulated an enormous amount of research and generated many ideas. Agreeing with Freud’s theory in its entirety is hardly necessary for appreciating the contribution he has made to the field of development.**

**Background**

**Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) was a Viennese M. D. who was trained in neurology and asked to work with patients suffering from hysteria, a conditioned marked my uncontrollable emotional outbursts, fears and anxiety that had puzzled physicians for centuries. He was also asked to work with women who suffered from physical symptoms and forms of paralysis which had no organic causes. During that time, many people believed that certain individuals were genetically inferior and thus more susceptible to mental illness. Women were thought to be genetically inferior and thus prone to illnesses such as hysteria (which had previously been attributed to a detached womb which was traveling around in the body). However, after World War I, many soldiers came home with problems similar to hysteria. This called into questions the idea of genetic inferiority as a cause of mental illness.  Freud began working with hysterical patients and discovered that when they began to talk about some of their life experiences, particularly those that took place in early childhood, their symptoms disappeared. This led him to suggest the first purely psychological explanation for physical problems and mental illness. What he proposed was that unconscious motives and desires, fears and anxieties drive our actions. When upsetting memories or thoughts begin to find their way into our consciousness, we develop defenses to shield us from these painful realities. These defense mechanisms include denying a reality, repressing or pushing away painful thoughts, rationalization or finding a seemingly logical explanation for circumstances, projecting or attributing our feelings to someone else, or outwardly opposing something we inwardly desire (called reaction formation). Freud believed that many mental illnesses are a result of a person’s inability to accept reality. Freud emphasized the importance of early childhood experiences in shaping our personality and behavior. In our natural state, we are biological beings. We are driven primarily by instincts. During childhood, however, we begin to become social beings as we learn how to manage our instincts and transform them into socially acceptable behaviors. The type of parenting the child receives has a very power impact on the child’s personality development. We will explore this idea further in our discussion of psychosexual development.**

**Theory of the mind**

**Freud believed that most of our mental processes, motivations and desires are outside of our awareness. Our consciousness, that of which we are aware, represents only the tip of the iceberg that comprises our mental state. The preconscious represents that which can easily be called into the conscious mind. During development, our motivations and desires are gradually pushed into the unconscious because raw desires are often unacceptable in society.**

**Theory of the self (Ob3, Ob4, Ob5)**

**As adults, our personality or self consists of three main parts: the id, the ego and the superego. The ID is the part of the self with which we are born. It consists of the biologically-driven self and includes our instincts and drives. It is the part of us that wants immediate gratification. Later in life, it comes to house our deepest, often unacceptable desires such as sex and aggression. It operates under the pleasure principle which means that the criteria for determining whether something is good or bad is whether it feels good or bad. An infant is all ID.The ego is the part of the self that develops as we learn that there are limits on what is acceptable to do and that often, we must wait to have our needs satisfied. This part of the self is realistic and reasonable. It knows how to make compromises. It operates under the reality principle or the recognition that sometimes need gratification must be postponed for practical reasons. It acts as a mediator between the Id and the Superego and is viewed as the healthiest part of the self.**

**Defense mechanisms emerge to help a person distort reality so that the truth is less painful. Defense mechanisms include repression which means to push the painful thoughts out of consciousness (in other words, think about something else). Denial is basically not accepting the truth or lying to the self. Thoughts such as “it won’t happen to me” or “you’re not leaving” or “I don’t have a problem with alcohol” are examples. Regression refers to going back to a time when the world felt like a safer place, perhaps reverting to one’s childhood. This is less common than the first two defense mechanisms. Sublimation involves transforming unacceptable urges into more socially acceptable behaviors. For example, a teenager who experiences strong sexual urges uses exercise to redirect those urges into more socially acceptable behavior. Displacement involves taking out frustrations on to a safer target. A person who is angry at a boss may take out their frustration at others when driving home or at a spouse upon arrival. Projection is a defense mechanism in which a person attributes their unacceptable thoughts onto others. If someone is frightened, for example, he or she accuses someone else of being afraid. Finally, reaction formation is a defense mechanism in which a person outwardly opposes something they inwardly desire, but that they find unacceptable. An example of this might be homophobia or a strong hatred and fear of homosexuality. This is a partial listing of defense mechanisms suggested by Freud. If the ego is strong, the individual is realistic and accepting of reality and remains more logical, objective, and reasonable. Building ego strength is a major goal of psychoanalysis (Freudian psychotherapy). So for Freud, having a big ego is a good thing because it does not refer to being arrogant, it refers to being able to accept reality.**

**The superego is the part of the self that develops as we learn the rules, standards, and values of society. This part of the self takes into account the moral guidelines that are a part of our culture. It is a rule-governed part of the self that operates under a sense of guilt (guilt is a social emotion-it is a feeling that others think less of you or believe you to be wrong). If a person violates the superego, he or she feels guilty. The superego is useful but can be too strong; in this case, a person might feel overly anxious and guilty about circumstances over which they had no control. Such a person may experience high levels of stress and inhibition that keeps them from living well. The id is inborn, but the ego and superego develop during the course of our early interactions with others. These interactions occur against a backdrop of learning to resolve early biological and social challenges and play a key role in our personality development.**

**Psychosexual stages (Ob2)**

**Freud’s psychosexual stages of development are presented below. At any of these stages, the child might become “stuck” or fixated if a caregiver either overly indulges or neglects the child’s needs. A fixated adult will continue to try and resolve this later in life. Examples of fixation are given after the presentation of each stage.**

**For about the first year of life, the infant is in the oral stage of psychosexual development. The infant meets needs primarily through oral gratification. A baby wishes to suck or chew on any object that comes close to the mouth. Babies explore the world through the mouth and find comfort and stimulation as well. Psychologically, the infant is all Id. The infant seeks immediate gratification of needs such as comfort, warmth, food, and stimulation. If the caregiver meets oral needs consistently, the child will move away from this stage and progress further. However, if the caregiver is inconsistent or neglectful, the person may stay stuck in the oral stage. As an adult, the person might not feel good unless involved in some oral activity such as eating, drinking, smoking, nail-biting, or compulsive talking. These actions bring comfort and security when the person feels insecure, afraid, or bored.**

**During the anal stage which coincides with toddlerhood or mobility and potty-training, the child is taught that some urges must be contained and some actions postponed. There are rules about certain functions and when and where they are to be carried out. The child is learning a sense of self-control. The ego is being developed.  If the caregiver is extremely controlling about potty training (stands over the child waiting for the smallest indication that the child might need to go to the potty and immediately scoops the child up and places him on the potty chair, for example), the child may grow up fearing losing control. He may becoming fixated in this stage or “anal retentive”-fearful of letting go. Such a person might be extremely neat and clean, organized, reliable, and controlling of others. If the caregiver neglects to teach the child to control urges, he may grow up to be “anal expulsive” or an adult who is messy, irresponsible, and disorganized.**

**The Phallic stage occurs during the preschool years (ages 3-5) when the child has a new biological challenge to face. Freud believed that the child becomes sexually attracted to his or her opposite sexed parent. Boys experience the "Oedipal Complex" in which they become sexually attracted to their mothers but realize that Father is in the way. He is much more powerful. For awhile, the boy fears that if he pursues his mother, father may castrate him (castration anxiety). So rather than risking losing his penis, he gives up his affections for his mother and instead learns to become more like his father, imitating his actions and mannerisms and thereby learns the role of males in his society. From this experience, the boy learns a sense of masculinity. He also learns what society thinks he should do and experiences guilt if he does not comply. In this way, the superego develops. If he does not resolve this successfully, he may become a "phallic male" or a man who constantly tries to prove his masculinity (about which he is insecure) by seducing women and beating up men! A little girl experiences the "Electra Complex" in which she develops an attraction for her father but realizes that she cannot compete with mother and so gives up that affection and learns to become more like her mother. This is not without some regret, however. Freud believed that the girl feels inferior because she does not have a penis (experiences "penis envy"). But she must resign herself to the fact that she is female and will just have to learn her inferior role in society as a female.  However, if she does not resolve this conflict successfully, she may have a weak sense of femininity and grow up to be a "castrating female" who tries to compete with men in the workplace or in other areas of life.**

**During middle childhood (6-11), the child enters the latent stage focusing his or her attention outside the family and toward friendships. The biological drives are temporarily quieted (latent) and the child can direct attention to a larger world of friends. If the child is able to make friends, he or she will gain a sense of confidence. If not, the child may continue to be a loner or shy away from others, even as an adult.**

**The final stage of psychosexual development is referred to as the genital stage. From adolescence throughout adulthood a person is preoccupied with sex and reproduction.  The adolescent experiences rising hormone levels and the sex drive and hunger drives become very strong. Ideally, the adolescent will rely on the ego to help think logically through these urges without taking actions that might be damaging. An adolescent might learn to redirect their sexual urges into safer activity such as running, for example. Quieting the Id with the Superego can lead to feeling overly self-conscious and guilty about these urges. Hopefully, it is the ego that is strengthened during this stage and the adolescent uses reason to manage urges.**

**Strengths and Weaknesses of Freud’s theory (Ob6)**

**Freud’s theory has been heavily criticized for several reasons. One is that it is very difficult to test scientifically. How can parenting in infancy be traced to personality in adulthood? Are there other variables that might better explain development? The theory is also considered to be sexist in suggesting that women who do not accept an inferior position in society are somehow psychologically flawed. Freud focuses on the darker side of human nature and suggests that much of what determines our actions is unknown to us. So why do we study Freud? As mentioned above, despite the criticisms, Freud’s assumptions about the importance of early childhood experiences in shaping our psychological selves have found their way into child development, education, and parenting practices. Freud’s theory has heuristic value in providing a framework from which elaborate and modify subsequent theories of development. Many later theories, particularly behaviorism and humanism, were challenges to Freud’s views.**

**Erikson and Psychosocial Theory**

**[](http://angel.southseattle.edu/AngelUploads/Files/9cc63e02-ff82-4004-a25e-7d194b7ce500/Erik_Erikson.png)**

**Now, let's turn to a less controversial psychodynamic theorist, the father of developmental psychology, Erik Erikson.**

**The Ego Rules (Ob7, Ob8, Ob 9, Ob10)**

**Erik Erikson (1902-1994) was a student of Freud’s and expanded on his theory of psychosexual development by emphasizing the importance of culture in parenting practices and motivations and adding three stages of adult development (Erikson, 1950; 1968). He believed that we are aware of what motivates us throughout life and the ego has greater importance in guiding our actions than does the Id. We make conscious choices in life and these choices focus on meeting certain social and cultural needs rather than purely biological ones. Humans are motivated, for instance, by the need to feel that the world is a trustworthy place, that we are capable individuals, that we can make a contribution to society, and that we have lived a meaningful life. These are all psychosocial problems. Erikson divided the life span into eight stages. In each stage, we have a major psychosocial task to accomplish or crisis to overcome.  Erikson believed that our personality continues to take shape throughout our life span as we face these challenges in living.  We will discuss each of these stages in length as we explore each period of the life span, but here is a brief overview:**

**Psychosocial Stages  1) Trust vs. mistrust (0-1): the infant must have basic needs met in a consistent way in order to feel that the world is a trustworthy place**

**2) Autonomy vs. shame and doubt (1-2): mobile toddlers have newfound freedom they like to exercise and by being allowed to do so, they learn some basic independence**

**3) Initiative vs. Guilt (3-5): preschoolers like to initiate activities and emphasize doing things "all by myself"**

**4) Industry vs. inferiority (6-11): school aged children focus on accomplishments and begin making comparisons between themselves and their classmates**

**5) Identity vs. role confusion (adolescence): teenagers are trying to gain a sense of identity as they experiment with various roles, beliefs, and ideas**

**6) Intimacy vs. Isolation (young adulthood): in our 20s and 30s we are making some of our first long-term commitments in intimate relationships**

**7) Generativity vs. stagnation (middle adulthood): the 40s through the early 60s we focus on being productive at work and home and are motivated by wanting to feel that we've made a contribution to society**

**8) Integrity vs. Despair (late adulthood): we look back on our lives and hope to like what we see-that we have lived well and have a sense of integrity because we lived according to our beliefs.**

**These eight stages form a foundation for discussions on emotional and social development during the life span. Keep in mind, however, that these stages or crises can occur more than once. For instance, a person may struggle with a lack of trust beyond infancy under certain circumstances. Erikson’s theory has been criticized for focusing so heavily on stages and assuming that the completion of one stage is prerequisite for the next crisis of development. His theory also focuses on the social expectations that are found in certain cultures, but not in all. For instance, the idea that adolescence is a time of searching for identity might translate well in the middle-class culture of the United States, but not as well in cultures where the transition into adulthood coincides with puberty through rites of passage and where adult roles offer fewer choices.**

**How do we act? Exploring behavior**

**Learning theories focus on how we respond to events or stimuli rather than emphasizing what motivates our actions. These theories provide an explanation of how experience can change what we are capable of doing or feeling.**

**Classical Conditioning and Emotional Responses (Ob11, Ob12)**

**Classical Conditioning theory helps us to understand how our responses to one situation become attached to new situations. For example, a smell might remind us of a time when we were a kid (elementary school cafeterias smell like milk and mildew!). If you went to a new cafeteria with the same smell, it might evoke feelings you had when you were in school. Or a song on the radio might remind you of a memorable evening you spent with your first true love. Or, if you hear your entire name (John Wilmington Brewer, for instance) called as you walk across the stage to get your diploma and it makes you tense because it reminds you of how your father used to use your full name when he was mad at you, you've been classically conditioned!**

**Classical conditioning explains how we develop many of our emotional responses to people or events or our "gut level" reactions to situations. New situations may bring about an old response because the two have become connected. Attachments form in this way. Addictions are affected by classical conditioning, as anyone who's tried to quit smoking can tell you. When you try to quit, everything that was associated with smoking makes you crave a cigarette.**

**Pavlov (Ob 12)**

**[](http://angel.southseattle.edu/AngelUploads/Files/9cc63e02-ff82-4004-a25e-7d194b7ce500/Ivan_Pavlov_%28Nobel%29.png)**

**Ivan Pavlov (1880-1937) was a Russian physiologist interested in studying digestion. As he recorded the amount of salivation his laboratory dogs produced as they ate, he noticed that they actually began to salivate before the food arrived as the researcher walked down the hall and toward the cage. "This," he thought, "is not natural!" One would expect a dog to automatically salivate when food hit their palate, but BEFORE the food comes? Of course, what had happened was . . . you tell me. That's right! The dogs knew that the food was coming because they had learned to associate the footsteps with the food. The key word here is "learned". A learned response is called a "conditioned" response. Pavlov began to experiment with this "psychic" reflex. He began to ring a bell, for instance, prior to introducing the food. Sure enough, after making this connection several times, the dogs could be made to salivate to the sound of a bell. Once the bell had become an event to which the dogs had learned to salivate, it was called a conditioned stimulus. The act of salivating to a bell was a response that had also been learned, now termed in Pavlov's jargon, a conditioned response. Notice that the response, salivation, is the same whether it is conditioned or unconditioned (unlearned or natural). What changed is the stimulus to which the dog salivates. One is natural (unconditioned) and one is learned (conditioned). Well, enough of Pavlov's dogs. Who cares? Let's think about how classical conditioning is used on us. One of the most widespread applications of classical conditioning principles was brought to us by the psychologist, John B. Watson.**

**Watson and Behaviorism**

**Watch the following youtube for background on Watson.  Notice how he was introducing learning rather than heredity as the explanation for why we are the way we are.**

**Watson believed that most of our fears and other emotional responses are classically conditioned. He had gained a good deal of popularity in the 1920s with his expert advice on parenting offered to the public. He believed that parents could be taught to help shape their children's behavior and tried to demonstrate the power of classical conditioning with his famous experiment with an 18 month old boy named "Little Albert". Watson sat Albert down and introduced a variety of seemingly scary objects to him: a burning piece of newspaper, a white rat, etc. But Albert remained curious and reached for all of these things. Watson knew that one of our only inborn fears is the fear of loud noises so he proceeded to make a loud noise each time he introduced one of Albert's favorites, a white rat. After hearing the loud noise several times paired with the rat, Albert soon came to fear the rat and began to cry when it was introduced. Watson filmed this experiment for posterity and used it to demonstrate that he could help parents achieve any outcomes they desired, if they would only follow his advice. Watson wrote columns in newspapers and in magazines and gained a lot of popularity among parents eager to apply science to household order. Parenting advice was not the legacy Watson left us, however. Where he really made his impact was in advertising. After Watson left academia, he went into the world of business and showed companies how to tie something that brings about a natural positive feeling to their products to enhance sales. Thus the union of sex and advertising! So, let's use a much more interesting example than Pavlov's dogs to check and see if you understand the difference between conditioned and unconditioned stimuli and responses. In the experiment with Little Albert, identify the unconditioned stimulus, the unconditioned response, and, after conditioning, the conditioned stimulus and the conditioned response.**

**Operant Conditioning and Repeating Actions (Ob 13, Ob14, Ob 16)**

**Operant Conditioning is another learning theory that emphasizes a more conscious type of learning than that of classical conditioning. A person (or animal) does something (operates something) to see what effect it might bring. Simply said, operant conditioning describes how we repeat behaviors because they pay off for us. It is based on a principle authored by a psychologist named Thorndike (1874-1949) called the law of effect. The law of effect suggest that we will repeat an action if it is followed by a good effect.**

**Skinner and Reinforcement**

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**B. F. Skinner (1950)**

**(Source Wikipedia)**

**Watch a pidgeon learn through reinforcement**

**B.F. Skinner (1904-1990) continued the expanded on Thorndike's principle and outlined the principles of operant conditioning. Skinner believed that we learn best when our actions are reinforced. For example, a child who cleans his room and is reinforced (rewarded) with a big hug and words of praise is more likely to clean it again than a child whose deed goes unnoticed.Skinner believed that almost anything could be reinforcing. A reinforcer is anything following a behavior that makes it more likely to occur again. It can be something intrinsically rewarding (called intrinsic or primary reinforcers), such as food or praise, or it can be something that is rewarding because it can be exchanged for what one really wants (such as using money to buy a cookie). Such reinforcers are referred to as secondary reinforcers or extrinsic reinforcers.**

**Positive and negative reinforcement (Ob 15)**

**Sometimes, adding something to the situation is reinforcing as in the cases we described above with cookies, praise and money. Positive reinforcement involves adding something to the situation in order to encourage a behavior. Other times, taking something away from a situation can be reinforcing. For example, the loud, annoying buzzer on your alarm clock encourages you to get up so that you can turn it off and get rid of the noise. Children whine in order to get their parents to do something and often, parents give in just to stop the whining. In these instances, negative reinforcement has been used.**

**Operant conditioning tends to work best if you focus on trying to encourage a behavior or move a person into the direction you want them to go rather than telling them what not to do. Reinforcers are used to encourage a behavior; punishers are used to stop behavior. A punisher is anything that follows an act and decreases the chance it will reoccur. But often a punished behavior doesn't really go away. It is just suppressed and may reoccur whenever the threat of punishment is removed. For example, a child may not cuss around you because you've washed his mouth out with soap, but he may cuss around his friends. Or a motorist may only slow down when the trooper is on the side of the freeway. Another problem with punishment is that when a person focuses on punishment, they may find it hard to see what the other does right or well. And punishment is stigmatizing; when punished, some start to see themselves as bad and give up trying to change.**

**Reinforcement can occur in a predictable way, such as after every desired action is performed, or intermittently, after the behavior is performed a number of times or the first time it is performed after a certain amount of time.   The schedule of reinforcement has an impact on how long a behavior continues after reinforcement is discontinued. So a parent who has rewarded a child’s actions each time may find that the child gives up very quickly if a reward is not immediately forthcoming. A lover who is warmly regarded now and then may continue to seek out his or her partner’s attention long after the partner has tried to break up. Think about the kinds of behaviors you may have learned through classical and operant conditioning. You may have learned many things in this way.  But sometimes we learn very complex behaviors quickly and without direct reinforcement.  Bandura explains how.**

**Social Learning Theory (Ob17)**

**Albert Bandura is a leading contributor to social learning theory. He calls our attention to the ways in which many of our actions are not learned through conditioning; rather, they are learned by watching others (1977). Young children frequently learn behaviors through imitation. Sometimes, particularly when we do not know what else to do, we learn by modeling or copying the behavior of others. An employee on his or her first day of a new job might eagerly look at how others are acting and try to act the same way to fit in more quickly. Adolescents struggling with their identity rely heavily on their peers to act as role-models. Newly married couples often rely on roles they may have learned from their parents and begin to act in ways they did not while dating and then wonder why their relationship has changed. Sometimes we do things because we've seen it pay off for someone else. They were operantly conditioned, but we engage in the behavior because we hope it will pay off for us as well. This is referred to as vicarious reinforcement (Bandura, Ross and Ross, 1963).**

**Do parents socialize children or do children socialize parents?**

**Bandura (1986) suggests that there is interplay between the environment and the individual. We are not just the product of our surroundings, rather we influence our surroundings. There is interplay between our personality and the way we interpret events and how they influence us. This concept is called reciprocal determinism. An example of this might be the interplay between parents and children. Parents not only influence their child's environment, perhaps intentionally through the use of reinforcement, etc., but children influence parents as well.  Parents may respond differently with their first child than with their fourth. Perhaps they try to be the perfect parents with their firstborn, but by the time their last child comes along they have very different expectations both of themselves and their child. Our environment creates us and we create our environment. Other social influences: TV or not TV?   Bandura (et als. 1963) began a series of studies to look at the impact of television, particularly commercials, have on the behavior of children. Are children more likely to act out aggressively when they see this behavior modeled? What if they see it being reinforced?  Bandura began by conducting an experiment in which he showed children a film of a woman hitting an inflatable clown or “bobo” doll. Then the children were allowed in the room where they found the doll and immediately began to hit it. This was without any reinforcement whatsoever. Later they viewed a woman hitting a real clown and sure enough, when allowed in the room, they too began to hit the clown!   Not onlyl that, but they found new ways to behave aggressively.  It's as if they learned an aggressive role.**

**Watch the experiment**

**Children view far more television today than in the 1960s; so much, in fact, that they have been referred to as Generation M (media). Based on a study of a national representative sample of over 7,000 8-18 year olds, the Kaiser Foundation reports that children spend just over 8 hours a day involved with media outside of schoolwork. This includes almost 4 hours of television viewing and over an hour on the computer. Two-thirds have television in their room and those children watch an average of 1.27 hours more of television per day than those do not have television in their bedroom (Kaiser Family Foundation, 2005). The prevalence of violence, sexual content, and messages promoting foods high in fat and sugar in the media are certainly cause for concern and the subjects of ongoing research and policy review.   Many children spend even more time on the computer viewing content from the internet.  And the amount of time spent connected to the internet continues to increase with the use of smart phones that essentially serve as mini-computers.  What are the implications of this?**

**What do we think?**

**Exploring Cognition**

**Cognitive theories focus on how our mental processes or cognitions change over time. We will examine the ideas of two cognitive theorists: Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky.**

**Piaget: Changes in thought with maturation (Ob18)**

**Jean Piaget (1896-1980) is one of the most influential cognitive theorists in development inspired to explore children’s ability to think and reason by watching his own children’s development. He was one of the first to recognize and map out the ways in which children's intelligence differs from that of adults. He became interested in this area when he was asked to test the IQ of children and began to notice that there was a pattern in their wrong answers! He believed that children's intellectual skills change over time that that maturation rather than training brings about that change. Children of differing ages interpret the world differently.**

**Making sense of the world (Ob19)**

**Piaget believed that we are continuously trying to maintain cognitive equilibrium or a balance or cohesiveness in what we see and what we know. Children have much more of a challenge in maintaining this balance because they are constantly being confronted with new situations, new words, new objects, etc. When faced with something new, a child may either fit it into an existing framework (schema) and match it with something known (assimilation) such as calling all animals with four legs "doggies" because he or she knows the word doggie, or expand the framework of knowledge to accommodate the new situation (accommodation) by learning a new word to more accurately name the animal. This is the underlying dynamic in our own cognition. Even as adults we continue to try and "make sense" of new situations by determining whether they fit into our old way of thinking or whether we need to modify our thoughts.**

**Stages of Cognitive Development (Ob20, Ob21)**

**Piaget outlined four major stages of cognitive development. Let me briefly mention them here. We will discuss them in detail throughout the course.For about the first two years of life, the child experiences the world primarily through their senses and motor skills. Piaget referred to this type of intelligence as sensorimotor intelligence. During the preschool years, the child begins to master the use of symbols or words and is able to think of the world symbolically but not yet logically. This stage is the preoperational stage of development. The concrete operational stage in middle childhood is marked by an ability to use logic in understanding the physical world. In the final stage, the formal operational stage the adolescent learns to think abstractly and to use logic in both concrete and abstract ways.**

**Criticisms of Piaget’s Theory (Ob22)**

**Piaget has been criticized for overemphasizing the role that physical maturation plays in cognitive development and in underestimating the role that culture and interaction (or experience) plays in cognitive development. Looking across cultures reveals considerable variation in what children are able to do at various ages. Piaget may have underestimated what children are capable of given the right circumstances.**

**Vygotsky: Changes in thought with guidance (Ob23, 24, 25, 26, 27)**

**Lev Vygotsky (1896-1934) was a Russian psychologist who wrote in the early 1900s but whose work was discovered in the United States in the 1960s but became more widely known in the 1980s.   Vygotsky differed with Piaget in that he believed that a person not only has a set of abilities, but also a set of potential abilities that can be realized if given the proper guidance from others. His sociocultural theory emphasizes the importance of culture and interaction in the development of cognitive abilities.  He believed that through guided participation known as scaffolding, with a teacher or capable peer, a child can learn cognitive skills within a certain range known as the zone of proximal development. Have you ever taught a child to perform a task? Maybe it was brushing their teeth or preparing food. Chances are you spoke to them and described what you were doing while you demonstrated the skill and let them work along with you all through the process. You gave them assistance when they seemed to need it, but once they knew what to do-you stood back and let them go. This is scaffolding and can be seen demonstrated throughout the world. This approach to teaching has also been adopted by educators. Rather than assessing students on what they are doing, they should be understood in terms of what they are capable of doing with the proper guidance.  You can see how Vygotsky would be very popular with modern day educators. We will discuss Vygotsky in greater depth in upcoming lessons.**

**Putting it all together: Ecological Systems Model (Ob28)**

**Urie Brofenbrenner (1917-2005) provides a model of human development that addresses its many influences. Brofenbrenner recognized that human interaction is influenced by larger social forces and that an understanding of those forces is essential for understanding an individual. The individual is impacted by microsystems such as parents or siblings; those who have direct, significant contact with the person. The input of those is modified by the cognitive and biological state of the individual as well. And these influence the person’s actions which in turn influence systems operating on him or her. The mesosystem includes larger organizational structures such as school, the family, or religion. These institutions impact the microsystems just described. For example, the religious teachings and traditions may guide the child’s family’s actions or create a climate that makes the family feel stigmatized and this indirectly impacts the child’s view of self and others. The philosophy of the school system, daily routine, assessment methods, and other characteristics can affect the child’s self-image, growth, sense of accomplishment, and schedule thereby impacting the child, physically, cognitively, and emotionally. These mesosystems both influence and are influenced by the larger contexts of community referred to as the exosystem. A community’s values, history, and economy can impact the organizational structures it houses. And the community is influenced by macrosystems which are cultural elements such as global economic conditions, war, technological trends, values, philosophies, and a society’s responses to the global community. In sum, a child’s experiences are shaped by larger forces such as the family, schools, and religion, and culture. All of this occurs in an historical context or chronosystem. Bronfenbrenner’s model helps us combine each of the other theories described above and gives us a perspective that brings it all together.**

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