NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA

COURSE CODE : ECE 120

COURSE TITLE :
DEVELOPMENT OF APPROPRIATE SKILLS IN CHILDREN

COURSE GUIDE

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INTRODUCTION

This course ECE 120 – Development of Appropriate Skills in Children is a two credit unit course. It is one of the courses designed for Early Childhood Education students at the undergraduate level. It is a one semester course available at the first semester to all students pursuing B.Ed. Early Childhood Education of the National Open University of Nigeria.

There are four modules which consist of 16 units.

Module 1 –Psychomotor and Cognitive Development

Module 2 – Language Development and Skills

Module 3- Social-Emotional Development

Module 4- Moral Development.

This course guide introduces you briefly about the course itself, how you can work your way through the course material, suggestions and guidelines on the time to spend on each unit and on your tutor marked assignment in order to be highly successful in the course. There are regular tutorial classes that are provided on this course in your study centre. You are advised to attend these tutorial sessions.

WHAT YOU WILL LEARN IN THIS COURSE

The overall aim of ECE 120: Development of Appropriate Skills in Children is to equip you with the knowledge of the living and learning skills that children need to develop and acquire in the process of their development. This knowledge would be found not only useful but highly rewarding to you as an early childhood educator on the one hand and as a "would be parents" or parents on the other hand.

COURSE AIM

This course aims at giving you an understanding of the theoretical basis and the processes of the developmental domains especially the cognitive domain in which includes intelligence and language as well as the affective domain which includes social, emotional and moral development of the children.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

There are some specific objectives set out to achieve the overall aim of this course. Every unit has specific objectives in addition. The unit objectives are stated in behavioural/ achievable terms at the beginning of each of the units. They are meant for you to read before you start working through the unit. You can also refer to them as you start working through the unit. You

can also refer to them as you work through the course unit to check how far you are progressing. At the end of the unit, try to refer to the objectives again to ensure you have achieved them. In this way you make sure that you have done what you are required to do. The wider objectives are given below. On successful completion of this course, you should be able to:

(i) Explain Piaget's cognitive developmental theory;
(ii) Describe the processes of assimilation and accommodation concepts of Piaget's cognitive developmental theory;
(iii) Identify the sensory abilities and explain their role in the development of the perceptual abilities.
(iv) Describe the four stages of Piaget's cognitive development;
(v) Explain the theories of language development and acquisition;
(vi) Discuss the development of literacy skills;
(vii) Define social and emotional concepts and issues relating to them.
(viii) Explain the theories supporting social and emotional development.
(ix) Describe the theory of attachment.
(x) Compare Piaget's theory of moral development with that of Kohlberg's theory of moral development.

WORKING THROUGH THIS COURSE

In order to complete this course without hitch, you are required to work through the course units, read the reference books or any other book(s) found useful. In reading the course material you are enjoined to be patient and steady. There are some exercise at the end of the units, don't gloss over them. Do them and discuss your answers with your colleagues. The exercises are purposely integrated to help you further grasp the import of the content. At some scheduled dates or points, you will be required to attempt and submit your tutor-marked assignments for assessment purpose; please do not fail in complying with the instructions. At the end of the course or semester, you will be required to sit for a final examination in the course on-line. This will require you to interact with the computer. You do not need to be scared. If you have little or no knowledge of the computer, you need to learn it. The course is supposed to take you about 16 weeks to complete. You will have to allocate your time to span all the units before the examinations come.

COURSE MATERIALS

The major components of this course are:

(i) The course guide
(ii) The course units or study units.
(iii) Reference books
(iv) Assignments file (on-line).

(v) Presentation schedule

STUDY UNITS

There are 16 study units in the 4 modules. These are:

Unit 1: Psychosocial Motor Development

Unit 2: Piaget's Theory of Cognitive Development

Unit 3: Cognitive Processes: Assimilation and Accommodation

Unit :4 Sensory and Perceptual Capability and Response

Unit 5: Piaget's Stages of Cognitive Development

Unit 6: Perceptual and Intellectual Development

Unit 7: An Overview of Language Development in Early Years

Unit 8: Theories of Language Development

Unit 9: Listening Skills

Unit 10: Early Literacy Development (Reading and Writing Skills)

Unit 11: The Role of Language in Early Years

Unit 12: Overview of Social-Emotional Development

Unit 13: Theories Supporting Social and Emotional Development

Unit 14: Bowlby's Emotional Theory of Attachment and Bonding

Unit 15: Piaget's Stages of Moral Development

Unit 16: Kohlberg's Theory of Moral Reasoning

You will observe that the first five units discuss issues relating to cognitive development. This is followed by another five units focusing on language development. The next three units discuss majorly the theories of social-emotional development while the last two units are on moral

development.

SET TEXT BOOKS

There are no compulsory set books. The course material is self-contained. However, you are free to consult any other text(s) considered relevant and useful, if that will further help you.

ASSIGNMENT FILE

The assignment file will be given to you on registration, with the course material. The marks you obtain from the assignments will count towards the final mark you obtain in this course. You will require submitting four assignments, out of which three will be used for the final grade in the course.

PRESENTATION SCHEDULE

The schedule for the presentation of your assignment and the examination will be made available to you at your study centre. Remember, you are required to submit all your assignments by the due date. You should try not to fall behind in your work.

ASSESSMENT

Assessment in this course will comprise the tutor-marked assignments and examination which comes at the end of the semester. For the assignments, you are expected to apply information, knowledge and techniques which you have gained from the course. These assignments should be submitted to your tutor for formal assessment in accordance with the deadlines stated or given to you. The assignments will count for 30% of your total course work.

At the end of the course or semester, you are required to sit for a final written examination that will be of two hours duration. The examination will also count for 70% of your total course mark.

TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT (TMAs)

Each unit has a tutor marked assignment. This implies that there are at least 15 TMAs in all. You are required to submit four out of which three will be graded and used as part of your total score. However, you are encouraged to have all the assignments treated. When you have completed any assignment; send in your assignment folder or file to your tutor. Make sure that the assignments get to your tutor on or before the deadline given to you in the presentation schedule. If for any reason, you cannot submit your work on time, contact your tutor before the due date to discuss the possibility of extension of time. Extensions will not be granted after the due date unless there are exceptional circumstances.

FINAL EXAMINATION AND GRADING

In this course ECE 120: The final examination will be of two hours duration and have a value of 70% of the total course grade. Questions for the examination will reflect the types of exercises, examples and tutor marked assignments. All areas of the course will be assessed.

Use the time between finishing the last unit and sitting for the examination to revise the entire course. You might find it useful to review your tutor-marked assignments and. comments on them before the examination.

COURSE MARKING SCHEME

The table below clearly shows the actual marking is broken down.

Assessment	Marks
Assignment	Four assignments submitted, best three graded at 10% each to give 30%
Final examination	70% of overall course marks
Total	100% of course marks

HOW TO GET THE MOST FROM THIS COURSE

In Open and Distance Education, we have self-learning materials which are designed in units. They are designed in such a way that they replace the lecturer in the University system. In other words, the duties of the lecturer are in-built into the self-learning materials. This implies that you can study or read or work through these units at your own time, own pace, own place and own convenience. Again, in the same way that a lecturer might give you some reading to do, give you in-class exercises or assignments, the study units provide you with the content to read, reference books to refer and exercise to help you get on well.

Each of these units follows a common format. The first item after the content is the introduction, this is followed by the objectives which let you know what you should be able to do by the time you have completed the unit. This is followed by the main body of the unit which guides you through the required reading. Exercises are interspersed throughout the units. Working through these exercises will help you to achieve the objectives of the unit and prepare you for the assignments and the examination. You should therefore work through each exercise as you come to it in the study units. Work through the examples too as you come to them.

The following practical tips will help you work through the course without any hitch. But if you run into any difficulty, do not waste time. Call your tutor on phone or post the question to the course co-ordinator - School of Education, National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN), Lagos or through our web address – www.noun.edu.ng. Remember that your tutor's job is to help you. Do not hesitate to call and ask him to provide help when you need it.

1. Read this Course Guide thoroughly.
2. Plan and organize a study schedule or a time table. Creating time for your reading, tutorial, discussion etc.
3. Do everything you can to stick to your study schedule, this is because students fail not because they do not have the ability but because they get behind with their work. If you have problems with your work, please let your tutor know before it is too late for help.
4. Start with unit I. read the introduction and objectives.
5. Assemble the study materials.
6. Work through the units. The contents arc arranged to provide a sequence for you to follow.
7. Keep in touch with the Study Centre for information.
8. Do your assignments and submit before or on the due date. You will learn a lot by doing the assignments.
9. Review the objectives for each unit to confirm that you have achieved them. If you feel unsure of any, review the study unit or consult your tutor.
10. When you are sure that you have achieved a unit's objectives, go to the next unit. Pace your study but keep to your schedule.
11. When you have submitted your assignment to your tutor, do not wait till it is returned. Start another unit. Keep to your schedule.
12. When you have completed the last unit, review the course and prepare yourself for the final examination. Check that you have achieved the unit objectives and the course objectives.

TUTORS AND TUTORIALS

There are tutorial sessions provided in support of this course. You will be informed of the dates, time and location of these tutorials, together with the name and phone number of your tutor from the Study Centre. Your tutor will mark and comment on your assignment. Your tutor will keep a close watch on your progress and on any difficulty you might encounter and provide assistance to you during the course. You must submit your assignments before the due date. They will be marked by your tutor and returned to you as soon as possible.

Do not hesitate to contact your tutor by phone, e-mail or at the Study Centre. Contact your tutor if:

- You do not understand any part of the study units.

- You have difficulty with the exercises.
- You have a question or problem with an assignment with your tutor's comments on an assignment or with the grading of an assignment.

Try to attend the tutorial sessions. This is the only face-to-face contact with your tutor and to ask questions to which answers are given. You can raise any problem encountered in the course of your study. To gain maximum benefit from the tutorials prepare a question list before attending the tutorials.

SUMMARY

This course ECE 120 is intended to introduce you to the knowledge and skills that you need to function and fit well as early childhood educator. On the completion of this course, you should be able to answer such questions as:

- What is cognitive development?
- What are the theoretical bases for social and emotional development?
- How the skills can be acquired in these domains (cognitive, language, social-emotional, moral development) help the child to function effectively?

We wish you well in the course

ECC 120: DEVELOPMENT OF APPROPRIATE SKILLS IN CHILDREN (2C)

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UNIT 1: PSYCHOMOTOR DEVELOPMENT

CONTENT

1.0 Introduction

The child at birth is a fascinating creature with his/her tiny seemingly helpless state yet he/she is perfectly formed, fully capable of making known his/her pleasure and discomfort to his/her caregivers. Every day, the child brings about remarkable changes in his/her development in all the domains. These developments, particularly the motor skills, cognitive and social competencies and language develop together and support one another. In this unit, we shall describe the general course of motor development by examining the dynamic systems theory of motor development and gross and fine motor development during infancy and early childhood.

2.0 Objectives

After reading this unit, you should be able to

- Describe the dynamic systems theory of motor development,
- Discuss the sequence of motor development
- Identify the gross motor and fine motor skills in infancy and early childhood period and
- Handedness.

3.0 Main Body

3.1 The Dynamic Systems Theory of Motor Development

Motor development involves the activities of muscles which lead to changes in posture, movement and coordination of movement with the infant's developing sensory apparatus. Motor follows. Cephalocaudal development that is infants gain control of their heads and upper torsos before they can effectively use their arms. It also follows proximodistal pattern and differentiation that is; infants can control their trunks and shoulders before they can use their hands and fingers. The development of hand skills is a clear example of proximidistal development. Motor development proceeds in an orderly sequence but there are considerable variations in the timing at which children first engage in the activities. Although the sequence mostly remains the same, some children will skip a step. The dynamic systems theory of motor

development views new motor skills as reorganisations of previously mastered skills which leads to more effective ways of exploring and controlling the environment. Each new skill is a joint product of central nervous system development, the body's movement possibilities, the child's goals and environmental supports for the skill.

According to the working of the systems theory, mastery of motor skills involves acquiring increasingly complex systems of action. When motor skills work as a system, separate abilities blend together, each cooperating with others to produce more effective ways for example, control of the head and upper chest combine into sitting with support, kicking, rocking on all fours and reaching combine to become crawling. Then crawling, standing and stepping are united into walking (Thelen, 2000).

In addition, the theory supports the fact that motor development cannot be genetically determined. The reason for this is the fact that it is motivated by exploration and the desire to master new tasks. Heredity just maps it out only at a general level.

The following factors: central nervous system development, the body's movement capacities, the goals the child has in mind and the environmental support for the skill determine/affect each new skill. Therefore, a new skill is a joint product of the factors listed. It should be noted that the factors that induce the change vary with age. For example, in the early weeks of life, brain and body growth are especially important as infant achieve control over the head, shoulders and upper torso. Later the baby's goals (crossing the room) and environmental supports (parental encouragement) play a greater role. This theory says that when a skill is first acquired infants must retire it e.g. a child trying to crawl, often collapse on his/her tummy, move backward and later figure out how to propel self forward by alternatively pulling with arms and pushing with feet, belly-crawling, in various ways, for several weeks. Motor mastery involves intense practice, for example in learning to work, toddlers gradually make their unsteady steps change to a larger stride, move their feet closer together, toes point to the front and legs become symmetrically coordinated.

Exercise I

- What is motor development?

- Explain the theory of dynamic systems of motor development.
- Identify the factors that determine the acquisition of new motor skill.

Answers

- Motor development involves the activity of muscles which leads to changes in posture, movement and coordination of movement with the infants developing sensory apparatus.
- Dynamic systems theory of motor development views new motor skills as re-organisation of previously mastered skills which lead to more effective ways of exploring and controlling the environment.
- The factors that affect or determine motor development are:-

  (i) Central nervous system development;

  (ii) The body's movement capacities;

  (iii) The goals the child has in mind;

  (iv) Environmental supports

3.2 Gross and Fine Motor Development in the First Two Years

Gross motor development refers to control over actions that help infants get around in the environment. Getting around or "getting a move on" is called locomotion. Locomotion is movement from one place to another. Children gain capacity to move their bodies through a sequence of activities that includes rolling over, sitting up, crawling, creeping, walking and running.

Fine motor development has to do with smaller movements such as reaching and grasping. The development of hand skills is a clear example of proximodistal development. For example, infants follow slowly moving objects with their eyes shortly after birth but they will not generally reach for them. Even though they show a grasp reflex but do not reliably reach for the objects that appear to interest them. By the age of 3 months, infants make clumsy swipes at

objects. Between the ages of 4 and 6 months, they become more successful at grasping objects. They can hold rattles, large plastic spoons, mobiles and other brightly coloured hanging toys. They can also transfer objects back and forth between hands.

Table 1: Gross Motor Development in the first two years

Motor skills	Average Age Achieved (Weeks)
Turns from stomach to side	12 – 16
Turns from stomach to back	20 – 24
Turns from back to stomach	24 – 28
Sits up	28 – 32
Crawls	32 – 36
Kneels up	36 – 40
Creeps	40 – 44
Stands up	44 – 52
Starts walking	56 – 64
Full walking	64 – 72

Source: Bayley, 2005.

Fine Motor Development in the First Two Years

Motor skill	Average Age (Weeks)
Swipes at objects	12
Grasps	12 – 24
Builds tower of two cubes	47
Scribbles vigorously	54
Copies horizontal and vertical lines	94 weeks (24 months)

Source: Bayley, 2005.

The above tables show the milestones of motor development of children between birth and two years.

Exercise II

- What is gross motor development?
- Give examples of gross motor activities and the average ages in which children achieve them.
- What is fine motor development?
- Give examples of fine motor activities

Answers

- Gross motor development is the control over actions that help children get around.
- Examples of gross motor activities
    - Crawling – 8 – 12 months
    - Standing – 11- 13 months
    - Walking – 14 – 16 months
- Fine motor development is the use of the fingers and hands small muscles to reach out and grasp objects.
- Examples of fine motor activities
    - Grasping
    - Holding
    - Pulling
    - Pushing, etc.

3.3 Development of Gross Motor Skills in the Early Childhood

Gross motor skills involve the large muscles used in locomotion (movement). Children make great strides in the development during the preschool years. As early as the age of 3, children can balance on one foot. By age 3 and 4, they can walk up stairs as adults. By age 4 or 5, they can skip and pedal a tricycle children at this level of development appear to acquire gross motor skills by teaching themselves and observing the behaviour of other children. Worthy of note is the fact that girls are better at tasks requiring balance and precision of movement than boys. On the other hand, boys show some advantage in throwing and kicking.

Motivation and practice are important in children's acquisition of motor skills.

Table3: Development of Gross Motor Skills in Early Childhood

Age	Gross Motor Activities
2 years (24 – 35 months)	• Runs well straight ahead • Walks up stairs, two feet to a step • Kicks a large ball • Jumps a distance of --- • Throws a small ball without falling • Pushes and pulls large toys • Hops on one foot, two or more hops • Tries to stand on one foot • Climbs on furniture to look out of the window
3 years (36 – 47 months)	• Goes around obstacles while running • Walks up stairs, one foot to a step • Kicks a large ball easily • Jumps from the bottom step • Catches a bounced ball, using torso and arms to form a basket

	• Goes around obstacles while pushing and pulling toys • Hops on one foot, up to three hops • Stands on one foot
4 years (48 – 59 months)	• Turns sharp corners while running • Walks down stairs, one foot to a step • Jump from a height appropriate to their age • Throws a ball overhead • Turns sharp corners while pushing and pulling toys • Hops on one foot, four to six hops • Stands on one foot for 3 – 8 seconds • Climbs ladders • Skips on one foot • Rides a tricycle well
5 years (60 – 70 months)	• Runs lightly on toes • Jumps a distance • Catches a small ball using hands only • Hops 2 to 3 yards forward on each foot • Stands on one foot for 8 – 10 seconds • Climbs actively and skilfully • Skips on alternate feet • Rides a bicycle with training wheel

Source: Spencer A. Rathus (2006). P. 266.

The table above shows the developmental milestones of gross motor skills of 2 – 5 years old children. Individual differences are more impressive in gross motor development during early childhood than sex differences. Moreover, some children are genetically predisposed to

developing better coordination or more strength than others. Motivation and practice are also important for children to acquire motor skills.

Exercise III

- Identify one difference between boys and girls in motor development in early childhood.
- List four developmental milestones of gross motor development between ages 3 – 4 years.
- List two factors that can enhance gross motor development

Answers

- Boys are better coordinated in throwing and kicking while girls are better in balancing and precision of movement.
- Developmental milestones of gross motor skills of children aged 3 - 4 years are:
    - Jump from the bottom step
    - Kick large ball easily
    - Throw ball overhead
    - Turn sharp corners while pushing and pulling toys
- Two factors that can enhance gross motor development are: motivation and practice.

3.4 Development of Fine Motor Skills in Early Childhood

The development of fine motor skills lags behind gross motor skills. Fine motor skills develop gradually. The skills involve the small muscles used in manipulation and coordination. It is another example of the proximodistal trend in development. For example, control over the wrists and fingers enables children to hold writing materials like chalk or pencil properly.

The milestones of the fine motor skills in early childhood are stated in the table below.

Table: Development of Fine Motor Skills in Early Childhood

Age	Fine Motor Activities
2 years (24 – 35 months)	• Builds tower of 6 cubes • Copies vertical and horizontal lines • Imitates folding of paper • Prints with a brush • Places simple shapes in correct holes
3 years (36 – 47 months)	• Builds tower of 9 cubes • Copies circle and cross • Copies letters • Holds crayons with fingers not fists • Strings four beads using a large needle
4 years (48 – 59 months)	• Builds tower of 10 or more cubes • Copies square • Print simple words • Imitates folding paper three times • Uses pencils with correct hand grip • Strings 10 beads
5 years (60 – 71 months)	• Builds 3 steps from 6 blocks using a model • Copies triangle and star • Prints first name and numbers • Imitates folding of piece of square paper into a triangle • Traces around a diamond drawn on paper • Laces shoes

Source: Spencer A. Rathus (2006). P. 269.

From the table, it is clear that fine motor skills take a giant leap forward in the preschool years. As a result of the ability to control the hands and fingers, young children are able to gradually become self-sufficient at dressing and feeding. Children get great satisfaction from managing their own bodies.

Handedness

Handedness is a result of the joint contribution of nature and nurture to brain lateralization. Children typically display a hand preference by the end of the first year. Handedness reflects the greater capacity of one side of the brain that is the individual's dominant cerebral hemisphere – to carry out skilled motor action. Other important abilities are generally located on the dominant side as well. For example, for right-handed people, language is occasionally located in the right hemisphere or more often shared between the hemispheres. The implication of this is that the brains of left-handers tend to be less strongly lateralized than those of right-handers. Many left-handed individuals are also ambidextrous. Although they prefer their left hand, they sometimes use their right hand skilfully as well.

One genetic theory proposes that most children inherit a gene that biases them for right-handedness and a left-dominant cerebral-hemisphere. But that bias is not strong enough to overcome experiences that might sway children toward a left-hand preference. To support this, an example of the English Royal family is usually sited that handedness has a genetic component, the Queen Mother, Queen Elizabeth II, Prince Charles and Prince William are all left-handed.

Handedness develops early. Left-handed children are not necessarily clumsier than right-handed children. Trying to re-orient left-handed children to write or carry out motor activities with the right hand may not help them much.

4.0 Conclusion

We have established in this unit that the theory that supports motor development cannot be genetically determined. Motor mastery involves both motivation and practice. Both gross

and fine motor developments are dependent of one another. Handedness is a product of both nature and nurture.

5.0 Summary

Motor development involves the activities of muscles which lead to changes in posture, movement and coordination of movement with infant's developing sensory apparatus. The dynamic systems theory of motor development proposes that children acquire new motor skills by combining existing skills into increasingly complex systems of action. Gross motor development refers to control actions that help children to get around while fine motor development focuses on the use of the muscles around the fingers and hands for manipulation and coordination. Important factors that enhance motor development include motivation and practice. Hand preference which reflects an individual's dominant cerebral hemisphere, strengthens during early childhood. Research on handedness supports the joint contribution of nature and nurture to brain lateralization. A great majority of left-handed children have no developmental problems rather they are more likely to display outstanding verbal and mathematical talents.

6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment

1. Discuss in details the theory of dynamic systems of motor development.
2. Describe the developmental milestone of gross motor skills of children between ages 2 and 4
3. Explain the achievements of 4 – 5 years old children in fine motor skills. What are the implications of these achievements for the pre-school teachers.
4. Identify at least two factors that affect motor development
5. Discuss the reasons why you will or will not support a parents of a left-handed child to force the child to use the right hand.

7.0 References/Further Reading

Berk, Laura E. (2008). Infants and Children 6th Edition. U.S.A. Pearson Education, Inc.

Spencer, A. Rathus (2006). Childhood: Voyages in Development 2nd Edition. United States: Thomson Wadsworth.

Thele, E. (2000). Motor development as foundation and future developmental psychology. International Journal of Behavioural Development. 24(4) 385 – 397.

UNIT 2: PIAGET'S THEORY OF COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

CONTENT

1.0 Introduction

According to Piaget (1965) cognitive development is the process of learning about the world and all of its many components. In this unit we shall be discussing what cognition is, the background to Piaget's cognitive theory and what the theory is all about and the cognitive theory of Jean Piaget.

2.0 Objectives

After reading this module and completing the related exercises, you should be able to:

- Define cognition
- Explain Piaget's theory of cognitive development

3.0 Main Body

3.1 Definition of Cognition

The word cognition has its roots in the Latin word "cognoscere" which means "to know". The mind is the spring board of knowing so the development of the mind falls within the cognitive domain. Cognitive domain has many overlapping components such as reasoning, concepts, memory and language. Each of these aspects has specific characteristics and patterns. Cognitive development therefore is the gradual and orderly changes by which mental processes become more complex and sophisticated. In other words, cognitive development can be viewed as the changes in intellectual abilities which include attention, memory, academic and everyday knowledge, problem-solving, imagination, creativity and language.

Exercise 1

- What is cognition?
- Give examples of the domain of cognition.

- Define cognitive development.

Answers

- Cognition is “knowing”. It comes from a Latin word “cognoscere”.
- Examples of domain of cognition include reasoning, memory, language…
- Cognitive development refers to changes in intellectual abilities.

3.2: Piaget’s Theory of Cognitive Development

Jean Piaget (1896 – 1980) was a Swiss Psychologists who was interested in how knowledge develops in human beings. He created one of the best known stage theories by describing four (4) qualitatively different stages of cognitive development. He devised a model describing how humans go about making sense out of their world by gathering and organising information. He was greatly influenced by his background knowledge of and training in Biology.

Piaget’s theory of Cognitive development states that children actively construct knowledge as they manipulate and explore their world. According to him people form mental concepts about their world regardless of age. These concepts about the world, he called ‘Schemas’. These schemas are general ways of thinking about or interacting with things in the environment. Piaget noted that our thinking processes change radically, though slowly from birth to maturity because we constantly strive to make sense out of the world.

He identified four (4) factors affecting this radical change. They are: biological maturation, activity, social experiments and equilibration. These factors interact to influence changes in thinking. He explained maturation to be the unfolding of the biological changes that are genetically programmed. There is little or no external or environmental impact on this aspect of cognitive development. To him, cognitive development follows a predictable pattern of maturation as determined by biological (hereditary) factors.

In activity, physical maturation helps the increasing ability to act on the environment and learn from it. The activities generated such as exploration, observation and organising of

information by maturation enables us to alter our thinking processes at the same time. According to Piaget, cognitive development is influenced by learning from others, that is social transmission. We reinstate the knowledge already gathered from the cultural environment. The fourth factor – equilibration will be discussed in the next unit as it is closely related to imitation and accommodation.

Jean Piaget believed that experiences within the environment are key factors influencing the developing mind. He provided a biological explanation for the connection between the developing mind and the developing brain. He also believed that environment plays a vital role throughout the course of cognitive development.

Exercise 2

1. Who was Jean Piaget? Describe him in two or three sentences.
2. What shaped his cognitive theory?
3. Describe Piaget's Cognitive Development theory.

Answers

1. Jean Piaget was a Swiss psychologist. Born in 1896 and died in 1980. He was interested in how knowledge develops in human beings.
2. His knowledge of and training in Biology shaped his cognitive theory.
3. Piaget's Cognitive development theory states that children actively construct knowledge as they manipulate and explore their world.

4.0 Conclusion

Jean Piaget devised a model describing how humans go about making sense of their world by gathering and organizing information. Piaget's ideas provide an explanation of the development of thinking from infancy to adulthood.

5.0 Summary

Piaget's theory of cognitive development states that children actively construct knowledge as they manipulate and explore their world. Factors affecting the radical change in the thinking processes include biological maturation, activity, social experiences and equilibration.

6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment

1. What is cognition?
2. Explain the relevance of Jean Piaget's background to his theory of cognitive development.
3. Briefly describe Jean Piaget's cognitive development.

7.0 References/ Further Reading

Guilford, J.P. (1988). Some changes in the Structure-Intellect model. Educational and Psychological Measurement, 48, 1-4.

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UNIT 3: COGNITIVE PROCESSES: ASSIMILATION AND ACCOMMODATION

CONTENT

1.0 Introduction

In the last unit, we discussed Piaget's theory of cognitive development, and the psychological structures or organized ways of making sense of experience to involve some processes which change with age. In this unit, we shall be discussing the concepts of assimilation and accommodation as they relate with the cognitive process structures.

2.0 Objectives

After reading this module and completing the related exercises, you should be able to:

- Define the concepts of assimilation and accommodation;
- Define equilibrium;
- Explain the role of these concepts in the process of cognitive development.

3.0 Main Body

3.1 Piaget's Theory

Jean Piaget believed that all species inherit two basic tendencies or what he called "invariant functions". Organisation is the combining, arranging, recombining and rearranging of beliefs and thoughts into coherent systems while adapting or adjusting to the environment.

Piaget established that people are born with a tendency to organise the thinking processes into psychological structures. These psychological structures according to Woolfolk (2010) are our systems for understanding and interacting with the world. Piaget explained cognitive theory in form of cognitive structure. To him, simple structures are continually combined and coordinated to become more sophisticated and then more effective. As children learn about the world, they are adding to their schema (conceptual understandings). The schemes (schemas) are

what he called “building blocks of thinking”. They could be regarded as the organised systems of actions or thoughts that allow us to mentally represent or “think about” the objects and events in our world. Schemas can be very small and specific e.g. sucking through a straw scheme. They can be larger and more general like the drinking scheme. Schemas can therefore be defined as mental systems or categories of perception and experience.

As it has been noted earlier, people inherit the tendency to adapt to their environment. Adaptation involves two basic processes called assimilation and accommodation. Piaget established that schemas are strengthened through these two basic processes of assimilation and accommodation.

Exercise 1

- What does Woolfolk mean by “psychological structure”?
- Piaget defined schemas as_____.

Answers

- Our systems of understanding and interacting with the world.
- “Building blocks of thinking”.

3.2 Assimilation

According to him, assimilation takes place when people use their existing schema to make sense out of objects or events in their world. Assimilation involves trying to understand something new by fitting it into what we already know. In other words, if new information or experience can be incorporated within an existing schema, then the process of assimilation occurs. The concept of assimilation has its roots in Biology. In Biology, assimilation is the process by which food is digested and converted into the tissues that compose an animal. Cognitive assimilation therefore refers to the process by which someone responds to new objects or events according to existing schema or ways of organising knowledge.

3.3 Accommodation

Sometimes, a new experience or information cannot easily fit into an existing schema. In that case, the existing schema may be changed or a new schema may be created to incorporate the new event, information or experience. This process is called accommodation. In other words, accommodation is the modification of existing schema to permit the incorporation of new events or knowledge. Accommodation is also a biological term. It means a change in structure that permits an organism to adjust or adapt to a novel object or event to a novel source of stimulation. Piaget believed that assimilation and accommodation are adaptive mental processes that occur spontaneously and continuously to help individuals make sense of the world. They are lifelong processes but not deliberate mental processes (Estes, 2004).

Piaget opined that the cognitive processes of organising, assimilating and accommodating can be viewed as a kind of complex mental balancing act. Therefore, when children can assimilate new information and experience into the existing schema or accommodate it into a new schema, a state of mental balance or equilibrium is established. According to Estes (2004), the restoration of equilibrium indicates that the knowledge base has been reconstructed and that the new experience is now part of the person's known knowledge base.

From Piaget's theory, we learnt that the actual changes in thinking take place through the process of equilibrium (that is the act of searching for a balance). This is the source of intellectual motivation and it lies at the heart of the natural curiosity of the child.

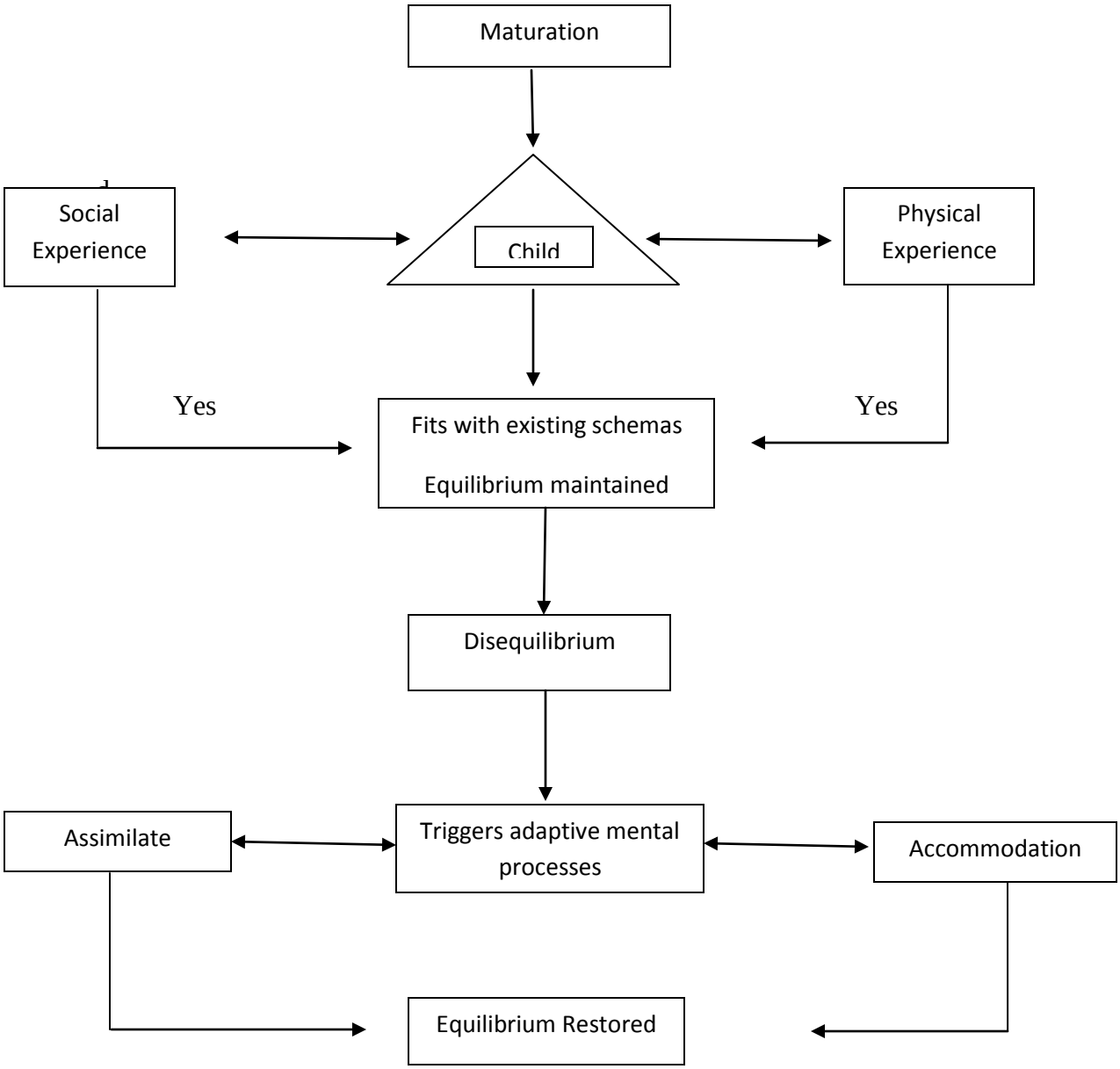

Figure 1: Constructing and Reconstructing Knowledge: Piaget's Cognitive Adaptive Process

(Adapted from Estes, Linda S. (2004). This figure illustrates the process as explained by Piaget.

Exercise 2

1. Briefly describe the processes of assimilations and accommodations.
2. What is equilibrium?
3. Why is the process of equilibrium important in cognitive development?

Answers

1. Assimilation is the process of fitting new information into existing schema while accommodation is the process of altering existing schemas or creating new ones in response to new information.

2. Equilibrium is the process of assimilating a new experience into an existing schema or accommodating a new schema to establish a state of mental balance.

3. Equilibrium is an important source of intellectual motivation. It also forms the basis of the natural curiosity of the child.

4.0 Conclusion

According to Piaget (1964), the essence of education is to form minds which can be critical, can verify and not accept anything they are offered without examination. The implication of this is that we need to promote critical thinking in children in order to equip them with the necessary skills to help them make informed decisions.

5.0 Summary

People inherit the tendency to adapt to their environment. Adaptation involves the basic processes of assimilation and accommodation. Assimilation is trying to understand something new by fitting it into what we already know while accommodation is the modification of existing schemas to permit the incorporation of new events or knowledge. The process of restoring a mental balance is termed equilibrium, that is, the search for mental balance between cognitive schemas and information from the environment.

6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment

1. Explain what cognitive assimilation is in the process of cognitive development.

2. Describe the process of accommodation and its role in cognitive development.

3. Explain the role of both assimilation and accommodation in individual's attempt to make sense of the world.

4. What is equilibrium? Explain the process of equilibrium on cognitive development.

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UNIT 4: PIAGET'S STAGES OF COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

CONTENT

1.0 Introduction

In the last units, we learnt about Jean Piaget as one individual who has tremendously influenced the contemporary field of child development more than any other person. His work focuses on children's mental processes. He investigated the ways in which children perceive and mentally represent the world, how they develop thought and logic, how they develop the ability to solve problems. Majorly, Piaget was pre-occupied with how children form concepts or natural representations of the world and how they manipulate their concepts to plan changes in the external world. He linked his views on children's mental processes to observable behaviour because he recognised that thoughts cannot be measured. In this unit, we shall learn more about the stages of cognitive development.

2.0 Objectives

After reading this module and completing the related exercises, you should be able to:

- Identify Piaget's stages of cognitive development;
- Describe the characteristics of each stage of Piaget's cognitive development.

3.0 Main Body

3.1 Piaget's Four Stages of Cognitive Development

Piaget identified four major stages of cognitive development. Children move through the four stages between infancy and adolescence. The cognitive processes develop in an orderly sequence, or series of stages. However, some children may be more advanced than the others at particular ages but the developmental sequence remains the same. The stages are generally associated with specific ages. He however pointed out that these are only general guidelines and not labels for all children of a certain age.

Table 1: Piaget's Stages of Cognitive Development

Stage	Period of Development	Characteristics
Sensorimotor	Birth – 2 years	• At first, the child lacks language and does not use symbols or mental representations of objects. • Uses senses and motor skills to explore environment. • Begins to make use of initial memory and thought. • Develop object permanence recognise that objects do not cease to exist when they are hidden. • Moves from reflex actions to goal – directed activity. • Acquires the basics of language
Preoperational	2 – 7 years	• Gradually develops use of language. • Develops ability to think in symbolic form. • Thought is egocentric • Employs static reasoning – able to think operations through logically in one direction • Demonstrates lack of irreversibility

		and conservation
Concrete operational	7 – 11 years	• Able to solve concrete problems in logical fashion • Reasoning becomes logical • Can organise objects into hierarchies of classes and subclasses (Able to classify and seriate) • Understands reversibility • Shows understanding of laws conservation • Demonstrates less egocentrism
Formal operational	11 years and older	• Able to solve abstract problems in logical fashion • Thinking is characterised by deductive logic. Becomes more scientific in thinking • Understands conservation.

The above table summarises the four stages and the characteristics of children at each stage of cognitive development.

Exercise 1

1. List Piaget's stags of cognitive development
2. What is the approximate age of preoperational stage?

3. List two characteristics of the formal operational stage.

Answers

1. Sensorimotor, preoperational, concrete operational and formal operational stages
2. 2 to 7 years
3. Less egocentrism, deductive reasoning, abstract reasoning, emergence of adult thought

3.2 Piaget's Contributions to Education

Piaget's theories of intellectual development have given rise to what is often called constructivist learning. He suggested that individuals actively construct knowledge on an on-going basis. He theorized that we are all constantly receiving new information and engaging in experiences that lead us to revise our understanding of the world. Piaget believed that children create knowledge of the world for themselves as they interact with the people and things in their environment. This approach has a significant impact on education in general and on early childhood education specifically.

Although Piaget spent little time in defining the educational implications of his theory, the educational implications have been given as follows:.

- His theory implies active learning during the early childhood years. Hands-on manipulation of materials and objects in the world provides the child with much information to assimilate and accommodate.
- Understanding how children gain knowledge about their world is essential to planning for future learning.
- The learning environment must allow for manipulation of objects and interactions with other children and adults.
- On the constructivist learning environment, research supports the fact that learning is a social and collaborative endeavour rather than a solitary activity. That is,

- ❖ Activities are learner centred rather than teacher centred.
- ❖ Topics are driven by children's interests rather than strict adherence to a fixed curriculum.
- ❖ Emphasis is on understanding and application rather than rote memorization or copying.

4.0 Conclusion

Jean Piaget is one of the most influential investigators that has influenced the field of child development more than the others. He did not believe that children's learning depends on reinforcement from adults. According to his cognitive development theory, children construct knowledge as they manipulate and explore their environment.

5.0 Summary

Jean Piaget identified four major discrete stages of cognitive development. These include the sensorimotor, pre-operational, concrete operational and formal operational stages. The cognitive processes develop in an orderly sequence or series of stages. However, some children may be more advanced than others at particular ages but the development sequence remains the same for all children.

6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment

1. Describe the four stages of Jean Piaget's Cognitive Development.
2. What are the implications for classroom practice?
3. Examine the criticism of this theory.

7.0 References/ Further Readings

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UNIT 5: SENSORY-PERCEPTUAL ABILITY AND RESPONSE

CONTENT

1.0 Introduction

The development of most sensory abilities commences in the prenatal environment prior to birth. As the new born infants emerge from the temperature-controlled environment of the womb to the world, they have a remarkable set of capacities that are crucial for survival and for evoking adult attention and care in their new environment. The capacities are embedded in their sensory capabilities which they use to explore their new world. They receive a variety of stimuli through the five senses of vision, hearing, taste, smell and touch from their environment. The five senses are functional to certain level at birth. For example, from the day of birth, a baby can open his/her eyes. The baby is aware of light and dark and can fix his/her eyes on near objects for brief periods. Normal babies can hear almost immediately after birth. They are startled by very loud noises and react by crying. They can feel pain and their senses of smell and taste are well developed at birth. In this unit we shall examine sensory abilities with which children explore their world.

2.0 Objectives

After reading this module and completing the related exercises, you should be able to:

- Identify the sensory abilities;
- Explain their role in the development of the perceptual abilities.

3.0 Main Body

3.1 Vision

Vision: The new born babies can see but they do not possess great sharpness of vision or visual acuity. The reason for this is the fact that parts of the brain that process visual information are not yet fully developed at the time of birth. Findings revealed that vision is the least developed of the senses at birth. As a result of this, new babies cannot focus their eyes well and

their visual acuity is limited. Visual acuity is the fineness of visual discrimination. According to Estes (2004), objects outside of the optimal field of vision are somewhat blurry for the first six weeks of life. However, by the time the infants are six months old, their visual acuity is similar to that of adults.

Although new born infants cannot see well, they actively explore their environment by scanning it for interesting sights and tracking moving objects. However, their eye movements are slow and inaccurate. Nevertheless, once new-borns focus on an object, they tend to look only at a single feature. Even though they prefer to look at colour rather than gray stimuli, they are not yet good at discriminating colours.

Research supports the fact that young infants can recognise and distinguish patterns (Klaus and Klaus, 1998). Infants are able to remember some of what they see. They also have definite visual preferences. They appear to prefer moving objects to stationary objects. It has also been established that infants show little or no visual accommodation. Visual accommodation refers to the self-adjustment made by the lens of the eye to bring objects into focus. Objects placed within a close range are clearest focus for most infants. This range can be expanded when lighting conditions are bright. It has been speculated that this sensory capacity of gazing into others eyes promotes attachment between infants and caregivers. Another important skill at this stage of development is the visual memory. The images processed by the brain become part of the visual memory of the infant.

Exercise 1

- Identify the sensory abilities.
- Which is the least developed of all the senses at birth?

Answers

- Vision, hearing, taste and smell.
- Vision

3.2 Hearing

The sense of hearing is well developed before the baby is born. Although myelination of the auditory pathways is not complete before birth but the middle and inner ears normally reach their mature shapes and sizes before babies are born. It has been established that some sounds travel through the womb. New born infants can hear remarkably well at birth unless their middle ears are clogged with amniotic fluid. Infants can hear a wide variety of sounds and this sensitivity improves greatly over the first few months of life.

According to Saffren, Werker and Werner (2006), infants at birth prefer complex sounds such as noises and voices to pure tones. Babies are more likely to respond to high-pitched sounds than to low-pitched sounds. Babies only a few months old can tell the difference between a variety of sound pattern. It has also been established that young children listen longer to human speech than to structurally similar non speech sounds. Infants can detect the sounds of any human language. These capacities reveal that the baby is marvellously prepared for the awesome task of acquiring language. It is also important to note that the sense of hearing plays a significant role in the formation of affectionate bonds between infants and their mothers. Research indicates that infant prefer the mothers voices to those of other women but do not show similar preferences for the voices of their father. Responsiveness to sound also supports the new born baby's exploration of the environment.

Exercise 2

- Identify the sensory abilities of children.
- Describe the role of hearing in the formation of bonding.

Answers

- Vision, hearing
- The sense of hearing plays a significant role in the formation of affectionate bonds between infants and their mothers.

3.3 Taste and Smell

Facial expressions of new-borns reveal that they can distinguish several basic tastes. They relax their facial muscles in response to sweetness. They purse their lips when the taste is sour. They show a distinct arch-like mouth when it is bitter. This shows that new-born infants are sensitive to different tastes. The different reactions of new-born infants to tastes are important for survival. The food that best support the infants early growth is the sweet-tasting milk of the mother's breast. New-born infants can readily learn to like a taste that at first evoked either a neutral or a negative response

The sense of taste is strongly connected to the sense of smell. New born infants can definitely discriminate distinct odours such as that of onions. Babies show more rapid breathing patterns and increased bodily movement in response to powerful odours. They also turn away from unpleasant odours. As with taste, certain odour preferences are present at birth. For example, the smell of bananas causes a relaxed, pleasant facial expression, whereas the odour of rotten eggs makes the infant frown. The dual attraction, the human odours of the mother and of breast helps babies locate an appropriate food source.

Exercise 3

1. How can we know that new born babies can distinguish basic tastes?
2. How do babies locate sources of food?

Answers

1. We can know through their facial expressions.
2. Babies locate sources of food by smelling.

3.4 Touch

The sense of touch is an extremely important avenue of learning and communication for infants. This skill is well developed at birth. Research reveals that newborn infants are very responsive to touch especially around the mouth, on the palms and on the soles of the feet. These areas are the first to develop along with the genitals during the prenatal periods. Touch is

activated by stimulation to the skin which in turn provides information about the external world. The sensations of skin against skill also provide feelings of comfort and security that may be major factors in the formation of bonds of attachment between infants and their caregivers. Experiences that involve the sense of touch are called tactile. Estes (2004) identifies other components of the sense of touch to include responses to texture, temperature and pain. At birth, new-borns are quite sensitive to pain. Research indicates that physical touch releases endorphins – painkilling chemicals in the brain. Allowing a new-born to endure severe pain overwhelms the nervous system with stress hormones which can disrupt the child's developing capacity to handle common everyday stressors.

Exercise 4

1. Identify the five senses that support the new-born infants survival.
2. What is visual acuity?

Answers

1. Five sense – vision, hearing, touch, smell and taste
2. Visual acuity is keenness or sharpness of vision.

3.5 Perceptual and Intellectual Development

Perception is the process of detecting a stimulus and assigning meaning to it. According to Woolfolk (2010), this meaning is constructed based on both physical representations from the world and our existing knowledge. Rathus (2006) on the other hand sees perception as the ability that infants develop to be able to integrate disjointed sensations into meaningful patterns of events. Research identifies several stages of the path from sensory input to recognised objects. The first phase involves extracting or analysing to give a rough sketch. This feature analysis has been called bottom up processing. The stimulus must be analysed into features or components and assembled into a meaningful pattern from "the bottom up".

Gestalt Phase: This involves perceiving organised meaningful wholes. This pattern was brought about by psychologists that studied the processes is Germany. They were called Gestalt theorists. Gestalt means "pattern" or "configuration". It refers to people's tendency to organise sensory information into patterns on relationships. Instead of perceiving bits and pieces of unrelated information, we usually perceive organised, meaningful whole. At the last stage of perception, the features and patterns detected are combined in light of the context of the situation. There is also the prototype that is a best example or classic case of input. So to recognise patterns rapidly in addition to noting features, we use context and what we already know about the situation or our prior knowledge about words or pictures or the way the world generally operates. In other words, what you know affects what you are able to perceive.

Exercise 5

1. What is perception?
2. List the phases involved in perception

Answer

1. Perception is a process of detecting a stimulus and assigning meaning to it.
2. Phases involve in perception are: bottom up, Gestalt phase and the prototype.

4.0 Conclusion

The perceptual capacities of children are embedded in their sensory capabilities. The senses are functional to certain level at birth. As the infants grow their capabilities also keep on developing with the stimulations from the environment.

5.0 Summary

New-born infants have a remarkable set of capacities that are crucial for survival and for evoking adults attention and care in the new environment as they come to the world. These capacities are embedded in their sensory capabilities, that is, their five senses of vision, hearing, taste, smell and touch. Perception is the process of detecting a stimulus and assigning meaning into it. This involves three phases.

6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment

- Identify the sensory abilities.
- Describe each of the sensory capacities and their role in perceptual development.
- Describe the relationship between sensory perception and intellectual development.

7.0 References/ Further Readings

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UNIT 6: PERCEPTUAL AND INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT

CONTENT

1.0 Introduction

Perceptual development is another dimension of the child's development, as you have cognitive, social-emotional development. Perception is receiving input through our senses. We have learned in unit 3 that the senses of hearing, touch, taste and smell but not vision are remarkably well developed at birth. That is, the new born comes to the world with a good number of perceptual skills. These inborn sensory capacities play a crucial role in perceptual development. There are also research evidences to support the fact that experience also plays a crucial role in perceptual development. This means that both nature and nurture interact to shape perceptual development. In this unit we shall examine perceptual processes and the influence on intellectual development.

2.0 Objectives

After reading this unit and completing the related exercises, you should be able to:

- Explain what perceptual development is;
- Discuss the processes of perceptual development;
- Discuss the relationship between perception and intellectual development

3.0 Main Body

3.1 Perceptual Processes

The ability to perceive accurately requires that two separate events occur. First, the sense organs must pick up the sight or sound and second the brain must evaluate and interpret it. This means that perception is the process of detecting a stimulus and assigning meaning to it. The meaning assigned is constructed based on both physical representations from the world and our existing knowledge.

The path from sensory input to recognised objects goes several stages. According to Anderson (2005), the first phase involves the process of extracting or analysing features to give a rough sketch. This he called "bottom-up-processing" – analysing features or components and assembling into a meaningful pattern from the bottom up. As perception continues, the features are organised into patterns. This process was studied in Germany by psychologists called Gestalt theorists. Gestalt means "pattern" or configuration. Gestalt in German refers to people's tendency to organise sensory information into patterns or relationships. However, if all perception relied only on feature analysis and Gestalt principle, learning would be very slow. The last stage of perception according to Anderson, the features and patterns detected are combined in the light of the context of the situation. We have a prototype (a best example or classic case) of input. In other words, to recognise pattern rapidly, in addition to noting the features, we use context and what we already know about the situation i.e. our prior knowledge about words or pictures or the way the world generally operates. Therefore, what we know also affects what we are able to perceive.

Exercise 1

- What is perception?
- List the stages of memory input.

Answers

- Perception is the process of detecting a stimuli and assigning meaning to it.
- Stages of memory input are:
    - Analysing the features
    - Organising into pattern
    - Use context

3.2 Perception and Reading Ability

The ability to read is based on a wide range of developmental skills acquired during the preschool years. One critical component is perception. The average age for reading readiness is 6.5 years. However, many children learn to read either earlier or later than this average. Many children are deficient in reading abilities because of poor perceptual judgements. These abilities are to be acquired between ages three and eight years. From our knowledge we know that sensory changes appear to be linked to maturation of the nervous system. Children will naturally exhibit some poor perceptual judgements because the perceptual skills have not fully matured. The maturity of these skills is essential to the ability of the child to read.

Three areas of interest that pertain directly to the development of reading ability are discussed below:

1. **Discrimination:** Discrimination is the ability to recognise differences in forms. Two of the forms that children frequently confuse are “b” and “d”. If a child has problems or difficulty with laterality (distinguishing right from left) consequently such a child will be unable to make the discrimination required to tell the difference between the two letters.

2. **Attention:** Life would be impossible if every variation in colour, movement, sound, smell, temperature and other features ended up in working memory. Therefore, adults are selective of what they pay attention to. By paying attention to selected stimuli and ignoring others, adults limit the possibilities of what they will perceive and process. In other words, adults can focus on the one thing of importance in the environment and block out all interfering events and attend directly to the task at hand. What adults pay attention to is guided to a certain extent by what they already know and what they need to know. Attention is affected by what else is happening at the time, by the complexity of the task and by the ability to control or focus attention. Children with attention deficit disorder have great difficulty focusing attention or ignoring competing stimuli. Young children may have problems paying attention because of distractions from competing events. One reason for their perceptual difficulties is that attention takes effort and is a limited resource. They learn to attend to things more efficiently as they mature and may

be able, like adults, to focus on the one thing of importance in the environment and block out all interfering events. The first step in learning is paying attention. Children cannot process information that they do not recognise or perceive.

There are three important factors in children's attention. These include

(i) Obligatory attention: This involves paying attention to only one cognitively demanding task at a time.

(ii) Search strategy: The ability to visually scan an object in an efficient way. With children, this ability increases with age.

(iii) Context use: This involves the context in which the perceptions must be interpreted.

Exercise 2

- Perception is one of the developmental skills required for reading. Yes or No?
- What is discrimination?
- Why do children have problems paying attention?

Answers

- Yes
- Discrimination is the ability to recognise differences in forms.
- Distractions from competing events

3.3 Gaining and Maintaining Attention

The following strategies can be used to gain and maintain children's attention.

(a) **Use of signals** – Signals can be developed that would tell children to stop what they are doing and focus on the task at hand. In these signals, visual and auditory signs can be mixed. Teachers should avoid distracting behaviours such as tapping a pencil while talking. Clear and short directions can be given before and not during transitions. Being playful with young children such as using a dramatic voice or clapping game can enhance gaining and maintaining attention.

(b) **Reaching out rather than calling out** – It is important to use children's names, speaking in a firm but non-threatening voice and walking to the children and looking into their eyes rather than calling them out will help in gaining attention.

(c) **Incorporating variety, curiosity and surprises into activities** – This could be done by creating shock by staging an unexpected event such as a loud argument. Provide shift in sensory channels by giving instructions that require children to touch, smell or taste. Use movements, gestures and voice inflection (speaking softly, and then more emphatically).

(d) **Asking questions and providing frames for answering** – For example, ask children why a particular material is important and how they intend to use and the strategies they will use. Have children work in pairs to improve each other's work.

3. **Recognition of Distinctive Features:** The ability to recognise the distinctive features of objects is a major area of perceptual development of children. There are a few key features that are associated with each object. For example, long ears are associated with rabbits. It takes children longer to recognise this "clue". According to Anselmo and Franz (1987), a variation of this skill is the child's ability to identify invariants in the objects they use. An invariant is defined by them as anything that always stays the same in an object in spite of superficial changes in appearance. It is important to note also that some researchers believe that children also impose meaning on what they perceive, constructing categories of objects and events in surrounding environment. The major reason for the difficulty in recognising distinctive features is that children rely heavily on the context for making accurate identifications.

Exercise 3

- Mention two strategies that can be used to improve attention.
- What is an invariant factor?

Answers

- Strategies to improve attention are the use of signals and incorporating variety, curiosity and surprises into activities.
- An invariant is anything that remains the same in an object in spite of changes in appearance.

4.0 Conclusion

Having reviewed the development of children's perceptual capacities we can safely use Gibson's (2000) differentiation theory to conclude that children search for invariant features in the environment (those that remain stable) in a constantly changing perceptual world. They explore internal features, notice stable relationships among those features, detect patterns and develop intermodal perception.

5.0 Summary

Perception is the process of detecting a stimulus and assigning meaning to it. There are three stages of perception. These are discrimination, attention and recognition of distinctive features. We can gain, attain and maintain attention using these guidelines – use of signals, reach out rather than call out, incorporate curiosity, variety and surprises to activities among others.

6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment

1. Explain the concept of perception
2. Identify and discuss the processes of perceptual development
3. Discuss the relationship between perception and reading

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MODULE 2: LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

UNIT 1: AN OVERVIEW OF LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT IN THE EARLY YEARS

CONTENT

1.0 Introduction

Language is the most awesome of universal human development. It develops with extraordinary speed during the early childhood years. Children vary in the rate at which they learn language but eventually, almost every child masters the complex linguistic system in which he/she is immersed. This process begins in infancy and continues throughout the early childhood years. In this unit, we shall take an overview of the processes of language development from infancy to early childhood and examine the milestones in early childhood language. We shall also look at ways to encourage language development.

2.0 Objectives

After reading this unit, you should be able to:

- Define what language is
- Explain the processes involved in language development from infancy to early childhood.
- Identify milestones in early childhood language development

3.0 Main Body

3.1 The Meaning of Language

The term "language" is used to refer to speech behaviour but more specifically, it refers to those systems through which people communicate with one another. The systems are those based on the use of the voice in the articulation of patterns of sounds, words, and signs representing particular elements of experience. All children in every culture master the complicated system of their native language unless severe deprivation or physical problems

interfere. There are over 6,000 national languages in the word. In general, cultures develop words for the concepts that are important to them.

It is likely that many factors majorly biological, cultural and experience play a significant role in language development. But to master a language, children must read the intentions of others so they can acquire words, phrases and concepts of their language and also find patterns in the ways other people use these words and phrases to construct the grammar of their language. The important point is that children learn language as they develop other cognitive abilities by actively trying to make sense of what they hear and by looking for patterns and making up rules to put together the jigsaw puzzle of language. The journey to this end commences from infancy.

Exercise 1

1. What is language?
2. Name two factors that play significant role in language development.

Answers

1. Language refers to speech behaviour and those systems through which people communicate with one another.
2. Factors that play significant role in language development are biological and cultural factors.

3.2 Language Development

The process of language development begins in infancy and continues throughout the early childhood years. The process of language development can be divided into pre-linguistic and linguistic speech period.

The Pre-linguistic Speech Period

Immediately children are born healthy, such newborns can maintain eye contact with someone within their range of vision. At birth, infants engage in undifferentiated crying. In other words, crying is the earliest form of infant communication. Parents quickly learn the many

different messages children send in this way. That is, parents especially mothers distinguish between cries to communicate pain and cries to communicate loneliness. This and other forms of pre-linguistic speech consist of vocalisations or voiced sounds. These include crying, cooing, babbling, gestures, emotional expressions.

(i) **Crying:** This is the first way in which the infant is able to communicate with the world at large. Through this medium, babies make known their needs for someone to relieve their hunger, pain, fatigue and other unpleasant bodily states and to satisfy their desire for attention. Parents are able to distinguish the various cries because nature has provided for such differentiation in the tonal quality of the cries.

(ii) **Cooing:** This is in the making of soft, repetitive vowel sounds like "ooh" and "aah". These sounds seem to be produced when the baby is relaxed and contented. The sound is otherwise known as voluntarily produced comfort sound. They are unlearned and are universally found even among deaf infants. They are regarded as playful activities which give the baby enjoyment. They are not used as a form of communication.

(iii) **Babbling:** Babbling is the stringing together of consonants and vowel sounds, at first in simple repeated sequences "da-da-da", "ba-ba-ba", "ma-ma-ma". Many of the consonants In babbling are ones that occur in the language to which the child is exposed. Sometimes, there are those that belong to other world languages or non-existence. It should be noted that when infants are uttering "da-da-da" sound, they are not calling "daddy", they are just exploring the sounds of language. It is the adults that often connect the repetitive syllables of babbling to, real objects, people or events reinforcing the infants babbling efforts by repeating the sound back to them.

(iv) **Gestures:** This form of communication consist movement of the limbs of the body which serve as substitutes for or supplements to speech. As a speech substitute, an idea is conveyed to others by meaningful movement of the limbs or some other parts of the body.

(v) **Emotional Expression:** This is communicated through facial and bodily changes. They are pleasant and unpleasant emotions. The pleasant emotions are accompanied by

pleasant vocalisations in the form of cooing, chuckling sounds and laughs. The unpleasant emotions are accompanied by whimpering, and crying. Happiness is expressed by relaxing the bodies, waving arms and legs, and smiles appearing on the face. On the other hand, anger is expressed by tensing the body, slashing movements of the arms and legs, tensing expressions of the face and cries of anger.

Pre-linguistic speech can be summarised as follows in table 2.

Table 2: Emergence of Oral Language

Pre-linguistic Speech	Description
Undifferentiated crying	At birth, infants signal their needs through this reflexive form of communication
Differentiated crying	At one month, infants crying is more precise with different patterns, intentions, intensities and pitches reflecting different emotional states
Cooing	By six weeks, chance utterances of vowel sounds occur as part of infants expression of contentment
Babbling	At about 3 to 4 months, infants playfully repeat simple consonant and vowel sounds (ba-ba-ba, da-da-da, ma-ma-ma, je-je-je)

Source: Estes, Linda (2004). Essentials of Child care and Early Education. Boston: Pearson Education.

Exercise 2

1. Identify some pre-linguistic speech of children at infancy
2. Differentiate between crying and cooing.
3. What is the importance of babbling?

Answer

1. Pre-linguistic speech include – crying, cooing and babbling.
2. Babies make their desires or needs known to others through crying while cooing are pleasant playful activities of the baby,
3. Babbling encourages the desire to communicate with others.

3.3 The Linguistic Speech

Near the end of the first year of life, children begin to speak words as they continue to receive favourable feedback for their vocalisation attempts. They begin to imitate and repeat the sounds of frequently heard words. This is called echo speech, which is still part of pre-linguistic behaviour but echo-speech serves as a bridge between pre-linguistic and linguistic speech. At toddlerhood, children proceed rapidly in their acquisition of language. To them, linguistic speech occurs when meaning is consistently attached to a particular speech sound. When repeated utterances of the same speech sound such as "ba-ba" are consistently met with the same person (baba in Yoruba meaning father), infants begin to connect the speech sound with the person, therefore, 'baba' becomes the word/name for father in Yoruba.

Many of the words at this stage carry much meaning than the adult's equivalent, this is referred to as holophrastic speech. Holophrases generally represent familiar objects or actions. As toddlers mature, they begin the process of stringing two words together to form simple sentences. A toddler who wants to go in the car with daddy may say "me go". This is referred to as telegraphic speech because of the limited word usage. Telegraphic sentences are shortened sentences that include two or three key words. These two-word sentences are a major step forward in the young children's use of language.

During the preschool years that is by age 3 through 5, the language understanding of children continues to rapidly expand. Vocabulary increases at an amazing rate, with new words added almost daily. Sentences move quickly beyond the two-word stage to more complex

combinations. Children keep on refining their understanding of the rules of communication and becoming more proficient at holding a conversation with others.

Table 3: Linguistic Speech

Linguistic Speech	Description
Holophrases	At about 12 months, infants use simple words to express thoughts. Average one year olds have 5-word vocabularies, 10-word vocabularies at about 15 months and 50-word vocabulary at 19 months
Telegraphic Speech	At about 24 months, children string 2 or 3 words together to form sentences using only the essential nouns and verbs approximately.
Grammatically Correct Speech	By 3 years, children may have vocabularies of some 900 words. They use longer sentences containing all parts of speech. They apply many grammatical principles though their sentence constructions tend to follow the rules too closely.

Source: Estes, Linda s. (2004). Essentials of Child Care and Early Education. Boston: Pearson Education.

Exercise 3

1. What is holophrastic speech?
2. Give some examples of telegraphic speech.
3. What is the average vocabulary of a 3-year old child?

Answers

1. Holophrastic speech is a one word speech that carries multiple meaning.
2. Examples of telegraphic speech are “food eat”, “me go”, “go bye bye”
3. 900 words

3.4 Milestones in Early Childhood Language and Ways to Encourage Development

Table 4 shows details of the milestones of language and how to enhance the development.

Table 4: Milestones in Early Childhood Language and Ways to Encourage Development

Age Range	Milestone	Strategies to Encourage Development
Between 2 and 3 years	Identifies body parts; calls self “me” instead of name; combines nouns and verbs; has a 450-word vocabulary; uses short sentences; matches 3-4 colours, knows big and little; likes to hear same story repeated; forms some plurals; answers “where” questions	• Help the child listen and follow instructions by playing simple games • Repeat new words over and over • Describe what you are doing, planning, thinking • Have the child deliver simple messages for you • Show the child you understand what he or

		she says by answering, smiling, and nodding your head • Expand what the child says. Child: "more juice" You say, "Chris wants more juice"
Between 3 and 4 years	Can tell a story; sentence length of 4-5 words, vocabulary about 1000 words; knows last name, name of street, several nursery rhymes	• Talk about how objects are the same or different • Help the child to tell stories using books and pictures • Encourage play with other children • Talk about places you've been or will be going
Between 4 and 5 years	Sentence length of 4-5 words; uses past tense; vocabulary of about 1500 words; identifies colours, shapes; asks many questions like "why?' and "who"?	• Help the child sort objects and things (e.g. things to eat, animals) • Teach the child how to use the telephone • Let the child help you plan activities

		• Continue talking about the child's interests • Let the child tell and make up stories for you
Between 5 and 6 years	Sentence length of 5-6 words; average 6-year-old has vocabulary of about 10,000 words; defines objects by their use; knows spatial relations)like "on top" and "far") and opposites; knows address; understands same and different; uses all types of sentences	• Praise children when they talk about feelings, thoughts, hopes, fears • Sing songs, rhymes • Talk with them as you would an adults
At every age		• Listen and show your pleasure when the child talks to you • Carry on conversations with the child • Ask questions to get the child to think and talk • Read books to the child every day, increasing in length as

		the child develops

4.0 Conclusion

This unit has helped us to understand what language is, the processes involved in acquiring language. The process may appear effortless but in reality, it is a major undertaking for children. Every child eventually masters the complex linguistic system in which he/she is immersed.

5.0 Summary

Language is the speech behaviour that refers to those systems through which people communicate with one another. Factors like biological, cultural and experimental affect language development. The process of language acquisition can be categorised into two, the pre-linguistic speech and the linguistic speech. Pre-linguistic speech include crying, cooing, babbling and the linguistic speech include holophrases, telegraphic speech and grammatically correct speech.

6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment

1. Vividly describe the characteristics of emergence of oral language it the pre-linguistic speech period of children.
2. What are the characteristics of children in the toddlerhood and pre-school years?
3. Explain the language development milestone of children between ages 2 to 4.
4. How can you encourage language development of children between ages 4 and 5?

7.0 References/Further Reading

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UNIT 2: THEORIES OF LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

CONTENT

1.0 Introduction

The process of language development is a major task for young children. The theorists that study language acquisition have considerable difficulty in explaining it. In this unit, we shall examine three different views of how children acquire language, those of the behaviourists, navitists and the interactionists. The behaviourists believe that children acquire language through the same stimulus-response connections that influence learning in all areas. According to Skinner (1957), children hear language spoken by parents and others, imitate that speech and are rewarded for the efforts. This positive reinforcement encourages them to communicate the more. The nativists theory suggests that every child regardless of culture, intellectual ability or socio-economic status inherits the genetic capability for language. However, the proponents of the interationists theory suggest that language acquisitions combine animate ability with environmental influence. In this unit, we shall examine the contributions of the theorists to the development of language in the early years

2.0 Objectives

After reading this unit, you should be able to:

- Explain the behvaiourist perspective in how children acquire language
- Discuss how the nativists explain that children are biologically primed to acquire language
- Describe the interactionist perspective about language development.

3.0 Main Body

3.1 The Behaviourist Theory of Language Development Acquisition

One of the proponents of the behaviourist theory was B.F. Skinner. He proposed that language like any other behaviour is acquired through operant conditioning. According to

Skinner, the frequency of a behaviour can be increased by following it with a wide variety of reinforcement such as praise, a friendly smile or a new toy. It can be decreased through punishment such as disapproval or withdrawal of priviledges. The concept of reinforcement is a central concept in operant conditioning. Reinforcers are stimuli that increase the frequency of the behaviour they follow. In relating this theory to language development, children learn to operate on the environment or to engage in certain behaviour because of the effects of that behaviour.

Research reveals that as the baby makes sounds, parents reinforce those that are most like words with smiles, hugs and speech in return. Moving the theory forward, some behaviourists believe that children rely on imitation to rapidly acquire complex utterances such as whole phrases and sentences. For example, children who are reared in Hausa or Yoruba speaking homes learn Hausa or Yoruba and not Edo or Urhobo. Therefore, language development can be explained in terms of imitation and reinforcement. Children learn language at least in part by observation and imitation. It seems likely that many vocabulary words especially nouns and verbs are learned by imitation.

The Role of Reinforcement: Although Skinner allowed that pre-linguistic vocalisations such as cooing and babbling may be inborn, but parents reinforce children for babbling that approximates the form of real words such as "ba" which in Yoruba resembles "baba". Children do in fact increase their babbling when it results in adults smiling at them, stroking them and talking back to them. Research shows that as children progress in their first year, they babble the sounds of their mother tongue with increasing frequency. This shows that children actively attend to the sounds in their linguistic environments and are intrinsically motivated to utter them.

Skinner further said that children acquire their early vocabularies through shaping. Shaping means the gradual building of complex behaviour patterns through the reinforcement of successive approximations of the target behaviour. For example, parents require that children's utterances be progressively closer to actual words before they are reinforced. More recent research shoes that reinforcement accelerates the growth of vocabulary in young children. To Skinner, multi-word utterances are complex stimulus – response chains that are also taught by

shaping. As children's utterances increase in length, parents foster correct word order by uttering sentences to their children and reinforcing imitation.

Although reinforcement and imitation contribute to early language development, they are best viewed as supporting rather than fully explaining it. Young children create many novel utterances that are not reinforced by or copied from others. Even when children do imitate others' language, they do so selectively focussing on building their own vocabularies and on refining aspects of language that they are working on at the moment. This takes us to the theory of the nativists.

Exercise 1

1. Name one of the proponents of the Behaviourist theory of language acquisition.
2. State clearly what the theory says.
3. Give examples of reinforcement.
4. Reinforcement and imitation fully explain the process of language development. True or False.

Answers

1. B.F. Skinner
2. Language is acquired through operant conditioning.
3. Examples of reinforcers:- praise, smile, speech in return, etc.
4. False.

3.2 The Nativist Theory of Language Acquisition

While the behaviourist theory explains some aspects of language acquisition, the nativist proponents add further insights into how children develop linguistic competence. The nativist theorists suggest that every child regardless of culture, intellectual ability or socioeconomic status inherits the genetic ability for language. According to Chomsky (1965) the young child

has amazing language skill etched into the structure of the brain. In other words, every child has an inborn tendency to acquire language. This inborn tendency is labelled 'Language Acquisition Device' (LAD). This innate tendency is found in the universality of human language abilities in the regularity of the early production of sounds, even among deaf children and in the invariant sequences of language development, regardless of which language the child is learning.

According to these theorists, LAD contains a universal grammar or set of rules common to all languages. It permits children as soon as they have acquired sufficient vocabulary to combine words into grammatically consistent novel utterances and to understand the meaning of sentences, no matter which language they hear. Because the LAD is specifically suited for language processing, children master the structure of language spontaneously and swiftly. They regarded the deliberate training by parents as unnecessary. To them, children are biologically primed to acquire language. In other words, children are genetically prewired to attend to language and to deduce the rules for constructing sentences from ideas.

There are evidences supporting Chomsky's theory in literature. We shall examine a few of them in this section. Newborn nannies are remarkably sensitive to speech sounds and they everywhere reach a major language milestone in a similar sequence. This is consistent with a biologically based language programme. Also, the ability to master a grammatically complex language system seems to be unique to humans as efforts to teach language to non human primates have met with limited success. Furthermore, evidence for specialised language area in the brain research shows that many parts of the brain are involved in language development and that each person may have a unique pattern of organisation for language ability and a sensitive period for language development that language learning occurs during one or two sensitive periods which begins at about 18-24 months and last till puberty have also been interpreted to support the theory.

It is now widely accepted that humans have a unique, biologically based capacity to acquire language. This is a major contribution of Chomsky's theory to the current views of language development. However, this theory has been challenged on several grounds. Researchers have great difficulty specifying Chomsky's universal grammar. The major problem is the absence of a complete description of these abstract grammatical structures. Moreover,

Chomsky's assumption that grammatical knowledge is innately determined does not fit with certain observations of language development. Children are found to continue to refine and generalise many grammatical terms. They engage in much piecemeal learning and making errors along the way.

Exercise 2

1. What is LAD?
2. Explain the theory of the Nativists.
3. What is the major contribution of this theory to language learning?

Answers

1. LAD is Language Acquisition Device.
2. Children are genetically prewired to attend to language and to deduce the rules for constructing sentences from ideas.
3. Humans have a unique biologically based capacity to acquire language.

3.3 The Psycholinguistic/Interactionist Theory

The proponents of this theory include Piaget (1959) and Vygotsky (1962). The proponents suggest that language acquisition involves the combination of innate ability and the environmental influences such as exposure to parental speech and reinforcement. There are two perspectives of the interactionist theory - one applies to the information-processing and the second on social interaction.

Some information-processing theorists assume that children make sense of their complex language environment by applying powerful cognitive capacities of a general kind. They noted that regions of the brain housing language also govern similar perceptual motor and cognitive abilities. The example given to support this is the fact that damage to parts of the left hemisphere results in difficulty comprehending both language and other patterned stimuli such as

music. They agreed with Chomsky's nativist perspective that infants are amazing analysers of speech and other information.

The other theorists, those who emphasise that child's social skills suggest that social skills and language experiences are centrally involved in language development. For example, an active child, well-endowed for making sense of language strives to communicate. In doing so, he cues his caregivers to provide appropriate language experiences which help him relate content and structure of language to its social meaning.

4.0 Conclusion

The process of language acquisition may appear effortless but in reality it is a major undertaking for children. Theorists have proposed three different views of how children acquire language. Theorists like Skinner believed that children acquire language through the same stimulus-response connections that influence learning in other areas and Chomsky suggests that every child is prewired to listen to language in such a way that they come to understand the rule of grammar. However, the interactionists highlight the importance of the influences of both the biological structures and the environment influences on language acquisition.

5.0 Summary

Researchers examined the theories of language development from three perspectives. There are those who believe in behaviourism. For example, Skinner (1957) argued that children acquire language through the stimulus-response connections. Children hear language spoken by parents and others. They imitate such speech and are rewarded for their efforts. This positive reinforcement encourages them to communicate more.

On the other hand, Chomsky (1990) and others believe that children are genetically prewired to attend to language. They have inborn tendency that primes the nervous system to learn grammar. However the psycholinguistic theory views language learning as a process that involves an interaction between environmental influences and an inborn tendency to acquire language.

6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment

1. With vivid examples to illustrate, describe the behaviourist theory of language development.

2. Explain the Nativist theory of language development. Give examples of research findings to support this theory.

3. What is the interactionist perspective of language development? How can you sustain this theory in line with your knowledge of language acquisition?

7.0 References

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UNIT 3: LISTENING SKILLS

CONTENT

1.0 Introduction

Listening is the language skill that children (those without hearing impairments) use the most in the outside world. Research reveals that on average, people spend 70 percent of their waking hours communicating and three-fourths of them allocated to listening and speaking. Unfortunately, despite the predominance of listening, it is the one that is taught the least in the classroom and most people get little or no training in listening. Listening is therefore referred to as the neglected or forgotten communication skill or language art. In this unit, we shall examine the definitions, roles, strategies and challenges of listening skill.

2.0 Objectives

After reading this unit and completing the related exercises, you should be able to

- Explain the concept of listening
- Discuss the roles of listening in language development
- Identify the functions that can foster listening
- Discuss the obstacles to good listening

3.0 Main body

3.1 Definitions of Listening

It is not an easy task to define listening because we use the word in everyday conversation to mean different things. For example, if a teacher says a child is not listening, it often means that the child is not thinking along with the teacher. If a parent says to a child that the child is not listening to him/her, it means the child is not obeying or doing what the parent is saying and in an advocacy context, "you are not listening" often means you are not agreeing with the advocate. Other people may define listening as "hearing what people are saying", "You

listen to the rumbling noise you hear", "it means to hear something e.g. people talking or animals making sounds, etc". Others may define listening as "paying attention and using one's imagination". From the above definitions, effective listening goes beyond merely receiving sounds. Listening is not just a noun, it could be viewed as a verb, that is, it is a process, it is what the listener does. According to McSporran (1997) listening is the necessary, interactive process that enables the brain to construct meaning from the sounds that are heard. For the purpose of this unit, listening is defined as the process of taking in information through the sense of hearing and making meaning from what was heard.

Let us compare listening with hearing so that we can distinguish between the two so as to be able to describe what effective listening is.

Table 5: Listening Versus Hearing

Listening	Hearing
Is a cognitive ability that is learned and practiced	Is a sensory function that develops on its own
Is a thought process and does not begin until children try to interpret the sounds they hear	Is the act of receiving sounds, and begins even before birth
Relies on experience, skill and practice	Depends on physiology in the ear to transmit impulses to the brain
Comprehends sensory input	Processes sensory input
Is very focussed and intentional. We have to become aware, filter our distractions and focus attention	Is involuntary and not necessarily focussed. We hear many different sounds simultaneously that compete for attention
Occurs when there is a clear purpose in mind	Does not necessarily have a specific purpose
Can be improved through practice and training	Can often be improved through technology

Often benefits from patience and wisdom of advancing age	Often declines in older adults and needs to be augmented

Source: Learning to Listen, Listening to Learn by Jilango, M.R (2007) Page 12.

The kind of listening that children need in learning environment is effective listening which involves receiving i.e. taking in the verbal or nonverbal message, attending to that is engaging effort and desire to keep our attention focussed completely on the message, assigning meaning that is interpreting or understanding the message through cultural contexts and personal intellectual and emotional process.

Exercise 1

1. Define listening.
2. Name at least three variables that affect listening.
3. What can of listening do children need in a learning environment?

Answers

1. Listening is the process of taking information through the sense of hearing and making meaning from what was heard.
2. Experience, skill and practice affect listening.
3. Effect listening that requires taking in verbal and nonverbal messages.

3.2 The Role of Listening in Language Development

Listening is where language development begins. The four communication skills are listening, speaking, reading and writing. Table 6 below shows the relationship among the four skills.

Table 6: Listening as one of the 4 Communication Skills

	Oral language relies on spoken words	Text-based language relies on print materials
Receptive- receives and interprets a message	**Listening** • Usually begins at birth to 1 year • Children learn to make sense out of the messages they hear	**Reading** • Typically begins near age 5 • Children use oral language to decipher written language
Expressive – Composes and transmits a message	**Speaking** • Often begins near the end of the first year • Children use language to express their ideas	**Writing** • Ordinarily begins near age 6 • Children use knowledge of language and printed words to express their ideas

The above table explains the relationships between listening and other communication skills.

Listening is directly linked to reading because both are receptive language skills requiring the receiver to interpret a message. Listening is so fundamental that children who have listening comprehension problems usually have problems with speaking reading and writing.

According to research, the role of listening in language development include the following:

Pre-birth to 1 year old

- A foetus attends to the mothers voice and can distinguish it from the voices of other women
- Newborns are sensitive to pitch. They cuck more rapidly when they are interested in something. When speech and other sounds are played, newborns suck more rapidly in response to language. This demonstrates a preference for speech.
- Listening affects mood. Infants on respirators breathe more rhythmically when music with a strong beat, rather than a lullaby is played softly in the background.
- Vocal imitation is one of the earliest communicative strategies used by children.
- Newborns are able to distinguish the sounds of all languages.

1 to 3 years old

- Toddlers use repetitive pointing and pantomime as important communication tools.
- Toddlers learn to interpret what another is talking about – even if an object referred to is out of sight.
- By 15 months, many toddlers have an oral vocabulary of about 10 words.
- By 16 months most toddlers can understand simple requests.
- By age 2 most children have a speaking vocabulary of about 50 words.
- 97 percent of 3-year olds can connect two or three words to form phrases and simple sentences.
- Listening requires the ability to pay attention.

3 to 8 years old

- Listening is the foundation for speaking reading, and writing in children in hearing impairments.
- By age 5 a child's receptive vocabulary soars to nearly 8,000 words.
- The relationship between listening comprehension and reading comprehension gets stronger as children's word recognition becomes increasingly automatic.

Exercise 2

1. What are the basic communication skills?
2. Name the oracy skills

Answers

1. Listening, speaking, reading and writing
2. Listening and speaking

3.3 General Functions of Listening

1. Children learn by listening because language is fundamental to perception, memory, thinking and behaviour. They listen to obtain information, learn and develop thinking skills.
2. Effective listening can make a real difference when it comes to recognising danger, making wise decisions and reacting appropriately.
3. Another important function of listening is to cultivate appreciation, enjoyment and positive attitudes and values.

3.4 Obstacles of Listening

There are four broad categories of obstacles to effective listening. These include:

- Psychological
- Cognitive and language processing

- Psychological and
- Issues with experience, skill and training

Physiological obstacles include permanent, irreversible and significant hearing loss or impairment. This is a formidable obstacle to listening. About 50 percent of severe hearing loss is thought to be genetic but other causes are injury or illness.

Cognitive and language processing obstacles: Cognitive conditions that commonly interfere with a child's ability to listen effectively include attentional difficulties, learning disabilities, language disorders and language processing problems.

Psychological obstacles: The ability to listen can be impaired by distracting or upsetting factors such as fatigue, hunger, illness or toileting needs. When children are under severe stress, for example, if they are physically or emotionally abused, they are understandably pre-occupied with that situation and may appear to be inattentive, distant and withdrawn.

Obstacles of experience, skills and training: Experience, skills and training affect listening. This includes the child's interest in the message, perception of the speaker and proficiency in the language.

Exercise 3

1. List the functions of language.
2. What are the obstacles to good listening?

Answers

1. To obtain information.
2. Physiological, psychological, cognitive and language processing.

4.0 Conclusion

The importance of listening is very crucial as this is the first communication and foundation skill children need to succeed in other language arts. Despite the predominance of

listening in the other skills, listening is least taught and it is almost neglected. Therefore, there is the need to re-awake interest in this skill and consciously strategise to inculcate the skill in the children.

5.0 Summary

In this unit, we defined listening as the process of taking in information through the sense of hearing and making meaning from what we hear and noted that children need effective listening that involves receiving information, attending to the information and assigning meaning by interpreting to understand. We established that listening is where language development starts from and listening is directly linked to reading. Functions of listening include listening to get information, ultimate appreciation and enjoyment, recognise danger and make wise decisions. Finally, obstacles to good listening include physiological, cognitive and language processing obstacle, psychological and obstacles of experience, skills and training.

6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment

1. Attempt a comprehensive definition of listening.
2. Distinguish between listening and hearing.
3. Discuss the importance of listening in language development in early childhood.
4. Explain the obstacles to good listening.
5. How can listening be promoted in early childhood?

7.0 Reference

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UNIT 4: EARLY LITERACY DEVELOPMENT (READING AND WRITING)

CONTENT

1.0 Introduction

Language and literacy are related but not identical. Although all children learn oral language, many find reading and writing more difficult. Illiteracy is a burden that some adults, carry with them throughout their lives. Research evidence supports that reading and writing go together because reading and writing are skills that children develop simultaneously. Early reading is supported and improved by early writing. Young children need reading to help them learn about writing and they need writing to learn about reading. In other words one area of development supports the area. It is as important to provide a variety of authentic writing experiences as it is to provide opportunities to explore and learn about reading. In this unit, we shall examine the concept of literacy, explain reading skills and writing skills and describe ways that the skills could be enhanced in the early years.

2.0 Objectives

After reading this unit, you should be able to:

- Explain the concept of literacy
- Describe reading and writing skills
- Identify ways to enhance literacy skills in early years

3.0 Main Body

3.1 Concept of Literacy

Literacy is language in use. It involves listening, speaking, reading and writing. These skills are all parts of early literacy learning and they are all connected. It is important for young children to learn to understand spoken language, become ware of the different sounds in language and start learning about printed letters and words. Literacy is the ability to read and use

written information appropriately in a range of contexts for example, to speak or acquire information to develop critical thinking. Being literate enables children to construct meaning from print. Children learn about literacy through the everyday things that happen in the house, classroom and in the community. It is important to encourage a love of reading and to demonstrate the power of writing to communicate ideas. As with oral language development, the early childhood years are pivotal for learning to read and write.

Exercise 1

- What is literacy?
- Identify some literacy skills
- Differentiate between literacy and language.

Answers

- Literacy is language in use. In other words, ability to construct meaning from print.
- Listening, speaking, reading and writing.
- Literacy is language in use while language is a whole system of communication.

3.2 Reading Skills

Reading is the ability to construct meaning from written materials. In most languages, reading is the cornerstone of learning. The foundation for reading is built in early childhood. Reading is a complex process that depends on perceptual, cognitive and linguistic processes. It relies on skills in the integration of visual and auditory information. Accurate awareness of the sounds in the child's language is an extremely important factor in subsequent reading achievement. Reading also requires the ability to make basic visual discriminations.

Benefits of Reading

We read to get information and use it for various benefits. These include:

- Reading is a key to unlocking the benefits society has to offer.

- Good readers find endless pleasure in literature. Reading is magical. It can transport one to worlds unknown, reveal aspects of the inner self previously undiscovered and raise possibilities unimagined.
- Reading makes textbook learning possible. It is also closely related to vocational efficiency.
- Skilled reading offers a gateway to ideas and information.
- Reading promotes civic consciousness, fosters civic engagement and rouse us from complacency.
- Reading promotes personal development. It can engender quiet reflection and move one to action.

Exercise 2

- What is reading?
- Identify two benefits of reading

Answers

- Reading is the ability to construct meanings from written materials.
- - Reading gives pleasure to readers
- It promotes personal development

3.3 Writing Skills

Writing is an extraordinary complex process for young children. It requires children to formulate personal opinions or ideas and then translate them into written symbols that represent words they use in oral language. The process is very demanding on both an emotional and intellectual level. The development of writing skills depends on a child's oral language facility and rich background experience. Writing has a special appeal to children as they feel increased permanency in comparison to speech. Children get a great feeling of creative achievement when

they can repeatedly turn to a piece of work they themselves have written. Writing celebrates the open-ended opportunity wherein children can express their feelings, ideas and fantasies. At first, children particularly at pre-school age do not distinguish writing from drawing. When they try to write, they scribble just as they do when they draw. However, as they experiment with lines and shapes by scribbling and drawing, they develop more than just fine motor skills, notice print in storybooks and observe adults making marks on paper (writing), they attempt to print letters and later words. It is around the age 4 that children's writing shows some distinctive features of print. Children often include picture-like devices in their writing, for example, using a circular shape to write 'sun'. Gradually, between ages 4 and 6, children do realise that writing stands for language. This fact takes us to the issue of handwriting.

Handwriting is the writing done with a writing material – chalk, felt pen, marker, pen, pencil, etc. It is a person's particular style of writing. Handwriting is defined as penmanship. It is a tool for communication and self-expression. The act of writing requires ability to formulate an idea in the mind, appropriate syntactic pattern, plan the correct graphic form for each letter and word and correct manipulation of the writing tool to produce letter shapes. Handwriting involves recognising and remembering different shapes (symbols) and relating them to spoken language. It entails ability to reproduce these symbols by creating one's own written communication. It is imperative to provide pre-writing activities in visual, auditory, perceptual and oral language to enhance the understanding of the basic primary principles involved in literacy generally. Moreover, there should be activities to improve the control of the hand like drawing, painting, moulding, building, colouring, matching exercises. These activities will ensure eye-hand coordination, left-right orientation and gain fine motor control.

Children will advance in perception to contribute to their ability to print/write. Writing centre could be created to provide many opportunities for early writing experiences which are essential for the literacy development. Simple writing materials such as pencils, pens, crayons, markers, recycled paper for rough drafts, lined paper for finished writing, etc. should be made available in the child's environment to promote writing.

Exercise 3

- List three pre-writing activities
- Why is writing important to the child?
- How can you enhance writing?

Answers

- Pre-writing activities are scribbling, drawing and painting.
- Writing helps children to express their feelings, ideas and fantansies.
- Provide pre-writing activities

  Creating writing centres

  Provide writing materials

3.4 Literacy Teaching Strategies

There are countless ways to encourage children's love of reading, writing, speaking and listening. Here are some of the best ways. As you read through, think about how many of these ideas can be worked into children's play activities.

1. **Conversation:** It is important to hold meaningful thought – provoking conversation with children. When talking with children, listen and respond to what they have to say. Use unusual words, expand what they say, offer more description and use more grammatically mature language. Challenge children to imagine, remember and think about things they see and hear around them. Invite them to play with sounds and words and think about spoken language itself. These activities will keep the conversation lively and children will actively participate using all their senses.
2. **Reading Aloud:** High-quality children's books should be used. Read aloud to the child/children at least once every day. Share a variety of stories, poems and information over time. Talk about the text, before, during and after reading. Offer activities related

to the materials read aloud. Select the favourites among the materials and read again and again.

3. **Exploring the Sounds of Language:** Exploring the sounds of language will increase phonological awareness. Children have to play with sounds and words and often find this quite funny. Play games and listen to stories, poems and songs that involve:
   - **Rhyme –** words that end with the same sound.
   - **Alliteration –** words that begin with the same letter
   - **Sound matching -** find which word begins with a specific sound e.g. "Listen to the word duck. Duck starts with the /d/ sound. Which of these words starts with the same sound as duck: bird, dog, or cat?"
4. **Include Alphabet Activities:** Provide materials to help children learn the letters of the alphabet. The list could include ABC books, magnetic letters, alphabet blocks and puzzles and alphabet charts. These materials help to connect level names to meaningful things for children.
5. **Support emergent readers as they try to read books and other forms of print**: Young children need ties and spaces to explore books and print on their own or with friends. You can help them by:
   - Reading favourite books especially predictable books with which children can chime in.
   - Fill the child's/children's environment with meaningful print such as daily schedules, labels that show where materials are stored, reminders or creating a well-designed library centre stocked with lots of good books.
6. **Support emergent writing:** Young children need easy access to materials so they can build their writing skills, including scribble writing random letter strings and invented spelling. Ensure to offer the children:
   - A demonstration of writing
   - Opportunities for meaningful writing such as writing library books checkout slips, charts that summarised a shared experience, etc.
   - Writing materials children can use in their play e.g. pencils and notepads to take orders or create lists.

7. **Explain how books and print work**: While introducing and reading books or other texts, help children learn the conventions of print by
   - Pointing to the print as you read it;
   - Inviting children to notice the differences between pictures and print;
   - Showing how books in English are read from left to right and top to bottom;
   - Pointing out different parts of books like the cover and the title page;
   - Encourage them to join in with repeated lines when you read their favourite stories.
8. **Offer activities that explore a topic:**

   When children choose and then study a topic such as shoes, they gain valuable background knowledge and have opportunities to use reading, writing and language skills. Children can listen to the teacher read topic-related information books and look at the books on their own. Children can gather data using observation, experiments and interviews, act out what they have learned during dramatic play or rewind observations and information.

4.0 Conclusion

Above all we have discussed in this unit, ensure that children enjoy and succeed in reading, writing and spoken experiences. When children have fun with literacy activities, they will come back again and again creating healthy learning habits now and for years to come.

5.0 Summary

Literacy refers to the language in use. It involves listening, speaking, reading and writing. Reading is the ability to construct meaning from written materials. Reading is a key to unlocking the benefits society has to offer. Writing has a special appeal to children. Literacy development can be enhanced with the following strategies – conversation, reading aloud, exploring the sounds of language including alphabet activities, supporting emergent readers and writing and explaining how books and print work.

6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment

1. Discuss the difference between language and literacy.

2. Make a case for including reading into the school time-table for children.

3. Why should teachers teach children writing?

4. Discuss in details the strategies one can use to enhance literacy development among children in early years.

7.0 References/Further Readings

Benson, H.S. (2008). Emergent Writing: Developing writing skills in the early childhood classroom. Best Practices PBS Teachers (Online) www.pbs.org/teacher/earlychildhood/articles/emergentwriting.html.

Fisher, Carol S. And Ann Terry (1997). Children's Language and the Language Arts. New York: McGraw Hill Book Co.

Masielle, T.L., and Trivette, C.M. (2006). Bringing the research to practice group. Staris CT: Centre for Early Literacy Learning.

National Association for the Education of Young Children (2009). Teaching Young Children. Washington DC. NAEYC Publication.

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UNIT 5: THE ROLE OF LANGUAGE IN EARLY YEARS

CONTENT

1.0 Introduction

The importance of language in early years cannot be over-emphasised because language development is a crucial part of early childhood development. Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky observe that while children are developing thinking skills, they simultaneously build a symbol that aid their comprehension of the world because the development of the thought and language are closely associated with their development. In this unit, we shall examine the role of language development of the cognitive, emotional, social and the preschool development of the child and his literacy acquisition.

2.0 Objectives

After reading this unit, you should be able to:

- Explain the role of language development on children's cognitive development
- Discuss the importance of language development on the psychosocial development of the child
- Discuss the role of language in the acquisition of literacy skills

3.0 Main Body

3.1 Language and Cognitive Development

Language is critical for cognitive development. Language and cognitive development are intrinsically connected. The journey starts with the brain cells or neurons that send signals through axons. The axons develop myelin sheaths called cells that insulate the axons and enable them to send messages 100 times faster. The area of the brain where language comprehension is controlled (Werniche's area) becomes myelinated several months before the part of the brain responsible for language production has started developing. Children therefore first develop comprehension called receptive language and later expressive language develop.

During the preschool years, children develop language skills that help to improve their memory, curiosity, concentration, thinking and reasoning skills. These skills are useful for

acquiring new vocabulary, grammar skills and symbolic thought. Children are capable of using their imagery aspect of their thinking in order to express ideas, ask questions, link between past and the future.

Exercise 1

- Name the first stage of language development in children.
- Identify some factors that enhance language development.

Answers

- The first stage of language development in children is the comprehension stage.
- Factors that enhance language development are memory, curiosity, concentration, reasoning skills.

3.2 Language and Emotional Development

Language is closely tied with emotional development. This connection starts immediately after the baby is born. The first form of communication with the mother or parents is by gazing, later on smiling, cooing and babbling follow. These actions elicit talking and touching from the mother. Later, the infants use nonverbal to communicate how he is feeling and receive appropriate emotional support needed. Later the child will use vocabulary to express his emotion of fear, anger, sadness, happiness, etc.

Research has shown that children that listen attentively and follow instructions will understand how to keep themselves and others safe. Children use language to express their anger or frustration instead of using physical means such as temper tantrums, punches or kicking. Children develop empathy by seeing from another person's point of view. Children have fun when they play with words. They sometimes play with invented words and sentences which may be nonsense songs or rhymes.

Language and Social Development

Children use language to communicate. As they grow older, they use speech more and more to exchange ideas and information thereby increasing in vocabulary growth. When they

have well developed language skills, clear speech, they are confident to express their opinions and enjoying playing with other children. Such children are at an advantage in getting along with their peers. These help children to understand the importance of sharing and taking turns. They tend to enjoy cooperative, play, creative play and games that require instructions or rules.

3.3 Language and Academic Development

Language development is one of the strongest predictors of academic success. Young children that are school ready are those who have extensive vocabularies and can speak fluently in conversations. If they have internalised rules of grammar, then they tend to be able to read easily than children without such skills. As we have learned earlier on, language development forms the basis for learning to read. Children extend their understanding of grammar through conversions with people particularly teachers and parents by sharing pictures, stories, songs, rhymes, etc. These in turn help with reading comprehension. In addition, speaking, listening, reading and writing develop concurrently rather than sequentially. In order to read and read children must understand that letters are symbols representing the sounds of speech, children who enjoy using language and develop a love of books tend to enjoy mark-activities such as using crayons on paper, or chalk on chalkboard. These motivate them to communicate using symbols. More importantly children who cannot express their thoughts in a coherent manner or slow with speaking or speech development sometimes may be in danger of language delay or some other types of developmental problem.

4.0 Conclusion

The importance of language in early childhood development cannot be overemphasised. It contributes to the cognitive, social emotional and academic development of the children. Children who show signs of delay and some developmental problems are easily identified for intervention.

5.0 Summary

Language development is a crucial part of early childhood development. Language is critical to cognitive development. Language skills help to improve children's cognitive skills such as reasoning, memory, curiosity, etc. Language is also tied to emotional development. Children use language to express their feelings instead of using physical means like kicking, punching, etc. When children develop large volume of vocabulary, they are confident to interact and cooperate with others during play. Language is one of the strongest academic determinants.

6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment

1. Explain how language development affects cognitive development.
2. Describe the role of language develop in psychosocial development of preschool children.
3. What is the difference between language and literacy? Explain the difference with vivid examples.

7.0 References/Further Reading

Benson, H.S. (2008). Emergent Writing: Developing writing skills in the early childhood classroom. Best Practices PBS Teachers (Online) www.pbs.org/teacher/earlychildhood/articles/emergentwriting.html.

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MODULE 3: SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

UNIT 1: OVERVIEW OF SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

CONTENT

1.0 Introduction

Children are social beings. They need productive relationships with other people to lead happy, satisfying lives. The social experiences they have in childhood provide the foundation on which all human relations are developed. The social competences they acquire and develop during childhood have a powerful influence on their later lives.

Children experience hundreds of different emotions each day. Emotions are linked to everything children do and are prompted by numerous happenings both large and small. They are what cause children to be affected by the people and events around them. Emotions help children to survive and provide them with information about their wellbeing. Emotions influence children's cognitive functioning and serve as a form of communication. In this unit we shall examine the concepts of social and emotional developments and other related emotional issues.

2.0 Objectives

After reading this unit and completing the related exercises, you should be able to:

- Define what social and emotional developments are
- Explain how children develop emotions
- Discuss emotional issues such as anger, fear, sadness, etc

3.0 Main Body

3.1 Social Development

Social development involves the processes of changes over time in the way we relate to others. Social development influences one's interactions with others and how effectively one navigates interactions and relationships.

3.2 Emotional Development

Emotional development is the ability to identify and understand emotions within oneself and to respond appropriately to the emotions of others. Children's emotional development is characterised by five developmental sequences. These include the predictable phases through which:

- Emotions emergence
- Self-awareness
- Children come to recognise other people's emotions
- Emotions regulation (Self-control)
- Emotional tasks

Exercise 1

- What is social development?
- Explain what emotional development is.

Answers

- Social development is the process of changes overtime in the way we relate to others.
- Emotional development is the ability to identify and understand feelings within one self and to respond appropriately to the feelings of others.

3.3 How children's emotions develop (Emotion Emergence)

Scientists believe that new born infants real emotions do not appear until weeks after their birth. Emotions will emerge when their cognitive processes are developed enough to allow them to interpret what they are experiencing. However, babies experience varying emotions within their first year. They may not display all the emotions they would ever have. Emotions increase in number and complexity as children mature. Primary emotions include joy, anger, sadness and fear. From this other more differentiated emotions eventually develop. For example, joy branches out to include surprise, affection, and pride. The primary emotion of anger serves as a foundation for the eventual development of frustration, annoyance, envy, fury and disgust. The emergence of emotion in children is explained in figure 2.

Age	Emotions			
6 weeks	Joy			
3 – 4 months		ANGER		
5 – 7 months			SADNESS	FEAR
8 – 10 months	Surprise		Separation Anxiety	Shyness
End of first year	Elation	Frustration	Embarrassment	Stranger distress anxiety
End of second year	Affection	Defiance, Envy & Contempt		
Third year	Pride		Shame	Shame
	Empathy	Empathy	Guilt Empathy	Guilt Empathy

Figure 2: The emergence of children's emotions during the 1st three years of life

Source: Guiding Children's Social Development and Learning by Kostelnik et al page 147

Self-Awareness: This is the process of understanding and recognising one's own feelings. The newborns come without any sense of self. Infants' exploratory experiences in which they see themselves produce effects by their actions provide the initial basis for developing a sense of efficacy. Young children's self-conscious emotions signal their sense of self. It has been observed that infants start to behave intentionally toward the end of their first year. This can be

illustrated by this example: shaking a rattle produces predictable sounds, energetic kicks shake their cribs, and screams bring adults. By repeatedly observing that environmental events occur with action, but not in its absence, infants learn that actions produce effects. They learn that their goals frequently conflict with the goals of others. Soon they realise that the self can be the focus of others intentions and emotional reactions. As a result, they become increasingly sensitive to variations in caregivers emotional messages. Infants who experience success in controlling environmental events become more attentive to their own behaviour and more competent in learning new efficacious responses, than are infants for whom the same environmental events occur regardless of how they behave.

Emotional Regulation (Self-Control): Self-awareness can contribute to effortful control that is the extent to which children can inhibit impulses, manage negative emotions and behave in socially acceptable ways. These capacities emerge between 12 and 18 months.

Resilience: Resilience encompasses four themes. These include

- Critical mindedness which helps protect against experiences of discrimination and facilitates a critique of existing social conditions.
- Active engagement: This includes behaviour in school, at home and with peers such that children proactively and positively impact their environment.
- Flexibility promotes adaptation to cognitive, emotional, social and physical development.

Exercise

- Identify some emotions that are noticeable among children before their first birthday.
- What is self-awareness?

Answers

- Some emotions of children from birth to 12months are joy, surprise, anger, sadness.

- Self-awareness is the process of understanding and recognizing one's own feelings.

4.0 Conclusion

Emotions colour our lives including the children. According to Rathus (2006), we are green with envy, red with anger, blue with sorrow. Positive emotions such as love can fill our days with pleasure and negative emotions such as fear, depression and anger can fill us with dread and make each day a chore.

5.0 Summary

Emotion is a state of feeling that has physiological, situational and cognitive components. A number of theories concerning the development of emotions have been offered by Abraham Maslow, Erik Erikson and others. Researchers agreed that a handful of emotions are shown by children during the first few months. Emotions develop in an orderly manner and the development is linked to cognitive development and social experience.

6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment

1. What are emotions?

2. Describe the emotional development of children from birth to 12 months.

3. Write short notes on the following: self-awareness, emotional regulation or self-control, resilience.

7.0 References

Erikson, E.H. (1963). Childhood and society. New York: Norton.

Rathus, Spencer A. (2006). Childhood: Voyages in Development (Second Ed.). United States: Thomson Wadsworth.

UNIT 2: THEORIES SUPPORTING SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

CONTENT

1.0 Introduction

In every field of study including the study of children, theories guide the collection of information, its interpretation and its application to real-life situations. In the last unit, we discussed what emotion is and described the process of emotional development in children. In this unit therefore, we shall look at what some psychosocial theories say about the child and examine the aspects that are relevant and support the knowledge of social and emotional development of the child. The theoretical framework of these great thinkers shapes several skills and behaviours that reflect underlying capabilities of children. In this unit, we shall discuss the theories of Abraham Maslow and Erik Erikson and their contributions to the social and emotional development of children in the early years.

2.0 Objectives

After reading this unit and completing the related exercises, you should be able to

- Explain the Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory
- Discuss what is attachment theory and
- Describe Erikson's stages of psychosocial development.

3.0 Main Body

3.1 Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory

Abraham Maslow was one of the proponents of the humanist theory. He developed a hierarchy of human needs which he called depreciation needs. He presented human needs in a pyramid model that presents a hierarchy of human needs that must be met before humans can be free to develop their most creative characteristics.

Maslow's hierarchy model has physiological needs at the base. Here basic human needs for food, water and shelter would have to be met. The deprivations needs include the need for food, for body maintenance, shelter for protection from danger and water for survival. Safety need is part of deprivation needs. This is necessary to maintain an orderly and nonthreatening environment. Next to this, Maslow's theory presents the needs of love and belonging. To be part of a group, there is the need to have love and affection. Esteem needs focus on need to hold oneself in high esteem and to be held in high esteem by others. Franz and Anselmo (1995) submit that only after deprivation needs have been satisfied can people be motivated by being needs or the pursuit of values. The highest level of the hierarchy is the self-actualisation. This presents the highest possible level of functioning so that the individual's skills and abilities are brought to full potential. Children need environments in which they feel safe and secure. They need secure relationships, supporting love and belonging. Children need to feel valued and competent.

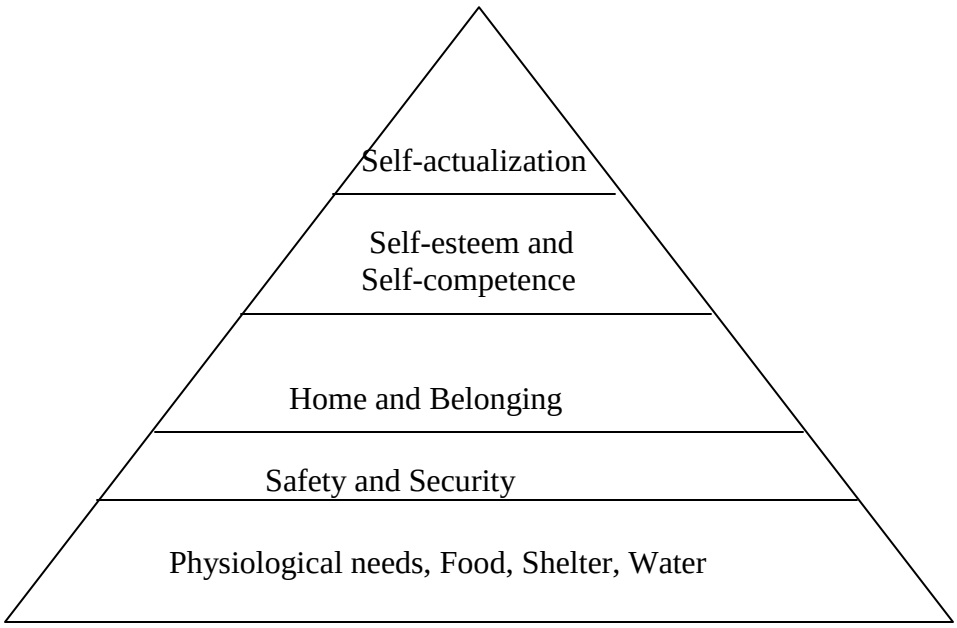

Figure 3: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Source: Woolfolk, Anita (2006). Educational Psychology.

Exercise 1

1. Identify the five levels of Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

2. Which aspects of the theory are relevant to social-emotional development of the child.

Answers

1. Physiological, safety and security, love and belonging, self-esteem and competence and self-actualization.

2. Children need environments in which they feel safe and secure, food and water for body maintenance etc.

3.2 Erikson's Theory of Psychosocial Development

Erik Erikson was one of the psycho-analysts whose work has influenced our understanding of emotional status of children. Erikson built on the theory of Sigmund Freud by expanding the five stages of emotional levels identified by Freud. He identified eight emotional stages. In his theory, the stages are sequential. He pointed out that it is necessary for children to resolve one stage positively in order to be successful with the reset. According to Erikson (1968), normal development must be understood in relation to each culture's life situations.

Table 7: Erikson's Psychosocial Development

Psychosocial Stage	Approximate Age	Task
Basic trust versus mistrust	Birth – 1 year	• To establish a trusting relationship with a primary caregiver • To develop trust in self, others and the world as a place where needs are met
Autonomy versus shame and doubt	1 – 3 years	• To strive for independence

Initiative versus guilt	3 – 6 years	• To plan and carry out activities • Learn society's boundaries
Industry versus inferiority	6 – 12 years	• To be productive and successful
Identity versus role confusion	12 – 20 years (Adolescence)	• To establish social and occupational identities
Intimacy versus isolation	20 – 40 years (emerging adulthood)	• To form strong friendships and achieve a sense of love and companionship
Generativity versus stagnation	40 – 60 years Adulthood	• To be productive in terms of family and work
Integrity versus despair	65+ years (old age)	• To look back at life as meaningful and productive.

Source: Erikson, E. H. (1968). Erikson's psychosocial development.

The first four of these stages are helpful for the understanding of social and emotional development at early childhood stage of development. As it could be observed, each of the stages is identified by its contrasting outcomes. For example, in Basic trust versus Mistrust, children (birth to 1 year) gain a sense of trust or confidence that the world is god from warm and responsive care. However, mistrust occurs when infants have to wait too long for comfort and when they are handled harshly.

In anatomy versus shame and doubt, between ages 1 and 3, anatomy is fostered when parents permit reasonable free choice of the use of new mental and motor skills. When they are not allowed, then there could be shame and doubt. The import of this is the fact that at each stage of development, if the social environment fails to provide the child with sufficient guidance

to allow for a positive resolution of the stage, then the child emerges from the stage with psychological problems that make the next stage of crisis more difficult to resolve.

Exercise 2

1. How many stages did Erikson identify in his theory of psychosocial development?
2. How many of them are relevant to early childhood education?

Answers

1. 8
2. 4

4.0 Conclusion

We have established in this unit that the stage theories of Maslow and Erikson and that of Bowlby have helped to explain the social-emotional development of children. They describe the relation of the individual's emotional needs to the social environment. They offered the basic framework for understanding the needs of young children in relation to society.

5.0 Summary

Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory presents a hierarchy of human needs, physiological needs represent the basic whereas self-actualisation represents the pinnacle. From this theory, we know that children need environments in which they feel safe and secure. Children need secure relationships supporting love and belonging. They need to feel valued and competent, supported, self-esteem and self-competence.

In his psychosocial theory, Erikson saw development as a passage through a series of stages each with its particular goals, concerns, accomplishments and dangers. The stages are interdependent. Accomplishments at later stages depend on how conflicts are resolved in the early years.

6.0 Tutors Marked Assignment

- How do the theories of Maslow and Erikson provide a rationale for supporting social emotional development?
- Explain the emotional theory of Abraham Maslow.
- What are the implications of Erikson's emotional theory?

7.0 References

Darragh, Johnna C. (2010). Introduction to Early Childhood Education: Equating and Inclusion. Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Pearson Education, Inc.

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UNIT 3: BOWLBY'S ETHNOLOGICAL THEORY OF ATTACHMENT AND BONDING

1.0 Introduction

Attachment is the strong affectionate tie new born, infants and children have for special people particularly the primary caregivers who may be the parents, child minders or teachers in their lives that lead to pleasurable experiences and joy when they interact with them. They are usually comforted by being near to them in times of stress. Towards the end of the first year, children have become attached to familiar people who have been responding to their needs. In this unit, we shall examine the theory of attachment and its implication for the children in early years.

2.0 Objectives

After reading this and responding to the exercise, you should be able to:

- Define what attachment/bonding is;
- Explain the theory of attachment:
- Discuss the role of attachment in the child's development.

3.0 Main Body

3.1 Bowlby's Ethological Theory of Attachment

Bowlby (1980) recognises the infant's emotional ties to the caregiver as an evolved response that promotes survival. According to this theorist, social-emotional literacy depends on relationships. Through these relationships with others, children learn information about themselves and what they can expect from people in their world. One of the main theories supporting the vital role of relationships in children's social-emotional development is attachment theory. The quality of relationships children have in their first years of life affects their lifelong quality of relationships.

One of the proponents of attachment theory was Bowlby (1980). His work was extended by Ainsworth (1978). According to attachment theory, the quality of relationships children form in their first years of life affects their lifelong quality of relationships. These include attachments with parents, primary caregivers and other adults. Attachment theorists believe that how infants are treated in their first year of life has an impact on how they respond to their primary attachment figure when anxious. Securely attached infants will seek out comfort. Insecurely attached infants will respond in one of two ways, either they will avoid seeking out comfort as they have not learned they will be comforted or they will react in a manner that demonstrates a desire for comfort coupled with anger or ambivalence.

The function of attachment behaviour is to keep an adult, who provides food, protection and comfort close to the infant. A mother who provides consistent, responsive care is frequently the person to whom the child is attached. Children who form what are called secure attachments with caregivers receive comfort when needed and are more confident to explore their world. Children who form insecure or disorganised attachments can be fearful, sad, anxious, clinging, rejecting or angry in interactions with the caregivers.

Exercise 1

- What is attachment?
- Name two of the proponents of attachment theory;
- Give examples of behaviours that can be associated with insecure attachment.

Answers

- Attachment is the strong affection tie we have for other people.
- Bowlby, Ainsworth, Water and Wall etc
- Fear, Anxiety, Anger etc.

3.2 Four Phases of Attachment

Bowlby's theory states that the infant's emotional tie to the caregiver is an evolved response that promotes survival. According to him, the infant's relationship with the parents begins as a set of innate signals that call the adult to the baby's side. Over time, a true affectionate bond forms. This is however supported by the new cognitive and emotional capacities that the child is developing and of course the history of warm and sensitive care that the primary caregiver is providing.

Bowlby (1980) identified four phases of attachment as shown in Table 8.

Table 8: Phases of Attachment

Phases of Attachment	Age of Onset	Characteristics
Pre-attachment	Birth to 6 weeks	• Use signals such as gazing, crying, smiling and grasping to get close to parents/caregivers
Attachment in the making	6 weeks to 8 months	• Begin to recognise familiar faces (parents, caregivers) • Respond differently to strangers
Clear-cut attachment	6 to 8 months – 18 to 24 months	• Display distress on separation from familiar caregivers. • Demonstrate stranger anxiety
Formation of reciprocal relationships	18 months to 2 years throughout childhood	• Learn to negotiate with familiar caregivers

		• Are willing to participate in give-and-take relationships

Source: Essentials of childcare and Early Education by Estes, Lindas.

Having gone through these four processes, children construct an enduring affectionate tie to the caregiver that they can use as a secure base in the parent's absence. This image serves as an internal working model. The internal working model is a set of expectations derived from early caregiving experiences about the availability of the attachment figures This model becomes a vital part of personality, serving as guide for all future close relationships. To Bowlby (1980), children continually revise and expand their internal working model as their cognitive, emotional and social capacities increase and as they interact with parents and form other close bonds with adults, siblings and friends.

Ainsworth, Water and Wall (1978) studied infant caregivers bonds and they also identified four categories of attachment as shown in Table 4 below.

Table 9: Categories of Attachment

Categories of Attachment	Characteristics
Secure attachment	• Are distressed on the departure of familiar caregivers but easily comforted on their return.
Avoidant attachment	• Are distressed on departure of familiar caregivers but avoid the caregivers on their return.
Resisted attachment	• Stay close to familiar caregivers before their departure and display angry behaviour toward caregivers when they return.

Disorganised/disoriented attachment	• May not resist familiar caregivers but may display contradictory behaviours such as walking slowly toward or turning away from caregiver.

Source: Essentials of Child Care and Early Education by Estes, Lindas.

Exercise 2

- How many phases are there in Bowlby' theory of attachment?
- Name the phases

Answers

- Four phases
- Pre- attachment, attachment in the making, clear-cut attachment and reciprocal relationship.

3.3 Implication for Classroom Practice

Much of the theory on teacher/caregiver- child relationship relies on the principles found in attachment constructs in which parent-child relationships define both the social-emotional competence of the child and the desirable emotional qualities of teacher-child relationships (such as secure attachment). In this view, teachers function as attachment figures and children who are "securely attached" to teachers are likely to use the teacher as a secure base and explore their physical and social environments. Presumably, children developing close relationships with their teacher can utilise the support received from this positive relationship to explore the school environment.

In contrast, dependent and conflictual teacher-child relationships may have negative effects, interfering with learning and academic achievement. When the fit between teacher

expectations and child actions are at odds, children lack the potential support of an attachment figure.

4.0 Conclusion

The attachment theory reveals that the quality of relationships children have affects their lifelong quality of relationships. The infant's emotional tie to the mother or primary caregiver is the foundation for all later relationships. In other words, the infant-parent bond is vitally important. However, research has shown now that later development is also influenced by the continuing quality of the parent-child relationship.

5.0 Summary

Attachment is a powerful emotional tie or bond between two people but in this unit attachment or bonding is the relationship between children and the caregivers usually the mother. Attachment keeps infants close to their mothers which is important for getting food and comfort and staying away from danger. Theorists such as Bowlby and Ainsworth identified phases and categories of attachment. Many factors such as opportunities infants have to form close, stable relationships with one familiar caregiver, history of warm and affections received during infancy all influence attachment.

6.0Tutor Marked Assignment

- Explain the Ethological theory of attachment propounded by Bowlby.
- Discuss in details the four phases of attachment as described by Bowlby.
- Identify the Ainsworth four categories of attachment.
- What are the implications of attachment or bonding for the growing child?
- What is attachment theory?
- What are the implications of this theory for young children?

7.0 References/Further Readings

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MODULE 4: MORAL DEVELOPMENT

UNIT 1: PIAGET'S STAGES OF MORAL DEVELOPMENT

CONTENT

1.0 Introduction

Moral development is a complex issue. It is an important part of the emotional-social aspect of personality. It is also part of cognitive domain. Moral development concerns the basis on which children make judgements that an act is right or wrong. Estes defines it as the ability to reason and make decision in social situations. It is also an affective domain component. In this unit, we shall be examining Jean Piaget's stages of moral development.

2.0 Objectives

After reading this unit and responding to the exercises, you should be able to:

- Define moral development
- Discuss Piaget's stages of moral development

3.0 Main Body

3.1 An Overview of Moral Development

Jean Piaget was one of the human theorists that explored moral development and moral reasoning within the context of cognitive development. He believed that the ways in which individuals perceive and understand situations affect their interpretation of morality. For many years, Piaget observed children playing games such as marbles and making judgements on the seriousness of the wrong of characters in stories. On the basis of these observations, he concluded that children's moral judgements develop in two major overlapping stages; moral realism and autonomous morality.

Exercise 1

1. Express Jean Piaget's opinion about moral reasoning.

2. How many stages did Piaget propose in his theory?

Answers

1. According to Jean Piaget, moral reasoning undergoes the same pattern as cognitive development.

2. Two stages

3.2 Piaget's Stages of Moral Development

In Piaget's opinion, moral reasoning undergoes the same cognitive development pattern around the world. He believed that children in the sensorimotor and pre-operational stages of cognitive development who rely on perception rather than logic to build their understanding of the world are in their prenormal stage of moral development. The moral considerations that children weigh at a given age are likely to reflect the values of the social and cultural settings in which they are being reared.

The Stage of Moral Realism

The first stage of Piaget's moral development is usually referred to as the stage of moral realism or of objective morality. The stage emerges between ages 5 and 6. Children consider behaviour to be correct when it confirms to authority or to the rules of the game. At this age, children perceive rules as embedded in the structure of things. Rules to them reflect ultimate reality. The children see right rules and wrong as absolute. They are not seen as deriving from people to meet social needs.

Although children are less egocentric at the stage of development, perspectives are still dependent on concrete experiences so they continue to make decisions about morality based on positive or negative consequences rather than on intentions. They align moral behaviours according to the degree of parental punishment. They view rules and consequences as absolute

and inflexible, for example, five or six year old children who lie or steal usually believe that they will be found out or at least punished for their acts.

The Stage of Autonomous Morality

Piaget (1965) found that when children reach the age of 9 to 11, they begin to show autonomous morality. They understand that rules are social decisions subject to revision through the cooperation of interested parties. They come to view social rules as arbitrary agreements that can be changed. They no longer automatically view obedience to authority figures as right. They realise that circumstances can require breaking rules.

Implications: Children who show autonomous morality are capable of flexible operational thought. They can focus on multiple dimensions and so they consider not only social rules but also the motives of the wrongdoer. They also show a greater capacity to take the point of view of others to empathise with them. Decentration and increased empathy brought children to weigh the intentions of the wrongdoer more heavily than the amount of damage done. Piaget (1965) believed that autonomous morality can be created through egalitarian relationships as children interact with others and see that different people have different rules. There is a gradual shift to a morality cooperation as children come to understand that people make rules and people can change them.

Exercise 2

1. At what age do children enter the stage of moral realism?
2. Explain the concept of moral cooperation.

Answers

1. Between 5 and 6
2. This is a stage of development wherein children realise that people make rules and people can change them.

4.0 Conclusion

Children develop a sense of right and wrong at preoperational stage. Their moral development is tied to moral reasoning, their thinking about right and wrong and their active construction of moral judgement.

5.0 Summary

Piaget identified two stages of moral development. This includes moral realism, and autonomous morality. Moral realism is a stage when children make decisions on positive or negative consequences rather than on intentions. Autonomous morality is the second stage of Piaget's stages of morality. In this stage, children base moral judgements on the intentions of the wrongdoer and on the amount of damage done. Social rules are viewed as agreements that can be charged.

6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment

1. Define the following concepts:- Pre-moral stage, moral realism and autonomous morality.
2. Explain the rationale for the decision of 10 year old child on social justice.
3. What are the implications of autonomous morality?

7.0 References

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Wink, J., & Putney, I., (2002). A vision of Vygotsky. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

UNIT 2: KOHLBERG'S THEORY OF MORAL REASONING

CONTENT

1.0 Introduction

In toddlerhood, children tend to use rewards and punishments as their primary criteria for figuring out if their actions or those of another child are right or wrong. They determine that action that are praised by adults are "good" and those that they are corrected are "wrong". As they grow, they discover that not all transgressions are treated equally. As a result of many such experiences, they begin to make distinctions between moral violations such as lying, stealing, hurting others and social – conventional interactions such as poor table manners, greeting someone improperly, speaking, rudely. By the age of 5 and 6, they classify some actions as "very wrong" if they result in physical harm to people e.g. hitting people or breaking things. Children categorise actions that disrupt the social order of the group such as forgetting to say "please" as "not very wrong". Older children use more sophistication reasoning in thinking about rules and expectations. They expand their definitions of hurtful behaviour beyond physical actions to include psychological impacts such as hurting people's feelings or betraying as hurting people's feelings or betraying secrets, etc. They recognise the need for maintaining some form of social order to protect the rights of individuals and groups. In this unit, we shall discuss how Kohlberg (1969) evaluated the moral reasoning of both children and adults by presenting them with moral dilemmas.

2.0 Objectives

After reading this unit, you should be able to

- Define moral dilemmas
- Explain Kohlberg's levels and stages of moral development

3.0 Main body

3.1 Kohlberg's Background

Lawrence Kohlberg was born in Bronx, New York. He is known for his research in the psychology of the development of children. Kohlberg's theory of moral development is based in part on Piaget's ideas that we discussed in Unit 1. His theory is frequently used to explain how children view morality.

According to Kohlberg (1969), morality develops in stages, each successive level representing a more mature form of reasoning. After a careful study of the responses of many persons to different imaginary moral dilemmas, moral dilemmas are situations in which no choice is clearly and indisputably right. Kohlberg divided moral development into three sequential levels: (a) a pre-conventional moral reasoning – here judgement is based solely on a person's own needs and perceptions (b) Conventional, where the expectations of society and law are taken into account and (c) post-conventional, here judgements are based on abstract, more personal principles of justice that are not necessarily defined by society's laws.

Exercise 1

- Where was Lawrence Kohlberg born?
- Identify the similarity between Piaget's theory of moral reasoning and Kohlberg's theory.
- What is moral dilemma?

Answers

- Kohlberg was born in New York
- Both theories propose levels and stages of moral reasoning.
- Moral dilemma is a situation in which no choice is clearly and indisputably right.

3.2 Kohlberg's levels and Stages of Moral Development

Table 10: Kohlberg's Levels and Stages of Moral Reasoning

Level of Moral Reasoning	Stage of Moral Reasoning	Characteristics
Pre-Conventional Level Typically begins in Early Childhood	1. Punishment – Obedience orientation	• Rules are obeyed to avoid punishment • A good or bad action is determined by its physical consequences. The goal is to avoid punishment.
	2. Personal reward/instrumental orientation	• Personal needs determine right and wrong • Favours are returned along the lines of "you scratch my back, I'll scratch yours". • The goal is gaining personal advantage or reward
Conventional Level Typically begins in Middle Childhood	3. Good boy – Nice girl orientation	• Good means "nice". It is determined by what pleases, aids and is approved by others. It is based on the expectations and approval of others.

	4. Law – and –order orientation	• Moral behaviour helps others and socially approved. • Laws are absolute. • Authority must be respected and the social order must be maintained. • Feel an obligation or duty to follow the rules
Post-Conventional Level Typically begins in adolescence	5. Contractual, legalistic or social contract orientation 6. Universal Ethical Princuple Orientation	• Consider the larger needs of society over personal needs • Good and right are matters of individual conscience and involves abstract concepts of justice, human dignity and equality.

Source: Rathus, A. Spencer (2006). Childhood: Voyages in Development.

Exercise 2

- How many levels of moral reasoning does Kohlberg's morality reasoning theory have?
- How many stages are there in all?
- Describe one of the characteristics of the "good-boy-nice-girl" orientation stage.

Answers

- 3 levels
- 6 stages
- Characteristics of "good-boy-nice-girl" orientation.
    - Morality is based on the expectations and approval of others.

3.3 Pedagogic Implications of Kohlberg's Theory of Moral Reasoning

In Kohlberg's theory of moral reasoning, there is evidence that the different levels of reasoning identified do form a hierarchy with each stage showing an advancement in reasoning over the one before. However, his stage theory has been criticised, that in reality, the stages do not seem to be separate, sequenced and consistent. That people often give reasons for moral choices that reflect several different stages simultaneously. Moreover, it is observed in everyday life, making moral choices involves more than reasoning. Emotions, competing goals, relationships and practical considerations all affect choices.

Despite the criticisms, Kohlberg has contributed to classroom practice by considering the issue of how education can raise the level of morality. He took the position that children do not acquire new levels of moral behaviour whether by being told what to do or how to behave or by being corrected. According to him, at each stage, the individual has to discover the possibility to new ways of thinking about morality and the discoveries will permit him/her to move to the next level. What the teacher has to do is to provide the conditions that permit children to manage these discoveries themselves.

4.0 Conclusions

Kohlberg's levels of moral reasoning are frequently used to explain how children view morality. There are evidences that the stages of morality are not culturally determined in the sense that different cultures might produce a different series of stages. As with the taxonomies

having a relationship to the theory of Piaget, the assumption is made that a person has to complete each stage before he can proceed to the next stage.

5.0 Summary

Kohlberg is known for his research in the psychology of moral development of children. He based his theory in part on Piaget's ideas of cognitive development. Kohlberg develops a detailed sequence of stages of moral reasoning or judgement about right and wrong. He divided moral development into three levels: (i) pre-conventional (2) conventional and (3) post conventional.

Pre-conventional level is a period during which moral judgements are based largely on expectations of rewards or punishment. The conventional level is a period during which moral judgements largely reflect social rules and conventions and the post-conventional level is a period during which moral judgements are derived from moral principles and people look to themselves to set moral standards.

6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment

1. What is Kohlberg's theory of moral development?
2. Describe the characteristics of children at the conventional levels of moral reasoning.
3. What are the criticisms of Kohlberg's moral reasoning?
4. What are the implications on educating children?

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