

14 - 5. Cognitive Development

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© SPMM Course 5. Cognitive Development Erikson's stages Erikson proposed psychosocial developmental stages. These coincide with Freud's psychosexual stages but extend well beyond adolescence. It is not necessary that each stage must be resolved entirely before further progress. A mixture of positive and negative outcomes is noted for most people. However, if predominantly negative experiences accumulate at various stages of development, this may predispose to difficulties in life. In Erikson's model autonomy refers to children gaining more control over activities and acquiring new skills. This is crucial for building self-esteem, failing which a sense of shame is felt. During 6 to 12 years of age we are capable of learning, creating and accomplishing numerous new skills and knowledge, thus developing a sense of industry. This is also a very social stage of development, and if we experience unresolved feelings of inadequacy and inferiority among our peers, we can have serious problems in terms of competence and self-esteem. Identity vs. role confusion. This stage occurs during adolescence between the ages of approximately 12 to 18. Up to this stage, according to Erikson, development mostly depends upon what is done to us. But from teenage onwards, our development depends primarily on what we do. Teens need to develop a sense of self and personal identity. During adolescence, children explore their independence and start to form a sense of self. This phase of transition from dependent child to an independent adult is associated with confusion and insecurity. Teens also experiment with different social roles at this stage. According to Erikson, this is important to the process of forming a strong identity and developing a sense of direction in life. The inherent strength of young adulthood is love, and the major task is intimacy and formation of a future bond partner. A middle aged adult seeks satisfaction through productivity in career and family / social network. This is referred to as generativity. Crisis Approximate Age

1. Basic trust vs. basic mistrust Birth to 12-18 months
2. Autonomy vs. shame 18 months to 3 years
3. Initiative vs. guilt 3 to 6 years
4. Industry vs. inferiority 6 to 12 years
5. Identity vs. role confusion Adolescence
6. Intimacy vs. isolation Young adulthood
7. Generativity vs. stagnation Middle adulthood
8. Ego integrity vs. despair Late adulthood

© SPMM Course An older adult reviews/cherishes life accomplishments prepares for end of life by pursuing lifelong interests etc. This is referred to as integrity Piaget's model of cognitive development According to Piaget, a schema is defined as the basic building block or unit of intelligent behaviour. Schemas consist of organized past experiences to understand future experiences. We have physical schema such as bike riding schema and mental schemas such as addition, multiplication and division schema. Within each developmental stage, functioning is generally internally consistent and stable and thus said to be in equilibrium. Stage-to-stage transformation occurs as a result of interaction with environment, whereas existing schemas cannot solve the environmental realities. Adaptation is the process of fitting schemas to environmental information. Adaptation can occur either as assimilation or accommodation. In assimilation new information is incorporated into existing schemas without restructuring the schemas. In accommodation, the schemas are restructured to 'accommodate' newly learnt information. Equilibration is achieved when all information properly fit into the schemas via either processes of adaptation. During each developmental stage, the child will experience cognitive disequilibrium, which through adaptation, gets solved, and equilibration results. Each time that equilibration occurs, the child produces more effective schemata or mental structures. Approx. AGE (not delineated by Piaget) STAGES FEATURES 0 to 2 years Sensorimotor Exercising reflexes (0 to 1 m) to smoothen them; Primary circular (1 to 4 m) reactions where reflexes extend to objects; secondary circular (4 to 10 m) where goal direction seen; object permanence starts by 9m; coordinated actions with added element of curiosity forms tertiary circular (12 to 18 m) reactions - here novelty is sought. Mental combinations occur; thoughts dominate actions. 2 to 7 years Preoperational Preconceptual stage 2 to 4 years; intuitive stage 4 to 7 years. 7 to 11 years Concrete operational Ability to decentre, conserve, seriate and declining egocentrism noted. Perspective taking starts to develop. But transitivity tasks still pose a challenge. E.g. '4>2, 2>1, which is the greatest of all?'

- is still difficult.

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