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Jean Piaget's theory of cognitive development — 10

Jean Piaget's theory describes cognitive development as a progression through four distinct stages, where children's thinking becomes progressively more advanced and nuanced. In the first stage, known as the sensorimotor stage, which lasts from birth to around two years, children learn through their senses and actions, developing key concepts like object permanence, the understanding that objects continue to exist even when they can't be seen. Next, in the preoperational stage, from ages two to seven, children start using symbols and language but struggle with logical thinking. They may be egocentric, meaning they find it difficult to see things from others' perspectives. Between ages seven and eleven, in the concrete operational stage, children become more logical in their thinking. They can understand concepts like conservation, realizing that quantity doesn't change even if the appearance of an object does. They also begin to think about others' thoughts and feelings more realistically. Finally, in the formal operational stage, from adolescence onward, children develop the ability to think abstractly and solve hypothetical problems. They can now reason about complex concepts like ethics, science, and mathematics, thinking systematically and forming hypotheses. StageAgeThinkingSensorimotorBirth to 18-24 monthsObject permanencePreoperational2 to 7 yearsSymbolic thoughtConcrete operational7 to 11 yearsLogical thoughtFormal operationalAdolescence to adulthoodScientific reasoningPiaget's Stages of Cognitive Development

Each child goes through the stages in the same order, but not all at the same rate). Some individuals may never attain all later stages. Child development is determined by biological maturation and interaction with the environment. At each stage of cognitive development, the child's thinking is qualitatively different. Each stage is characterized by a unique type of intelligence. Piaget proposed that children's intellectual development is not simply about accumulating more information, but involves qualitative changes in how children think. These developmental stages are influenced by several key factors:

- Biological maturation:** As children grow, their cognitive abilities naturally evolve. Interaction with the world around them shapes their understanding and learning processes.
- Social experiences:** Interactions with peers and adults provide crucial learning opportunities.
- Equilibration:** The internal drive to maintain a balance between what they know and what they experience. During the sensorimotor stage (birth to age 2) infants refine motor skills and engage in sensory exploration, forming early concepts like object permanence through active interaction with their surroundings.
- Major Characteristics and Developmental Changes:**
 - The infant** learns about the world through their senses and through their actions (moving around and exploring their environment).
 - During the sensorimotor stage, a range of cognitive abilities develop. These include: object permanence; self-recognition (the child realizes that other people are separate from them); deferred imitation; and representational play.
 - Cognitive abilities relate to the emergence of the general symbolic function, which is the capacity to represent the world mentally.
 - Around 8 months, infants develop object permanence, understanding that objects continue to exist even when out of sight, and will search for them when they disappear.
 - Educators and caregivers should focus on interactive and sensory-rich experiences, such as tactile play (sand, water), games promoting object permanence (peek-a-boo), and imitation activities.
 - At the beginning of the sensorimotor stage, infants live in the present without a mental representation of the world, lacking a sense of object permanence. If an object cannot be seen, it does not exist to them; thus, if a toy is hidden under a blanket, the infant will not search for it until it is visible again.
 - The primary achievement during the sensorimotor stage is the development of the understanding that objects continue to exist even when they are not seen. It requires the ability to form a mental representation (i.e., a schema) of the object. Towards the end of this stage the general symbolic function begins to appear where children show in their play that they can use one object to stand for another. Language starts to appear because they realize that words can be used to represent objects and feelings. The child begins to be able to store information about the world, recall it, and label it.
 - Individual Differences/Cultural Practices:** In some cultures, babies are carried on their mothers' backs throughout the day. This constant physical contact and varied stimuli can influence how a child perceives their environment and their sense of object permanence.
 - Gender Norms:** Toys assigned to babies can differ based on gender expectations. A boy might be given more cars or action figures, while a girl might receive dolls or kitchen sets. This can influence early interactions and sensory explorations.
 - Learn More:** The Sensorimotor Stage of Cognitive Development

Piaget's second stage of intellectual development is the preoperational stage, which occurs between 2 and 7 years.

At the beginning of this stage, the child does not use operations (a set of logical rules), so thinking is influenced by how things look or appear to them rather than logical reasoning. For example, a child might think a tall, thin glass contains more liquid than a short, wide glass, even if both hold the same amount, because the child focuses on the height rather than considering both dimensions.

Furthermore, the child is egocentric; he assumes that other people see the world as he does, as shown in the Three Mountains study.

As the preoperational stage develops, egocentrism declines, and children begin to enjoy the participation of another child in their games, and lets pretend play becomes more important.

Teaching should incorporate role-playing, symbolic play, storytelling, and visual aids to support imaginative thinking.

Tasks that encourage perspective-taking can help children gradually overcome egocentrism.

Toddlers often pretend to be people they are not (e.g., superheroes, policemen), and may play these roles with puppets or real objects.

Children must learn to invest in and playmate.

Major Characteristics and Developmental Changes:

- Toddlers and young children** acquire the ability to internally represent the world through language and mental imagery.
- During this stage, young children can think about things symbolically. This is the ability to make one thing, such as a word or an object, stand for something other than itself.
- Child's thinking is dominated by how the world looks, not how the world is. It is not yet capable of logical (problem-solving) type of thought.
- Moreover, the child has difficulties with class inclusion; he can classify objects but cannot include objects in sub-sets, which involves classifying objects as belonging to two or more categories simultaneously.
- Infants at this stage also demonstrate animism. This is the tendency for the child to think that non-living objects (such as toys) have life and feelings like a persons.
- By 2 years, children have made some progress toward detaching their thoughts from the physical world. However, have not yet developed logical (or operational) thought characteristics of later stages.
- Thinking is still intuitive (based on subjective judgments about situations) and egocentric (centered on the child's own view of the world).
- Individual Differences/Cultural Storytelling:** Different cultures have unique stories, myths, and folklore. Children from diverse backgrounds might understand and interpret symbolic elements differently based on their cultural narratives.
- Race & Representation:** A child's racial identity can influence how they engage in pretend play. For instance, a lack of diverse representation in media and toys might lead children of color to recreate scenarios that don't reflect their experiences or background.
- Learn More:** The Preoperational Stage of Cognitive Development

By the beginning of the concrete operational stage, the child can use operations (a set of logical rules) so they can conserve quantities, realize that people see the world in a different way (decentring), and demonstrate improvement in inclusion tasks.

Children still have difficulties with abstract thinking.

Major Characteristics and Developmental Changes:

- During this stage, children begin to think logically about concrete events.
- Children begin to understand the concept of conservation; understanding that, although things may change in appearance, the amount of matter remains the same.
- This is a research approach for understanding children's thinking that Piaget adapted from the diagnostic clinical interview used in psychology. Unlike standardized tests, the clinical method uses flexible, open-ended questions to explore the child's thinking in depth. The interviewer develops their questions based on the child's initial responses, prompting further explanation and clarification.
- Key characteristics of the clinical method:
 - Piaget's method** emphasizes the importance of understanding the child's perspective, rather than imposing adult ways of thinking on them.
 - One key aspect of this approach is the use of open-ended and non-judgmental questions that allow the child to express their thoughts freely.
 - The questions should be based on the spontaneous questions asked by children of the same age or younger.
 - The interviewer must carefully observe the child's responses and follow up with additional questions to clarify their reasoning.
 - The interviewer must also be able to distinguish between truly spontaneous responses and those that are influenced by suggestion or other external factors.
- Piaget provided detailed criteria for evaluating the quality of children's responses, emphasizing the need to consider factors like resistance to suggestion, the depth of the child's thinking, and the consistency of the response over time.
- Piaget's clinical method has been influential in the field of developmental psychology and has helped to shape the way researchers and educators understand children's thinking.
- What is the critical method and how does it differ from the clinical method?
 - It's important to note that the clinical method evolved throughout Piaget's career.
 - In his early work, Piaget primarily relied on what he called the clinical method, which focused on verbal interactions with children through open-ended questioning to understand their thinking processes.
 - The clinical method primarily relied on verbal dialogue between the researcher and child.
 - Through careful questioning, Piaget would explore children's reasoning and underlying cognitive structures without imposing adult frameworks or leading responses.
 - Piaget engaged in significant intellectual debates, notably with contemporaries Susan and Neel Keats Susan (1951) provided empirical observations suggesting that children possessed cognitive abilities earlier than Piaget claimed. These reactions prompted Piaget to critically evaluate and refine his methodological approach.
 - As a result of these challenges, Piaget began incorporating physical objects and manipulations into his interview, leading to what he termed the critical method.
 - This approach combined observation and hands-on experimentation to capture children's authentic cognitive processes more accurately.
 - While the clinical method primarily emphasized verbal dialogue, the critical method involved children actively manipulating objects, allowing researchers to observe their actions and reasoning in relation to physical phenomena.
 - By incorporating physical objects into his research, Piaget could observe how children's actions and manipulations influenced their thinking.
 - For example, a researcher might ask a child to predict whether a ball of clay will weigh more or less after being rolled into a snake (conservation of mass).
 - By observing the child's actions and explanations, researchers could gain insight into their understanding of the concept.
 - Another example of this approach was Piaget's exploration of how children transition from animistic to mechanistic thinking.
 - He investigated children's conceptions of material force through a series of experiments involving physical demonstrations.
 - Piaget believed that engaging children with concrete challenges helped to put them at ease, minimized the amount of verbal instruction required, and allowed the interviewer to use the child's language when discussing the phenomenon.
 - This made the research process more accessible and revealing of children's true cognitive abilities.
 - Despite these methodological refinements, the core principles of the clinical examination, such as open-ended inquiry, a focus on underlying reasoning, and sensitive interviewing, remained essential elements of his research, even as his methods became more complex and incorporated physical demonstrations.

4. **Piaget's Theory Differs From Others In Several Ways:**

- Piaget's (1936, 1950) theory of cognitive development** explains how a child constructs a mental model of the world. He disagreed with the idea that intelligence is a fixed trait, and instead argued that cognitive development is a process that occurs in response to the environment.
- Children's cognitive development is not a linear process, but rather a series of stages. Each stage represents a new level of understanding, and children move through these stages at their own pace.
- Piaget's theory is based on the idea that children learn through active exploration and discovery, rather than passive reception of information.
- He argued that children's cognitive development is influenced by both biological maturation and environmental factors.
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Children construct an understanding of the world around them, then experience discrepancies between what they already know and what they discover in their environment.

- Schemas**
 - A **schema** is a mental framework or concept that helps us organize and interpret information.
 - Its like a mental file folder where we store knowledge about a particular object, event, or concept.
 - According to Piaget (1952), schemas are fundamental building blocks of cognitive development.
 - They are constantly being created, modified, and reorganized as we interact with the world.
 - Wadsworth (2004) suggests that schemata (the plural of schema) be thought of as index cards filed in the brain, each one telling an individual how to react to incoming stimuli or information.
 - According to Piaget, we are born with a few primitive schemas, such as sucking, which give us the means to interact with the world.
 - These initial schemas are physical, but as the child develops, they become mental schemas.
 - Examples of Innate Schemas: Babies have a sucking reflex, triggered by something touching their lips. This corresponds to a sucking schema.
 - The grasping reflex, elicited when something touches the palm of a baby's hand, represents another innate schema.
 - The rooting reflex, where a baby turns its head towards something that touches its cheek, is also considered an innate schema.
 - When Piaget discussed the infant's ability to learn from the environment, he was referring to the child's ability to modify and expand their existing schemas.
 - For example, a child who has a schema for a cat as a feline animal might learn that a dog is not a cat by observing a dog's behavior.
 - As children grow, they carry out more complex operations and begin to imagine hypothetical (imaginary) situations.
 - Operations are learned through interaction with other people and the environment, and they represent a key advancement in cognitive development beyond simple schemas.
 - As children grow and interact with their environment, these basic schemas become more complex and numerous, and new schemas are developed through the processes of assimilation and accommodation.
- The Process of Adaptation**
 - Jeon Piaget (1952) viewed intellectual growth as a process of adaptation (adjustment) to the world.
 - This happens through assimilation, accommodation, equilibration, and disequilibrium.
 - Equilibration**, the mechanism balancing assimilation and accommodation, drives cognitive growth and transition between developmental stages according to Piaget.
 - Assimilation** is fitting new information into existing schemas without changing ones understanding.
 - For example, a child who has only seen small dogs might call a cat a dog due to similar features like fur, four legs, and a tail.
 - Accommodation** occurs when existing schemas must be revised to incorporate new information.
 - For instance, a child who believes all animals have four legs would need to accommodate their schema upon seeing a snake.
 - A baby tries to use the same grasping schema to pick up a very small object. It doesn't work.
 - The baby then changes (accommodates) the schema using the forefinger and thumb to pick up the object.
 - When a child's existing schemas are capable of explaining what it can perceive around it, it is said to be in a state of equilibrium, i.e., a state of cognitive (i.e., mental) balance.
 - Disequilibrium** occurs when new information conflicts with existing schemas, creating cognitive discomfort.
 - This cognitive conflict drives cognitive development and learning.
 - These processes are continuous and interactive, allowing schemas to evolve and become more sophisticated.
 - Example: When encountering new information, a child first attempts to assimilate it into existing schemas. If it doesn't fit, they experience disequilibrium, which prompts them to accommodate by modifying or creating new schemas.
- Equilibration**
 - Equilibration acts as a regulatory mechanism, balancing assimilation and accommodation.
 - This balance is crucial because:
 - Constant assimilation without accommodation would prevent the learning of new concepts.
 - Constant accommodation without assimilation would make every experience seem novel, leading to cognitive exhaustion.
 - By maintaining this balance, equilibration facilitates cognitive growth, allowing children to build increasingly complex and accurate mental representations of the world.
 - Applications to Education**
 - Think of old black-and-white films you've seen where children sat in rows at desks with inkwells. They learned by rote, all chanting in unison in response to questions set by an authoritarian figure like Miss Trunchbull in Matilda.
 - Children who were unable to keep up were seen as slacking and would be punished by variations on the theme of corporal punishment.
 - Yes, it really did happen and in some parts of the world still does today.
 - Piaget is partly responsible for the change that occurred during the 1960s to early childrens education.
 - Children should be able to do their own experimenting and their own research.
 - Teachers, of course, can guide them by providing appropriate materials, but the essential thing is that in order for a child to understand something, he must construct it himself, he must re-invent it.
 - Every time we teach a child something, we keep him from inventing it himself.
 - On the other hand that which we allow him to discover by himself will remain with him visibly.
 - Piaget (1972, p. 27)
 - Plowden Report in the 1960s, the Plowden Committee investigated deficiencies in United Kingdom education and incorporated many of Piagets ideas into its final report, published in 1967.
 - This was notable because Piagets (1952) work was not originally designed for educational applications.
 - The report made three key recommendations based on Piagets theories:
 - Age-appropriate learning:** The report recommended that educational activities and content should be tailored to match childrens cognitive developmental stages as proposed by Piaget.
 - Hands-on learning:** The report emphasized that children should learn through direct, hands-on experiences rather than passive reception of information.
 - Individual differences:** The report highlighted that children learn at different rates and have different strengths, so educational programs should be flexible and accommodate individual needs.
 - This included recommendations for more practical activities and the use of manipulatives in the classroom.
 - Active learning:** The report emphasized the importance of children being active participants in their own learning, rather than passive recipients of information.
 - This aligns with Piagets view that children construct their own understanding through interaction with their environment.
 - The Plowden Report emphasized several recurring themes aligned with Piagets work:
 - Individual learning/Curriculum flexibility**
 - The central role of play in childrens learning
 - Utilizing the environment for learning
 - Discovery-based learning
 - Assessment of childrens progress
 - Importantly, the report cautioned that teachers should not assume that only what is measurable is valuable, encouraging a holistic approach to assessing childrens development.
 - Educational Strategies Based on Piagets Theory**
 - Teachers should encourage students to take an active role in discovering and constructing knowledge.
 - The teachers role is to facilitate learning rather than direct tuition.
 - Because Piagets theory is based upon biological maturation and stages, the notion of readiness is important.**
 - Readiness concerns when certain information or concepts should be taught.
 - According to Piagets theory, children should not be taught certain concepts until they have reached the appropriate stage of cognitive development.
 - Consequently, education should be stage-specific, with curricula developed to match the age and stage of thinking of the child.
 - For example, abstract concepts like algebra or atomic structure are not suitable for primary school children.
 - Assimilation and accommodation require an active learner, not a passive one, because problem-solving skills cannot be taught, they must be discovered (Piaget, 1958).
 - Therefore, teachers should encourage the following within the classroom:
 - Consider the stages of cognitive development: Educational programs should be designed to correspond to Piagets stages of development.
 - For example, a child in the concrete operational stage should not be taught abstract concepts about which racial or cultural groups are better at certain subjects can influence a child's self-confidence and, subsequently, their engagement in that subject.
 - Gender & Peer Interactions:** Children should interact physically with their environment, so provide plenty of opportunities for hands-on learning.
 - Egocentric Activities:** Use exercises that promote high-different perspectives.
 - For instance, having two children sit across from each other with an object in between and asking them what the other sees.
 - Classification Tasks:** Provide objects or pictures to group, based on various characteristics.
 - Hands-on Experiments:** Introduce basic science experiments where they can observe cause and effect, like a simple volcano with baking soda and vinegar.
 - Logical Games:** Board games, puzzles, and logic problems help develop their thinking skills.
 - Conservation Tasks:** Use experiments to showcase that quantity doesn't change with alterations in shape, such as the classic liquid conservation task using differently shaped glasses.
 - Hypothesis Testing:** Encourage students to make predictions and test them out.
 - Abstract Thinking:** Introduce topics that require abstract reasoning, such as algebra or ethical dilemmas.
 - Problem Solving:** Provide complex problems and have students work on solutions, integrating various subjects and concepts.
 - Debate and Discussion:** Encourage group discussions and debates on abstract topics, highlighting the importance of logic and evidence.
 - Feedback and Questioning:** Use open-ended questions to challenge students and promote higher-order thinking.
 - For instance, rather than asking, Is this the right answer?, ask: How did you arrive at this conclusion?
 - Individual Differences In Learning**
 - While Piagets stages offer a foundational framework, they are not universally experienced in the same way by all children.
 - Social identities play a critical role in shaping cognitive development, necessitating a more nuanced and culturally responsive approach to understanding child development.
 - Piagets stages may manifest differently based on social identities like race, gender, and culture.
 - Race & Teacher Interactions:** A child's race can influence the way they are perceived and, consequently, their cognitive challenges and support.
 - Racial and Cultural Stereotypes: These can affect a child's self-perception and self-efficacy.
 - For instance, stereotypes about which racial or cultural groups are better at certain subjects can influence a child's self-confidence and, subsequently, their engagement in that subject.
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Educators should use assessments that reflect real-world tasks and allow students to demonstrate their understanding in multiple ways.

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Educators may need to address these concerns and provide evidence of the benefits of play-based learning.

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broad societal structures (e.g., culture).Bronfenbrenners theory offers a more comprehensive view of the multiple influences on a child's development, complementing Piaget's focus on cognitive processes and individual development. Differences:Piaget focuses on individual development through independent exploration. Bronfenbrenner emphasizes the complex interplay between an individual and multiple environmental systems, from immediate family to broader societal influences.Stage-based vs. Systems Approach:Piaget proposed distinct stages of cognitive development. Bronfenbrenners Ecological Systems Theory views development as ongoing interactions between the individual and various environmental contexts throughout the lifespan.Role of Environment: For Piaget, the environment provides opportunities for cognitive conflict and schema development. Bronfenbrenner sees the environment as a nested set of systems (microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, chronosystem) that directly and indirectly influence development.Cognitive Structures vs. Proximal Processes: Piaget focused on the development of cognitive structures (schemas). Bronfenbrenner emphasized proximal processes regular, enduring interactions between the individual and their immediate environment as key drivers of development.Discovery Learning vs. Contextual Learning: Piaget advocated for discovery learning to challenge existing schemas. Bronfenbrenner would emphasize the importance of understanding and leveraging the various ecological contexts in which learning occurs, from family to cultural systems.Similarities:Both recognize the child as an active participant in development.Both acknowledge the importance of the child's environment in shaping development.McLeod, S. (2009, August 05). Piaget cognitive stages of development. Simply Psychology. FAQs Cognitive development is how a persons ability to think, learn, remember, problem-solve, and make decisions changes over time. This includes the growth and maturation of the brain, as well as the acquisition and refinement of various mental skills and abilities. Cognitive development is a major aspect of human development, and both genetic and environmental factors heavily influence it. Key domains of cognitive development include attention, memory, language skills, logical reasoning, and problem-solving. Various theories, such as those proposed by Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky, provide different perspectives on how this complex process unfolds from infancy through adulthood. Cross-cultural studies show that the stages of development (except the formal operational stage) occur in the same order in all cultures suggesting that cognitive development is a product of a biological maturation process.However, the age at which the stages are reached varies between cultures and individuals, suggesting that social and cultural factors and individual differences influence cognitive development. Schemas are mental structures that contain all of the information relating to one aspect of the world around us.According to Piaget, we are born with a few primitive schemas, such as sucking, which give us the means to interact with the world.These are physical, but as the child develops, they become mental schemas. These schemas become more complex with experience. Piaget acknowledged the complex relationship between a child's verbal expressions and their active engagement with the concrete world. He recognized that children, like adults, possess a layer of purely verbal thought that can be superimposed over their active and concrete thought.This verbal layer can manifest in various ways, including:Inventing Stories: Piaget observed that children frequently invent stories, both during questioning and in their everyday lives. He argued that these stories offer insights into the child's thought processes, as they often reflect the child's understanding of causality, relationships, and the workings of the world.Responding to Hypothetical Scenarios: In his studies on moral judgment, Piaget used hypothetical dilemmas to explore children's reasoning. He recognized that these verbal scenarios, while not directly mirroring the child's lived experience, could still elicit valuable insights into their moral reasoning processes.However, Piaget also expressed concerns about the limitations of relying solely on verbal expressions to understand children's thinking.Verbal Thought as a Potential Distraction: Piaget cautioned that focusing too heavily on a child's verbalizations might lead researchers away from observing their active engagement with the world, which he considered a crucial aspect of their cognitive development. He emphasized the need to balance verbal inquiry with observations of the child's actions and manipulations of physical objects.The Risk of Misinterpreting Verbal Responses: Piaget emphasized that children's verbal expressions could be influenced by various factors, such as a desire to please the interviewer or a misunderstanding of the question. He stressed the importance of careful interpretation and the need to distinguish between liberated or spontaneous responses and those that are influenced by suggestion or other external factors.To address these challenges, Piaget advocated for integrating verbal inquiry with observations of the child's active and concrete engagement with the world.Combining Verbal and Concrete Tasks: As his clinical method evolved, Piaget increasingly incorporated concrete tasks and manipulations into his research protocols. By engaging children in activities that involved interacting with physical objects, he believed he could gain a more comprehensive understanding of their reasoning processes. This shift is exemplified in his research on physical causality, where he presented children with concrete demonstrations, such as dropping a pebble into a glass of water, and then questioned them about their observations and explanations.Using Language Rooted in the Child's Experience: Piaget emphasized the importance of using language and concepts that were familiar to the child and connected to their concrete experiences. He believed that this approach helped to ensure that the child understood the question and that their responses reflected their genuine thinking.Piaget's theory posits that children take an active role in the learning process, acting much like little scientists as they perform experiments, make observations, and learn about the world. This hands-on interaction is crucial, as it allows children to continually add new knowledge, build upon existing knowledge, and adapt previously held ideas to accommodate new information.Ultimately, Piaget saw the relationship between verbal and concrete thought as a dynamic interplay that evolves as the child develops. By carefully attending to both aspects of a child's thinking, researchers can gain valuable insights into the complex processes of cognitive development, ensuring a well-rounded understanding of how children learn and grow. Baillargeon, R., & DeVos, J. (1991). Object permanence in young infants: Further evidence. Child development, 1227-1246. Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). The ecology of human development: Experiments by nature and design. Harvard University Press. Bruner, J. S. (1966). Toward a theory of instruction. Cambridge, Mass.: Belkapp Press. Case, R. (1985). Intellectual development: Birth to adulthood. Academic Press. 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Assimilation: Integration of new information into existing schemas. Accommodation: Modifying existing schemas or creating new ones to fit new information. Equilibration: Process of balancing assimilation and accommodation to progress through cognitive stages, resolving conflicts and shifting to new thought patterns. McLeod, S. (2025, April 18). Piaget cognitive stages of development. Simply Psychology. Olivia Guy-Evans, MSc BSc (Hons) Psychology, MSc Psychology of Education Associate Editor for Simply Psychology Olivia Guy-Evans is a writer and associate editor for Simply Psychology. She has previously worked in healthcare and educational sectors. Saul McLeod, PhD Editor-in-Chief for Simply Psychology BSc (Hons) Psychology, MRes, PhD, University of Manchester Saul McLeod, PhD., is a qualified psychology teacher with over 18 years of experience in further and higher education. He has been published in peer-reviewed journals, including the Journal of Clinical Psychology.

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