

BRUNER'S COGNITIVE THEORY

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JEROME BRUNER

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an American psychologist who has made significant contributions to human cognitive psychology and cognitive learning theory in educational psychology.

Bruner was one of the founding fathers of constructivist theory.



Principles of J. Bruner Theory

1. Instruction must be concerned with the experiences and contexts that make the student willing and able to learn (readiness).
2. Instruction must be structured so that it can be easily grasped by the student (spiral organization).
3. Instruction should be designed to facilitate extrapolation and or fill in the gaps (going beyond the information given).

J. Bruner Theory

- Bruner's theoretical framework is based on the theme that learning is an active process and learners construct new ideas or concepts based upon existing knowledge.
- Facets of the process include selection and transformation of information, decision making, generating hypotheses, and making meaning from information and experiences.
- Cognitive structure (i.e., schema, mental models) provides meaning and organization to experiences and allows the individual to "go beyond the information given".

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- Bruner believed that intuitive and analytical thinking should both be encouraged and rewarded.
- He believed the intuitive skills were under-emphasized and he reflected on the ability of experts in every field to make spontaneous bound.
- He investigated motivation for learning. He felt that ideally, interest in the subject matter is the best stimulus for learning. Bruner did not like external competitive goals such as grades or class ranking.

Conclusion of Theory

- A major theme in the theoretical framework of Bruner is that learning is an active process in which learners construct new ideas or concepts based upon their current/past knowledge.
- As far as instruction is concerned, the instructor should try and encourage students to discover principles by themselves and they should engage in an active dialog (i.e., socratic learning).
- Curriculum should be organized in a spiral manner so that the student continually builds upon what they have already learned.

Features of J. Bruner's theory of Instruction

1. Tendency towards learning
2. The ways in which a body of knowledge can be structured so that it can be most readily grasped by the learner,
3. The most effective sequences in which to present material.
4. The nature and pacing of rewards and punishments.