

# **Basic assumptions of development**

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## Basic assumptions of Development

- A person has *hereditary organic reactions*
- He is naturally *active*
- He is *born without mind*
- He Needs to *adapt to environment*
- To adapt, he *organizes thinking into Structures (schemas)*

## Constructivist Approach

Jean Piaget's theory remains the standard against which all other theories are judged and often labeled **constructivist because it depicts children as constructing knowledge for themselves** .

Piaget's theory is often described as a **constructivist view**. According to **constructivists**, people interpret their environments and experiences in light of the knowledge and experiences they already have. People do not simply take in an external reality and develop an unchanged, exact mental copy of objects or events. Instead, they build (or "construct") their own individual understandings and knowledge.

Individuals construct their own knowledge during the course of interaction with the environment. Thinking is an active process whereby people organize their perceptions of the world

Children are seen as

- Active
- Learning many important lessons on their own
- Intrinsically motivated to learn
- Generating hypotheses, performing experiments, drawing conclusions

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## Schemas

- Schemas are the basic structural units of human mind . They constitute patterns of behaviour that an individual use in dealing with objects in his environment . Piaget called the schema the basic building block of intelligent behavior – a way of organizing knowledge.
- A schema can be defined as a set of linked mental representations of the world, which we use both to understand and to respond to situations.
- Schemas are mental or cognitive structures which enables a person to adapt and to organise the environment.
- Schemas are categories of knowledge that help us to interpret and understand the world.

- For example, at birth the schema of a baby is reflexive in nature such as sucking and grasping. The sucking reflex is a schema and the infant will suck on whatever is put in its mouth such as a nipple or a finger.
- The infant is unable to differentiate because it has only a single sucking schema. Slowly, the infant learns to differentiate where milk-producing objects are accepted while non-milk objects are rejected.
- At this point, the infant has two sucking schemas, one for milk-producing objects and one for non-milk producing objects.

## Assimilation

- Assimilation is using an existing schema to deal with a new object or situation. The process of taking in new information into our previously existing schema's is known as **assimilation**. **Assimilation** which is using an existing schema to deal with a new object or situation.
- It is the process of taking in new information into our already existing schemas is known as assimilation. The process is somewhat subjective because we tend to modify experiences and information slightly to fit in with our preexisting beliefs

It's a kind of matching between the already existing cognitive structure and the environmental needs as they arise.

- Eg: A child sees a Donkey for the first time and immediately calls it a Horse. Thus, the child has assimilated into his schema that this animal is a Horse.
- Another example of assimilation would be when an infant uses a sucking schema that was developed by sucking on a small bottle when attempting to suck on a larger bottle.

## Accommodation

Accommodation involves modifying existing schemas, or ideas, as a result of new information or new experiences. New schemas may also be developed during this process.

- The boy who had assimilated the Donkey as a Horse will eventually accommodate more information and thus realize the different characteristics between a Horse and a Donkey. The child will learn that the Donkey is not a Donkey but a Horse, an accommodated ability.

## Equilibration

According to Piaget's theory , optimal level of intellectual functioning take s place when there is a balance between assimilation and accommodation. This process of maintaining *this balance is termed as Equilibration.* The cognitive structure change from one stage to another by the process of equilibration, maintaining child and his changing environment.

As children progress through the stages of cognitive development, it is important to maintain a balance between applying previous knowledge (assimilation) and changing behavior to account for new knowledge (accommodation). Equilibration helps explain how children can move from one stage of thought into the next



## **Adaptation:**

- Assimilation and accommodation are the two sides of adaptation. It is the ability of the person to adjust to the environment and to interact with it.
- It's a process that takes place through direct interaction with the environment.
- Adaptation occurs as a result of two complementary processes, Assimilation and Accommodation.

In the cycle of adaptation and equilibration, a new experience is first assimilated into an existing scheme. If it doesn't fit properly, cognitive disequilibrium results. Accommodating (adjusting) the scheme brings the child to cognitive equilibrium, until a new assimilation challenges the scheme again.