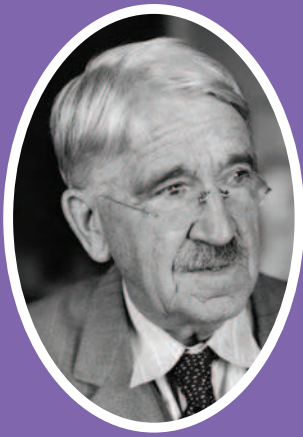
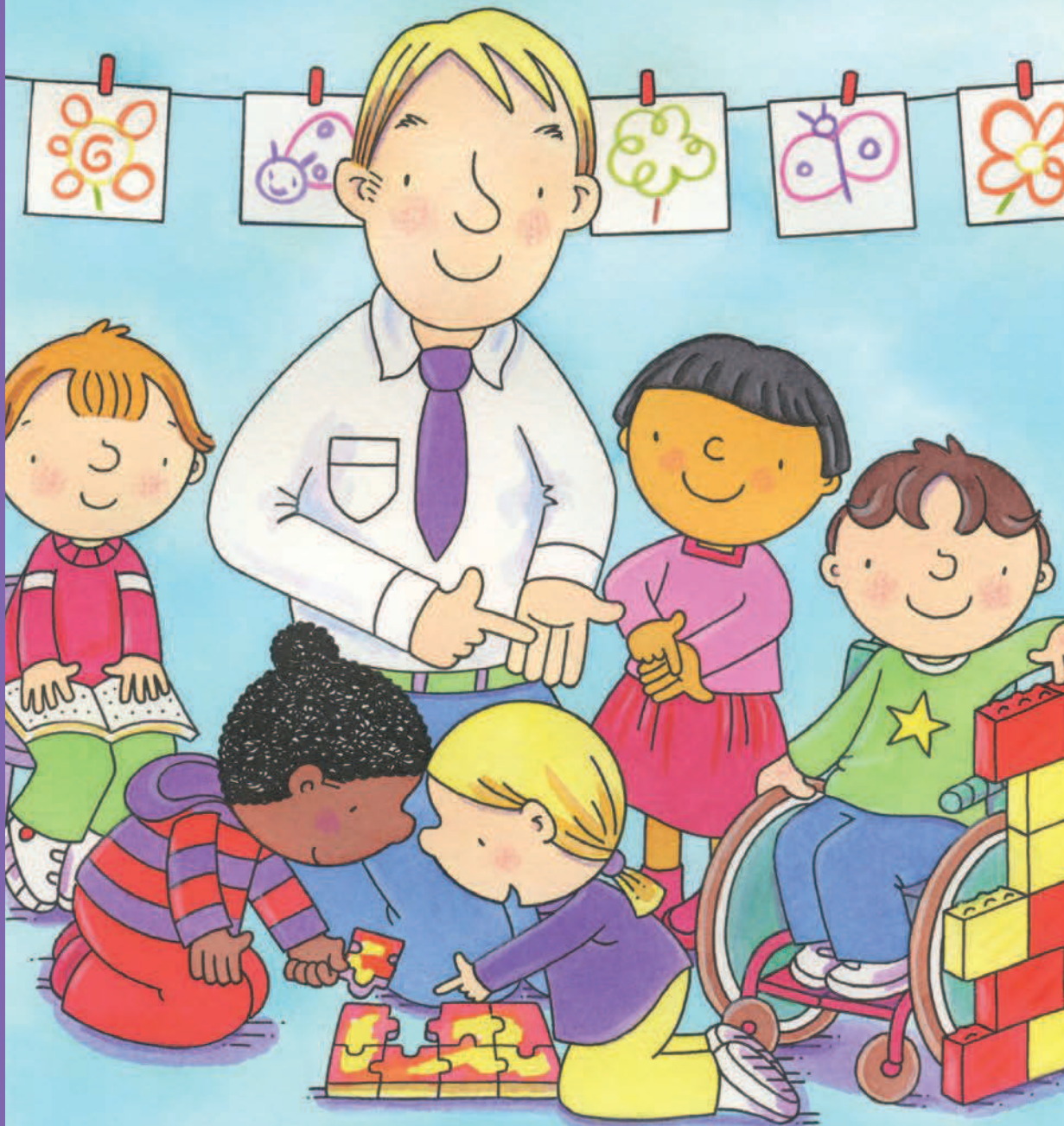


How children learn 4 Thinking on special educational needs and inclusion

From Steiner to Dewey - theories and approaches on how children with special educational needs learn and develop

Shirley Allen and Peter Gordon



How children learn 4

Thinking on special educational needs and inclusion

by Shirley Allen and Peter Gordon

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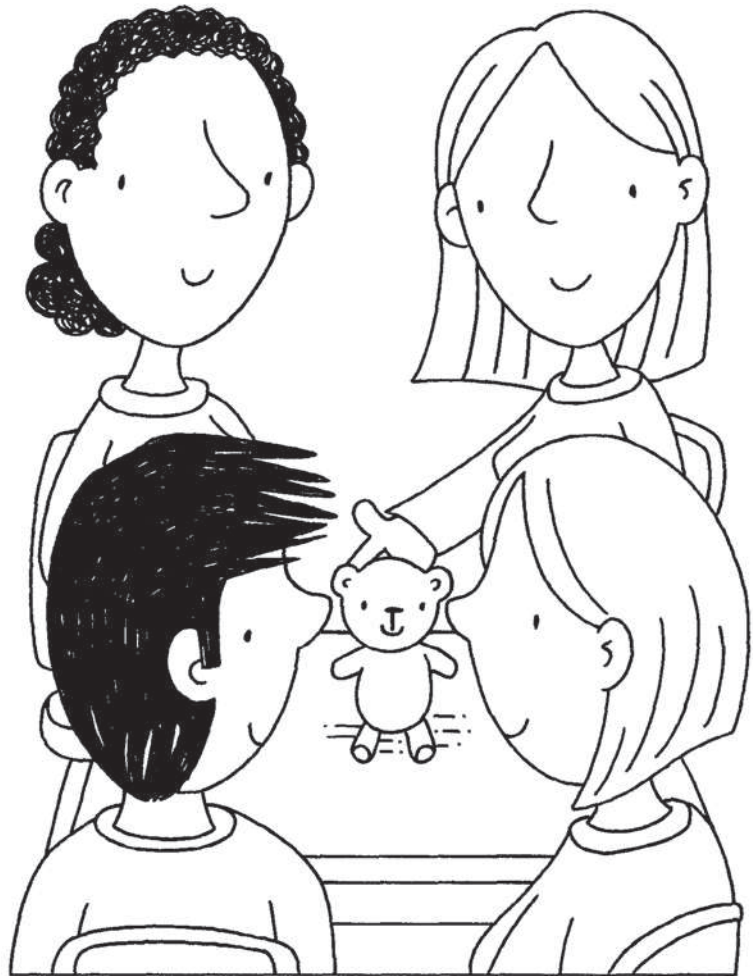
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Introduction

This book is the fourth in the *How Children Learn* series. It considers the contribution made by a range of theorists, educational thinkers and practitioners to current ideas and practices about how young children learn and develop, with a particular focus on how we can support children with additional needs. Educational theorists and thinkers, both classical and contemporary, have an important influence on current inclusive practice within the early years.



As we have seen in the previous books in the series, theories and thinking on education can be developed from research, experimentation, philosophical ideas or experiential considerations. However they are arrived at, one common strand is the importance of observation of real people in real contexts. All the theories, ideas and philosophies explored in this book have been developed and honed by academics and practitioners who have observed how people, including children, learn.

The focus of the first book in the series was generally on individual theorists such as Susan Isaacs and John Comenius, and, in addition, there were some general sections which looked at influential education approaches such as High Scope and Forest Schools. There were also sections on important aspects of early education such as Learning Through Play.

The second book was more concerned with trends and developments rather than individual theorists. It considered how both classical ideas and modern 'progressive' ideas have made an impact on current thinking and practices. The book mostly considered the way that theories about talking, literacy, creativity and intelligence have grown out of other people's theories and then further developed new thinking in these areas.

In the third book, contemporary thinkers and theorists were highlighted such as Tina Bruce and Guy Claxton, who are currently influencing ideas about the learning and development of young children. There were also topics of interest to contemporary practitioners such as Gender Issues, Moral Development and Learning Outdoors.

About this book

- This book, the fourth in the series, focuses on theorists and thinkers who are currently influencing ideas about the learning and development of young children, particularly those with additional needs, and about inclusive practice in early years settings. In the second part of the book, a range of topics will be explored which are highly influential in promoting inclusive practice and are of particular interest to today's practitioners. Examples of practice in the book demonstrate how educators have looked 'beyond labels, diagnoses and particular settings' and considered individual factors to ensure that children with additional needs are 'both prepared for and accepted within society'.⁽¹⁾
- Most sections are laid out in a consistent pattern. There are some key facts to place the theory or thinking within a context. The theory is explained and titles of the main publications are listed. Theory is then linked to practice with examples where relevant. Each section has a 'Comments' area which is there to encourage some critical and reflective analysis of the content.
- There are a great many links between the theorists, their theories and the other ideas presented in this book and in the series as a whole. These links are highlighted to encourage the reader to explore beyond the current page. It is our hope that readers will use these pages as springboards into further reading and research and will want to find out more about how children can be included and their learning developed.
- This book deals with a huge amount of theory and understanding about the education and development of young children and those

with additional needs. It can be just a brief introduction to these ideas which will hopefully stimulate the interest of readers to find out more. We are conscious that we will have omitted many potential thinkers and theorists who have also been influential in developing inclusive practices, but this is inevitable given the choices we have had to make.

Reference

Hickman, C. and Jones, K. (2005) 'Inclusive practice for children with Special Educational Needs' in Waller, T. (ed) *An Introduction to Early Childhood*. London: Paul Chapman

Notes to students

Every effort has been made to make sure that you have all the information you will need to cite sources in your own work. You may need to rearrange these references in your work in order to satisfy the specific demands of tutors and accreditation bodies. You would be wise, before you hand in your assignments, to double check that you have indeed met the requirements relevant to your particular course or place of study.

Each section contains guidance to help you track down more information for yourself. The information in this book is just the beginning as there is much more available material to be read, discussed and learnt from the work of the eminent thinkers and theorists that we have introduced to you. It is worth checking to see whether your library (public, college or university) can help you find some of the texts we refer to.

Words of warning

Take extra care about referencing accurately. Any written work should include clear references to all sources used, whether you have just used their ideas or quoted directly from their work. You want to avoid being accused of plagiarism, which can be a very serious academic offence, through carelessness or inaccuracy.

Be very cautious about the use of web sites. They can be a really useful and helpful source of accurate information. They can also be misleading, inaccurate or purposefully mischievous. They may just be simply out of date. It is always sensible to reflect on who is publishing the information and why. It is just possible that they are trying to get you to buy something or are presenting a particular viewpoint to sway your opinion.

Any website addresses given in this book were valid and accessible at the time of going to press.

Benjamin Bloom

PROFILE

Benjamin Bloom was an American academic who specialised in researching learning behaviours. He led a group which looked at ways of identifying a classification of learning objectives which would cover all areas of learning and in 1956 produced what has come to be known as “Bloom’s Taxonomy”, which continues to be influential today.

KEY DATES

1913	Born in Lansford, Pennsylvania
1942	Received a Ph.D. in Education from the University of Chicago
1944	Appointment as an instructor in the Department of Education at the University of Chicago
1956	First volume of <i>Handbook of Taxonomy of Educational Objectives: The cognitive domain</i> published
1964	Second volume <i>Handbook of Taxonomy of educational objectives: The affective domain</i> published
1999	Died

LINKS

- *How Children Learn 1*
Burrhus Skinner and behaviourism
- *How Children Learn 3*
Carl Rogers
- *How Children Learn 4*
Abraham Maslow
Albert Bandura

His life

Benjamin Bloom pursued an academic career, taking an interest in the assessment of students and the psychology of learning. He worked in the mid-twentieth century within an educational context which supported the idea that assessment was a way of weeding out less able students, so that the ‘cream’ would rise to the top. However, Bloom’s attitude was different. According to Eisner, a former student of Bloom:

What Bloom had to offer his students was a model of an inquiring scholar, someone who embraced the idea that education as a process was an effort to realize human potential, indeed, even more, it was an effort designed to make potential possible. Education was an exercise in optimism. ⁽¹⁾

At the 1948 Convention of the American Psychological Association, a group of educationalists led by Bloom was set up to develop a framework to classify educational goals and objectives. The intention was to formulate a hierarchical index of thinking behaviours that contributed to the processes of learning. In 1956 the result of this work came to be known as “Bloom’s Taxonomy” of educational objectives.

Continuing with his interest in the nature of learning, Bloom published in 1964 *Stability and Change in Human Characteristics*, based on a number of longitudinal studies, in which he tried to throw light on the educational controversy over the importance of nature versus nurture. This work highlighted the importance of early experiences and the influences of early learning as significant factors that contribute to children’s, and adults’, intellectual growth. ⁽²⁾

Bloom showed in his studies that it is possible to estimate 50% of the variations in intelligence at the age of 17 by looking at the child’s progress at the age of four. He also concluded that early experiences at home have a significant impact on later learning. Furthermore he believed that by using appropriate teaching practices and learning environments, virtually all children can learn at a high level.

In his later years he pursued his interest in the nature of giftedness in young people and the work of his research team, *Developing Talent in Young People*, was published in 1985.

His writing

Bloom has contributed to and edited many publications relating to the nature of learning, educational assessment and giftedness, including *Taxonomy of educational objectives: Handbook I, The cognitive domain* (1956) and *Taxonomy of educational objectives: Volume II, The affective domain* (1964) which explain the two domains that were developed in detail. He also wrote or co-authored, amongst others,



Benjamin Bloom

Human characteristics and School learning (1976), *All our children learning: a primer for parents, teachers, and other educators* (1980), *Developing talent in young people* (1985) and *The home environment and social learning* (1993).

His theory

Bloom and his research group identified three 'domains', or categories of learning:

1. The 'cognitive domain' (relating to intellectual skills and capacity). These were structured according to functionality from lowest to highest, see table 1 below.
2. The 'affective domain' (relating to attitudes, emotions and motivation). These were structured according to functionality from lowest to highest, see table 2 below.
3. The 'psychomotor domain' (relating to physical skills and co-ordination). Bloom never developed a taxonomy for this group, this task was taken on by Dave (1970), Harrow (1972), and Simpson (1972).

Putting the theory into practice

Bloom's taxonomy has provided a common framework for educators to use in constructing the curriculum. Many primary schools have taken on an 'enquiry based' curriculum. An example of this is the International Primary Curriculum (IPC). The taxonomy can be used to identify a hierarchy of questions which relate to the levels of learning.

The taxonomy has highlighted the need to have clear educational objectives for teaching and to measure pupils' progress against those objectives. Not only does this provide a means to evaluate the effectiveness of the teaching, it also provides the learner with clear goals. In England, the application of Assessment for Learning (AfL) requires that at the start of a lesson, the Learning Objective (or goal) is shared with the children and then success criteria are identified which enable the learning objective to be met. ⁽⁵⁾ This gives the children a measure of control over their own learning and enables them to self-assess their work. The strategy is based on practice in successful schools, which indicates that pupils will improve most if they understand the aim of their learning, where they are in relation to this aim, and how they can achieve the aim.

Bloom's ideas have demonstrated that a holistic approach should be taken towards children's learning. The physical and emotional development of children needs to be considered and planned for alongside their cognitive development. The Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) is used in many schools across England. ⁽⁶⁾ The School Sports Co-ordinator Scheme (SSCo) has operated in England since 2003. ⁽⁷⁾ This is usually a secondary school teacher who works with children and staff from a cluster of local primary schools to develop the physical education curriculum.

In the early years, all three areas are included in the curriculum and can be particularly relevant to children with special needs, depending on the specific nature of the need. For example, children with Dyspraxia are likely to have a personalised programme of physical activities to encourage their physical

Table 1: A summary of Bloom's taxonomy of the cognitive domain (based on the original Handbook ⁽³⁾)

Level	Process	Explanation	Example	Examples of Actions
1	Knowledge	Know and recall information	Know number facts	Know, List, Describe, Label
2	Comprehension	Understand	Explain in own words	Interpret, Predict, Summary
3	Application	Use in new situation	Write a report	Demonstrate, Apply, Construct
4	Analysis	Break down into component parts	Recommend future action	Deconstruct, Infer, Differentiate
5	Synthesis	Create new meaning from known components	Design a process for a specific function	Comply, Create, Modify
6	Evaluation	Make judgements	Choose the best from amongst several	Conclude, Justify, Appraise

Table 2: A summary of Bloom's taxonomy of the affective domain (based on the original Handbook ⁽⁴⁾)

Level	Process	Explanation	Example	Examples of Actions
1	Receiving	Awareness	Listen to others	Ask, Identify, Use, Describe
2	Responding	Active Participation	Give a presentation	Perform, Answer, Present
3	Valuing	Developing an attitude towards	Represent a political view	Justify, Join, Differentiate
4	Organisation	Prioritise into a system	Accept responsibility	Synthesise, Formulate, Integrate
5	Characterisation	Behave consistently	Commit to ethical practice	Verify, Qualify, Discriminate

Benjamin Bloom

co-ordination. Children who have behaviour difficulties are likely to have a personalised programme with clear objectives which are reviewed frequently. These programmes will be based on a hierarchical system, which is matched to appropriate expectations for the children.

His influence

In 1981 Bloom's handbook was voted tied fourth in a survey on the significant writings that influenced curriculum in the first three quarters of the 20th century. ⁽⁸⁾ From the 1950s, Bloom served as an adviser on education to several overseas governments including Israel and India. ⁽⁹⁾ Bloom's testimony to the Congress of the United States about the importance of promoting cognitive development in the first four years of the child's life in 1965 was influential in the establishing of the Head Start Program. Currently, about a million economically deprived children in the US receive its support at an annual cost of about \$7 billion. ⁽¹⁰⁾ Head Start was very influential in the set up of the Sure Start programme in the UK.

Comment

Subsequent scholars, such as Anderson L. et al (2001) ⁽¹¹⁾, have argued that the hierarchy of learning established within Bloom's taxonomy is not fixed. For example, in the Cognitive Domain comprehension comes before application. There is a school of thought which feels that learning through problem solving is just as valid as comprehension and, in this scenario, application may come before comprehension. Bloom himself advocated that his taxonomy should develop over time.

The Taxonomy is still evolving. There are the different versions of the Psychomotor Domain and, in 2001, Anderson and Krathwohl (a contributor to the original Handbooks) edited a revised version of the taxonomy ⁽¹¹⁾, arguing that Bloom's original intention was that it should be relevant and fit-for-purpose and that the needs of the twenty-first century had changed since the original taxonomy was conceived. The revised version of the Cognitive Domain changed the places of 'synthesis' (creating) and 'evaluation' in the hierarchy of learning and re-defined the levels as verbs instead of nouns. This reflects Bloom's shift in emphasis from cognitive concepts to learning behaviours, such as remembering, understanding and applying.

Bloom was not interested just in number-crunching. He advocated that an understanding of context (including the learning environment, prior attainment and the quality of teaching) was needed in order to interpret test scores and that without this, the scores on their own made little sense. However, this has not stopped the government in the UK from publishing league tables where institutions are compared to each other based on test scores.

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www.odu.edu/educ/roverbau/Bloom/blooms_taxonomy.htm
www.internationalprimarycurriculum.com

<http://www.infed.org/thinkers/et-rous.htm>

Jerome Bruner

His life

Jerome Bruner was born in New York City in 1915. Though blind at birth, he gained his sight by the age of two following operations to remove cataracts. Bruner's father died of cancer when he was twelve. He gained his first degree from Duke University in 1937 and then studied at Harvard University, gaining a PhD in 1947. During the Second World War, Bruner worked as a social psychologist for United States (US) Army's intelligence services researching propaganda, public opinion and social attitudes. Bruner joined the faculty at Harvard after the war, where he worked as an academic psychologist with Leo Postman on ways in which needs, motivations, and expectations influence perception. Their approach was known as the 'New Look'. Bruner also worked on theories of cognition with George Miller, with whom he founded the Center for Cognitive Studies at Harvard in 1960.

Bruner became interested in education and was asked to chair an influential conference attended by academics and educators at Cape Cod in 1959, which was convened in response to concerns about science education in the US in the wake of Russia's launch of Sputnik One in 1957. Bruner contributed to educational reform during the early 1960s and was involved in the development of educational programmes, including Head Start, which aimed to support children living in poverty. His landmark book, *The Process of Education*, which was based on his work on educational reform, was published in 1960.

Bruner left Harvard in 1972 to take up a post as Watts Professor of psychology at Oxford University, where he continued to research children's early development and pre-school education before returning to the US in 1981 to work at the New School for Social Research. In the 1990s he became more interested in social and cultural aspects of learning and referred to himself as a 'cultural psychologist'. He is currently professor of psychology and senior research fellow in law at New York University. Bruner was married three times and has two children.

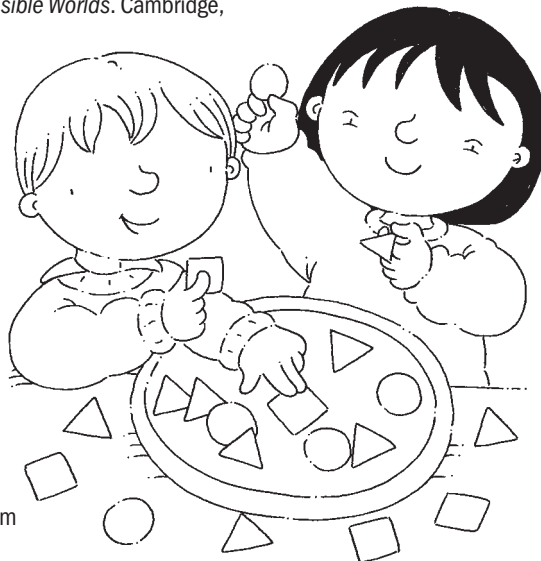
His writing

Bruner was a prolific and influential writer. His work includes:

- Bruner, J. (1960/1977) *The Process of Education*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. The original edition of the book is reassessed in the preface to the 1977 edition.
- Bruner, J. S. (1966) *Toward a Theory of Instruction*. Cambridge, MA: Belkapp Press.
- Bruner, J.S. (1971) *The Relevance of Education*. New York: WW Norton and Co Inc.
- Bruner, J. (1986) *Actual Minds, Possible Worlds*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Bruner, J. (1990) *Acts of Meaning*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Bruner, J. (1996) *The Culture of Education*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

His theory

Bruner's interest in children's cognitive development emerged from his early work in the area of cognitive psychology at Harvard. In his 1960 book *The Process of Education* Bruner argued that children were active learners who would benefit from first-hand experiences to help them



PROFILE

Jerome Bruner has had a long distinguished career as a psychologist, working in the areas of perception, cognition and education. Largely influenced by the work of Piaget and Vygotsky, Bruner was a social constructivist who emphasised the social nature of learning. He used the term 'scaffolding' to describe how adults can support children's learning.

KEY DATES

- | | |
|------|---|
| 1915 | Born in New York City, USA |
| 1947 | Awarded PhD from Harvard |
| 1952 | Joined the Department of Psychology at Harvard University |
| 1963 | Received the Distinguished Scientific Award from the American Psychological Association |
| 1972 | Appointed Watts Professor of Psychology at Oxford University, England |
| 1991 | Appointed Meyer Visiting Professor at New York University School of Law |

LINKS

- [How Children Learn 4](#)
Bloom
Gardner
Piaget
Vygotsky

Jerome Bruner

develop their thinking and learning. He proposed a 'spiral curriculum', which would enable children to continually revisit ideas and activities, building on their experiences in order to develop more complex understanding. Bruner also referred to factors affecting children's cognitive development in this book, including:

- Structuring knowledge for the learner so that it could be grasped more easily. Bruner thought that understanding the structure of a subject supported learning, and that categorization was a key process in structuring knowledge.
- Readiness for learning: the process should correspond with the child's cognitive abilities and relate to their experiences and contexts so they are willing and able to learn. He thought that any subject could be taught to a child at any stage of their development.
- Intuitive and analytical thinking, which should be encouraged and rewarded. He believed that intuitive skills should be valued and thought that basic concepts could be understood more intuitively from an early age.
- Motivation, which he felt stimulated learning. He thought children's interest in the material to be learned was more effective than setting any external goals.



Bruner was also concerned with how children represent their experiences and understanding; he proposed that this occurred through three different modes of representation. These are:

1. Enactive representation – when cognition is represented through children's physical actions.
2. Iconic representation – when children represent events and objects through mental images.
3. Symbolic representation – when children's thinking is represented by symbols, such as language.

Bruner thought that play experiences were an important aspect of young children's development, providing opportunities for exploration and experimentation. He defined play as the 'culture of childhood'.

Bruner highlighted the central role of language in children's cognitive development; he thought that adults should enable children to engage and negotiate meaning in a variety of social contexts. Diverging from Chomsky's view of language acquisition as an innate process led by a Language Acquisition Device (LAD), Bruner proposed that young children's language developed through their experiences with familiar people and routines within recurring 'formats' of interaction. ⁽¹⁾ These 'language formats' can be described as routine language repetitions occurring, for example, in action rhymes. Bruner thought they are largely regulated by the adult and support the development of children's pre-linguistic skills. He referred to these formats as 'epiphanies of the ordinary' and argued that they form the basis of 'Language Acquisition Support Systems' (LASS).

Bruner later developed an interest in the role of narrative as a process for thinking and meaning-making. He thought that narrative supported cognitive development and helped to make sense of the extraordinary; he said that stories 'provide just the right medium both for rendering the strange familiar and for doing just the reverse'. ⁽²⁾

Over the course of his lifelong career as a psychologist, his theoretical views were transformed and the focus of his thinking about children's learning shifted from a focus on 'cognitive psychology' to 'cultural psychology'.

Putting the theory into practice

Bruner's views on learning have important implications for practitioners working with children with additional needs. His emphasis on the importance of children's involvement and interest in their learning through play and active exploration are key features of current early years practice. Bruner's theory of children's intuitive learning also has implications for practice; for example, young children

Comment

could intuitively learn the principles of physics, such as friction, through play experiences with toy vehicles. Practitioners can encourage children to think intuitively by modelling the process and by developing respectful relationships with children so they feel secure to suggest solutions and explore ideas.

By applying Bruner's notion of a 'spiral curriculum', practitioners can support children to extend their thinking and understanding by revisiting activities and experiences and making connections in their learning. Practitioners can also apply Bruner's metaphor of 'scaffolding' by considering the complexity of tasks and reflecting on how they 'scaffold' support for children, according to their stage of learning and development. By participating in children's play, they can 'scaffold' the play by offering a role to the child or modelling the play so the child understands what is expected of their role. ⁽³⁾

The concept of 'sustained shared thinking', which was advocated by the Effective Provision of Pre-School Education (EPPE) longitudinal study in England ⁽⁴⁾, draws on Bruner's view of the significance of adults' skilled interactions with children to 'scaffold' their learning and develop their thinking. The EPPE study found that 'sustained shared thinking' was more likely to occur in settings in which children made more developmental progress. ⁽⁵⁾

Bruner thought children's confidence, skills and understanding could be enhanced by encouraging them to represent their thinking as they explore and create meanings in their play. Children who have speech and language difficulties can be encouraged to explore and share meanings and represent their thinking in different ways; for instance, by using electronic equipment or signing systems, such as Makaton, to communicate with others. Practitioners can also support children with additional needs to develop specific skills that enhance their social engagement with their peers and adults. ⁽⁶⁾ For example, they could model turn-taking and response in conversations with children to support their understanding of these conventions.

His influence

Bruner has been at the forefront of educational thinking and reform throughout his life. His work has been influential on later theorists, such as Howard Gardner, and he influenced educational provision through his contribution to programmes, such as Head Start. He became interested in the pre-schools in Reggio Emilia, which he visited. His views on cognitive development influenced the findings of the Plowden report of 1967. The report encouraged early years and primary school educators to follow a 'child-centred' play-based pedagogical approach, which was centred on the individual needs and interests of children. ⁽⁶⁾

Bruner was involved in developing a social studies programme called 'Man: a course of study' (MACOS), which used a cross-cultural set of film and written teaching materials. It proved difficult to implement and was later criticised by Bruner himself as too focused on the learner as an individual.

A concern that has been levelled against Bruner's advocacy of discovery learning is that children may develop misconceptions and practitioners may be unaware of their existence. This could occur, for instance, when children are not able to readily communicate their learning. Therefore, practitioners need to ensure that their observation and assessment procedures effectively support children's development and progression, that children have opportunities to communicate their understanding and any misconceptions are addressed within a sensitive and supportive environment.

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www.nas.org.uk

<http://www.makaton.org/>

John Dewey

PROFILE

John Dewey was an American philosopher, psychologist and educator who wrote extensively about educational philosophy and practice. He believed that learning should be active and child-centred.

KEY DATES

1859	Born in Burlington, Vermont, USA
1884	Started teaching at the University of Michigan
1894	Moved to the University of Chicago to teach Philosophy
1896	Initiated the University of Chicago's Laboratory School
1899	President of the American Psychological Association
1904	Took up post at Columbia University, New York City
1952	Died in New York City

LINKS

- [How Children Learn 1](#)
High Scope
- [How Children Learn 4](#)
Malaguzzi
Montessori
Piaget
Steiner
Vygotsky

His Life

After graduating from Vermont University in 1879, John Dewey took up teaching posts in school before gaining his PhD from Johns Hopkins University in 1884. He then went to the University of Michigan to teach Psychology and married Alice Chipman, who was one of his students, in 1886. Alice's interest in the links between social issues and education is thought to have influenced Dewey's work on the subject of education.

In 1894, Dewey took up a post at the University of Chicago, where he opened his 'Laboratory School' in 1896. His school became a centre of thinking on 'progressive education', a term used to describe a 'child-centred' rather than a 'school-centred' approach to education. Though the school was successful, Dewey's work there ended in 1904 due to controversy over Alice's role as principal. He resigned his post at the university and then moved to Columbia University in New York City, where he focused on writing and teaching about philosophical issues. He continued writing until his death in 1952.

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His theory

Dewey considered education as: ⁽¹⁾

- Growth – in the way that children develop and assume the place of adults in society, bringing values promoted by their education.
- Direction – guided by the teacher, students collaboratively learn the process of selecting good habits and directions of inquiry to address problems. Dewey focused on the process of inquiry rather than specific subject issues and thought education should support children to learn how to learn.
- Having a social function – education is perceived as a benefit to each child.

Dewey's theories about education are associated with the concept of 'Progressive Education'. His experimental school at the University of Chicago was grounded in his beliefs that children learn by actively participating with real materials and experiences and they should be encouraged to experiment and be independent thinkers. ⁽²⁾ He also thought teachers should be well-organised and provide planned experiences, based on their observations. Dewey termed experiences as 'educational' if they: derive from children's interests and develop from their previous knowledge and experience; support the children's development; enable children to acquire new skills; support children's understanding of the world; and prepare children for full lives. ⁽²⁾ Dewey's definition of 'experience' can be interpreted as activities that include 'active and passive elements...it involves learning that consciously connects consequences with the initial activity or action'. ⁽³⁾

Dewey also thought that education should provide opportunity for children to apply and develop their thinking. In the text *How We Think* (1933), Dewey suggests the word 'thinking' is applied in different ways to describe: ⁽⁴⁾

- Everyday thoughts or 'daydreaming'.
- 'Imaginative thinking', which describes things that cannot be perceived directly.
- Thinking as 'believing', which is based on acquired beliefs.
- 'Reflective thinking', which describes enquiry through a series of thoughts towards a conclusion, which is based on firm reasons. The process of reflective thought enables individuals to control their own thinking so they can participate in a democratic society.

Putting the theory into practice

Dewey's theories highlight the significance of acknowledging the values of family and society in education and its role, in turn, of supporting democratic society. Dewey thought planned activities should support educational provision for all children. He proposed that activities should be based on an individual's needs rather than generalised goals, which may not be achievable for all children. Dewey emphasised the need for educators to have good knowledge of the children in their care and undertake effective observation, assessment and planning, which builds on children's interests and experiences of previous learning. His approach serves to encourage children with low levels of motivation and self-esteem to participate in learning opportunities, as they experience activities that are interesting and developmentally appropriate. ⁽²⁾

Dewey thought educators should engage in effective interactions with children; which would enable them to model language and support children with language difficulties. He also advocated that educators should be knowledgeable practitioners in order to help children to make sense of their world and support their wide-ranging interests more effectively within realistic contexts. Dewey's views on the process of children's learning are associated with the development of the 'project approach', where learning is thematic and extended across different subjects. This approach aimed to involve children with a range of abilities in projects that were meaningful and interesting. Dewey thought educators should facilitate children's involvement in the project, enabling them to build on their individual interests and apply their skills appropriately to project activities.

Dewey's views on reflective thinking encourage educators to document children's learning, assess their practice and review their provision accordingly. This helps to prevent children with additional needs being assessed on the basis of assumptions rather than educators' own knowledge of their actual levels of development.

His influence

Dewey's theories have had a significant effect on education policy and practice. His view of children as active learners was supported by Jean Piaget and is reflected in the practice developed by Loris Malaguzzi in the pre-schools of Reggio Emilia.

Dewey's philosophy about progressive educational approaches influenced provision in the USA; for example, the High Scope approach to early childhood education drew on Dewey's theories. High Scope was developed in the 1960s by Dr David Weikart in Michigan to combat the likelihood of low achievement. High Scope aimed to support all children to actively participate in their learning, though it has been adapted for use in different early years settings. Due to its focus on daily planned activities that are personalised to children's abilities and interests, High Scope has been used by educators working with children with special educational needs. The 'plan-do-review' sequence, which is an aspect of the High Scope approach, draws on Dewey's notion of a systematic process of reflection. ⁽⁵⁾

Comment

Though Dewey advocated that educators should carefully plan and guide children's learning and review their learning experiences, his 'child-centred' approach to education has been criticised for undermining children's attitudes towards personal responsibility, which does not prepare them for contributing in the future to the wider needs of society. ⁽⁶⁾

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Jean-Jacques Rousseau

PROFILE

Jean-Jacques Rousseau was an 18th century Genevan philosopher who influenced thinking in music, philosophy, society, politics, religion and education. His ideas have been influential on later theorists such as Froebel and Montessori.

KEY DATES

- 1712 Born in Geneva, Switzerland. His mother died nine days later
- 1724 Worked as an apprentice legal clerk and then an engraver
- 1728 Left Geneva, disaffected. Converted to Roman Catholicism
- 1745 Began a relationship with Thérèse Levasseur
- 1754 Rejoined the Church of Geneva
- 1762 *Emile* was published. It was outlawed in France and Geneva
- 1762 Lived in exile in Switzerland, England and rural France before returning to Paris in 1766
- 1778 Died in Ermenonville, France

His life

Rousseau grew up in Geneva, which was at the time a Protestant city state, where he and his brother were brought up by his father and a great aunt. His father left when he was ten and Rousseau was sent with his cousin to board with a Calvinist Minister for two years.

From the age of thirteen he worked as an apprentice, initially to a notary and then to an engraver. He was very unhappy as the latter beat him and he ran away. Eventually in Savoy he met Françoise-Louise de Warens, a noblewoman who was separated from her husband. He had a ten year relationship with her, converted to Roman Catholicism and she served as his benefactor and eventually became his lover.

When he was twenty-one he became the secretary to the French Ambassador in Venice, although this post lasted just a year as he quarrelled with the Ambassador. In Paris the following year he met Thérèse Levasseur, a twenty-four year old seamstress, and lived with her for the next thirty-five years, eventually marrying her in 1768. He had previously referred to her as his 'housekeeper', despite having had five children with her. All the children were sent to The Foundlings Home, an orphanage, shortly after their birth.



Jean-Jacques Rousseau

Rousseau rejoined the Church of Geneva in 1754. Much of his writing was controversial and his books on education and social politics were banned in Geneva and France. He spent a period in exile in Switzerland, England and rural France before returning to Paris in 1766. Although he became well known, his mental health was erratic and he did not enjoy his celebrity status.

His writing

From 1736 until his death Rousseau wrote many essays, treatises and books, fiction and non-fiction, on subjects including music, philosophy and politics. He also wrote an opera. His most important work on education was *Émile: or, on Education (Émile, ou de l'éducation)* published in 1762.

His theory

Rousseau postulated that man is naturally good and that it is the influence of education and society which can corrupt him. The two contributing factors to man's growth are his intelligence which nurtures his soul, and his sensory appetites which nurture the well-being of his body.

A child is born into natural innocence and initial and continual engagement with the natural environment feeds the child's innate morality. ⁽¹⁾

He felt that city dwelling would eventually lead to the degeneration of humanity and that it was only the sensory replenishment of the countryside which would lead to a renewal of life. He advised people to send their children "...where they may live in the midst of fields, in order, so to speak, that the life within them may be regenerated..." ⁽²⁾

Rousseau felt that the adult's role in the educational development of the child should be twofold:

- i) That of the 'mother' whose function is to meet his physical needs through sustaining him and to be vigilant in protecting him from the corrupting influences of society and its artificial habits and customs. She should discourage him from establishing his own habits, for example "to use one hand more than the other, to eat, sleep or do anything at particular times". ⁽³⁾
- ii) That of the 'father' (tutor/teacher) who encourages the child to develop along the natural pathway that exists within him. He should not give rules but allow them to be discovered.

In his book *Émile*, ⁽⁴⁾ Rousseau sets up a hypothetical situation which details the education of *Émile*, a child without previous 'flaws', and shows how the relationship between pupil/apprentice and teacher/tutor works ideally. He says that teachers need to know their pupils; "Begin thus by making a more careful study of your scholars".



Putting the theory into practice

It is worth noting the context in which children were brought up in France at the time. Many babies were not nursed by their mothers but given up to wet nurses, and were clothed in swaddling garments in their early life which restricted their movement. There were other critics of these practices at the time, but the changes that came about to these general practices were attributed to Rousseau's ideas.

Rousseau was clear about the importance of play outdoors, specifying that in an ideal education "Up to twelve years the child should be out-of-doors in order to cultivate his senses." ⁽⁵⁾ Today the effective use of outdoor play is seen as "best practice".

The adults who look after children can assist their development through careful observation of what children are able to do and then offer encouragement to build on this. Rousseau's philosophy, importantly for children with Special Educational Needs, acknowledges children's 'natural' abilities, rather than viewing children as 'deficit models' where the emphasis is on what they cannot do.

Also pertinent to children with special needs is their personalised learning under the guidance of a named adult which is very much part of practice in early years settings.

Apart from the adult's detailed knowledge of the child, the other factor which is key to success in this is the strong, positive relationship

Jean-Jacques Rousseau

between the adult (the tutor/teacher) and the child, enabling the child to be guided within a safe and trusting environment. Parents and staff working together strengthens that trust.

His influence

Rousseau's ideas on freedom and equality were influential in the thinking which led to the French revolution in 1789. His vision of a regenerated human nature was powerful in influencing the romantic movement in Europe, which existed roughly from 1780 to 1850.

The Forest Schools movement in Germany, Denmark, the UK and USA owes some of its philosophy to Rousseau. The environment of the Forest School, which supports children's cognitive and emotional development, offers opportunities for children with additional needs to develop autonomy and confidence.

Although the notion of child-centred education cannot be solely attributed to Rousseau, he did advocate that children should be free to explore their sensory environments. These environments, accessible to all children, are particularly attractive for children with sensory impairments or learning disabilities. Rousseau also thought that adults should observe what children are doing and then interact with them to guide their development. This is very much in keeping with current practices where adults in a setting take the lead from the children and become involved in the child-initiated activities and facilitate children's extended learning.

Comment

Rousseau identifies fundamental differences between the roles of the sexes. He is very clear on what mothers and fathers are responsible for in raising and educating the child. He also makes it clear that the purpose of educating girls is to enable them to look after and serve the needs of their menfolk. Whilst these attitudes may have been in keeping with the social context of the 18th century, they do not resonate with the thinking in many contemporary societies.

Rousseau advocates discouraging habits to develop in children, including the predominant use of one hand. It has been shown that all kinds of issues can develop when a naturally left-handed child is made to write with their right hand. Young children, particularly those with special needs, thrive within a structured environment with clear boundaries and expectations which have well-established routines.

Many of Rousseau's ideas are confusing, impractical and open to differing interpretations. For example, Rousseau says that ideally each child should have one tutor/guide and that each tutor/guide should only have the one child, and that the best person to undertake the tutor/guide role is the father. This raises questions

about families with more than one child and those where the father is not an active member. Watkins (1953) reflects on Rousseau "The difficulty of interpreting him arises ... from the fact that most students insist on crediting him with a degree of logical consistency which in fact is not a characteristic of his writings."⁽⁶⁾

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Howard Gardner

His life

Howard Gardner's parents were Jewish refugees to the United States from Nazi Germany. As a child, he was an avid reader and showed exceptional promise as a musician. Gardner admits that he has been influenced by the tragic death of his brother in a sleighing accident, shortly before his birth. He believes that his own motivation for hard work and success came from learning of the death of his brother in a newspaper report. ⁽¹⁾

Initially, Gardner studied history at Harvard University but changed this course to study 'Social Relations', which included psychology, sociology and anthropology. His thinking was influenced by Erik Erikson, who was one of his tutors at Harvard. Gardner learned the importance of careful observation and understanding of human personality from Erikson. He also worked with Jerome Bruner in his early career and acknowledged Bruner's influence on his own work.

Gardner has published over 25 books, the most influential being *Frames of Mind* in 1983, in which he set out his theory of multiple intelligences. He always intended that this would influence educational practice and has been involved in school reform since he published his theory.

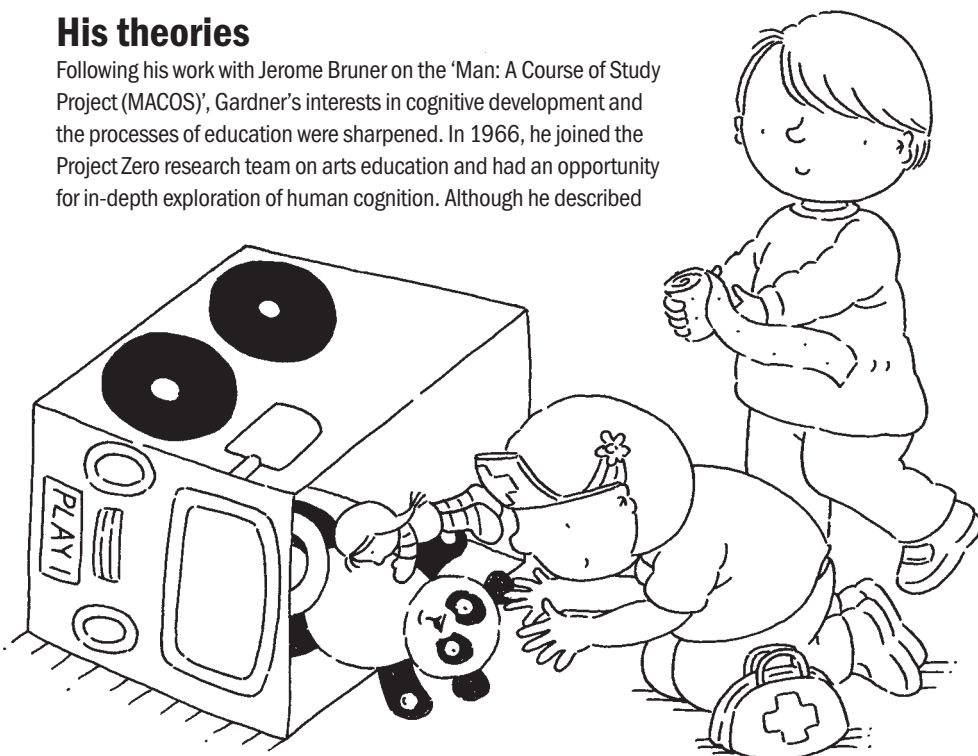
His writing

Whilst the most influential text of Gardner's work has undoubtedly been *Frames of Mind*, published in 1983, Gardner has been writing since the early 1970s to the present time. Other titles of particular interest to those involved in practice with children with special educational needs include:

- *The Unschooled Mind: how children think and schools should teach* (1991).
- *The Development and Education of Mind* (2006).
- *Five Minds for the Future* (2007).

His theories

Following his work with Jerome Bruner on the 'Man: A Course of Study Project (MACOS)', Gardner's interests in cognitive development and the processes of education were sharpened. In 1966, he joined the Project Zero research team on arts education and had an opportunity for in-depth exploration of human cognition. Although he described



PROFILE

Howard Gardner is Hobbs Professor of Cognition and Education at Harvard University. His theory of multiple intelligences has challenged long-held assumptions about intelligence and helped practitioners widen their understanding of how children learn. His more recent work has focused on what he believes to be the crucial aspects of the education process.

KEY DATES

- 1943 Born in Scranton, Pennsylvania
- 1981 Awarded a MacArthur Prize Fellowship for showing exceptional merit and promise as a researcher
- 1983 Published his book '*Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences*' which initially received a mixed reception from academics and practitioners
- 2007 Published '*Five Minds for the Future*' in which he outlines the key cognitive abilities he believes to be essential for the contemporary world

LINKS

- *How Children Learn 4*
Bruner
Dewey
Malaguzzi
Piaget

Howard Gardner

Piaget as the 'single dominant thinker' in the area of children's development⁽²⁾, Gardner found himself questioning the leading thinking of the day, which was based on Piaget's theory of cognitive development and the emphasis on psychometric testing of intelligence.

By the late 1970s, Gardner was involved with the Project on Human Potential 'to assess the state of scientific knowledge concerning human potential and its realisation'⁽³⁾ and, following this, he developed his major theory of multiple intelligences. For Gardner, intelligence is 'the capacity to solve problems or to fashion products that are valued in one or more cultural settings'⁽⁴⁾ and he undertook a complete review of the existing literature on indicators of intelligence. He became increasingly dissatisfied with the idea that intelligence can be measured as an IQ score and instead developed the idea that intelligence is dependent on the opportunities offered to children within a particular context or culture.

In developing his theory of multiple intelligences, Gardner used eight criteria or signs of intelligence⁽⁵⁾. These included his observations that:

- Damage to specific areas of the brain can cause specific kinds of impairment, such as motor, sensory or linguistic difficulties.
- Some individuals, especially those known as 'infant savants' or prodigies, can show specific gifts in certain areas of development, such as art or music.
- Intelligence has an identifiable core operation or set of operations.
- Intelligence has a distinctive developmental history and a definable set of 'end state' performances.
- Learning behaviour can be encoded in a symbol system.

For example, both mathematics and language can be written, as well as spoken.

- Intelligence has an evolutionary history and evolutionary plausibility.
- Evidence of intelligence can be supported from experimental psychological tasks.
- Evidence of intelligence can be supported from psychometric findings.

Gardner used these criteria to define seven intelligences which he published as the first edition of *Frames of Mind* in 1983. At that stage, these were:

- Linguistic intelligence.
- Logical-mathematical intelligence.
- Musical intelligence.
- Bodily-kinesthetic intelligence.
- Spatial intelligence.
- Interpersonal intelligence.
- Intrapersonal intelligence.

Subsequent research and reflection led Gardner to consider the possibility of three further intelligences: a naturalist intelligence; a spiritual intelligence; and an existential intelligence. However, he concluded that only the first of these should be added to the original list of seven.⁽⁶⁾

Gardner believes that all human beings possess all these intelligences to some degree or other, but that no two human beings will have exactly the same profile of intelligences. Although he acknowledges that in Western society, it is the understanding of intelligence as defined in the logical-mathematical and linguistic intelligence, that has been viewed with high importance, Gardner does not set his list of eight intelligences in any hierarchical order. Each simply identifies a different type of intelligence, though Gardner believed that the two personal intelligences should be seen as permeating the others.



In essence, Gardner took a holistic understanding of learning and stated: 'I want my children to understand the world, but not just because the world is fascinating and the human mind is curious. I want them to understand it so they will be positioned to make it a better place' ⁽⁶⁾. His theory of multiple intelligences

Summary of Gardner's 'intelligences':

Linguistic Intelligence is shown through the ability to use spoken and written language. It includes the ability to learn languages and the capacity to communicate effectively in a given situation, such as explaining events, convincing others through persuasive arguments or writing poetically.

Logical-mathematical intelligence is demonstrated through the ability to analyse problems logically, carry out mathematical operations with ease and investigate issues scientifically.

Musical Intelligence involves a particular capacity in performing, composition and appreciation of musical patterns. According to Gardner, musical intelligence generally runs parallel to linguistic intelligence.

Bodily-kinaesthetic intelligence includes the capacity to use one's whole body or parts of the body to solve problems and the ability to use mental abilities to coordinate bodily movements. Gardner sees mental and physical activity as related, such as in dance or sporting activities.

Spatial intelligence is concerned with the recognition and use of both wide space and more confined areas. Architects often demonstrate spatial intelligence and children can demonstrate it in activities such as jigsaws.

Interpersonal intelligence is shown in the capacity to understand the intentions, motivations and wishes of other people. Interpersonal intelligence enables people to work effectively with others.

Intrapersonal intelligence is concerned with the ability to understand oneself, one's feelings and fears. Gardner believed that intrapersonal intelligence allowed us to regulate our own lives effectively.

Naturalist intelligence is shown in the capacity to recognise, categorise and identify specific features and patterns in the environment. Gardner suggests that the 'popularity of dinosaurs among five-year-olds is no accident' but rather indicates our evolutionary, naturalist intelligence. ⁽⁷⁾

has helped educators reflect on what learning is and broaden their understanding of human intelligence. Many believe this approach has benefited many children who behave and learn differently.

Gardner's more recent work *Five Minds for the Future* ⁽⁹⁾ has arisen out of his analysis of contemporary social, economic, political, ecological and technological realities and the unprecedented speed with which these are changing. In order to prepare and enable children and young people to flourish, Gardner describes the need for an educational dynamic which includes both what children have to give to us and what we have to give to them. In particular, he believes children need the following 'minds':

- The disciplined mind – drawing on three understandings of the word 'discipline': to work regularly and steadily in order to improve; to master the key ways of thinking – in science, mathematics, history and the arts; and to become 'expert' in at least one area.
- The synthesising mind – skills in sifting out important information, deciding what options to make and why, choosing what to ignore and why, recording information appropriately.
- The creative mind – the capacity to come up with new ideas or products that are generally valued eventually (and not too quickly).
- The respectful mind – able to value – and not simply tolerate – others as individuals who look different, think differently, and have different belief systems.
- The ethical mind – understanding the responsibilities of citizenship, employment and community and acting on the basis of such responsibilities.

For Gardner, each of these minds should be nurtured in children across the age span, beginning in the early years. Like Martin Luther King, Gardner believes that the goal of education is 'intelligence plus character' ⁽¹⁰⁾ which is formed from birth.

Putting the theory into practice

Although Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences has not been universally accepted within academic circles, many educators and practitioners working with children have welcomed his work. For those who work with children with special educational needs, the idea that ALL of the intelligences are needed to live life well offers a breadth of understanding to what 'achievement' means. Gardner has helped practitioners understand the importance of taking individual differences among children very seriously and to take a deep interest in how children's minds are different from one another. He believes every child has a mixture of strengths and weaknesses and where some children with special educational needs may not demonstrate high levels of linguistic or logical-mathematical intelligence, they may demonstrate exceptional musical or bodily-kinaesthetic intelligence.

Howard Gardner

An understanding of multiple intelligence theory has impacted on special education in a number of ways. It has challenged a system which had assumed that everyone learns the same things in the same way, with a universal assessment measure to test the learning. Instead, with a greater emphasis on individual strengths, holistic approaches to learning now allow for a range of different kinds of learners in one setting, with the full set of intelligences included in the programme. Through personalised learning initiatives, educators assess, identify and support children's individual strengths and needs and consider their different learning styles.⁽¹¹⁾ For many children, this has meant the difference between being in a special school placement and in a mainstream setting. In turn, this has led to enhanced self-esteem in children who can take their place within a broad community of learners.

Gardner's later work on the 'five minds' has yet to be tested but, in creating inclusive settings where each of the intelligences is valued and more personalised provision is the norm, children are learning to value individual differences and appreciate children with special educational needs. The creation of such an ethos is undoubtedly contributing to the nurturing of the 'respectful mind', which is core to the contemporary educational process.

Comment

Howard Gardner has his critics; John White⁽¹¹⁾ questions whether all the intelligences meet Gardner's own criteria of having a symbol system, such as musical notation for musical intelligence. Gardner himself admits the challenges of assessing the different intelligences and acknowledges that some of the judgments made could be subjective. By describing musical and bodily-kinaesthetic intelligences as intelligences rather than talents, Gardner challenged a conventional view of linguistic and logical intelligence within education by proposing that cognitive strength could be manifested through other domains of learning, which helped to promote the place of the Arts in the curriculum⁽¹²⁾. The understanding of 'selfhood' in intrapersonal intelligence is likely to be very individualistic, and almost impossible to measure. Yet, for all these concerns, Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences has had a positive impact on many children by contributing to the move away from a narrow understanding of learning to a much broader view of what is needed for all children to have opportunities to develop their interests and strengths, including those children with specific disabilities, such as attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).⁽¹²⁾

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<http://www.howardgardner.com/>

PROFILE

Alexander Sutherland Neill was a Scottish author and educator. After a short period of time as the headteacher of Gretna Green School in Scotland, he worked to establish an educational experience for children, which was aligned with his passionate belief that the happiness of the child should be the foremost consideration in decisions about the child's upbringing, and that happiness grows from a sense of personal freedom. He founded Summerhill School and his philosophy of progressive education, considered by some to be controversial, continues to influence educational thinking today.

His life

Alexander S. Neill, one of thirteen children, received his early education in his father's one-room, five-class village school where he later became a pupil-teacher. Neill described his initial experience of teaching as "wretched" due to problems with discipline. ⁽¹⁾ In the 1910s Neill's experience and his acquaintance with the educator Homer Lane led him to advocate progressive education. Following difficulties establishing his own progressive school in Dresden and Sonntagsberg, Neill established a school in his family home, 'Summerhill', in Lyme Regis. After four years the school moved to Leiston in Suffolk and formed the first 'self-governing' boarding school, Summerhill School. ⁽²⁾

His writing

Neill was prolific and also wrote fiction based on his school experiences. The titles below outline his key ideas on progressive education:

- *The Problem Child* (1926) Neill clarified his thoughts about freedom in protest against his experiences as a child and as a pupil teacher.
- *The Problem Parent* (1932) When Neill was correcting the proofs of *The Problem Child*, he realized suddenly that he had written the wrong book. "There isn't a problem child," he said, "there is only a problem parent."
- *The Free Child* (1953) A series of chapters on Neill's philosophy for educating children.
- *Summerhill* (1960) A collection of extracts from *That Dreadful School and Other Papers* produced by Neill.

His theory

Neill's ideas are based primarily on his own experiences and observations, supplemented with some study of psychological (especially psychoanalytic) theory. This sets him apart from many educational theorists who start with an idea and then 'test' it in practice afterwards.

In his 1960 book *Summerhill*, Neill noted that he and his first wife, Ada, wanted "to make the school fit the child instead of making the child fit the school." In order to achieve this, he wrote, they would forsake "all discipline, all direction, all suggestion, all moral training, all religious training." ⁽³⁾

Shortly before leaving Dresden, Neill said "I am only just realising the absolute freedom of my scheme of Education. I see that all outside compulsion is wrong, that inner compulsion is the only value." ⁽²⁾ He felt that children had intrinsic motivation and that it was appropriate for them to choose what they wanted to do, even if they chose to do nothing.

Neill believed many of the children's problems resulted from poor sex education. He argued that adults should answer the questions a child asks, neither



A. S. Neill

LINKS

- *How Children Learn 1*
Susan Isaacs
- *How Children Learn 4*
Rousseau

KEY DATES

1883	Born in Forfar, Scotland
1899	Began as pupil-teacher in his father's school
1914–1918	Headteacher of Gretna Green School
1921	The earliest manifestation of the Summerhill ethos was founded at the Dalcroze School, part of an international school in a suburb of Dresden in Germany
1923	The school moved to Summerhill in Lyme Regis, England
1927	Summerhill moved to its present site at Leiston in Suffolk, England
1973	Died in Aldeburgh, England

more nor less. He also believed that prohibiting masturbation causes problems for children and that if children were allowed to discuss sexual matters openly, pornography, homosexuality and promiscuity would not arise.

Neill was against the notion that children should have everything they wanted or that they should be allowed to violate the rights of others, but he argued against adults making moral judgments. Neill believed that traditional methods of education, such as the imposition of authority and sanctions, compulsory attendance and moralising simply force children into a neurotic image of their elders.

Neill held what he termed “private lessons” with pupils, which included discussions of personal issues and equated to psychotherapy. These “PLs” were discontinued as Neill found that those children who didn't have them also seemed to find they could change any unacceptable behaviour. He came to the conclusion that it was the sense of freedom which was the decisive factor in changing behaviour, and not the psychotherapy.

Putting the theory into practice

The Neill approach has much relevance for today's early years provision in general and also for children with special needs. There is a strong emphasis on children exercising personal choices through self-regulation. Neill stated that this freedom can only be exercised by children as long as they are not infringing on the freedom of others. At Summerhill students took part in Schulgemeinde, or weekly community meetings, designed to help them define limits and establish community rules. Involving children in the set up of school and class rules is common practice in many schools today.

Children should also not be expected to make decisions they are not ready to make. So, for instance, a secure framework should be provided within which children can choose what they want to do. For example, Neill said:

A child should not be asked to face responsibilities for which he is not ready, nor be saddled with decisions he is not yet ready to make. The watchword must be common sense. ⁽⁴⁾

Neill's concept of 'self-direction' is reflected in one of the key tenets of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) ⁽⁵⁾, which states that adults should be responsive to child-initiated activities. This child-initiated approach has particular relevance for children with special needs as in ensuring children's interests are followed, rather than always led by the adult, it enables their ideas and achievements to be valued, and their personal interests to be developed.

Neill considered that school was not just about educating children, but rather that children's happiness is paramount. He identified physical, mental and emotional well-being as important contributors to this sense of contentment. Neill felt that school should be about more than just education in its narrow sense, and that it should encompass the role of the child's family. Achieving this holistic approach to children's education could be seen as suggesting the input of a variety of specialist provision. Today in the UK, a multi-agency approach which includes the health and family support service is seen as key to supporting children with special needs. In her 2011 review of the Early Years Foundation Stage Dame Clare Tickell says that for those with specific needs:

“Ensuring a close working relationship between those people in health, early years and education alongside parents and carers is an absolute pre-requisite to this.” ⁽⁶⁾

Neill also promoted the idea of humour and a sense of fun. He gives an example of how he introduced the children to visitors as “pigs” and the children would grunt accordingly, until on one occasion an eight year old girl said “Isn't that joke rather stale now?” He said, “Perhaps children like to be treated

with humour because humour involves friendliness and laughter. ... Much of the success of Summerhill is due to its sense of fun.”⁽⁷⁾

His influence

Neill encouraged educators to listen to children and respect their rights. His ideas were influential in the formulation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.⁽⁸⁾ These are based on the notion that children have human rights, that they are not owned by parents or anyone else and that the physical assault of children is a crime. For example, Article 13.1 of the Conventions states that, “The child shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers...”⁽⁹⁾

Listening to children and involving them in decision-making has also become a fundamental expectation within schools, for example through the formation of pupil-led school councils, and feedback on learning. Whitty (2007) states that well over 90% of schools in England and Wales have a school council.⁽¹⁰⁾

Comment

Neill was heavily influenced by Freud’s ideas that sexual repression underpins the psyche and that children can be freed from this “diseased attitude” by adults being open and non-judgemental with children on sexual matters. Current safeguarding practices make it difficult for adults to be open with children in the way Neill advocates, in case such openness is misconstrued. His ideas on homosexuality as a form of sexual deviance are also outdated.

The Summerhill School has had a stormy relationship with the English school inspectorate Ofsted. In 1999 the inspectorate issued a scathing report saying that Summerhill had been “mistaking idleness for personal liberty”.⁽¹¹⁾ The school fought back, mounting a successful legal action against Ofsted. The 2007 Ofsted report was much more favourable, “Students are ‘courteous, polite and considerate’, make ‘good progress’ and are ‘well-rounded, confident and mature’ when they leave.”⁽¹²⁾

Critics of Neill’s ideas feel that he lacks a systematic, considered philosophy of education; that his view of moral and religious education was outdated and simplistic; and that he had an anti-intellectual bias. It is not surprising that much of the true nature of Neill’s ideas is still shocking in a world where it is mostly assumed that adults know best what is good for children.

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Carl Rogers

PROFILE

Carl Rogers is best known for creating and promoting, within humanistic psychology, 'client-centred' or 'non-directive' therapy. He transferred his ideas to the field of education, through his focus on the most effective role of the teacher as a 'facilitator of learning'. Rogers suggested that emotions and feelings in education had to be taken into account. Natalie Rogers says of her father that he "was a model for compassion and democratic ideals in his own life, and in his work as an educator, writer, and therapist."⁽¹⁾

KEY DATES

1902	Born in Oak Park, Illinois
1926	Enrolled at Columbia University Teachers College
1928	Joined Rochester Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children
1931	Received doctorate from Columbia University Teachers College
1940	The term 'client-centred therapy' was introduced
1969	<i>Freedom To Learn: A View of What Education Might Become</i> published
1987	Died in La Jolla, California

His life

Carl Rogers was the fourth of six children of a strictly Christian family. He was regarded as a 'somewhat sickly child'⁽²⁾ although he was well-advanced in his ability to read before he began formal education.

His family moved to a large farm in 1914 and Rogers developed a strong interest in scientific agriculture. It was this subject he decided to study at university when he became a student at the University of Wisconsin in 1919. However, by the end of his first year he had changed his main subject to History, having decided he was going to become a Christian minister.

He was one of a select group of students chosen to attend a seminar in China in 1922 and toured the Far East for six months. He also became engaged that year and married two years later. He then spent two years at the Union Theological Seminary, New York City before giving up his theological ambitions and joining the nearby Columbia University Teachers' College, studying clinical and educational psychology.

In 1928 Rogers joined the Rochester Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children as child psychologist and then its director. He then began to publish books based on his experiences working with damaged children. From 1940 he pursued an academic and writing career, publishing controversial books which, to begin with, upset the orthodoxy of psychotherapy but which eventually became more accepted and influential. His client-centred approach, initially developed for therapy was later applied to education, an account of which is in Rogers' 1969 book *Freedom to Learn*.

From 1946 to 1947, Rogers served as president of the American Psychological Association and in 1956, he received its first Distinguished Contribution Award. In his later years, he travelled extensively in the US, Europe, Latin America, Russia, Japan, and South America facilitating Person-Centred Approach workshops.

His writing

Rogers wrote and contributed to many books from 1939 until his death. The most complete statement of his theory of humanistic psychology is in *Client-centered Therapy* (1951). His two collections of essays, *On Becoming a Person* (1961) and *A Way of Being* (1980), illustrate his humanistic philosophy beyond the field of psychology, and his 1983 book, *Freedom to Learn for the 80s* presented his full theory of experiential learning.

His theory

Rogers, in his 1969 edition of *Freedom to learn*⁽³⁾, identified ten principles for learning on which the following are based:

- People have a natural built-in capacity to learn.
- When the learner feels that what they are engaged in has relevance for them, significant learning takes place.
- Learners resist learning when they feel that it threatens to change the way they perceive or organise themselves.
- Such resisted learning is more easily assimilated when there is as little external threat (pressure to complete a task, sanctions for non-completion) as possible.
- Learning which has a perceived low threat tends to be assimilated.
- Learning through doing produces much significant learning.
- The learner participating in the learning process helps the learning to take place.

Carl Rogers

LINKS

- The most effective learning takes place when the learner initiates the process and is involved holistically, through feelings as well as intellect.
- When self-evaluation and self-criticism are the basic form of review, and not external evaluation, creativity, self-reliance and independence are encouraged.
- The skills of learning to learn are the most useful, particularly within the context of self-development.

Instead of seeing education as a process of instruction and receiving, he promoted the idea of a facilitator who guided the learner(s) in a process of discovery. He produced ten guidelines for the facilitation of learning on which the following are based:

- The facilitator should establish the initial group climate.
- The facilitator helps to establish the clarity of individual and group purposes.
- The learners should be trusted to want to achieve their stated purposes as this will provide the motivation for significant learning.
- The appropriate resources need to be made available and structured by the facilitator.
- Facilitators themselves are part of the flexible resources available to the individual or group.
- Both intellectual and emotional expressions from the individual or group should be accepted by the facilitator and valued with the appropriate degree of emphasis.
- As the facilitation expectations become more established, the facilitator should move into the role of a participant learner.
- The facilitator should share their thoughts and feelings as one of the group for the others to accept or not.
- Throughout the learning process, the facilitator needs to be aware of any indications of deep or strong feelings evident within the group.
- During the whole process, the facilitator needs to recognise and accept their own limitations.

Putting the theory into practice

The 'goal' of Rogers' theory is to produce 'the fully functioning person' ⁽⁴⁾ who has these attributes:

- They are open to experience and relate to both external and internal experience without becoming defensive.
- They live existentially, so that each moment is new and valuable, neither living in the past nor the future but totally in the here and now.
- They trust themselves to respond appropriately to stimuli and so are happy to take risks and learn from their experience.

Along with other theorists, for example Dewey and Rousseau, Rogers' ideas have contributed to what has become known as 'personalised learning' ⁽⁵⁾ where the child is placed firmly at the centre of, and is seen to contribute to, the learning process. This contrasts with 'traditional education', where education is considered to be the outcome of instruction on the child.

Rogers' views are relevant to the value placed today on child-initiated activities and children's greater involvement in planning and assessment of learning in early years settings.

- *How Children Learn 1*
Freud
Skinner
- *How Children Learn 3*
Rogers



Carl Rogers

His influence

In a study by Haggbloom et al. (2002) Rogers was found to be the sixth most eminent psychologist of the 20th century and second, among clinicians, only to Sigmund Freud. ⁽⁶⁾

Maureen O'Hara ⁽⁷⁾ states that 'Rogers' profoundly humanizing psychology of human potential has been embraced by not only American culture but by much of the developed world. Those spheres include education, organisational consulting, healthcare, psychotherapy and counselling, community action and social agency, adult development, communications training, parenting education, and pastoral care.'

Rogers' child-centred approach clearly resonates with early years practice, where the significant adult acts as a facilitator to the child's learning and encourages the child's independent development. This role of facilitator is crucial in dealing with children who have special needs. Not only is it undesirable to create a culture of dependency in those children, but carefully scaffolded support must be put in place to encourage them to take as much responsibility for themselves as they are able to.

Rogers identified that when children are motivated by choosing their own activities their learning will be significantly deeper and part of the role of the facilitator is to help the child reflect on their achievements, feel good about their successes and help identify where they need to try different strategies to do even better. Boosting self-esteem and independence is good for all children and especially so for those with special needs.

Practitioners can consider ways in which children with different special needs can be included in recording their successes. For example, by using digital cameras to capture images of their painting, a child who cannot verbalise their thoughts can be involved in a discussion by pointing to their picture. ⁽⁸⁾

Towards the end of his life Carl Rogers was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize for his work with national conflicts in South Africa and Northern Ireland.

Comment

Rogers' theories, because they grew out of the client/therapist relationship, relate very much to the individual's relationship with their learning facilitator and minimally concern the dynamics of group learning and how this can be enhanced by social skills.

Rogers regards intellect and emotion as the aspects which make up a holistic person, whereas more recent ideas, particularly those of Gardner ⁽⁹⁾, suggest that there are many other facets to take into account.

The attributes which Rogers has identified as necessary for practitioners (as facilitators of learning) can be exercised within a creative and enquiry-led curriculum. However, within a more content-driven and prescribed curriculum, it is less realistic to expect practitioners to function in this way, although encouragement of the learner's independence, self-evaluation and self-trust remain relevant.

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Vivian Gussin Paley

Her life

There was nothing to indicate in her schooling or childhood that she had any interest in becoming a teacher or in working with young children. She gained her PhD, Bachelor of Philosophy from the University of Chicago in 1947. She interrupted her undergraduate studies by moving to New Orleans, where she came under the influence of Rena Wilson who was a professor of education connected to Newcomb College Nursery School.

Paley says: "When I observed in her nursery school, Rena showed me how unpredictable and creative children are in their play. Rena helped me to see that the most interesting part of children's play – the characters, plots, and dialogue – was something we often ignored. I thought to myself, "Wow, this is a subject that is far more exciting than anything else." I was hooked from that point on."⁽¹⁾

After teaching in New Orleans, and New York, she moved back to Chicago, where she became a kindergarten teacher at the University of Chicago Laboratory School where she remained for the rest of her teaching career. The school was founded in 1896 by John Dewey (see pages 15-23) as an educational experiment to challenge the then conventional attitudes about childhood education. Dewey believed that education was a social process and wanted to show how a school could develop into a cooperative community.

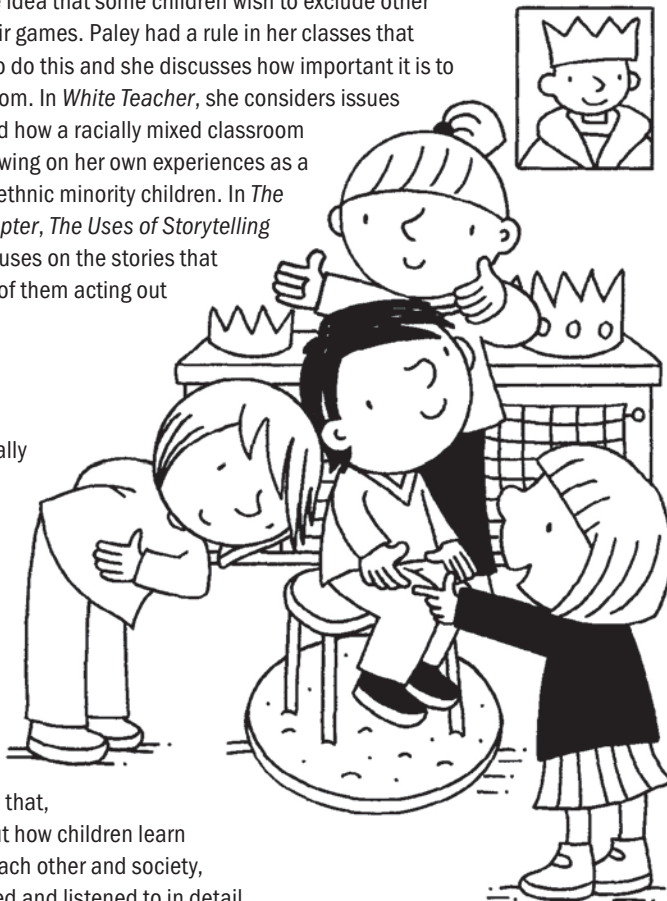
Her writing

Paley wrote 13 books about young children, each with a unique theme. In *You Can't Say You Can't Play*, she explores the idea that some children wish to exclude other children from playing in their games. Paley had a rule in her classes that children were not allowed to do this and she discusses how important it is to have fairness in the classroom. In *White Teacher*, she considers issues around multiculturalism and how a racially mixed classroom can be best supported, drawing on her own experiences as a white teacher working with ethnic minority children. In *The Boy Who Would Be a Helicopter*, *The Uses of Storytelling in the Classroom*, Paley focuses on the stories that children tell and the power of them acting out their narratives.

Her theory

Paley's books do not generally contain theory but draw on her own experiences as a practitioner-researcher to explore her thoughts, which themselves draw on narrative and psychoanalytic theories.

A key aspect of her thinking is that adult perspectives differ from children's perspectives and that, in order for adults to find out how children learn and relate to themselves, each other and society, children need to be observed and listened to in detail.



PROFILE

Vivian Gussin Paley, working in early years settings in the United States, became a practitioner researcher, gathering her data using tape recordings of children's conversations, play and narratives. She noted down and commented on her research in several books. Many educators believe that Paley's biggest influence is in promoting storytelling and fantasy play in young children.

KEY DATES

- 1929 Born in Chicago in the United States
- 1981 Publication of "Wally's Stories", her first book
- 2004 Paley was named as an Outstanding Educator by the US National Council of Teachers of English.

LINKS

- *How Children Learn 1*
Lev Vygotsky
John Dewey
- *How Children Learn 3*
Carl Rogers
- *Enabling Environments in the Early Years*
The emotional environment

Vivian Gussin Paley

Story telling

Paley feels that children have an innate ability to put thoughts and feelings into the form of stories. She believes that children's intellectual and social development can be profoundly affected by fantasy play and storytelling. They enable young children to begin to make sense of the world around them, get used to the requirements of the classroom, develop their language skills and understanding and interact empathetically with other children. By acting out their own and others' stories, children can see what kinds of narrative are engaging and satisfying, whether the characters are using appropriate language and if the dramatisation is a true representation of the story. Story telling and dramatic play provide the opportunity for both adults and children to practise skills such as expressing their own ideas, listening to those of others, negotiating roles, and empathy. The children are able to consider feelings and emotions within the narrative, such as friendship, fear and loss.

Paley's observations led to the belief that children take it for granted that fairy tales have a life of their own, including the power to frighten them, despite adults sometimes attempting to mitigate the full effects of the stories. However there is something much more profound taking place when children's own stories are used. Paley thinks that they have an intuitive approach to narratives. She says "It is the way they think ... it makes for a better story."⁽²⁾

Play

Paley strongly promotes the notion that the process through which children develop their understanding of their worlds is fantasy play. She believes that fantasy play provides a safe environment for children to explore their own identities (since they can be anybody or anything) and to reveal their secret thoughts. Paley feels that the power of fantasy play can never be over-estimated.

From her time at Newcomb College Nursery School, Paley says "In time we discovered that play was indeed work. First there was the business of deciding who to be and who the others must be, and what the environment is to look like and when it's time to change the scene. Then there was the even bigger problem of getting others to listen to you and accept your point of view while keeping the integrity of the make-believe, the commitment of the other players and perhaps the loyalty of a best friend."⁽³⁾

Punishment

Paley points out that, as a teacher, she had made mistakes and yet was not punished by being isolated, humiliated or told that she was not allowed to take part in particular activities. She feels that it is not appropriate to do to children what she would not allow to be done to herself. So, once she decided to no longer use the 'time out chair', she decided that she would have to provide an alternative positive strategy for teaching.

The strategy that she developed was to tap into the energy and commitment children gave to telling their stories and being involved in dramatizing them. By carefully observing children and listening to them she was able to engage their motivations. By modelling fair and reasonable behaviour she was able to influence children's behaviour. By enabling them to engage in each other's narratives, their empathy towards each other was developed.

The role of the teacher/practitioner

Paley admits that, as a new teacher, she was afraid of the children and sought mostly to get the approval of the principal. She now feels that during her early teaching career she was out of step and 'in the wrong forest' in not paying enough attention to the children's play and stories.

She notes that adults tend to regard the noisy, repetitive fantasies of children as uneducational, but says that those who choose to become educators should not think that they know how each child begins to learn. She concludes that the children are capable of dealing with frustrations in more ingenious and safe ways than she ever could.

It is the teacher's role to help develop the 'building blocks of society'. This can be achieved by observing children and supporting an environment which encourages fantasy play and leads to "friendship, fantasy and fairness".

Inclusion

Paley says that it is through the inclusion of everyone's stories that children feel valued, not just by inviting parents in to celebrate religious holidays or cultural events. She feels that equal weight should be given to community culture, family culture and the culture of play.

In her books, Paley demonstrates that every child, even those who have communication difficulties, has a story to tell and a right to have that story told, and can contribute to the classroom community. The contribution, even if it is considered by adults to be disruptive or a distraction, should be recognised for what it is. In the classroom adults must ensure that no-one is ignored or made to feel isolated.

Paley asks the child to dictate their story to her and she writes it down. The child then chooses who will act out the story and 'critiques' the attempts until it is just what they want. The drama is then acted out for the class and they discuss what they have seen.

Putting the theory into practice

Paley does not explicitly propose a theory and then test it against empirical research. She uses her experience of working with children to draw out general issues which she then comments upon. Therefore the theory in this chapter has been inferred from her writing, interviews and the comments of others.

Vivian Gussin Paley

Comment

Throughout her teaching career, Paley worked as a practitioner who constantly tried out her ideas. Through reflecting on what she observed and the data she gathered, she revised and developed her thinking, which she then encapsulated in her books.

In early years settings it is now common practice to observe children carefully and to find out and utilise the particular circumstances and interests of each child. Child-initiated activities are encouraged and valued and the power of play is recognised. Rules, based for example on inclusive practice, are discussed and drawn up with children and a safe environment for the discussion of relationships and anxieties is provided through such activities as circle times.

Practitioners take on the role of facilitators of children's learning, providing the resources, time, equipment and environment, within which cognitive, social and emotional development can flourish. In many school and setting behaviour policies, the emphasis is on positive behaviour management where praise, rewards and recognition of achievement are the main strategies.

These strands – close observation, capturing children's interests, child-initiated activities, positive behaviour management and inclusive practice – are all relevant to and supportive of children with special needs in the early years.

Paley's thoughts on inclusive practice are fundamental to developing these children's independence and sense of personal worth. To emphasise her approach – every child has a story to tell and a right to have that story told.

Her influence

Over her career, Paley has received many awards for her contribution to English teaching, early years practice and children in society. Her recognition by the educational and other communities, indicates that Paley's work is readable and approachable and that she has something to say which resonates with a broad spectrum of audiences.

Paley's focus on positive behaviour management strategies has been influential in the development of schools' and settings' behaviour management policies and strategies.

In her 1984 book, *Boys and Girls: Superheroes in the Doll Corner*,⁽⁶⁾ Paley considers the way the curriculum and adult expectations of children's work and play practices can disadvantage boys. In recent years there has been recognition of this for certain groups of boys within the education system and many schools and settings have since developed "boy-friendly" strategies such as more competitiveness, action-focused curriculum, and an emphasis on physical activity.⁽⁷⁾

It could be argued that Paley's research methodology was not systematic. Her ideas are based upon a relatively small and narrow sample of children who were selected due to their availability, that is the children who attended the University of Chicago Laboratory School. It is essentially a series of case studies. However, her writing is compelling and her conclusions resonate with the experience of other practitioners. The awards she has received bear testimony to this.

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Ferre Laevers

PROFILE

Laevers' name is associated in the early childhood sector with well-being and involvement. Over the past 35 years he has been involved in international research on the experiential learning of young children and has produced practitioner tools to encourage and develop 'deep learning' in children.

KEY DATES

- 1994 Published first book on young children's learning
- 2005 Co-founder and President of European Early Childhood Education Research Association

LINKS

- *How Children Learn 1*
Te Whariki: the New Zealand early years curriculum
- *How Children Learn 3*
Ferre Laevers
The care and education of children up to 3
- *How Children Learn 4*
Albert Bandura
Abraham Maslow
Carl Rogers

His life

Ferre (Ferdinand) Laevers was born in the Belgian Congo. His family returned to Belgium when he was ten. He eventually became a student in Leuven, about 30 kilometres east of Brussels. He developed an interest in early years education and how teachers could encourage self-direction amongst the children in their learning.

He took up a post in 1973 at Katholieke Universiteit in Leuven to support training and research in the early years. Amongst the influences on his thinking while undertaking his doctoral studies were Jean Piaget, Carl Rogers and Sir Herbert Read. ⁽¹⁾

Laevers began his work on experiential learning in 1976 when he was involved in a project to help a group of Flemish early years teachers to critically reflect on their practice. Over the years he has been part of similar projects in over 20 countries.

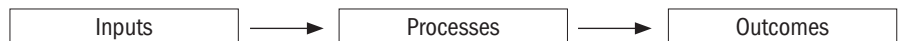
At the time of writing, Laevers is Director of the Research Centre for Experiential Education and was elected president of the European Early Childhood Education Research Association (EECERA) in 2005.

His writing

Laevers has authored or co-authored over 100 articles, reports, chapters and books since 1996. The vast majority relate to his research on the well-being of children and their involvement in learning. The full list of his publications can be found at <<https://lirias.kuleuven.be/cv?u=U0018384>>.

His theory

Laevers considers the learning process to consist of three distinct elements:



The inputs consist of the "ingredients for a powerful learning environment" ⁽²⁾, including:

- Respect for the child.
- Communication, a positive group climate.
- A rich environment.
- An open framework approach.
- Representation: impression-expression cycle.
- Observation, observation, observation.

The outcomes, or the effects of learning, are:

- Emotional health/self-esteem.
- Exploratory drive.
- Competencies and life skills.
- The basic attitude of 'linkedness' ⁽³⁾ i.e. be able to:
 - Empathise.
 - Value others.
 - Take responsibility.
 - Instigate positive action.

In order to explore the processes involved in the learning experience, Laevers has identified two sets of indicators which he feels should be considered in the planning of any educational setting. These relate to emotional well-being and involvement. His university has given its name to the Leuven

Scales, which indicate the levels at which the learner is functioning. Laevers' ideas suggest that high levels of well-being and involvement are indicative of high levels of children's development and deep learning which should lead to a much greater capacity to deal with work, relationships and general aspects of life.

Children are observed for regular short periods of time and scored using the scales. It is felt that, unless they are operating at levels four or five, they will not be benefiting fully from their activities in terms of their learning. It is recognised however that children are unlikely to be functioning at the higher levels consistently. After an initial analysis, the observer will then focus on the children who are scoring at low levels and design appropriately targeted, individual interventions.

The Leuven Scales can be used as a quality improvement tool. The scales highlight the importance of looking more broadly at process and achievement in children's learning, rather than focusing on their outcomes. ⁽⁴⁾ As well as providing diagnostic information on the processes involved in the children's learning, the observations also provide useful feedback to the adults who are designing and providing the learning context.

Putting the theory into practice

The ideas embodied in well-being and involvement have been honed over the years by extensive international research. The experiences of those involved have resulted in an 'inventory of initiatives' that promote well-being and involvement. This can be used by practitioners who wish to improve the development of learning within their settings.

This inventory is called "The Ten Action Points": ⁽⁵⁾

1. Re-arrange the classroom into appealing corners or areas.
2. Check the content of the corners and replace unattractive materials with more appealing ones.
3. Introduce new and unconventional materials and activities.
4. Observe children, discover their interests and find activities that meet these orientations.
5. Support ongoing activities through stimulating impulses and enriching interventions.
6. Widen the possibilities for free initiative and support them with sound rules and agreements.
7. Explore the relation with each of the children and between children and try to improve it.

The Leuven Scale for Well-being ⁽²⁾

1	Extremely Low	Children demonstrate obvious signs of discomfort e.g. crying. Their expression may indicate that they are dejected, sad, frightened or angry. There is no response to what is going on around them. They may exhibit aggressive behavior towards themselves or others.
2	Low	Their physical demeanour and behaviour suggest they feel ill at ease, though not all the time. However, these indications are not as strong as under level one.
3	Moderate	Children appear to be neutral in expression and physically. Little emotion is shown.
4	High	Signs of being satisfied and comfortable are indicated, though not consistently, nor as strongly as at level five.
5	Extremely High	Children appear positively cheerful, smiling and expressing delight. They may be displaying positive physical activity. They could be chatting to themselves or humming, engaging with their surroundings and appear confident and self-assured.

The Leuven Scale for Involvement ⁽²⁾

1	Little Activity	Children do not engage. They appear to stare vacantly, either standing or sitting by themselves. They could be low-level, repetitive activities. (It should be noted, however, that sometimes children who are apparently doing nothing, may in fact be thinking about something or just watching.)
2	Intermittent Activity	Children may be engaged for less than half the time and appear to be day dreaming or listlessly wandering.
3	More or Less Consistent Activity	Although they may be doing something, they are not actively engaged with the activity or it does not seem to be affecting them. They may seem lethargic.
4	Consistent and Sometimes Intense Activity	Children are actively engaged and enthusiastic, often challenging themselves, though they may need input from adults or other children to sustain their involvement.
5	Continuous Intense Activity	Children become absorbed in engaging and intense activities. They find it relatively easy to make choices and concentrate on what they are doing, sustain their interest and seem energised.

Ferre Laevers

8. Introduce activities that help children to explore the world of behaviour, feelings and values.
9. Identify children with emotional problems and work out sustaining interventions.
10. Identify children with developmental needs and work out interventions that engender involvement within the problem area.

His influence

There has been a great deal of interest in Laevers' work internationally. In the UK he has influenced the direction of The Effective Early Learning Project, led by Christine Pascal and Tony Bertram. Pascal and Bertram say that in the United States research on motivation (which demonstrates Involvement) has shown that children with high levels of motivation perform better on outcome measures of performance, such as decoding and comprehension skills. ⁽⁶⁾

Although the application of "The Ten Action Points" can benefit all children, the final two points relate specifically to children with special needs. Point nine deals with behavioural and emotional problems. Based on a large body of international research, the expanded action point provides suggestions for an experiential strategy to support children by structuring time and space, or by giving positive attention. For example, a child who demands a lot of attention through negative behaviour can be targeted for unexpected praise when they behave in the desired way. Point 10 relates to children with developmental needs and involves specific interventions relating to children's 'problem areas'. For example, a child who finds it difficult to coordinate sight and movement can be encouraged to engage in appropriate catching activities.

Laevers' work on children's well-being has been used to inform the 2007 UNICEF study of children's well-being ⁽⁷⁾, as well as Ofsted's publication of a comparative table of aspects of children's well-being for Local Authorities in England, as part of the Annual Performance Assessment of Local Authorities. ⁽⁸⁾

be argued that the numbers lose the essential qualities that descriptive or 'best fit' assessments can provide.

The observations which underpin the scales essentially relate to how the individual child functions within their learning environment. The Leuven Scales do not address, what humanistic psychologists such as Bandura and Maslow have recognised, the importance of social interactions on development.

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Comment

Some schools in the UK have adopted the Leuven Scale of Wellbeing to identify barriers to learning for their pupils. Performance data on children measures a very narrow range of achievements (e.g. SATs) and schools feel that the Leuven Scale data contextualises this and provides indications for personalised interventions for children.

Part of the appeal of the Leuven Scales is that, in the modern context of data-rich schools and settings, they provide more numerical data on children which can be used to analyse correlations and compare groups or individuals. However, it could

Where to find out more

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<http://www.teachingexpertise.com/articles/project-improves-practice-1121>

<http://www.earlylearninghq.org.uk/earlylearninghq-blog/the-leuven-well-being-and-involvement-scales/>

Loris Malaguzzi

His life

Loris Malaguzzi was born in 1920 in Correggio, Northern Italy and grew up during the period known as 'Fascist Italy'. He taught in elementary and middle schools during the Second World War, gaining an Education degree from the University of Urbino in 1946.

After the fall of Fascism at the end of the war in 1945, a group of working parents came together with a shared aim to build a school for their children, where they could acquire the values and skills to develop and sustain a democratic society in the future. Malaguzzi, who was inspired by the strength of their commitment to this task, joined in their efforts to build and run the first school in Villa Cella. He developed further schools with the community in the region until 1963, when the first municipal pre-school for three to six year olds was opened in response to local demand. The first municipal infant-toddler centres for children from three months to three year olds followed in 1971. Malaguzzi was appointed as director of Early Childhood programmes in the region in 1963 and held this post for the next thirty years.

In 1950, Malaguzzi founded the municipal Psycho-Pedagogical Medical Centre, and worked there as a psychologist for 20 years, though he continued his association with the pre-schools during this period. He also worked as a consultant for the Italian Ministry of Education and founded the Gruppo Nazionale Asili Nidi (a national early education research group) in Reggio Emilia in 1980. The 'Loris Malaguzzi International Centre', which opened in 2006, supports ongoing early childhood research and study visits to Reggio Emilia.

His writing

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- Malaguzzi, L. (1994) *Your Image of the Child: Where Teaching Begins*. Child Care Information Exchange.96, pp. 52-61.
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His theory

Malaguzzi's innovative and creative educational philosophy was influenced by progressive educational theorists, such as Dewey and Vygotsky and by his personal experiences of life under the Fascist regime. Malaguzzi continuously applied and shaped his theoretical views of education in practice from the time when he first worked with parents as a young teacher to lead development of early childhood services until his death. Using a metaphor of riding a bicycle to explain the value of



PROFILE

Loris Malaguzzi was the founding director of the municipal early childhood centres in the area of Reggio Emilia in Northern Italy. Malaguzzi developed a philosophy for Early Childhood Education that is known today as the 'Reggio Emilia Approach'. Central to this approach is a conceptual view of the child having rights rather than needs. ⁽¹⁾

KEY DATES

- | | |
|------|--|
| 1920 | Born in Correggio, Italy |
| 1963 | Opened the first municipal pre-schools |
| 1971 | Opened the first municipal infant-toddler centres |
| 1981 | Launch of 'The Hundred Languages of Children' touring exhibition |
| 1994 | Died at home in Reggio Emilia |

LINKS

- [How Children Learn 3](#)
Bronfenbrenner
- [How Children Learn 4](#)
Bruner
Dewey
Gardner
Montessori
Piaget
Vygotsky

Loris Malaguzzi

connecting theory to practice, Malaguzzi proposed that we would keep a good balance by pushing two pedals, each representing theory and practice, but by only pushing one of the pedals, we would not travel far. ⁽²⁾

Malaguzzi viewed education as a collaborative venture between children and adults, where they could explore meanings, engage in critical dialogue and co-construct knowledge together. A significant element of Malaguzzi's philosophy was his view of the 'strong' child, who was a communicator from birth. He advocated that children could communicate in different ways using a 'hundred languages' to represent their thinking and emphasised the importance of listening to children. Malaguzzi thought that respectful, co-operative relationships between children and adults were essential to the learning process. He valued parental involvement and advocated opportunities for professional dialogue, reflection and research. As pedagogical leader of early childhood services in the region, Malaguzzi was instrumental in the development of the theory and practices, which are now known as the 'Reggio Emilia Approach' to early childhood education. Through 'The Hundred Languages of Children' touring exhibition, which was initiated by Malaguzzi, this approach has been widely disseminated and gained international recognition.

Putting the theory into practice:

The following four terms are fundamental aspects of the 'Reggio Emilia Approach': ⁽³⁾

1. The image of the child is conceptualised as a: ⁽⁴⁾
 - Protagonist, who is strong, rich and capable. Children, teachers and parents are the three central protagonists in the educational process, with the child as the starting point for the curriculum.
 - Collaborator, who is interconnected to others within and beyond their community. The formation of children's identities and their learning takes place through interaction in social contexts.
 - Communicator, supported by an atelierista (studio teacher who is trained in the visual arts). The child represents and communicates their thinking and learning in different forms, through a 'hundred languages'.
2. In the process of negotiated learning, the teacher acts as ⁽⁴⁾:
 - Co-constructor, facilitating and extending the child's interests and explorations and encouraging them to develop projects. The teacher listens, observes, talks and documents the learning journey.
 - Researcher, developing strong, collegial relationships with others to engage in professional development, based on their work and children's progression.
3. Documentation: ⁽⁴⁾
 - Exists in different forms, such as photographs, transcripts of children's language, representations of

the child's thinking and teachers' commentary on the purpose and process of learning.

- Not only represents an 'end product' but is collected throughout the child's experiences and activities.
 - Enables children, parents and other adults in the setting to share their perspectives, understanding and values about the learning process. It helps to make the learning process more 'visible' and informs parents about their child's provision and progression.
 - Conveys to the child that their thoughts and actions are noticed, understood, appreciated and can be shared with others.
 - Provides a historical archive of the setting's work.
4. Social relationships: ⁽⁵⁾
 - The establishment of long-term, meaningful relationships among and between children, parents and teachers is seen as a priority; relationships underpin effective communication, collaborative activity and reciprocity. The physical environment is planned to support relationships by providing spaces for participation and interaction.
 - Support the formation of a democratic, just and inclusive school community.
 - Facilitate the local community's interest and engagement in the work of the school.

The Reggio Emilia Approach is fully inclusive; Malaguzzi advocated that all children are active participants and co-constructors in the learning process. Educators at the municipal early childhood centres in the Reggio Emilia region value the rights and contributions of children with additional needs; for example, by identifying children's strengths in the documentation of their work.

Malaguzzi's concept of the hundred languages of children acknowledges the validity of children's use of diverse forms of communication and enables all children to have a 'voice' and express themselves through different modes of communication, such as: dance, gesture, shadow play, puppets, maps, construction materials and computers. These different modes of representation are particularly helpful for children with special needs, in particular those with speech and language difficulties.

The provision of visually attractive environments in the Reggio Emilia centres has been termed 'the third teacher'. Light, shade and colour are used carefully to support children's sensory experiences and promote their enquiry and participation; for example, by exploring reflection through mirrors. Spaces that enable interaction between community members at the centre are integral to the provision; they facilitate children's communication and collaboration with others. The use of long-term projects, which are central to the Reggio pedagogical approach, support children who may need more time to develop their thinking and learning. Projects are formed and developed around the children's individual interests and therefore

promote the involvement of all children in the learning process. They provide meaningful contexts for children with special needs to share experiences and understanding with others.

His influence

Malaguzzi's pedagogical leadership of the Reggio Emilia approach has been highly influential across early years practice. For example, he advocated that society should collectively support high quality early years provision as a prerequisite for a democratic and fair society. Significant investment in early childhood services since the end of the 20th century in England would seem to acknowledge Malaguzzi's intuitive view of the value of early years education.

Malaguzzi proposed that professionals, parents and other members of the community work collaboratively to promote learning opportunities for all children. For example, the Reggio Emilia centres employ an *atelierista*, who supports children's creative learning and the *pedagogista* (pedagogical co-ordinator) who supports educators across a group of early childhood centres. This approach is reflected in current practice in early years provision in England; for example, multi-disciplinary teams work collaboratively to support the development and care of children, including those with additional needs.

Malaguzzi also emphasised the importance of educators developing meaningful relationships and listening to children to facilitate their learning. These principles are embedded in early years frameworks in England and elsewhere. Malaguzzi used a metaphor of a ball being tossed in the air by the learner to represent the educative process. He explained that educators should catch 'the ball that is thrown to us', because 'if the ball is not returned [by the educator], then the game is over'.⁽⁶⁾ Malaguzzi's metaphor highlights the significance of adults' timely and effective response to children to support their learning experience.

Comment

Though the Reggio Emilia Approach is widely known and valued today, it is also recognised that it is unique to its original locality and cannot be readily transformed elsewhere. However, aspects of the approach could be adapted to benefit provision, particularly for children with additional needs. One criticism that has been made of the approach is the lack of curriculum planning and other practices that provide accountability for the setting's provision. However, Malaguzzi encouraged practitioners to reflect and discuss their practice and the use of documentation provides transparency about practice and supports its evaluation.

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Reuven Feuerstein

PROFILE

Reuven Feuerstein is a clinical psychologist and educator. From his work with children who appeared to have low levels of cognitive performance, he formed a positive view that human cognitive functioning is not fixed but could be enhanced. He described this potential for cognitive change as 'structural cognitive modifiability' and developed a holistic approach to cognitive enhancement.

KEY DATES

1921	Born in Botosan, Romania
1940-44	Studied in Bucharest
1945	Moved to Palestine
1952	Completed degrees in General and Clinical Psychology at the University of Geneva
1970	Awarded his PhD in Developmental Psychology at the Sorbonne
1970	Appointed Professor of Educational Psychology in Bar Ilan University School of Education, Israel

LINKS

- *How Children Learn 4*
Montessori
Piaget
Vygotsky

His life

Reuven Feuerstein studied at the Teachers College in Bucharest from 1940-44. During this period he was also co-director and teacher in a school for disadvantaged and disturbed children. Due to the Nazi invasion of Europe, Feuerstein escaped and fled to Jerusalem in 1944, where he attended a teacher training seminary. After the Second World War ended, Feuerstein worked as a special education teacher and counsellor with survivors of the Holocaust who had been separated from their parents and cultures.

Feuerstein went to Switzerland in 1949 to recuperate from TB, where he went on to study psychology under Jean Piaget and Andre Rey. In 1954 he returned to Israel, where he developed a psychological service to support the assessment of the large numbers of children who had immigrated to Israel.

In 1965, Feuerstein became the director of the Hadassah-WIZO-Canada Research Institute, which later became part of the International Center for the Enhancement of Learning Potential (ICELP). Though his approach was not accepted by academics at the time, who favoured the use of conventional tests, Feuerstein's radical work has since become far more widely accepted and has applications for all children, including those with additional needs.

His writing

Feuerstein has written extensively as a main or contributing author to works about his theory of cognitive enhancement. His work includes:

- Feuerstein, R., Rand, Y. and Hoffman, M. (1979) *The Dynamic Assessment of Retarded Performers: The Learning Potential Assessment Device (LPAD)*. Baltimore, MD: University Park Press.
- Feuerstein, R., Rand, Y., Hoffman, M. B. and Miller, R. (1980) *Instrumental Enrichment: An Intervention Program for Cognitive Modifiability*. Baltimore, MD: University Park Press.
- Feuerstein, R., Rand, Y. and Rynders, J. (1988). *Don't Accept Me As I Am: Helping "Retarded" People to Excel*. N.Y.: Plenum Press.
- Feuerstein, R. (1999). *Instrumental Enrichment/Mediated Learning Training Programs*. Arlington Heights, IL: Skylight Training and Publishing.

His theory

Feuerstein's theory of Structural Cognitive Modifiability (SCM) is based on an optimistic notion that an individual's cognitive functioning has the potential for change as it is flexible and open. ⁽¹⁾ His theory was derived from his experience of working with children in Israel who had been culturally deprived. He believed that their poor performance in standard intelligence tests was caused by their undeveloped cognitive functions, which had been affected by their culturally-deprived backgrounds. ⁽²⁾ Feuerstein thought that conventional IQ testing did not reveal the children's learning potential. He suggested that when a child's thinking processes are under-developed, they may struggle to find connections between similar tasks. Though a particular task may be managed by the child, they had not developed the capacity to transcend their learning to a different context. ⁽³⁾ His view led him to develop assessment tools, which aimed to uncover a child's capacity to learn.

Learning Potential Assessment Device (LPAD)

Feuerstein advocated the use of LPAD to evaluate a child's potential to learn through 'dynamic assessment'. ⁽⁴⁾ The assessment, which consists of a series of cognitive tasks carried out over a number of days, aims to understand how a child thinks and learns. Dynamic assessment is a process of testing and teaching simultaneously. During the assessment, a specific principle or

process is taught and the learner's application of this principle or process is later assessed by the teacher. The assessment is used to develop an appropriate, individualized intervention programme for the child in the form of 'Instrumental Enrichment' (IE) tasks. The LPAD differs significantly from IQ testing in the following ways: its use of measurement tools; the test situation; its emphasis on process rather than outcome, as well as how the test results are then interpreted. ⁽¹⁾

Instrumental Enrichment

Feuerstein's 'Instrumental Enrichment' (FIE), is a cognitive intervention programme, which was first developed in the 1950s. FIE enables the practice and learning of various strategies and stages in information processing and can be undertaken over a period of two or three years. The programme consists of 14 'instruments' (see table 1 below) or paper and pencil tasks, which are free from subject-specific associations, and instead aimed at promoting the individual's cognitive development and capacity to learn.

The instruments are each concerned with particular cognitive functions, which can be classified within the following headings: ⁽⁴⁾

- The control of perception and attention.
- Comparison.



- Categorisation.
- Understanding relationships.
- Defining problems.
- Thinking hypothetically.
- Planning.
- Solving Problems.

FIE Basic has been developed for younger children from approximately three to seven years of age, or older children who have underdeveloped cognitive functioning. The programme aims to promote the development of basic concepts and build thinking skills. It consists of a set of playful learning activities (see table 2), which encourage children to seek and form relationships. It consists of 10 instruments, which are taught over the course of two to four years.

Mediated Learning Experience

Feuerstein uses the term 'mediated learning experience' (MLE) to describe the interaction between the mediator and the child, which facilitates change in their cognitive functioning. During the MLE, prescribed tasks are used by the mediator to promote the child's thinking. ⁽⁴⁾ Drawing on Vygotsky's work, Feuerstein uses the term 'mediator' rather than 'teacher' to depict the more experienced individual who 'mediates' the interaction.

Table 1: The instruments of Feuerstein's instrumental enrichment

1	Organisation of dots	8	Numerical progressions
2	Orientation in space I	9	Family relations
3	Comparisons	10	Instructions
4	Categorisations	11	Temporal relations
5	Analytic perception	12	Transitive relations
6	Orientation in space II	13	Syllogisms
7	Illustrations	14	Representational stencil design

Table 2: The instruments of FIE Basic

1	Tri-channel attentional learning	6	Identifying emotions
2	Orientation in space I	7	From empathy to action
3	Orientation in space 2	8	Preventing violence
4	Organisation of dots	9	Compare and discover the absurd
5	From unit to group	10	Learning to question for reading comprehension

Reuven Feuerstein

Putting the theory into practice

Feuerstein's concept of a 'mediated learning experience' has direct application to practice. His theory of 'Structural Cognitive Modification' was based on his commitment to inclusive practice. He aimed to promote all children's access to education so they could develop their potential. His thinking is reflected in the current emphasis on early intervention strategies, which seek to minimise the effects of socio-economic disadvantage and improve children's future life chances.⁽⁵⁾ Feuerstein also advocated the involvement of parents in their child's programme, which is also relevant to current practice.

Feuerstein also highlights the importance of effective assessment to ensure children are not misjudged by established procedures. He advocated the use of assessment processes that are responsive to the unique circumstances of individual children. For example, assessment processes aim to measure learning potential rather than actual performance and assessment tasks are varied, and include visual material.⁽¹⁾

Feuerstein's theory acknowledges the importance of the mediator's respectful relationship with the child so they can encourage the child's intellectual and emotional development.⁽⁴⁾ The mediator guides the process of 'bridging', which is the transfer of learned strategies and principles acquired from previous areas of learning to another unrelated task.

His influence

Feuerstein's work on cognitive development has emphasised the importance of developing children's independent thinking and problem-solving skills so they are supported to 'learn how to learn'. This has provided a focus on the 'process' rather than the 'content' of learning. The assessment procedures advocated by Feuerstein have highlighted the need for educators to consider the potential of children's cognitive functioning as well as actual performance in assessment tasks. His focus on intervention as a tool to improve children's potential outcomes is supported by a 'growing body of evidence of the effectiveness of early intervention with children and families'.⁽⁶⁾

FIE is used to enhance the learning potential of children who have impaired or underdeveloped cognitive functions, including those who are blind, as there is a Braille version of FIE. Feuerstein's programme has provided a positive message for educators, children with cognitive deficit and their families.⁽⁷⁾ His belief that children should not be defined by their limitations supports the view that educators should be prepared to enhance the learning potential of all children.

Comment

A criticism of Feuerstein's theory is that some of his theoretical concepts are not clearly defined and the quality of mediated learning experiences can only be assessed subjectively. The programme also has financial implications for a setting; staff would need to be trained for their role as mediator and would need allocated time and specialised resources to work on the programme.

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The International Center for the Enhancement of Learning Potential <http://www.icelp.org/asp/main.asp>

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Rudolf Steiner

His life

Steiner studied maths, chemistry and natural history at the University of Vienna. He tutored a boy with special needs from 1884 until 1890, when he moved to Weimar to research Goethe's scientific writing. This work enabled him to graduate as a doctor of philosophy in 1891. Steiner moved to Berlin in 1897, where he wrote and lectured. He was interested in philosophy and science and thought the rapid development of the sciences should be grounded in spiritual rather than material principles. His interest in spirituality led him to develop a distinctive philosophy known as Anthroposophy, which can be defined as 'knowledge of the wisdom of humanity'.⁽¹⁾ Anthroposophy is concerned with the areas of spiritual science, eurhythm (harmonious movement) and nature. Its principles are integral to the Steiner-Waldorf approach to education.

The first Steiner-Waldorf school opened in 1919 in Stuttgart. Eric Molt, the director of the Waldorf-Astoria cigarette factory, had heard Steiner talk about education and invited him to establish a school for the factory workers' children. Molt believed that Steiner could provide an innovative approach to education at a time of devastation in Germany, following the end of World War One. Steiner agreed to Molt's proposal; he later wrote: 'We need to look without prejudice at what children bring with them if we are to raise them as they need to be raised so that the next generation will move past the social ills that have such a terrible effect upon us at present'.⁽²⁾

This first Steiner-Waldorf school was successful and inspired the development of further schools and kindergartens. Today, more than 1,800 early years settings and over 900 schools follow the Steiner-Waldorf approach throughout the world.



PROFILE

Rudolf Steiner was an Austrian scientist, philosopher and educator whose work encompassed the areas of architecture, the arts, medicine and biodynamic agriculture (organic farming). Steiner advocated a holistic form of learning that emphasised the importance of children's emotional and spiritual development. Steiner's approach to education continues today in Steiner-Waldorf kindergartens and schools throughout the world.

KEY DATES

- | | |
|------|---|
| 1861 | Born in the village of Kraljevec, Austria (now Croatia) |
| 1919 | First Steiner-Waldorf school (Freie Waldorfschule) opened in Stuttgart, Germany |
| 1925 | Died in Dornach, Switzerland |

LINKS

- *How Children Learn 4*
 - Bruner
 - Dewey
 - Malaguzzi
 - Neill

Rudolf Steiner

His writing

Steiner produced some 170 books and published transcripts of nearly 6,000 lectures. His work is published by The Anthroposophic Press, The Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship, and The Rudolf Steiner Press. His writing includes:

- *Philosophy of Freedom* (1964) Rudolf Steiner Press – his first main work (published in German in 1894).
- *The Education of the Child and Early Lectures on Education* (1906-1911), including *Education of the Child in the light of Spiritual Science* (1996) Anthroposophic Press – contains his earliest ideas on education and child development.
- *The Study of Man* (2004) Rudolf Steiner Press – lectures delivered by Steiner in 1919 to the teachers of the first Steiner-Waldorf school in Stuttgart.

His theory

Anthroposophy forms the theoretical basis to teaching methods used in Steiner-Waldorf provision, but is not taught to the students directly. It offers a perspective of child development and underpins educational theory, the role of the teacher, the collegial running of the school and other concepts that relate to Steiner education.

Steiner believed that formal education should not be imposed on children before the age of seven, but encourages children to develop 'self-direction'. He considered that repetition and the natural rhythms of daily routines support the child's feelings of security, and that creative play experiences provide opportunities to support the development of the child's imagination. Pressure on children to succeed is avoided and positive relationships between children, parents and staff are encouraged.

Steiner thought that teaching was an art⁽¹⁾ and that the child should be treated as an individual. Education should be concerned with the development of the whole child and have an integrated approach. The physical, emotional, cultural, spiritual and intellectual needs of each child are given equal attention. Through this balanced approach, children can develop clarity of thought, a sensitivity of feeling and a positive strength of will.

The Steiner approach to the curriculum and pedagogy work in accordance with life's natural rhythms and aim to support the unfolding of the following human faculties through engagement with the natural world:⁽³⁾

- 'Doing' – related to the hands. Involves developing control of body and limb movement.
- 'Feeling' – related to the heart. Involves the affective area of the emotional and aesthetic senses.
- 'Thinking' – related to the head. Involves the cognitive area of rational thought.

Steiner's model of education is organised into three seven-year phases that correspond to stages of children's development:

- **Kindergarten:** from birth to seven years. At this stage, the 'active' or 'will' stage of development is dominant. Learning through imitation, the senses and the use of the imagination is emphasised. Children's physical and language skills are developed and they become ready for school. Formal teaching of literacy and numeracy does not occur in this phase. Children experience movement, music, story-telling and rhymes, as well as routine household tasks, such as cleaning and cooking. Children's learning has greater meaning to them through its relevance to daily life.
- **Middle School:** between the ages of 7 to 14 years. The 'affective' or 'feeling' stage of development predominates at this stage, which is intended to be creative, challenging and structured. The child may have the same teacher throughout the phase. Academic subjects are incorporated with the arts through physical, spiritual and craft activities.
- **Upper School:** from the age of 14 to 21 years. Cognitive thinking ability is dominant at this stage and guidance is provided by different specialist teachers. The student is encouraged to develop understanding of current issues, form judgements, and think independently.

Putting the theory into practice

The Steiner-Waldorf approach has much relevance for early years provision for children with special needs. There is a strong emphasis on child-centred practice that is aligned with the child's individual needs and stage of development. Steiner encouraged practitioners to consider ways of working that are in harmony with children's strengths and focus on their potential, rather than areas of weakness. For example, Steiner said:

Instead of wringing our hands about how poorly such children spell and continually asking what we should do to teach them to spell, it would be much better to think about what capacities the children actually have, seek out those special talents, and then find a way to teach the children what they need to learn from those talents.⁽²⁾

Therefore, Steiner advocated that practitioners identify children's positive attributes and appreciate and respect children for what they can do. This is an important aspect of inclusive practice.

Steiner's holistic approach to learning encourages children to access experiences indoors and outdoors and use all their senses as they participate in art, cooking, gardening, singing, music, story-telling and eurhythmy, which is a form of movement that makes speech and music visible. This provision enables young children to access wider forms of representation such as movement or drama,

which they can use to communicate their feelings. This supports their social and emotional development, which is particularly important for emotionally vulnerable children. Children with developmental delay are supported by eurhythmic therapy, which consists of special exercises that assist their physical and inner development.

Steiner felt formal 'teaching' was inappropriate in the early years and could be stressful at a critical period of young children's development. Expectations imposed on children could be challenging, particularly if these are not aligned to the circumstances and needs of the individual child. Steiner thought children could learn through imitation, when the adult plays alongside the child. Activities such as cooking enable young children to access meaningful and engaging experiences that also support the development of cognitive skills, for example, by weighing ingredients when cooking. The use of 'warm technology', such as hand whisks or other devices that are operated by hand, supports children's physical and cognitive development as they see the impact of the machine's action. Cooking fosters an interest in healthy eating too, as children learn about how to prepare food, using natural ingredients. This helps them to develop understanding of basic food hygiene and nutritional needs, as well as allergies and intolerance to certain foods, which supports children with special dietary needs.

The familiar rhythm of recurring daily and seasonal activities in Steiner-Waldorf education provides children with a sense of continuity and predictability. This promotes a feeling of calmness, helping children to feel secure and confident. Steiner emphasised the importance of rhyme, rhythm, puppets and song. He thought repetition of stories supported the development of children's literacy, imagination and memory.

Steiner-Waldorf practitioners adopt a consistent pedagogical approach and act as role models, mentors and guides to young children. Their respectful attitude encourages children to feel secure and try new experiences. A strong sense of community between children, parents and staff is valued within Steiner-Waldorf education.

Communication between teachers and parents enables observations and experiences to be shared and supports parents' understanding of the Steiner approach. Older children are encouraged to help younger ones, which helps them to understand the needs and perspectives of others and communicate respectfully and sensitively with peers and adults.

Steiner's approach encourages children to develop a respectful attitude to the environment by encouraging them to demonstrate caring attitudes and appreciate its beauty. All children can be included in this endeavour,

according to their respective stage of development. Careful attention is paid to providing a 'homely', quality environment, which supports children's transition from home to the early years setting. 'Warm' colours are used and space is provided for play activity, with resources that can be used in multiple ways. The emphasis on imaginative play supports children's creative development. It allows children to 'pass through invisible doorways into alternative worlds'.⁽⁴⁾ An aesthetically pleasing environment promotes children's interaction in different areas of the setting. Plastic toys are avoided; furniture and resources that are made from natural materials provide a connection to the natural world and support children's sensory and spiritual experience.

His influence

Prevailing interest in Steiner-Waldorf provision demonstrates that Steiner has been an influential figure in educational provision for children around the world and that his ideas have relevance today. His support for a holistic view of children, who create their own ideas through imaginary play and develop their 'self-direction', is recognised in provision for 'child-initiated activity' within the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).⁽⁵⁾ This has particular relevance for children with special needs, as it enables their ideas and achievements to be valued and their interests to be developed. Children's capabilities could otherwise go unrecognised when adults determine all activities in the setting and control the conditions in which they can be accessed.



Rudolf Steiner

The importance of respectful, trusting relationships in Steiner-Waldorf provision relates to the EYFS theme of 'Positive Relationships'.⁽⁵⁾ Steiner's notion of practitioners who know and respect children and their family is most relevant for practitioners today working with children who have special needs. Equally, Steiner's innovative thinking about the setting working in harmony as a socially inclusive community resonates with current policy and practice on inclusion in early years provision.

Comment

The lack of access to programmable toys or electronic technology in Steiner early years settings does not support access to electronic resources for children with special needs, which could provide useful, specific support for children's learning and development. This equipment is considered by Steiner practitioners to be detrimental to children's healthy development as it does not enable them to be deeply connected to real life experiences, can restrict the use of their imagination, or could cause children to be less attentive to others, as they are overstimulated by inappropriate images and sound.⁽⁶⁾

Steiner-Waldorf provision does not endorse formal learning, including the area of 'communication, language and literacy' before the age of seven.⁽⁵⁾ A child with special needs may, therefore, be unable to access a particular support programme that is more formally delivered. However, group activities are differentiated to accommodate children's specific needs, which are reviewed through staff observations and case-studies.⁽⁶⁾

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<http://www.steinerwaldorf.org.uk> Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship (for schools based in the UK and Ireland).

www.ecswe.net The European Council for Steiner Waldorf Education (ECSWE) is a European organisation with 27 national Waldorf Associations, representing over 670 Steiner Waldorf schools in Europe.

<http://www.rudolfsteinerpress.com> Rudolf Steiner Press publishes books that further spiritual science, or anthroposophy.

Maria Montessori

PROFILE

Her life

Whilst working as a doctor, Montessori undertook research in psychiatric medicine and continued to study philosophy, psychology and education. After getting a job at San Giovanni Hospital she developed an interest in 'idiot children' (the term attributed at the time to children with SEN) and children from deprived backgrounds. She studied and was influenced by the writings of Édouard Séguin about children with cognitive issues. In 1900 Montessori became the director of a school for children with special needs opened by the National League for Retarded Children. In the same year she gave birth to a son, the father of whom was a co-director at the school, though this was kept secret at the time. Having a child outside marriage was not socially acceptable and could have affected Maria's career and social standing. She arranged for the child to be cared for by someone else, though she kept some contact with him. In Naples, in 1902, Montessori presented her own ideas about possible ways of educating 'unteachable children'. She linked the ideas of training children's senses to using concrete experiences to help children understand abstractions.⁽³⁾

In 1907 Montessori set up her first *Casa dei Bambini* in response to being asked to provide childcare for migrant workers living in the tenements of San Lorenzo, Rome. The 'Children's House' itself was based in a tenement slum and was established to provide day care for the children of workers who had come to the city to work in its factories. Eventually, after setting up further Houses supported by her particular methodologies, she decided in 1913 to give up her university and medical work and focus on training teachers and developing learning resources, and to establish an international network of schools. She was appointed a government inspector of schools in Rome in 1922. In Montessori's later life she travelled the world lecturing and promoting Montessori education.

Her writing

Montessori's books have been translated into English and reprinted for modern readers. Her most significant works include:

- Montessori, M. (1995) *The Absorbent Mind*. Kent: Owl Books.
- Montessori, M. (1972) *Discovery of the Child*. New York: Ballantine Books.

Her theory

Montessori studied children's education from the point of view of a scientist. She used the classroom as her laboratory for observing children and finding ways to encourage their development. She concluded that children learn best by doing. Her approach is holistic in that it seeks to develop the whole child. A cornerstone of the theory is that a child's early years are the period when their capacity to learn is the greatest.

The Montessori approach identifies a collection of human tendencies for 'order', 'communication' and 'repetition', which drive children's behaviour during every period of development.

Planes of development

Through her observations, Montessori identified four developmental periods, or "planes":

Maria Montessori became the first female certified physician in Italy in 1896, graduating at the top of her class. She founded Casas dei Bambini, or 'Children's Houses' and studied the development of young children and how they used sensory materials. Her work became widely recognized and embraced throughout the United States, Europe, and India. She was publicised in America as "an educational wonder worker".⁽¹⁾ She founded and taught training courses across these continents, set up a research institute in Spain, and opened Montessori Training Centres in London and the Netherlands.



Maria Montessori

KEY DATES

1870	Born in Ancona, Italy
1896	Graduated as the first female doctor in Italy
1900	Her son was born
1907	Opened first Casa dei Bambini (Children's House) in Rome
1922	Became government inspector of schools in Rome
1929	Founded the Association Montessori Internationale (AMI)
1952	Died in the Netherlands

LINKS

- *How Children Learn 1*
Maria Montessori
- *How Children Learn 2*
The development of theories about how children learn to read and write
- *How Children Learn 3*
The care and education of children up to three
- *How Children Learn 4*
Observation and assessment

- First plane - From birth to around six years. Physical and psychological changes are rapid. The child is a concrete learner who builds a picture of the world through their senses. They are beginning to construct their own identity and developing independence of action. Some concepts used to describe this period are:
 - The absorbent mind: The child is easily soaking up the information from his or her environment through the engagement of the senses. Montessori felt that this power was strong in the first plane of development and then diminished from the age of six.
 - Normalization: This psychological state develops from the child concentrating on activities which satisfy their developmental needs.
 - Sensitive periods: Children have particular sensitivity at different times to:
 - Acquisition of language.
 - Order.
 - Sensory refinement.
 - Interest in small objects.
 - Social behaviour.
- Second plane – From around six to twelve years. Montessori observed the physical, psychological and social features of this age group. Physical changes include initially the loss of baby teeth and the lengthening of the legs and torso followed by a period of uniform growth. Psychological changes include the tendency to work and socialize in groups and the powers of reason and imagination. Developmentally there is the formation of intellectual independence, moral sense, and social organisation.
- Third plane – From around twelve to around eighteen years. Physical changes encompass puberty and adolescence. Psychological changes include instability and difficulties in concentration, creative tendencies and developing notions of justice and personal dignity. Developmentally there is the self-identification of becoming an adult within society at large.
- Fourth plane – From around eighteen to around twenty-four years. There was little about this period and an educational programme was not developed.

Prepared environment

In order to respond to the needs of each period, Montessori's approach called for free activity within a "prepared environment". Each period requires an educational environment targeted to the identified human characteristics and to the specific characteristics of children at those specified periods. The purpose of this managed environment is to enable the child to develop their inner motivation and their independence, using structured resources, and is characterised by: a layout that is in proportion to the child and his or her needs; beauty and harmony, cleanliness of environment; order; an arrangement that facilitates movement and activity; and limitation of materials, so that only material that supports the child's development is included. ⁽⁴⁾

Putting the theory into practice

A range of practices exists under the name 'Montessori', however the Association Montessori Internationale (AMI) includes these standards:

- Mixed age classrooms, with classrooms for children aged two and a half or three years to six years old by far the most common.
- Student choice of activity from within a prescribed range of options.
- Uninterrupted blocks of work time.
- A discovery model, where students learn concepts from working with materials, rather than by direct instruction.
- Specialised educational materials developed by Montessori and her collaborators. ⁽⁵⁾

Comment

Some of Montessori's approaches to learning are particularly relevant to young children with special needs. A very structured environment with clear boundaries and expectations gives SEN children the confidence to develop their skills and independence. Having a mix of ages within the class can also provide more capable role models. Developing sensory experiences can be very beneficial to children with SEN, as they are known to produce a wide range of positive results in special populations. ⁽⁶⁾

The following features have been developed to address the different needs of the identified 'planes' of development in the Montessori Approach:

- First plane
 - 0–3 Activities and materials are scaled to the children's size and abilities. There are activities to develop movement and independence, particularly independence in toileting.
 - 4–6 (Primary). Children are in mixed-age groups, with typically 20 to 30 children who are supervised by one trained teacher and an assistant. Classrooms contain child-sized tables and chairs with resources on child-height shelves. The teacher initially models the activities. Children can then choose them freely. The activities support practical skills such as pouring and spooning. Materials aim to develop the senses and promote maths, language, music and art development.
- Second plane (6 to 12, Elementary) Classes can contain up to 30 or more children, supervised by a trained teacher and one or more assistants. They can be mixed-age 6–9 and 9–12 groupings, although 6–12 groups are also possible. The teacher works with small groups of children, who can then follow up with independent work dictated by their own interests. The scope of lessons is quite broad and includes work outside the classroom.
- Third plane (12–18, Middle and High School) Education is not as well-developed as programmes for the younger children. During her lifetime, Montessori did not set up a teacher training programme, or a detailed plan of education for the Third Plane of development. Since then several schools have extended their provision to meet the needs of the older age group.

Her influence

The Association Montessori Internationale (AMI), continues to train teachers internationally using presentations and materials developed by Montessori and her son, Mario. One source suggests that there are 4,000 Montessori schools in the US and 7,000 worldwide from birth to eighteen years old. ⁽⁸⁾

Most Montessori schools in the UK cover the nursery years, although a growing number are offering Montessori into the primary years. ⁽⁹⁾ The Montessori methodology is not without its critics. It has been suggested that the children's learning experiences are too structured and prescriptive, children's play is not valued, and creative use of the classroom equipment is discouraged.

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Jean Piaget

PROFILE

Jean Piaget proposed that children actively construct knowledge and understanding of the world through their interaction with the environment. His views on children's sequential progression through a series of age-related stages of cognitive development have influenced early years practice research.

KEY DATES

1896	Born in Neuchâtel, Switzerland
1923	Became Professor of psychology, sociology and philosophical sciences at Neuchâtel University
1929	Became Professor of child psychology at Neuchâtel University
1956	Founded and became director of the Institute for Educational Science
1980	Died in Geneva

LINKS

- *How Children Learn 4*
Bruner
Dewey
Feuerstein
Laevers
Montessori
Vygotsky

His life

When Piaget was only 10 he published a short paper about a sighting of an albino sparrow. By the age of fifteen, he was offered a post at Neuchâtel's natural history museum, following his articles on molluscs, though he declined this offer in order to continue with his education. After studying natural sciences at Neuchâtel University, Piaget became interested in psychoanalysis and went to Zurich University, where he attended lectures given by Carl Jung. In 1919, Piaget moved to Paris to work on standardised tests at the Albert Binet Laboratory School. He found that there were comparable errors in the incorrect test answers given by children of similar ages. This observation led him to explore the subject of children's reasoning, which he continued to study during his long career.

Piaget was appointed director of the Jean-Jacques Rousseau Institute in Geneva in 1921 and took up other significant roles at the university and elsewhere until his death in 1980. He married a psychologist, Valentine Châtenay, in 1923 and they had two daughters and a son. His detailed observations of his own children's development contributed to his theoretical work.

His writing

Piaget was a prolific writer. Examples of his work include:

- Piaget, J. (1929). *The Child's Conception of the World*. London, Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd.
- Piaget, J. (1955). *The Language and Thought of the Child*. New York, World Publishing Co.
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His theory

The term 'cognitive development' describes how children think, learn, develop concepts, remember, understand relationships and solve problems. ⁽¹⁾ Piaget's study of children's cognitive development emerged from his interest in epistemology, which is the theory of knowledge. He explored the reasons why children responded to questions in particular ways and examined the processes involved in the formulation of their answers. His research focused on the foundations of logical, mathematical and scientific thinking and the connection between biological and cognitive development. ⁽²⁾

From observations of his own children and his clinical research, Piaget formed a view that children's knowledge is progressively constructed by their active exploration of the world. For example, if a child grew plants in a garden and observed their growth, they would construct knowledge about the growth of plants that could not be gained by merely looking at books on the subject read by an educator. ⁽³⁾ Piaget's view of children actively constructing their own knowledge and understanding through their experience of the world became known as a constructivist approach to learning. His theory emphasised the value of interesting and challenging play opportunities and a stimulating environment to enable children to engage in concrete experiences and encourage them to actively explore the world.

Assimilation, accommodation and equilibrium

Piaget used the term 'schemas' to describe the 'mental structures into which we organize the knowledge we hold about the world'. ⁽⁴⁾ He argued that knowledge was progressively internalised through the three processes of assimilation, accommodation and equilibrium.

1. Assimilation describes the process in which information from new experiences is incorporated into existing schema, which do not need to be altered.
2. Accommodation occurs when schema are modified or extended to adjust to concepts or knowledge, acquired from new experiences, which contradict existing mental

structures. For example, a child could know that you drink from a cup. However, a child's new experience of using a cup as a measure when cooking would extend their existing knowledge of a cup's properties.

3. Equilibrium explains the process of adjustments made to schema to resolve any conflict from new understanding and explanations and restore a balance, or equilibrium, between assimilation and accommodation.

Stages of Cognitive Development

Piaget proposed there were four sequential stages of children's cognitive development:

Sensorimotor stage

This stage occurs from birth until approximately two years. During this stage, children are mainly concerned with their own needs. They continually explore their environment using their primitive perceptions and senses and begin to solve problems and develop their thinking about the world. Their initial reactions, such as grasping, are mainly reflexive, but their physical actions become increasingly less instinctive and more purposeful and co-ordinated. By the end of this stage, the child develops an understanding of 'object permanence', which is the realisation that an object exists even when it can no longer be perceived.

Preoperational stage

Children between the age of approximately two to six or seven years continue to explore their environment and develop their thinking from their experience. They use mental imagery and begin to represent their thinking symbolically through language and the symbolic use of objects, such as using a doll to represent a baby. They tend to focus on one characteristic of an object or person at a time and can make inaccurate generalisations. Piaget described children as 'egocentric' during this stage of development, as they perceive the world from their point of view.

He found supporting evidence for this theory from the 'Three Mountain Task'. In this experiment, Piaget presented children aged four and five years old with a model of three mountains and then moved a doll to different points on the model. The children were asked to choose photographs, which showed views that the doll would have seen from different points where it was placed on the model. He found that children generally chose photographs that would have been seen from their vantage point instead of the one that would have been seen by the doll.

Concrete operational stage

When children of approximately seven to eleven years progress to this stage, their thinking becomes more rational and they start to acknowledge different perspectives. Their understanding of the conservation of number, volume and mass develops so they

recognise that two equal quantities remain the same, regardless of changes in their appearance.

Formal operational stage

During this final stage, children of eleven or twelve years to adult age explore problems mentally, form hypotheses and develop abstract thinking.

Putting the theory into practice

Piaget's theory implies that the educator supports children by facilitating their exploration rather than by purely imparting information to them. For example, the use of open-ended questions, which offer a range of outcomes, encourages children to engage in a process of enquiry and consider different aspects of a subject. ⁽³⁾ A question that does not require one correct answer but enables different responses that could be equally acceptable is also less threatening for children with additional needs.

Piaget's view of children's active participation in their cognitive development has important implications for the physical environment; for example, a range of sensory elements provides opportunities for children to use all their senses when exploring the environment. Appropriate access is another consideration, as this enables children's exploration and enquiry; for example, clear pathways in the setting encourage visually impaired children to explore their environment more confidently. ⁽⁵⁾



Jean Piaget

Interesting and challenging play activities, based on children's individual needs and interests, encourage children's exploration and experimentation. Opportunities for children's participation in play are supported by an inclusive approach across the setting; for example, Lilli Nielson, a Danish educator, advocates that all children should have experience of playing in a 'den' to promote their learning. Nielson constructs a 'Little Room' for children with complex needs to support them with making a den, based on observations of their interests. ⁽⁶⁾

Piaget's concept of 'readiness' to learn highlights the need to consider the appropriateness of learning experiences for all children, the expectations of the child and their readiness to undertake those activities. ⁽⁷⁾

His influence

Piaget's views have made a significant contribution to developmental psychology and early years theory, influencing theorists, such as Athey (1990), who developed research on schemas. Piaget's work has been highly influential in early years practice, supporting the notion of play as a valid activity to promote children's learning and emphasising the importance of an 'enabling environment', which encourages children's active learning and enquiry.

Comment

Piaget's theory has caused some controversy; critical points about his work include:

- His writing can be difficult to understand and includes technical terms which can confuse the reader.
- The focus on children's thought processes does not sufficiently acknowledge the importance of children's social and emotional development.
- Young children demonstrate far more sophisticated levels of thinking than Piaget had claimed. For example, Donaldson proposed that many of Piaget's experiments were not sufficiently set in meaningful contexts for children. Donaldson ⁽⁸⁾ reports on the findings of Maratsos' (1973) experiments with young children, who were asked to communicate information about a toy car to an adult who was either looking at the car or who had their eyes closed. Maratsos found that children tried to give additional information verbally when they knew the adult could not see the car, demonstrating high sensitivity.
- His findings were based on a small, unrepresentative sample of children. His observations were mainly of his own three children, which has been criticised for not being an appropriate sample for the purposes of scientific research. ⁽³⁾

- The stages of cognitive development are too fixed. Subsequent views of children's development challenged Piaget's theories and suggested that overlapping across stages could occur. Additionally, Piaget's stages of development are criticised for proposing 'norms' of development, which are then used to assess and compare children's performance. This gives rise to the notion that some children are 'abnormal' if they are perceived to not be performing within their expected stage of development. ⁽⁹⁾

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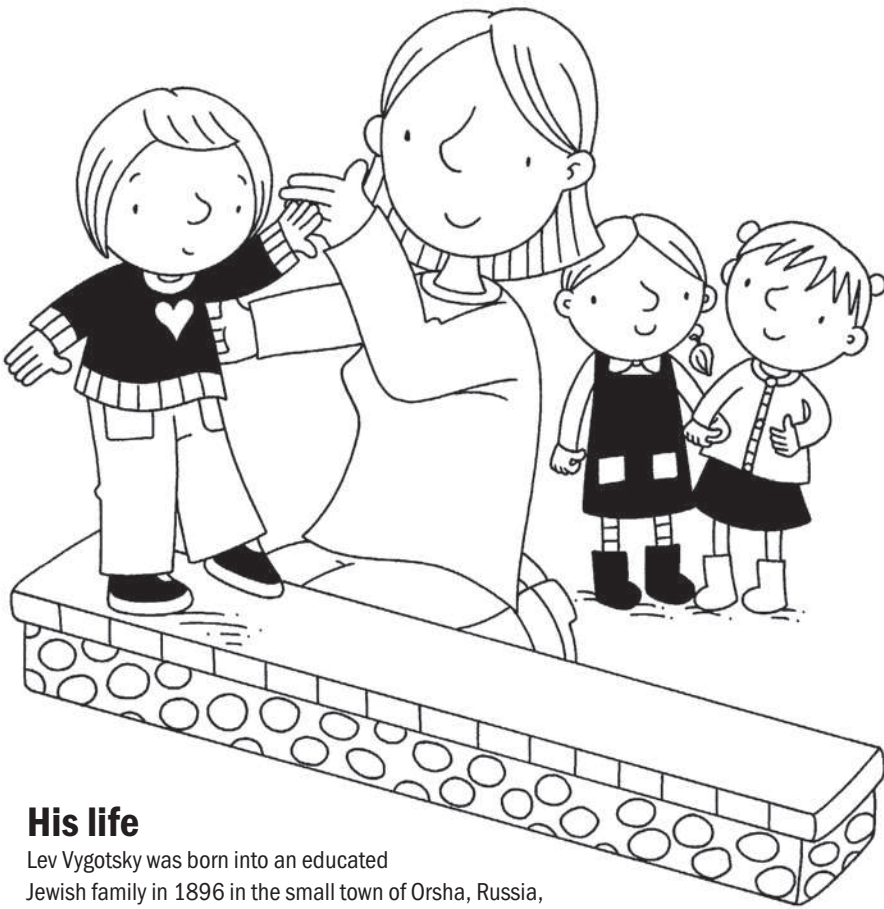
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Lev Vygotsky



His life

Lev Vygotsky was born into an educated Jewish family in 1896 in the small town of Orsha, Russia, which is now part of Belarus. His family moved to the city of Gomel a year later, where his father worked in managerial positions. Vygotsky was encouraged to study and achieved excellent exam results when he left school. Despite the quota system in place at the time, which limited the number of university places for Jewish students, he was accepted by Moscow University to study Medicine. However, he decided to transfer to the university's Law School and he later took up study of philology at Shanavsky University in Moscow. Vygotsky returned to Gomel after completing his studies in 1917. Following the Russian Revolution that year, which ended the Tsarist rule of Russia, he started teaching in a vocational school in 1919.

Vygotsky, who was influenced by Marxist principles and was interested in psychology, was invited to join the Institute of Psychology in Moscow in 1924. He led the section for the education of children with special needs, who were described at the time as having physical disabilities and 'mental retardation'. He became absorbed in the subject and led the First Congress on Special Education in Russia in November, 1924. Vygotsky wrote a paper for the conference, inviting people to respond with creative ideas to address the problems of educating children with disabilities. ⁽¹⁾ In this paper, he argued against looking at children's disabilities only from a biological perspective, which was the prevailing view at the time.

Vygotsky started to teach about special education in teacher training departments of universities and colleges and, in 1925, he was asked to represent the Institute at an international conference in London on the education of 'deaf and mute' children. He also visited France, Germany and Holland and looked at their pedagogical approaches to working with children with special needs. Though he contracted tuberculosis on his return to Russia, Vygotsky continued with his work, which attracted much interest and attention from academics and practitioners across the country. In 1929, he helped to establish the Experimental Institute for Special Education, where

PROFILE

Though he only lived to the age of 37, Lev Vygotsky was a leading figure in Soviet psychology. His views about learning have influenced pedagogical approaches to early years education globally. Vygotsky argued that learning leads development and emphasised the importance of the social and cultural context in which learning occurs. He used the term 'zone of proximal development' (ZPD) to describe the difference between the actual achievement of the child working alone, and their potential achievement with the support of a 'more knowledgeable other'. Vygotsky saw speech as a tool in children's learning that was used to develop their thinking and he highlighted the importance of play for children's cognitive development.

KEY DATES

- | | |
|------|---|
| 1896 | Born in Orscha, Russia (now in Belarus) |
| 1913 | Attended Moscow University |
| 1924 | Invited to work at the Institute of Psychology, Moscow |
| 1926 | Opened a laboratory for the study of children with disabilities |
| 1934 | Died of tuberculosis |

LINKS

- Bloom
- Broffnenbrenner
- Bruner
- Paley
- Piaget

Lev Vygotsky

he studied children who had a range of additional needs from a psychological, clinical and pedagogical perspective. ⁽¹⁾

Following Vygotsky's tragic early death from tuberculosis in 1934, his colleagues, including A.N. Leontiev and A.R. Luria, preserved his writing and developed his work, which had been censored by the Stalinist regime. Translations of his writing started to emerge in the West from the 1960s onwards and his thinking continues to widely influence educational theory and practice today. Vygotsky married and had children; his daughter Gita worked with deaf students throughout her career and wrote about her father's work.

His writing

Vygotsky was a prolific writer; his translated work includes:

- Vygotsky, L.S. (1978) *Mind in Society: The Development of Higher Psychological Processes*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Vygotsky, L.S. (1986) *Thought and Language*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press (original work published in 1934).
- Vygotsky, L.S. (1987) *Thinking and Speech*. Translated from the Russian by N. Minick. New York: Plenum Press.

His theory

Vygotsky advocated the importance of social and cultural contexts for learning, which leads children's development. His key thinking about learning incorporates the following factors:

- Learning occurs through the child's interaction with skilled adults and through social interaction with their peers.
- A range of psychological tools support learning, including language, books, maps, diagrams, mnemonic (memory) devices, counting systems and writing. These tools help children to understand the social and physical world and shape their thinking.
- Language is a tool for thinking and is developed in a social context. It is gradually internalised to become part of the child's independent actions and enables higher-level thinking. These higher mental processes, such as logical thinking and classification, are transferable from one context to another.
- Play supports children's cognitive development as well as their emotional and physical development. Play enables children to explore meaning. The use of symbolic representations of objects in play supports the development of abstract thought.
- The 'zone of proximal development' (ZPD) describes the difference between the level of actual development, and the level of potential development that a learner could reach with the support of adults or more capable peers. The nature

of support would vary according to different stages of the learner's development.

- Instruction is a key factor in children's development and supports specific forms of thinking. The term 'instruction' covers a range of strategies, such as discussion and modelling. ^(2,3)

Putting the theory into practice

Vygotskian theory concerns the education of children of all ages but it has particular relevance to early years practice due to its focus on play and communication through social interaction. His theory also highlights the relevance of young children's relationships with significant objects, such as books or toys, and culturally specific practices in which children engage at home or at their early years settings. In terms of Vygotskian theory, children are seen as active partners in their play and interactions as they construct knowledge, skills and attitudes.

Vygotsky's work at the Institute of Psychology in Moscow concerning the education of children with special needs was closely linked to practice. He proposed that the education of children's social needs should be carefully considered; he thought the main problem concerning a child's disability was not the neurological or sensory impairment itself, but its social implications. He wrote that: ⁽¹⁾

"Although the disability itself (blindness, deafness) is a biological fact, the educator is confronted not so much by the biological facts but by their social consequences."

If a child had difficulties, such as limited vision, Vygotsky thought it was important to not only focus on treating the child's sight itself, but to find ways of supporting their interactions and relationships. He thought this would enable the child to acquire the cultural tools that would support the development of their abstract thinking. ⁽⁴⁾ He suggested that alternative psychological tools should continue to be developed to support children with special needs, other than those symbolic systems available at the time, such as Braille or sign-language. His visionary thinking foregrounds the use of digital technology that has been developed since his death to provide further systems of communication. ⁽⁵⁾

Vygotsky supported inclusion of children with special needs in mainstream settings and advocated that children should be perceived in terms of their strengths rather than their weaknesses. He said: ⁽¹⁾

"One must keep in mind that any child with a disability is first of all a child and only afterwards an impaired child.... One must not perceive in the child only the defect, the "grams" of the illness and not notice the "kilograms" of health that children possess. From the psychological and pedagogical points of view, one must treat the child with a disability in the same way as a normal one".

Comment

Vygotsky thought that including children with developmental or physical differences would benefit all participants in a community of learners as they would have opportunities to explore new strategies, build concepts and solve real problems. ⁽⁶⁾ Including children with additional needs in dramatic play promotes the development of their abstract, symbolic thought, which in turn supports their cognitive development. ⁽⁷⁾ This has implications for practice; educators might consider how they support children to understand 'culturally sanctioned modes of behaviour' and manage feedback from their peers or adults; for example by supporting children to understand the rules concerning play roles or by modelling the use of props or conventional behaviour in the play. ⁽⁶⁾ Careful professional judgement about individual children's strengths and needs is also required to ensure appropriate steps are taken within the ZPD so children are not insufficiently stretched or extended too far.

His influence

Vygotsky's legacy is substantial; his views on the importance of social interaction, particularly spoken dialogue, to support learning, ⁽⁴⁾ have contributed significantly to the development of pedagogical approaches within current early years practice.

Vygotsky was concerned with both the theory and practice of educational provision for children with additional needs. His acknowledgement of the importance of the social, as well as the biological, consequences for children's disabilities highlights the importance of educators' sensitive and respectful approaches to inclusive practice.

Vygotsky countered the contemporary view of low expectations of children with additional needs and his thinking about inclusive practice was far-sighted.

Bruner was particularly influenced by Vygotsky's work and promoted its wider dissemination. Bruner also emphasised the importance of social interaction in children's learning and his notion of 'scaffolding' is closely aligned with Vygotsky's ZPD. Other theorists have also been influenced by his work, such as Barbara Rogoff, whose concept of 'guided participation' builds on Vygotsky's concept of the ZPD.

Vygotsky's work needs to be considered within the contextual circumstances of its time and place and is challenging to read and interpret due to its complex style. ⁽⁴⁾ It also contains some inconsistencies; for example, his view of children's learning in sociocultural contexts does not sufficiently acknowledge their own role in their learning. However, his ideas were largely untested and were still being developed at the time of his premature death. ⁽³⁾ His work continues to be explored and developed by others within their own contextual domains.

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Paulo Freire

PROFILE

Paulo Freire was an influential educationalist who advocated an approach to education known as 'critical pedagogy'. He thought learners should be critically engaged in the educational process through communication and dialogue with their educators and that the educational process should acknowledge the importance of individual learners' cultural and personal life experiences.

KEY DATES

1921	Born in Recife, Brazil
1964	Arrested in Brazil due to his involvement in a literacy programme
1969-70	Visiting Professor at the Centre for the Study of Development and Social Change at Harvard University
1979	Returned from exile to Brazil
1989	Became Secretary of Education in São Paulo, Brazil
1997	Died

LINKS

- *How Children Learn 4*
Bloom
Dewey
Montessori
Neill
Steiner
Vygotsky



His Life

Paulo Freire was born into a middle-class family which was affected by the 'Great Recession' of the late 1920s and Freire experienced poverty and hunger as a child. He lived in a region that was largely populated by those who were poor and illiterate and became aware of the adverse effects of poverty. He realised how people were disadvantaged by their illiteracy and their lack of opportunity to express their views.

Freire became interested in education and saw this as a means to empower less privileged individuals so they could free themselves from oppressive social conditions. Following a short career as a lawyer, he taught Portuguese in a school and in 1947 he started to work in North East Brazil with adult illiterates, who were barred from participating in the political process as voters at that time. Freire completed his Doctoral dissertation on education at the University of Recife in 1959 and went on to work there as Professor of History and Philosophy of Education. In 1962, Freire developed and implemented a successful national literacy programme. However, his programme was viewed as subversive by the military leaders who took power following a governmental coup d'état in 1964 and Freire was arrested and imprisoned for 70 days. He was then exiled from Brazil and did not return to the country until 1979.

After briefly staying in Bolivia, Freire moved to Chile, where he worked as a consultant with UNESCO and at the Chilean Institute for Agrarian Reform. In 1969 he was appointed visiting scholar at Harvard University and then moved to Geneva in 1970, where he took up the role of special educational consultant to the World Congress of Churches. He advised on educational reform and developed education activities for a range of groups. On his return to Brazil, Freire resumed his involvement in education and continued writing on the subject up to the time of his death in 1997.

His writing

Apart from his best known text, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1996), Freire's other works include:

- Freire, P. (1973) *Education for Critical Consciousness*. New York: Seabury Press.
- Freire, P. (1992) *Pedagogy of Hope: Reliving Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. New York: Continuum.
- Freire, P., Macedo, D. (1996) *Letters to Cristina: Reflections on my Life and Work*. New York: Routledge.

His theory

Freire proposed that society was comprised of the 'oppressors' and the 'oppressed'. He referred to the 'Culture of Silence' of oppressed individuals, who have no 'voice' to confront the dominant culture of oppression. He thought education should empower individuals to overcome oppressive social conditions by enabling the disempowered to develop their literacy skills in order to express themselves more effectively and participate more actively and equitably in their communities.

Freire rejected the 'banking' concept of education, in which the educator is the owner or depositor of knowledge and the learner is the receptacle for that knowledge. This can also be perceived as a 'jug and mug' system of education which 'shapes the learner to be an observer of the world as it is, rather than as a social actor who has the capacities to change it'.⁽¹⁾ Freire believed this form of education was ineffective, as it does not respect the contribution of the students. He argued against the 'expert' role of the educator, who chiefly imparts knowledge to others, and proposed that educators and students should exchange ideas for their mutual benefit.⁽²⁾

Freire believed that literacy should be related to the social context in which it occurs⁽³⁾ and that education should enable students to engage in critical dialogue and share their thoughts and ideas. He thought an individual's understanding of the world was enhanced through opportunities for literacy exchanges. He used 'culture circles', in which students and educators could face one another and discuss issues that were relevant to themselves and their lives.⁽⁴⁾ Freire advocated a participatory approach, where the educator acknowledges the student's pertinent issues and experiences.

Freire used innovative media technologies in his literacy programmes and recognised the significant role that computers would come to play in society. As Secretary of Education for the city of São Paulo during the early 1990s, Freire arranged for schools under his direction to acquire computers. As well as incorporating new technologies and multiple literacies in his programmes, Freire also questioned whether they helped all social groups or perpetuated existing inequalities in society.⁽⁵⁾ He thought their use should be contextual and integrated with students' and educators' real lives.

In Freirean theory, literacy is viewed as an agent for social change and personal transformation.⁽⁴⁾ He used the term 'conscientization' to denote how learners move towards 'critical consciousness' as they gain skills and motivation and begin to take positive action against oppressive influences to transform their circumstances. 'Conscientization' involves 'praxis', which is the relationship between learning and practical application.⁽¹⁾

Freire believed that educators should engage in reflective practice to support the development of their provision. In 'The Pedagogy

of the Oppressed', Freire notes that 'action and reflection occur simultaneously' and 'critical reflection is also action'.⁽⁶⁾

Putting the theory into practice

Freire's pedagogical approach is known as 'critical pedagogy'; it 'values the sociopolitical and cultural context of learners'.⁽⁷⁾ His theory is closely related to principles of inclusive practice, as educators who adopt a Freirean approach are also concerned with enhancing individual learning experiences and supporting the needs of all their students. McKinnon has explained how the Freirean approach has been applied to develop collaborative practice at the Pen Green Early Years Centre:⁽⁸⁾

- Educators engage in dialogue on equal terms with parents.
- The staff contribute to the development of reflective practice with equal importance.
- Children, parents, and educators are all involved and connected to the work of the Centre; they participate and work collaboratively.

According to Freire, literacy enables the individual to read the 'world' as well as the 'word'. In view of the increasing amount of knowledge that is available via the internet, it is important for educators to consider how children 'learn how to learn' and access knowledge that is relevant to their world so they can effectively participate in the social and cultural customs and practices of their family and wider



Paulo Freire

community. Freire's acknowledgement of opportunities that enable students' understanding of different forms of communication and their meanings is reflected in current use of multi-modal systems of 'reading' and 'writing', such as visual, aural, spatial, gesture and linguistic modes.⁽⁹⁾

The development of opportunities for multi-modal systems of communication is particularly relevant for the provision for young children with additional needs; by taking account of their individual interests and needs when supporting their literacy pathways, educators facilitate the development of children's effective modes of communication. This provision supports their opportunities to express their thoughts, share ideas, extend their learning and participate more effectively in social and cultural practices in the home, setting and wider community.

Influences

Freire's emphasis on education as a tool to promote individuals' more equitable participation in their communities has been highly influential. His view that 'Supportive, dialogical and interactive social relations in critical learning situations can promote cooperation, democracy and positive social values'⁽⁵⁾ resonates with the principles of current early years frameworks for practice.

Freire advocated that educators engage in reflective practice linked to action to support the development of enhanced provision for children, including those with additional needs.

His call for educators to have high expectations of all those with whom they work, regardless of early disadvantages, as Freire himself experienced, is aligned with the principles of early intervention policies and literacy programmes, which seek to redress the effects of disadvantage children have experienced in the early stages of their lives.

Comment

Freire's use of language in his writing has been criticised for not being very accessible to the reader. This is compounded by his use of some technical terms or concepts with which the reader may not be familiar, such as 'critical consciousness'.

Though connected to education, his references to political and economic arguments, such as his representation of education as a 'banking' concept can confuse the understanding of his educational theory. Additionally, this representation of the learning process does not acknowledge the range of different strategies and forms of communication that educators might use with their students.

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Albert Bandura

His life

Albert Bandura was the youngest, and only boy, of six children. He attended a small school with limited resources and only two teachers. He later claimed that, as a result, the students had to take control of their own learning. These experiences may have influenced his ideas on the importance of 'personal agency', the capability to originate and direct actions for given purposes. He worked for a period after school filling holes on the Alaska Highway. ⁽¹⁾ Following this he enrolled at the University of British Columbia in 1949 to study biological sciences. He chanced upon psychology when he was looking for a course to fill some time. After gaining his doctorate, he accepted an internship at the Wichita Guidance Center in Kansas and was then offered a job at Stanford University. At the time of writing, he has continued to work at Stanford.

His writing

Bandura has written, co-authored and contributed to numerous books, journals and articles. *Social Learning Theory* (1977) and *Social Foundations of Thought and Action* (1986) explain his social learning theory. *Self-efficacy: The Exercise of Control* (1997) explores the application of human agency through the affects of people's beliefs in their abilities to act in order to achieve what they desire. He has also written about aggression, particularly in adolescents.

His theories

Bandura's social learning theory indicates that behaviours, cognitions and the environment are continuously interacting in reciprocal determinism, which means that the way we think, what we do and where we do it all affect each other. Bandura said "Learning would be exceedingly laborious, not to mention hazardous, if people had to rely solely on the effects of their own actions to inform them what to do. Fortunately, most human behavior is learned observationally through modelling: from observing others one forms an idea of how new behaviors are performed, and on later occasions this coded information serves as a guide for action." ⁽²⁾

Models

Within society, children have access to many different people who are influential models. These may be family members, friends, teachers and school assistants, film and television characters, sports personalities or other people who are significant in their lives. Their behaviour is observed and can be imitated.

In order for the imitating process to take place, Bandura described the various steps involved as: ⁽³⁾

- Attention — the child needs to observe and encode the behaviour.
- Retention — the child needs to be able to remember what has been observed.
- Reproduction — the behaviour must be turned into action.



PROFILE

Albert Bandura is a psychologist who was born in Canada and works in the United States as a Professor of Social Science in Psychology at Stanford University. His career spanned almost sixty years during which he made significant contributions to many fields of psychology, and became known for originating social learning theory and social cognition theory (self-efficacy).

KEY DATES

1925	Born in Alberta, Canada
1952	Awarded PhD from University of Iowa in clinical psychology
1953	Started teaching at Stanford University
1974	Became President of the American Psychological Association (APA)
1980	Awarded for Distinguished Scientific Contributions from APA
2004	Awarded for Outstanding Lifetime Contribution to Psychology from APA

LINKS

- *How Children Learn 1*
Burrhus Skinner and behaviourism
- *How Children Learn 3*
Carl Rogers
- *How Children Learn 4*
Abraham Maslow

Albert Bandura

- Motivation – there needs to be a reason to act. Some possible reasons which motivate children are:
 - Past reinforcement, as in traditional behaviourism.
 - Promised reinforcements (incentives) that can be imagined.
 - Vicarious reinforcement, seeing and recalling the model being reinforced by others.

There are also negative motivations which deter imitations:

- Past punishment.
- Promised punishment (threats).
- Vicarious punishment.

Identification is the process whereby the child adopts the values, attitudes and beliefs of the person they are imitating (the model). In social learning theory the child can potentially identify with any other person. ⁽⁴⁾

Self-regulation

A crucial aspect of our behaviour is how we control it through self-regulation. Bandura suggests there are three steps:

- Self-observation – we monitor ourselves and our behaviour.
- Judgment – we measure ourselves against a standard, either something in existence or one we create for ourselves, for example a personal target such as exercising every day.
- Self-response – how we respond to how well we have done. If we do well, we reward ourselves with positive self-responses. If we do poorly, we punish ourselves with negative self-responses.

Self-concept

Self-concept (also called self-esteem) is developed through the process of self-regulation. If, over a period of time, we tend to meet our standards and award ourselves positive self-responses, then we will have a rich sense of self-concept. If, on the other hand, we find ourselves constantly falling short of our standards, we will have a poor sense of self-concept. Bandura considers self-reward as more effective than self-punishment. He sees three possible outcomes of harsh self-punishment:

- Compensation – a superiority complex with delusions of grandeur.
- Inactivity – becoming apathetic, bored or depressed.
- Escape – overindulging in alcohol/drugs, fantasizing or even suicide.

Bandura has recommendations for those with poor self-concepts:

- Self-observation – get to know your behaviour accurately.

- Standards – don't set your standards too high so you set yourself up to fail. Setting standards that are too low is pointless.
- Self-response – celebrate successes, avoid self-punishments, don't wallow in failures. ⁽⁵⁾

Self-efficacy

The concept of self-efficacy is at the centre of Bandura's social cognitive theory, which details how personality development is the result of the interplay between observational learning, social experience, and reciprocal determinism.

The 'self-system' is made up of attitudes, abilities and cognitive skills and is important in how people perceive and respond to different situations. Self-efficacy is an integral part of the self-system. Bandura defines it as "the belief in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to manage prospective situations". ⁽⁶⁾ These beliefs underpin how people behave, think and feel and therefore contribute to motivation, behaviour and psychological states. Self-efficacy is a major determinant of how people approach tasks, goals and challenges.

People who have a strong sense of self-efficacy:

- Welcome challenging problems as tasks to be overcome
- Show a more profound interest in activities they take part in
- Develop a strong sense of commitment to whatever they do
- Overcome disappointments and setbacks quickly

People who have a weak sense of self-efficacy:

- Try to avoid being challenged.
- Do not believe that they are capable of overcoming difficulties.
- Concentrate on what they do badly and any negative repercussions.
- Shed any confidence they have in their own abilities.

The development of self-efficacy

Bandura felt that underpinning beliefs start to take shape in early childhood and continue to grow throughout life as new knowledge, skills and understanding are assimilated. The major sources of self-efficacy are:

- Mastery experiences – from being successful in performing tasks.
- Social modelling – seeing other people complete tasks successfully.
- Social persuasion – verbal encouragement and praise.
- Psychological responses – feelings and emotions, for example moods or a sense of security.

Putting the theories into practice

Bandura's ideas have led to developments in psychotherapy. However, aspects of these will be recognised by practitioners working in schools and settings.

Self-control therapy

This therapy technique has a high success rate in dealing with relatively straightforward problems concerning undesirable habits, including:

- Behavioural charts – these audit and analyse the context for undesirable behaviour.
- Environmental planning – having identified the 'triggers' for the behaviour, plan to avoid or minimise them.
- Self-contracts – these should be written down and witnessed by, for example the therapist, and include self-administered rewards if achieved and sanctions if not.

Modelling therapy

The idea behind modelling therapy is to encourage someone with a psychological problem to observe another person coping successfully with the same issue. The original research behind it involved people who had a phobia about snakes and who witnessed an actor pretending to have the same phobia, but overcoming it and handling a snake. Visualisation, imagining a scenario under the direction of the therapist, has been shown to be almost as effective as actually seeing it.

Education

Social learning theory has applications for use in educational settings: ⁽⁷⁾

- Children learn by watching other people.
- Discussing the consequences of a behaviour with a child can help develop desired behaviours and discourage undesired behaviours, giving the learner choices.
- Modelling can be used by adults or by using other children to demonstrate what needs to be done. In order to be effective, the four essential aspects of attention, retention, reproduction, and motivation must be in place.
- Adults are role models, being careful to always demonstrate desired behaviours.
- Children need to believe that they can do tasks and have a strong sense of self-efficacy. Praise and confidence building is important.
- Adults must have realistic expectations for children so that achievement is possible. Challenges can be motivating.
- Encourage learners to be self-regulating and value the contributions of peers.

With young children and those with special needs, it is appropriate to support them to their level of capability through having high

but realistic expectations, and for adults to scaffold their learning as much as they need. Aspects of the above such as praise, developing self-confidence and encouraging self-regulation are equally important in building self-esteem and self-worth. It is worth remembering that the beliefs which underpin how they think of themselves (self-efficacy) start to take shape in early childhood.

His influence

Bandura's theories have influenced many areas of research and practice including education, psychotherapy, social policies and health sciences. A 2002 survey of members of the APA placed Bandura as the fourth most-frequently cited psychologist of all time.

Comment

The 'stage' theories of psychologists, including Piaget, describe the way children change at the approximate ages of two, seven and twelve. It has been suggested that social learning theory is a better predictor of the changes that occur, such as speech acquisition, when puberty begins. These changes can be viewed as a function of the interplay between the child's internal processes (cognition, self-efficacy), their behaviour and environmental influences.

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Abraham Maslow

PROFILE

Abraham Maslow was an American psychologist who, although trained in the behaviourist and Freudian traditions, was a prime contributor to humanistic psychology which became known as “the third force” in psychology. He believed in focusing on the positive qualities of people and identified and studied those he thought exhibited positive human traits and behaviour.

KEY DATES

1908	Born in Brooklyn, New York
1970	Died in California

LINKS

- *How Children Learn 1*
Freud
- *How Children Learn 3*
Rogers

His life

Abraham Maslow was born in 1908 into a family of Russian Jewish immigrants to the United States. He was the eldest of seven children, and described in his youth as “an extraordinarily shy, neurotic young man, depressed, terribly unhappy, lonely and self-rejecting.”⁽¹⁾

His father wanted him to be a lawyer and he tried law school for two weeks before telling his father that he couldn't be a lawyer but wanted to study. He took up psychology in 1928 at the University of Wisconsin. He was considered highly intelligent and a brilliant student.

After gaining his doctorate he became disillusioned with behaviourism. He said “If you treat your children at home in the same way you treat your animals in the lab, your wife will scratch your eyes out. My wife ferociously warned me against experimenting on her babies.”⁽²⁾

He was influenced by the work of Freud and, at Columbia University in 1936, controversially interviewed female students about their sexual lives.

He became a professor of psychology at Brooklyn College and taught there for fourteen years. He was a natural entertainer, and very popular with the students, and thus became known as “the Frank Sinatra of Brooklyn College”. He became heavily influenced by two colleagues, Gestalt psychologist Max Wertheimer and anthropologist Ruth Benedict. He was so impressed by them professionally and personally that he kept notes about them and their behaviour and this reinforced his fascination with the psychological concept of “self-actualization”, or the ability to fulfil your full potential, and the type of people who can achieve it.

In 1959 Maslow moved to Brandeis University and in 1962 was one of the founders of the Association for Humanistic Psychology along with, amongst others, Carl Rogers (see pages 22-24). In 1970, the New York Times described Maslow as “The founder of humanistic psychology”.⁽³⁾



Abraham Maslow

He also developed an interest in business practice as he found it was a field where his theories could be tested.

His 1962 book, *Towards A Psychology of Being* became very influential in the human potential movement and its methodology of encounter group workshops. The first edition sold over 100,000 copies. Maslow was elected president of the American Psychological Association in 1967. He died of a heart attack in 1970.

His writing

Maslow wrote more than a hundred articles and was the author of more than twenty books.

His article, *A Theory of Human Motivation* (1943) introduced his hierarchy of needs. His most influential books outside psychology are *Motivation and Personality* (Harper 1954), which explores the complex world of what motivates people and how their personalities interact with these motivations. *Towards a Psychology of Being* (Van Nostrand 1962) also outlines the theories on self-actualisation and the hierarchy of needs. With both these books no assumptions are made of the reader as the book is targeted towards a wide audience.

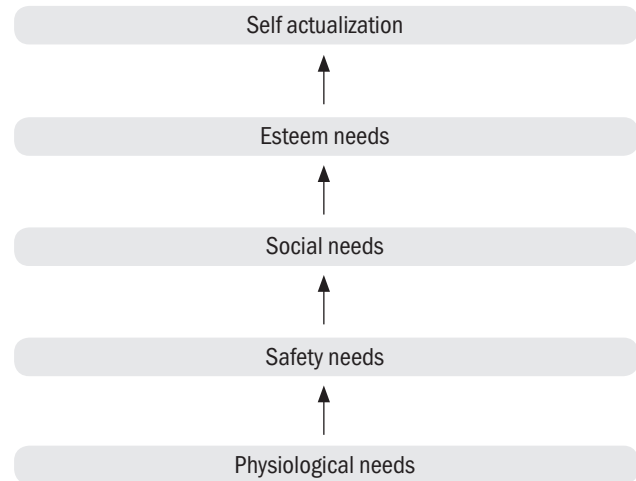
His theory

Maslow did not write specifically about education, though his ideas have a great deal of relevance to how society educates its children. His thinking was original as most psychology before Maslow had concerned itself generally with ill and abnormal people. Maslow speculated on the factors which encouraged positive mental health and worked on the assumption that people have natural inner resources which promote their mental growth. The ultimate goal is for people to achieve the fulfilment of their potential for self-actualisation.

Hierarchy of Needs

Maslow postulated that human needs are arranged hierarchically. In this model, lower level needs must be satisfied before higher level needs can be addressed. When a need is mostly satisfied, for example hunger, it is no longer motivating and the person will then focus on the next level in the hierarchy.

- Physiological Needs – would include such things as breathing, drinking, eating, sex, sleep, excretion, homeostasis.
- Safety Needs – would include such things as physical safety, a sense of security, employment, resources, morality, family environment, health.
- Social Needs – would include friendship, belonging, giving and receiving love, intimacy.
- Esteem Needs – would include self-respect, respect of others, achievement, recognition, confidence.



Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Self-Actualisation

This is the ultimate goal of the hierarchy and, according to Maslow, is never completely satisfied as the more the individual grows psychologically, the greater the number of opportunities that are recognised for further growth. Individuals at this level tend to have needs relating to such things as truth, justice, meaning, wisdom, creativity, problem-solving, lack of prejudice and acceptance of what is. Maslow felt that only a small percentage of people reach this level.

Peak Experiences

Peak experiences are profound moments when a person experiences heightened awareness of harmony, understanding, happiness or love. Maslow's range of data was prompted by empirical research which asked the question "... think of the most wonderful experience or experiences of your life; happiest moments, ecstatic moments, moments of rapture, perhaps from being in love, or from listening to music or suddenly 'being hit' by a book or a painting or from some great creative moment..."⁽⁴⁾

Maslow suggested that self-actualising people have frequent peak experiences which make them feel acutely alive and self-sufficient, but still part of the world.

B-Cognition

Maslow developed this term to represent the 'cognition of being', which he said happened during the peak experiences. It has the effect of:

1. Seeing the experience as a whole, separated from relations with other things.
2. Focusing complete attention.

Abraham Maslow

3. Perceiving the world independently of human concerns.
4. Deepening that perception.
5. Rising above self-centred perceptions.
6. Being self validating with its own intrinsic value.
7. Creating a disorientation in time and space.
8. Being positive, good and desirable.

Putting the theory into practice

Maslow's theories concerning motivation recognise the potential in each person for self-actualisation. Education has embraced the idea of potential and "achieving or reaching their full potential" commonly appears in the aims of schools.

Maslow termed the process of his identified psychological development as healthy "growth" which is based around a constant series of individual choices which confront people throughout their lives. They will only move forward on this continuum if they perceive that the attractions of a possible choice of action outweighs the dangers. He is quite clear that "the complete absence of frustration, pain or danger is dangerous.... The child ... is able to profit from nicely graded frustrations and become stronger thereby." He also recognises that "overprotection implies that the child's needs are gratified for him".⁽⁵⁾

In an early years setting this is consistent with scaffolding the children's learning and development to enable them to challenge themselves and make choices which are at an appropriate level for their stage of development. If the children feel secure about their basic needs being satisfied, they will be motivated by their intrinsic potential for growth.

Children with special educational needs require careful support, which encourages them to do as much as possible for themselves and not to become dependent on that support. Resilience should be encouraged by adults promoting children's abilities to be self-directive and devising their own ways of overcoming challenges. Professional development for staff can be crucial to equip them with the necessary skills to do this.

Children with SEN are particularly vulnerable at times of transitions. The needs around safety and security have to be considered carefully before there can be any expectation that children will engage in the higher levels of motivation. This has implications, for example, in admission processes. Settings should ensure they have careful procedures aimed at reducing possible anxieties on the part of both the children and their carers. The key person approach in early years settings supports all young children's need for a secure attachment. By forging close relationships with the child and their family, key persons have a better understanding of the child's competencies and preferences, which helps them to address the child's individual physical and emotional needs more effectively.⁽⁶⁾

His influence

Along with others such as Carl Rogers, Maslow has been recognised as creating a new perception of psychology, namely humanistic psychology.

In 1965 Maslow wrote *Eupsychian Management*, a book about business management. One website describes Maslow as the "Father of Modern Management Psychology".⁽⁷⁾ His theories have been embraced by business as management tools to enhance the motivation of employees.

Comment

Since the publication of Maslow's 'hierarchy of needs' there has been debate about whether the identified stages are sufficiently descriptive of what actually happens and whether they are in the right order. His theories are based upon a relatively small sample of people who were chosen very unscientifically. Maslow himself recognised this and hoped that others would continue to refine his research.

The theory makes it difficult to explain specific cases such as the example of the 'starving artist' who neglects lower needs in pursuing higher ones. One criticism of the order of the hierarchy is that it is ethnocentric as it does not differentiate between the social and intellectual needs of people raised in individualistic societies, such as the USA, and people raised in collectivist societies, such as China.

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Multi-professional working

Towards collaborative working practice

The 2003 Green Paper, 'Every Child Matters (ECM): Change for Children',⁽²⁾ which formed the basis of the 2004 Children Act, advocated the need for integrated working by professionals who were involved in delivering services for children and young people. The policy aimed to transform traditional separate working practices by members of multi-agency staff from different departments, such as Social Services, Health or Education. By fostering more collaborative ways of working between staff from different sectors, the ECM policy sought to provide more effective support for the needs of children and their families.

Prior to the introduction of the ECM policy in the 2003 Green Paper, Lord Laming had conducted a review into the tragic death of Victoria Climbié.⁽³⁾ The Laming report revealed that agencies involved in her support had not shared information appropriately.⁽³⁾ The Green Paper led to the role of 'Directorate of Children's Services' being established by each local authority to co-ordinate all the services for children within their area. Local Authorities were also expected to create Local Safeguarding Children's Boards. The policy introduced a focus on the delivery of multi-agency services; the different agencies were expected to share information, their methods of assessment and their frameworks. Additionally, they were expected to plan funding streams and strategies for joint intervention.⁽⁴⁾

The outcomes of ECM were established across different children's services and were incorporated into the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework;⁽⁵⁾ the five outcomes are:

- Being healthy.
- Staying safe.
- Enjoying and achieving.
- Making a positive contribution.
- Achieving economic wellbeing.

The EYFS Framework acknowledges that practitioners' contribution to the work of multi-professional teams is an integral part of their role. Practitioners engage positively with children, their families, colleagues and other professionals in order to effectively deliver the EYFS for all children.⁽⁵⁾

The Common Assessment Framework (CAF)

As suggested by The Laming Report,⁽³⁾ the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) was introduced as a standardised approach to assessing children's additional needs. CAF supports the identification of a child's additional needs which are not currently being met at the earliest possible stage. When completing the CAF, educators should ensure that families understand the information being recorded about their child.

CAF is intended to support the child's family through the use of a single form, which enables all the agencies involved in the support of a child to access the information they need. The form aims to remove the need for different agencies concerned with providing services to undertake their own separate assessments.

However, Professor Munro noted in her review of Child Protection⁽⁶⁾ that:

'nationally prescribed sets of forms and software specifications can unintentionally influence and limit local practice, making it difficult for local authorities to innovate in response to new evidence or respond to particular problems in their area.'

Therefore, educators need to ensure that established processes to support multi-professional working are reviewed in the light of their professional use so they provide appropriate support for children. Additionally, it is important to ensure that children and their families understand and

PROFILE

A multi-professional, collaborative approach supports children's development and learning. Multi-professional working is undertaken by members of a multi-professional team who have contact with children in their settings, and who work collaboratively and share information with other professionals in accordance with the confidential practices of their workplace and role.⁽¹⁾

LINKS

- [How Children Learn 4](#)
Malaguzzi
Assistive technology
Behaviour
Hearing and Visual impairment
Learning through the Arts
Listening to Children
Observation and Assessment
Partnership with parents

Multi-professional working

support the right of other professionals who are working with the child to access their CAF information. ⁽⁶⁾

Information sharing

'Information sharing' is a process that is intended to support those children who require additional services by enabling early intervention. Educators use their professional judgment and experience to decide if personal information about a child should be shared with other professionals in order to support their needs and ensure that parents understand the process and have provided their consent. Following Lord Laming's suggestion ⁽³⁾ that agencies should communicate information more effectively, 'Information Sharing Guidance' was set out in the 2004 Children Act to improve the process of sharing information. Children's Trust Boards were expected to ensure that all partners complied with the guidance.

Potential benefits of Multi-professional working

The following features have been identified as being effective features of multi-agency working with children: ⁽¹⁾

- Participation of more than two relevant agencies, including key stakeholders.
- Identifying common aims and understanding a common problem. There is a shared vision about the likely outcome.
- Having an agreed action plan.
- Communicating with other relevant groups, such as children, parents and community members .
- Clearly articulating agreed decision-making processes.
- Seeking to accommodate different values, cultures and participating agencies.
- Sharing skills and resources.
- Risk-taking.
- Using agreed systems of communication to share information.
- Respecting and acknowledging contributions from different agencies.
- Defining agreed roles and responsibilities.

Challenges to Multi-professional working

Integrated services do not necessarily work effectively together. The National Foundation for Educational Research conducted a study on inter-agency working on behalf of the Local Government Association. Their report identified five main areas that presented challenge to inter-agency working practice:

- Funding and resources.
- Responsibilities and roles .
- Opposing priorities.

- Communication.
- Existing cultures and management structures in professional and agency work practices.

Communication is a key factor. Members of multi-professional teams should seek to develop effective working relationships with each other and respectfully acknowledge the unique contribution of team members to supporting the child and their family. When working with members of the multi-professional team, it is important for the educator to keep the child as the main focus and to include them as part of the team, where this is possible and appropriate. ⁽⁷⁾

One of the benefits of the ECM agenda was that it was rooted in the context of provision for all children. Therefore children with additional needs were not seen to be exclusively accessing services, as those services were accessible to all children and their families. Similarly, children with additional needs could access services within the mainstream provision. Children with additional needs will benefit from the work of strong multi-professional teams that 'provide appropriately for the individual needs of the children for whom they care and educate'. ⁽⁷⁾

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The CWDC website has helpful information on multi-professional work at: <http://www.cwdcouncil.org.uk/integrated-working>

Partnership with parents



Some key thinking and ideas about partnership with parents

Historically in the UK, before the publication of the Plowden report in 1967, schools' relationships with parents were based on the idea that schools had to compensate in some way for the deficits that existed in children's home lives. Parents' role in the relationship with their schools was to support the school requirements and ensure that their children were ready and able to participate fully in whatever activities the schools offered. ⁽¹⁾ In his report Plowden clearly stated that "One of the essentials for educational advance is a closer partnership between the two parties (i.e. schools and parents) to every child's education." ⁽²⁾

A sample of government thinking

In 1978 the Warnock Report, which looked at Special Educational Needs, was published by the UK Government. There was a whole chapter on "Parents as Partners" which specified that "...the successful education of children with special educational needs is dependent upon the full involvement of their parents: indeed, unless the parents are seen as equal partners in the educational process, the purpose of our report will be frustrated." ⁽³⁾

The UK government's Parent's Charter, ⁽⁴⁾ issued in 1991 and then updated in 1994, explained what parents can expect and how to become more effective partners in their children's education. Under the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, schools of children of statutory age were required to publish a home-school agreement which parents were involved in drawing up and had to confirm their understanding. Statutory guidance for schools was updated in June 2011 to simplify the language and include new categories of schools.

PROFILE

Parents are the first and continuing educators of their children. Partnerships between parents and settings (specifically early years establishments but could include schools) is all about reciprocal relationships. The setting influences what happens in the home and the parents influence what happens in the setting. The involvement of parents is much greater earlier in educational experiences.

LINKS

- *How Children Learn 1 and How Children Learn 4*
Friedrich Froebel
John Dewey
Margaret McMillan
Rudolph Steiner
Lev Vygotsky
Chris Athey
Loris Malaguzzi

Partnership with parents

Theorists' thinking

Many theorists have stressed the importance of considering parents when thinking about young children's learning. Margaret McMillan was among the first to say that parental involvement was important. Froebel thought that parents should be closely involved in their children's education. Dewey thought that the school life should grow gradually out of the home life, and that it is the duty of the school to deepen and extend the child's sense of values, which have been established in his home. For Steiner, the kindergarten was designed to be a warm and friendly place with a home-like environment and in which parents' involvement was high.

Vygotsky suggested that children learn through an apprenticeship approach, for example by reading at home with members of the family. Athey wrote an article in 1981 on parental involvement in nursery education and concluded that children whose parents participated made outstanding gains in their academic achievements and still maintained them two years later. Malaguzzi developed his educational philosophy based on his work in a nursery built and run by parents.

What is involved in 'partnership'?

Janis Keyser⁽⁵⁾ identified "family-centred care principles" which need to be adopted by settings and parents if an early childhood programme is to succeed. These are:

- Recognising and respecting one another's knowledge and expertise.
- Sharing information through two-way communication.
- Sharing power and decision making.
- Acknowledging and respecting diversity.
- Creating networks of support.

Putting the theory into practice

An OECD report in 1997 identified four key strategies that exist within the English and Welsh education system around parental involvement:

1. Parents seeing themselves as consumers of educational services.
2. Involvement of parents in the governance of schools.
3. Raising children's (particularly those considered to be disadvantaged) achievement by more effective family/school relationships.
4. Encouraging parents to get involved in hands-on activities in settings.⁽⁶⁾

"The rationale of parental involvement has primarily focused upon raising educational achievement"⁽⁷⁾ though other aims have included:

- The wellbeing of children enhanced by schools and families sharing goals related to them.

- Increasing the satisfaction of teachers by knowing that the families are supporting their work.
- Reassuring the families that the schools are doing the best that they can to help the children through developing the families' knowledge of school procedures and processes.

Wall⁽⁸⁾ relates that the Lamb Inquiry in 2009, which looked at parental confidence in SEN systems in England, highlighted the importance of communication within partnership. Parents want "good, honest and open communications" and feel that when things go wrong it is poor communication which is at the bottom of it. She goes on to identify the key issues for parental partnerships in settings as follows:

- Respect for parents and their views.
- Acknowledgement of the benefits of partnership by practitioners.
- Parents need to be empowered.
- Existing policies need to be reviewed to ensure that they are reflected in practice.
- Assumptions should not be made about partnerships happening – planning and regular review is important.
- Quality of relationships and equality within relationships determine the success or otherwise.

Some of these issues can be particularly acute for the parents of children with SEN. The experience of these parents may have involved conflict with support agencies which have engendered a lack of trust in "the system". Therefore building trust is of vital importance, particularly demonstrating that all partners are after the same outcome – what is in the best interests of the child's development.

The influence of thinking on partnership with parents

The expectations of parents have been raised by the national debates on education and by the subsequent legislation involving the roles of parents in the education of their children. There are national and international parent networks and support groups, such as the Special Needs Parents Association in Ireland (www.specialneedsparents.ie), and with the development of the internet, social networking sites and smart phones, communications between parents have been greatly enhanced. They are therefore able to share experience of good practice and can highlight practice which is less than good.

There are also heightened expectations evident within the training of Early Years Professionals (EYPs) about relationships with parents. Of the thirty nine EYPS standards,⁽⁹⁾ four are related directly to communicating and working in partnership with families and carers. The following skills are required of all EYPs:

Partnership with parents

- Recognise and respect the influential and enduring contribution that families and parents/carers can make to children's development, well-being and learning.
- Establish fair, respectful, trusting and constructive relationships with families and parents/carers, and communicate sensitively and effectively with them.
- Work in partnership with families and parents/carers, at home and in the setting, to nurture children, help them develop and to improve outcomes for them.
- Provide formal and informal opportunities through which information about children's well-being, development and learning can be shared between the setting and families and parents/carers.

Comment

Although the general expectation is that schools and settings should enter into partnerships with parents, there are some parents who, for many different reasons, do not feel that it is appropriate to get so involved in their children's education. They may not feel confident, they may have had poor experiences of education themselves, or they may lack knowledge of the system, particularly if they were educated in another country. Such parents could feel that it is more beneficial to "leave it up to the experts".

This is where parent empowerment and education comes into play. A "partnership" suggests equal power for each partner and it may be that some parents require help and support to begin to feel 'equal'.

It is also worth considering how realistic it is for educational institutions to totally share power with their parents. Parents need to have an understanding of the limitations that exist in order to be meaningfully engaged in partnership. Schools and settings have regulatory constraints on them, for example duties to do with health and safety. Staff have employment rights which have to be protected. Funding streams may be restricted and therefore resources (both human and material) could be limited.

The nature of parenthood has undergone changes over the past few years. There is now a much greater variety in family make-up, for example foster families, first/second generation newcomers, same sex parenting, extended families and single parents. It is therefore imperative, if schools and settings are aspiring to effective partnership, that they must make every effort to be inclusive of all the different home backgrounds of the children.

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Observation and Assessment

PROFILE

By undertaking observations, educators can gain knowledge and understanding about individual children's interests, preferences, abilities and needs, which can inform practice and be shared with parents, colleagues and other professionals.

Assessment provides information about children's learning and development and their progression over time, which can be used to plan their 'next steps' of learning and to identify their strengths and particular needs.

The process of observation and assessment supports early identification of children with additional needs and enables educators to plan effectively for inclusive provision, according to children's individual needs. Observation and assessment can also be used to inform early years research studies and to evaluate the quality of early years practice.

LINKS

- *How Children Learn 4*
- Dewey
- Laevers
- Malaguzzi
- Montessori
- Paley
- Piaget
- Behaviour
- Hearing and visual Impairment
- Listening to children
- Multi-professional working
- Partnership with parents

Some key thinking and theories about observation

Observation of children can be described as 'watching the children in our care, listening to them and taking note of what we see and hear.'⁽¹⁾

Pioneers of observation

Early pioneers of observation in early childhood education included the educators Friedrich Froebel, Margaret McMillan, Maria Montessori and Susan Isaacs, who used observation to inform their provision for children's learning and development. Froebel recognised the importance of play and thought educators could use observations of young children to support their play interests. McMillan, who was influenced by Froebel, observed children at her Open Air Nursery in Deptford, London. She was concerned with children's holistic needs and used observations to develop records of their development.

Montessori thought observations of children could help identify how the learning environment should be organised to support their individual progression. Isaacs believed that 'deep observation was the key to understanding the complex and unique realities of individual children'.⁽²⁾ She made detailed observations of children's activities at the Malting House School in Cambridge during the 1930s and analysed these to consider children's cognitive and emotional development. Isaacs also proposed that parents should record observations of their children to provide further information on their progression.

These educators emphasised the importance of the process of observation, which is now an integral part of current early years practice.



Observation and Assessment

Different kinds of observations and their use

Observation method	Purpose of observation
Time sampling	track a child's actions at intervals over a fixed period of time
Event sampling	provide details of a significant event which has been noticed
Checklist	record particular information about a child
Daily timed	observe a child at a specific time of day
Target child	record details of a child's actions over a period of time
Narrative observation	provide a detailed account of a child's actions
Sociogram	identify a child's social interactions and friendship groups
Tracking map	record the location of a child's activity
Film, photography and audio recording	record a conversation with a child, an activity or an area of provision

Observations enable early years educators to: ⁽³⁾

- Review safety of provision and identify possible dangers.
- Give attention to all children.
- Value, support and extend play activities.
- Be aware of new developments in children's play activities.
- Know more about children's intentions and meanings.
- Identify any difficulties that children may be experiencing, such as bullying.
- Know more about individual children's interests, preferences, dispositions and patterns of action and interaction.
- Gain evidence of children's cognitive and social development and share this with parents, colleagues and other professionals.
- Inform planning for individuals and groups of children.
- Reflect on their observations of children and evaluate provision in terms of the curriculum, environment and resources.
- Consider observations against theoretical views of children's development.
- Use observation as a tool for their own or others' professional development.

Observation of children with additional needs

Educators and other professionals can use observations to evaluate the progression of children with additional needs and monitor the effectiveness of any interventions that have been introduced to support their needs. If children have a statement of special educational need, then observations will provide important sources of information on their progression at their annual review meetings. Observations can also assist with the identification of a child's specific areas of strength or difficulty when initial concerns have

been raised by a parent, educator or another professional who is working with the child. ⁽⁴⁾

Methods of observation

Observations that are undertaken when educators are engaged in children's activities are known as 'participant observations'. Other forms of observation are 'spontaneous observation', when a record of a noticeable or significant event is made or 'planned observations', when the observer stands back to observe children. ⁽¹⁾ Observations vary in type and length, according to their purpose.

Some key thinking and theories about assessment

Assessment is 'the process of analysing and reviewing what we know about children's development and learning.' ⁽¹⁾ Margaret Carr has identified four characteristics of assessment: ⁽⁵⁾

- It is concerned with everyday practice.
- It is observation-based.
- It requires an interpretation.
- It leads to improved learning and teaching.

Early years educators generally form judgements about children's ideas, knowledge, motivation, abilities and thinking from their experience of observing children rather than from using formal assessment procedures. ⁽⁶⁾ This formative assessment is called 'assessment for learning', as it informs planning and provides information which is used to plan for the 'next steps' of children's learning. Children's assessments can be called 'Learning Journeys', as they document their progression over a period of time, such as the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

Observation and Assessment

Learning dispositions

The EYFS Profile is a summative assessment, as it summarises children's progress towards the Early Learning Goals at the end of the EYFS. It also serves as formative assessment to guide provision for children in their following year at school (Year One).⁽¹⁾

Carr advocated the use of a framework of 'learning dispositions', which describes children's attitudes and motivation. She suggested that educators use 'learning stories' to describe children's dispositions, which make their learning 'visible'. Carr proposed five domains of leaning disposition:⁽⁵⁾

- Taking an interest.
- Being involved.
- Persisting with difficulty or uncertainty.
- Communicating with others .
- Taking responsibility.

The emphasis on children's achievement in Learning Stories and the notion of 'learning dispositions', resonates with Loris Malaguzzi's view of the child as a 'competent learner', which he promoted in the pre-schools of Reggio Emilia. Learning Stories acknowledge that assessment of learning in early childhood should have a broad application. They should not be limited to describe children's academic achievement, as this could lead to a focus on academic instruction at the expense of child-centred, play-based learning opportunities, although they are not 'mutually exclusive.'⁽⁷⁾

Assessment of children with additional needs

The assessment of children who have additional needs can be documented through use of the 'Common Assessment Framework' (CAF), which enables information on a child to be shared between all members of multi-agency teams involved in supporting the child. The CAF contributes to a 'joined-up' approach to provision of support and interventions for children. Careful procedures should be established to ensure that information on a child is kept confidentially and only shared with relevant people.

Observation and assessment in practice

Observers should have appropriate permission to undertake observations of children or access information on their assessment. Observation and assessment, which are essential aspects of educators' work with young children, can also be complex processes. Skills involved include:⁽¹⁾

- Looking – having a focus and clear purpose of the observation. Prior knowledge about children's learning from other sources, such as the child's parents, could be used to support the focus of the observation and its interpretation.

- Listening – attending to the child's interactions with different adults and children.
- Recording – accurately documenting aspects of children's behaviour, responses, learning and development.
- Thinking – reflecting on the observation and interpreting what has been seen. This process informs assessment and planning. Discussion with the child's parents and others who work with the child can support the thinking process.
- Questioning – questions addressed to the child or their parents may help to confirm, clarify or discard thoughts arising from observations.

Importance of objective observation

Educators should consider how they enable children's involvement in their observations and assessment. They should also recognise that their observations and assessments of children may be influenced by their attitudes towards children. For example, educators' views on a child's gender or appearance could potentially influence their views about a child's behaviour or abilities. Therefore, they should be alert to the likelihood of their judgments being affected by their feelings and attitudes.⁽⁸⁾

Tina Bruce suggests four steps of a narrative observation which aim to minimise the observer's bias during the process of observing and describing children's play:⁽⁹⁾

- The context of the observation is recorded briefly by the observer.
- The observer records a description of the child's actions and conversations as accurately as possible, referring to other children involved. The observer only describes and does not try to interpret what they observe the child do or say, as the observation will be impaired if the observer is distracted or biased in their approach to the observation.
- The observation is analysed and interpreted.
- The observation is related to observations of the child by others and compared to theories of children's learning and development.

Observation through schemas

Schemas, which describe a child's consistent patterns of action, provide a focus for an observation. Children's actions can be interpreted through different schemas, and this information can then be used to inform ways in which educators can extend children's learning. Educators can apply their knowledge of schemas when analysing observations to identify the learning needs of all children, including those children with additional needs. This enables a more inclusive approach to provision.

Influence

The importance of observation and assessment is recognised globally in early years policies and frameworks. These processes

Observation and Assessment

help educators to see the child as an individual and plan accordingly for their individual needs. This is particularly relevant for children with additional needs, as it supports the early identification of any difficulties and can provide reliable evidence to inform judgements and future requests for additional support. However, it is not sufficient to record only what is observed. Observers should carefully and sensitively interpret observations so they can be used to inform assessment and guide provision for children's learning.

Observation and assessment processes have also been used as quality indicators when evaluating practice. For example, the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS) and the additional Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale – Extension (ECERS-E) were used to measure the effectiveness of the learning provision for children during the longitudinal research study, Effective Provision of Pre-School Education (EPPE) project.⁽¹⁰⁾

Comment

The observed child may be perceived as a passive object without a voice, so it is important that children are treated respectfully and consistently.⁽⁸⁾ Observation and assessment have been criticised as their outcomes could be used to categorise children in relation to prescribed 'norms' of development or learning outcomes. Nevertheless children's difficulties should be identified and monitored so that these can be appropriately addressed; educators should be sensitive to potential negative outcomes from their assessment of children with additional needs against measures that are based on national expectations. A range of assessment opportunities that consider children's holistic development enables children's competencies to be highlighted and helps to balance potential or actual deficit views of children.

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Listening to children

PROFILE

Listening to children, the 'pupil voice' and consulting children about their educational experience has become more prominent over the past few years. Early on it mainly focused on older children as they were thought of as having more formulated views. However, with the shift towards thinking of younger children as 'beings' in their own right, rather than 'becomings', ⁽¹⁾ that is working towards being something else, listening to young children has gained an impetus.

LINKS

- *How Children Learn 3*
Lesley Abbot
Tina Bruce
Mary-Jane Drummond
- *How Children Learn 4*
Vivian Gussin Paley
Loris Malaguzzi
Paulo Freire
Hearing and Visual Impairment
Observation and Assessment

Some key thinking and ideas about listening to children

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) specifically deals with children's rights to be listened to in Articles 12 and 13, and UK legislation (primarily the Children Acts 1989 and 2004) have significantly directed the attention of educationalists to listening seriously to what children have to say about their views, concerns and feelings. Professor Kathleen Marshall, Scotland's Commissioner for Children and Young People, has written, "the fact that young children might sometimes express their views to us through play or through noisy and gregarious activities, should not lead us to downplay the seriousness of what they are telling us." ⁽²⁾

Clark et al (2005) ⁽³⁾ proposed a 'Mosaic Approach' as a framework for listening to children. This is based on the idea that a mosaic is made up of very small parts which, when arranged together make a picture. It adopts a stance that children are 'experts in their own lives' and draws on an assortment of tools to 'enable young children to express their ideas and feelings with confidence'. That can facilitate them to 'develop new skills and competencies, which in turn can increase their abilities to communicate with adults'. It offers early years practitioners the 'rich potential for children to communicate and for adults to listen'.

In 2007, Clark ⁽⁴⁾ described the framework as having three interlinked stages:

- Stage One - Information is gathered by the children and then they and the adults begin to assess it.
- Stage Two - The children and adults discuss and interpret what the gathered information means, continuing the process begun in the first stage, now also involving practitioners and families when possible.
- Stage Three - The question is asked and discussed, "What is going to change or remain the same as a result of this process?"

The approach works within the context of Rinaldi's concept of 'a pedagogy of listening': ⁽⁵⁾

- Interior listening - engaged in by the children by reflecting on what it means to be in a particular environment
- Multiple listening - a recognition of the importance of children's and adults' voices.
- Visible listening - the use of documentation as the basis for discussion and interpretation.

The Mosaic Approach therefore could support practitioners' understanding of 'children's choices and interests [which] are the driving force for building knowledge, skills and understanding'. ⁽⁶⁾

Some theorists' thinking

Vivian Gussin Paley (pages 25-27) - A key aspect of her thinking is that adult perspectives differ from children's perspectives and that, in order for adults to find out how children learn and relate to themselves, each other and society, children need to be observed and listened to in detail. Much of her research was based on tape recordings of children's conversations, play and narratives.

Paulo Freire (pages 50-52) - He postulated the idea of 'critical pedagogy'. He thought learners should be critically engaged in the educational process through communication and dialogue with their educators. He thought education should empower individuals to overcome oppressive social conditions by enabling the disempowered to develop their literacy skills in order to express themselves more effectively and participate more actively and equitably in their communities.

Comment

Loris Malaguzzi (pages 31-33) – He viewed education as a collaborative venture between children and adults, where they could explore meanings, engage in critical dialogue and co-construct knowledge together. He advocated that children could communicate in different ways using a ‘hundred languages’ to represent their thinking and emphasised the importance of listening to children.

Putting the theories into practice

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, the idea of having a key person who specifically relates to only a few children, enables them to establish positive relationships and gives them the opportunity to really listen to what the children have to say. It is only by listening and observing that they can really follow the children’s interests.

Practitioners are developing a broader sense of what ‘listening’ means. The Regio Emilio approach advocated by Malaguzzi described children as having “a hundred languages” as they also express themselves through their artistic endeavours. Practitioners are having to understand what these ‘languages’ are telling them. This can be particularly significant for children with additional needs whose main mode of expression could be non-verbal. It may be that careful observation is the ‘listening’ required.

Nancy Rosenow’s article ⁽⁷⁾ looks at the way that children can give messages through their construction activities in their setting and is a fascinating case study. Each of the children is communicating something important through a largely non-verbal activity. Work in this visual-spatial realm really is another ‘language.’ The practitioners involved agree that it would be a shame if they didn’t take the time to ‘hear’ what the children are saying.

There is also evidence ⁽⁸⁾ to show that regular opportunities for children to engage in conversations with a trusted adult can have significantly beneficial effects. Lindsay Smith demonstrated that such conversations provided children with “opportunities to communicate, notably disclosing child protection issues that may otherwise have remained uninvestigated. Increasing the opportunities for children to experience being listened to by a skilled adult positively affected their educational progress.” She argues that skilled listeners have a significant effect on children’s learning and on some children’s behaviour.

Influence

In England, the training of Early Years Professionals (EYPs) includes specific requirements about listening to children. Of the thirty-nine standards which have to be met in order to qualify for EYP status, four are related directly to relationships with children. Standard 27 says “Listen to children, pay attention to what they say and value and respect their views.” This is considered ‘a vital part of establishing positive relationships with them, and is central to the process of learning and developing’ ⁽⁹⁾

Listening to and consulting children about their learning and feelings can lead into unknown territory and cause us to function outside our comfort zone. It can also raise issues of power, either adult power or power play between children, issues which are not always easy to deal with. There could also be the danger that adults exploit the information given to them by children to pursue their own agendas. In their State of the Art Review of listening to and consulting with young children in England, Denmark and The Netherlands, Clark et al ⁽³⁾ could find very few research studies into young children’s views and experience of education and childcare. The Review also showed that there were only limited examples in the published literature where the views and experiences of young children with disabilities have been studied. Similarly, there were few documented examples to be found of research that had focused on listening to and involving young children from ethnic minority groups.

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<http://www.ncb.org.uk/what-we-do/early-years/ycvn> (Young Children’s Voices Network)

<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/crc.htm> (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child)

Hearing and visual impairment

PROFILE

Inclusion is about reducing barriers to learning and participation for all children. Particular consideration must be given to children with visual or hearing impairment and there are strategies and operational tactics which can assist in removing the barriers encountered by these children so that they can play a full, active and inclusive part in the available provision.

LINKS

- *How Children Learn 1*
Guy Claxton
- *How Children Learn 3*
Ferre Laevers
Brain and body
- *How Children Learn 4*
Vivian Gussin Paley
Ferre Laevers
Assistive technology

Some key thinking about hearing and visual impairment

Hearing impairment

Hearing impairment is measured in comparison with 'normal' hearing and is classified as one of four levels of severity:

- Mild.
- Moderate.
- Severe.
- Profound.

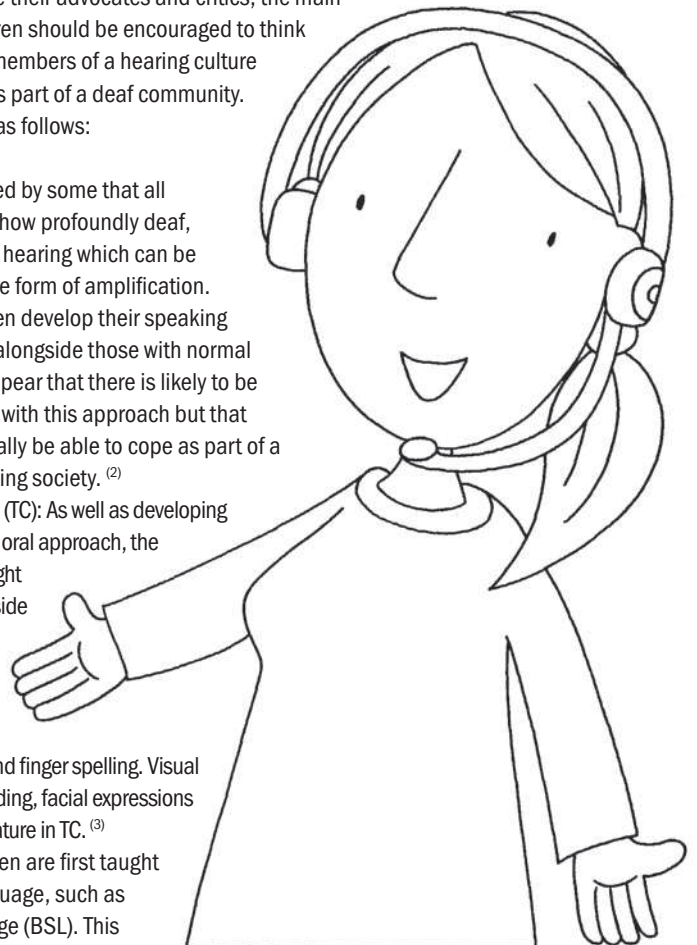
Within these classifications, each child will have a different profile of hearing loss. If it is the higher frequencies which are missing, this will affect the ability to recognise speech as most of the information in speech is carried by the consonant sounds, which are mainly high frequency.

The stage at which a hearing impairment takes hold in a child's development is also very important. If the impairment occurs after the skills and concepts of language acquisition have taken place then the child, assuming there are no other delaying factors, will have developed speech and some measure of understanding. If it is congenital or from birth, then the child will need help to acquire language skills.

There are three approaches to encouraging language development in children with hearing impairment. ⁽¹⁾ They all have their advocates and critics, the main issues being whether children should be encouraged to think of themselves as minority members of a hearing culture or identifying themselves as part of a deaf community.

Some key approaches are as follows:

- **Oralism:** It is believed by some that all children, no matter how profoundly deaf, have some residual hearing which can be enhanced with some form of amplification. The children can then develop their speaking and listening skills alongside those with normal hearing. It would appear that there is likely to be some speech delay with this approach but that children will eventually be able to cope as part of a predominantly hearing society. ⁽²⁾
- **Total communication (TC):** As well as developing language through an oral approach, the children are also taught sign language alongside which reinforces the structures of spoken language by the inclusion of grammatical signs and finger spelling. Visual clues such as lip-reading, facial expressions and gestures also feature in TC. ⁽³⁾
- **Bilingualism:** Children are first taught a 'natural' sign language, such as British Sign Language (BSL). This



Hearing and visual impairment

reinforces their sense of identity and position within deaf culture. Only once they have internalised the sign language are they taught conventional language. ⁽⁴⁾

It is important to recognise that language and communication are tied in very strongly with social and cultural identification. ⁽⁵⁾ When thinking about the above options, it is crucial to consider the first language of the child and their family. There are potential complications around encouraging English as a first language because it is spoken in a setting, if the home language is different.

Visual impairment

Webster and Roe promote the notion that:

"[C]hildren with impaired vision cannot simply be considered in terms of the normal developmental milestones achieved by all other children, but with well-defined gaps in some areas of experience and maturation." ⁽⁶⁾

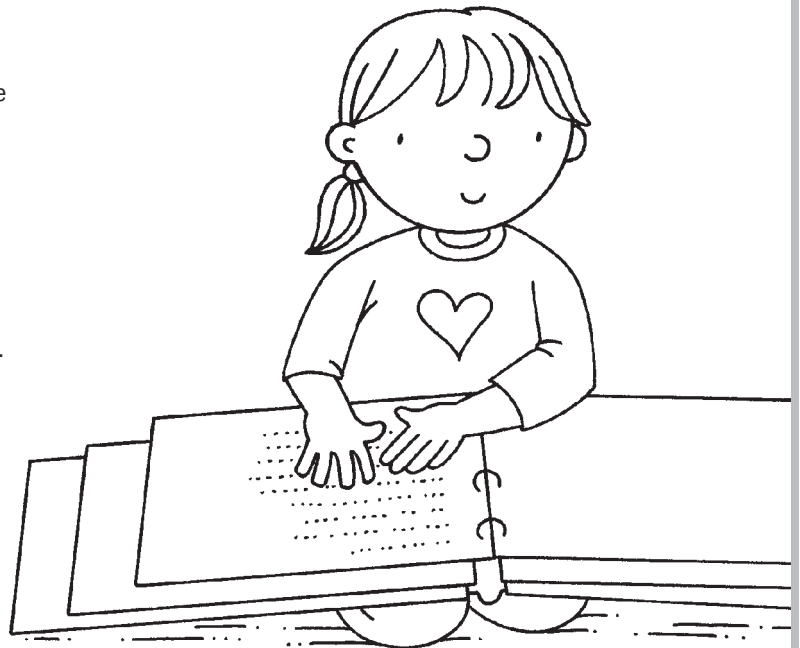
Visual impairment is just one of the many individual factors that need to be taken into account (such as learning style, motivation and resilience) when considering the personal and social development of children. Depending on individual needs, a child may require more specialist support, such as through adaptations to the learning environment.

In each individual, visual impairment will influence other personality traits, social and personal skills in ways that are often unpredictable. For instance, confidence or determination may be affected, although this is not necessarily the case. However, any learning difficulties which a child encounters may not arise from such internal factors but may be as a result of issues to do with the provision or the way the environment is structured.

It could be significant at what stage in the child's development the impairment takes hold. If it is after the skills and concepts of colour and shape and the visual aspects of spoken communication have developed then the child, assuming there are no other delaying factors, will have developed some measure of understanding of such visual concepts. If it is congenital or from birth, then the child will need more help to understand these concepts.

Complex Needs

It is quite possible that a child has a hearing or visual impairment as one attribute of wider or more complex needs. In this case careful diagnosis and monitoring is required and needs to be conducted within a framework that involves all the agencies that have an interest in the child, including the setting and the parents, so that there is consistency of care and shared knowledge of how the child's needs are being met.



Strategies for managing hearing or visual impairment in young children

- Early diagnosis.
- Liaising carefully with other agencies, such as health and speech therapy.
- Close liaison with parents or carers to provide a consistent approach and keep them informed of progress.
- Staff training.
- Careful observation and listening by adults to determine what, if anything, is missing from the child's repertoire of speaking and communication skills.
- Encouraging children to become confident in managing specialist equipment independently, such as hearing aids, glasses or magnifiers.

There is research evidence to suggest that the two factors which are most significant in determining language outcomes for five year olds with hearing impairments are early enrolment on intervention programmes and the involvement of families. ⁽⁷⁾ For early years settings, assuming there is not specialist expertise within the setting, this presupposes close liaison with external agencies, such as speech therapists.

Operational tactics with hearing impairment

- Reducing background noise in the setting.
- Working individually or in smaller groups.
- Getting the child's visual attention and facing them before communicating.
- Having the same clear expectations of behaviour as with other children.

Hearing and visual impairment



- Having regular breaks from listening activities.
- Teaching all the children songs and rhymes that they can sign (with, for example, Makaton).
- Possible use of a radio aid by the child, or the adult using a clip-on or facial microphone with sound then amplified throughout the room. ⁽⁸⁾

Operational tactics with visual impairment

- Giving children time to interact with artefacts or make their way around.
- Working on communication skills such as listening, keyboard skills.
- Encouraging tactile and other sensory development.
- Assessing the appropriateness of activities, equipment and the environment from the perspective of the children
- Having the same clear expectations of behaviour as with other children.
- Developing mobility and orientation skills within the setting. ⁽⁹⁾

Comment

It is a well-aided adage in education that what is good for special needs children is also good for all children. The strategies and tactics outlined above are part and parcel of good early years practice and their implementation could be expected within any setting, whether there are children with visual or hearing impairment or not. By providing a suitable environment and appropriate practices which support children's individual needs, settings are also encouraging the other children and their families to understand the perspectives of children with impairments.

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www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk

www.mib.org.uk

Learning through the Arts

Some key thinking and theories about learning through the arts

The National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Education produced a report in 1999 which was commissioned by the UK government. The membership of the group included people involved in academic research, television, theatre, fashion, music, art galleries, education and dance. The report was titled "All our futures: creativity, culture and education".

The report concluded that creative and artistic activities were important in the education of children and that they contributed to academic achievement. They noted that children who struggle with academic work can have outstanding abilities in other areas and that "...the key is to find what children are good at. Self confidence and self esteem then tend to rise and overall performance improve. High standards in creative achievement require just as much rigour as traditional academic work."⁽²⁾

Art as a way of knowing and developing oneself

Sahasrabudhe (2006) says that the Arts should be considered as "distinct ways of knowing". Different Arts have their own attributes of learning, each identified by "specific tools, practices and beliefs about what makes an object, or performance aesthetically moving and worth coming back to." Artistic knowledge is fundamentally distinct from other kinds of knowledge through intended outcomes, ways of making meaning, methods used and "views of truth and excellence".⁽³⁾

Sahasrabudhe equated children's ages and school stage of development with phases of artistic development and the orientation of their learning:⁽³⁾

How age relates to artistic development and learning

Age	Artistic development	Learning orientation
Pre-primary (2-4 years)	Mark-making	Symbol processing
Primary (4-9 years)	Early symbols	Symbol processing
Upper primary (9-11 years)	Emerging expertise	Socio-cultural perspective
Lower secondary (11-14 years)	Artistic challenge	Socio-cultural perspective
Higher secondary (14-17 years)	Artistic thinking	Reality construction of one's own making

Art as a medium to communication

Many theorists have stressed the importance of the artistic dimension to young children's learning. Steiner advocated that movement and imaginative play were key elements in developing learning. Laevers focused on the emotional and well-being aspects of learning, Trevarthen on the 'Communicative Musicality' between babies and their mothers and Paley on the impact of children's acted out narratives on their self-confidence. Gardner identified musical abilities and bodily-kinaesthetic/spatial competences as distinct 'intelligences'.

One of Malaguzzi's concepts for the 'image of the child' is 'a communicator', who is supported by an 'atelierista' (a studio teacher trained in the visual arts). In the Reggio Emilia pre-school centres, the curriculum is built around expressive and creative learning. Children are encouraged to interact with their environment, presenting their thoughts, feelings and experiences in a range of 'languages'.

PROFILE

The value of 'Learning through the arts' has been recognised by theorists in the past and has gained international currency in recent years. Paul Ricouer, a French philosopher, said 'The arts offer us models for the redescription of the world. They attach us to others, to our history, and to ourselves by providing a tapestry rich with threads of time, place, character, and even advice on what we might do with our lives.'⁽¹⁾

In the UK, it has been recognised that children with high academic ability may have other strengths that are often neglected and that children who struggle with academic work can have outstanding abilities in other areas.⁽²⁾

LINKS

- *How Children Learn 1*
Howard Gardner
Loris Malaguzzi
Rudolph Steiner
- *How Children Learn 3*
Ferre Laevers
Guy Claxton
Colwyn Trevarthen
- *How Children Learn 4*
Vivian Paley
Ferre Laevers
Howard Gardner
Loris Malaguzzi
Rudolph Steiner

Learning through the Arts

Putting the theories into practice

Many national governments and education systems have taken up the ideas inherent in learning through the arts. Here are some examples of practice in the United States, Canada, England and Australia:

In the US, Theatre-In Education (TIE) groups have been set up to engage with young children in the Head Start programme preschool settings. ⁽⁴⁾ Groups in New York City are supported by the 'Early Learning Through the Arts' (ELTA) organisation. The actor/educators engage with the children in drama activities designed to stimulate literacy, language development, imaginative play, development of different perspectives and conflict resolution. There is also a professional development component with staff in the settings so that they can continue the approach beyond the TIE visits.

In Canada, there is an organisation called Learning Through the Arts (LTA), which evolved out of the Royal Conservatory of Music. LTA's work in schools is based on three "pillars": ⁽⁵⁾

- i) A focus on teacher professional development.
- ii) The interface between community artists and the education system.
- iii) A sustainable framework for partnership working.

In 2005, The Arts Council of England produced a guide to help early years settings to:

- Build understanding of the arts and creativity.
- Celebrate what is already being achieved.
- Audit and review their provision for the arts.
- Improve provision, where possible. ⁽⁶⁾

The guide contains a section on contacts and resources and self-assessment checklists to enable settings to:

- Audit their provision in creativity.
- Build a creative curriculum.
- Build an environment for creativity.
- Share and celebrate work with artists and other creative people.
- Develop professionally.

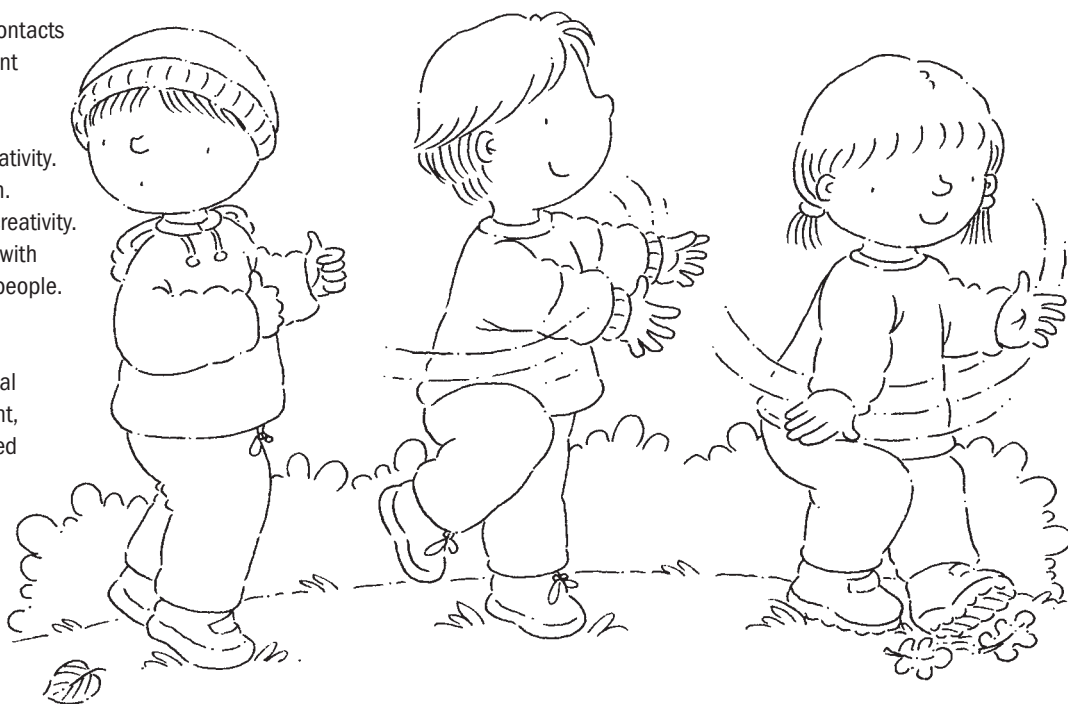
In 2007 in Australia, the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs produced the "National education and the arts statement" which laid out their vision for the development of an integrated arts education approach to the Australian school curriculum.

The document stated "An education rich in creative arts maximises opportunities for learners to engage with innovative thinkers and leaders and to experience the arts both as audience members and as artists. Such an education is vital to students' success as individuals and as members of society, emphasising not only creativity and innovation, but also the values of broad cultural understanding and social harmony that the arts can engender." ⁽⁷⁾

For young children with additional needs, the arts provide the potential for increasing their abilities to express themselves and communicate in a range of media. For example, visual expression and movement helps children with hearing impairment to develop their engagement with their environment and with other people (see chapter on Hearing and Visual Impairment, pages 70-72). Children with speech and language difficulties can make use of drama and art activities to express their ideas. Such achievement in the expressive arts can lead to increased self-efficacy, which in turn supports social learning (see chapter on Albert Bandura, pages 53-55).

Influence

In November 1999, the Director-General of UNESCO launched an international appeal for the promotion of arts education and creativity at school as part of the construction of a culture of peace. ⁽³⁾ The UNESCO's 2005 report, *Towards Knowledge Societies* advises that "Stimulating children's activity and sharpening their sensitivity to artistic practices, game- and repetition-based learning, as well as the use of artistic techniques (theatre, music, painting, etc.) in general education are living realities that offer inexpensive increased possibilities of expression and understanding, and stimulate the interest of children and adolescents in school and knowledge." ⁽⁸⁾



Comment

There is some concern about the abilities and skills of generalist educators in early years and primary education being able to promote arts-based learning effectively. In a recent study in Australia,⁽⁹⁾ it was suggested that the primary curriculum is far too demanding on a generalist educator's subject knowledge and that it is the creative subjects which suffer the most when unrealistic expectations are demanded.

In education systems where the emphasis is on delivering ever higher academic attainment in literacy and numeracy and pressure is exerted downwards in the system so that early years provision is seen as a preparation for future attainment, the arts may be perceived as having less educational significance rather than providing a valuable mode of learning and communication that supports all children's learning and development. Therefore this mode of learning is often regarded as a means to an end, rather than a legitimate end in itself.

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Where to find out more

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<http://www.learningthroughthearts.co.uk> (a UK social enterprise)

<http://www.ltta.ca> (a Canadian organisation affiliated to the Royal Conservatory of Music)

Assistive technology

PROFILE

Assistive technology (AT) can promote children's learning and development by allowing them to take part more effectively in activities and routines in their natural environments. AT devices can range from low-tech (for example adapted spoons) to high-tech (for example computers), which can increase young children's options and promote their physical and social inclusion in different settings. ⁽¹⁾

LINKS

- *How Children Learn 4*
Hearing and visual Impairment
Multi-professional working
Observation and assessment
Partnership with parents

Some key thinking about assistive technology

The US government has defined assistive technology devices as "any item, piece of equipment or product system, whether acquired commercially or off the shelf, modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities". ⁽²⁾

The technology may affect a change in the attributes of the person, for example a device to produce speech for a person with vocal impairment, or a change in the environment, for example a sound system to amplify a teacher's voice for children with a hearing impairment. In the latter case, the technology would also affect everyone else within that environment.

Discussing who has the right to AT, Borg J et al ⁽³⁾ point out that:

- Although using AT can increase the participation of those who use it, many countries do not have access to such technology.
- The United Nations' Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) includes a requirement that countries should implement action related to the provision of AT and its use.
- The particular actions required in the CRPD are distributed throughout the convention making it difficult to interpret or use for the purpose of producing national policies.
- The requirements relate only to some human rights and some disabilities, but in order to be inclusive they should give all people with disabilities the right to AT that is available and affordable.
- There is an acknowledgement in the CRPD that, as well as impairments, there are barriers within the environment, for example accessibility. The requirements relate to technology which enhances bodily and sensory functioning as well as changing environments.
- The provision of AT should be not just an international responsibility, but should apply nationally as well.

When AT is introduced, it should be based on: assessed need, knowledge of what is available; and the choice and implementation of an AT "solution". The implementation should then be monitored and evaluated to ensure that it is meeting that identified need. Parette et al ⁽⁴⁾ consider how this can be achieved in early years settings. A particular methodology is outlined which can be used to evaluate the effectiveness of an AT intervention.

The "concurrent time series probe approach" involves the methodical collection of data from observations and children's outputs over regular time intervals. In order to make the data collection manageable in terms of time constraints and responsibilities, it can involve all adults associated with the setting. What is of primary importance is that professionals recognise the positive outcomes that are possible by the use of AT to compensate for disabilities or impairments and to assist in the early development of skills and concepts on which future learning will be based.

Putting the theories into practice

A 2006 study ⁽⁵⁾ of early years settings across thirty three states in the US looked at how providers felt about the implementation of AT. The conclusions were:

- Providers seem to view assistive technology with relative breadth that includes both high tech (for example computer aided learning) and low tech (for example pencils adapted for small fingers).
- AT practices are significantly affected by the amount and level of training that practitioners have had. Those with more training which focused on AT made greater use of it and knew more about the sorts of factors involved in making decisions to do with appropriate provision, including improving the participation of children in daily routines and activities.

- Irrespective of training, practitioners seemed aware of how important AT can be in improving children's active participation and in promoting interactions within the family.
- Parental attitudes and children's environments were seen as important considerations when making decisions about AT.
- Providers on the whole disagreed with several reasons that have been identified as barriers to using AT.

Concerns about current practices in the study include:

- Many infants and toddlers who need AT do not have access to it.
- Only 18% of the providers thought of themselves as well trained, or as having sufficient knowledge about AT for the children with disabilities that they worked with.
- Developmental skills facilitation was viewed as very important in making decisions about using AT. This could imply that efforts at using AT are more focused on the development of skills than on promoting children's participation in natural environments.

Comment

It would appear the level of training given to educators in the use of AT affects whether and how the technology is used. It has also been suggested⁽⁶⁾ that practitioners who have worked in the field for longer than ten years report feeling more confident in all areas of AT service provision and particularly in the area of AT assessment. The level of practitioner qualifications does not appear to make any difference.

As to the effectiveness of using AT with young children, there is a lack of published material which evaluates its use overall. Philippa H. Campbell et al reported in 2006 that "As a whole, evidence of effectiveness of AT devices use by infants and toddlers is limited in terms of the number of published reports, the content areas emphasized, and the level of evidence provided."⁽⁷⁾ This is an area that is constantly developing and there is an obvious need for further research.

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Behaviour

PROFILE

Children's behaviour in school or in early years settings has been the focus of much research and even government enquiries in recent years. With a huge emphasis on raising attainment and effective learning it is not surprising that consideration has been given to factors such as behaviour which can support or be a barrier to learning.

LINKS

- *How Children Learn 1*
Burrhus Skinner and behaviourism
- *How Children Learn 3*
Carl Rogers
Moral Development
- *How Children Learn 4*
Montessori
Piaget
Vygotsky
Maslow
Bandura

Some key thinking and theories about behaviour

There are numerous theories about human behaviour and the factors which determine it. These need to be viewed within a context of how people understand their own behaviour and its consequences. The Munro report which reviewed child protection on behalf of the UK Government puts forward the view that behaviour issues can be caused by attachment difficulties: "... secure attachment with those close to them leads to the development of empathy, trust and well-being. In contrast, an impoverished, neglectful or abusive environment often results in a child who doesn't develop empathy, learn how to regulate their emotions or develop social skills, and this can lead to an increased risk of mental health problems, relationship difficulties, anti-social behaviour and aggression..."⁽¹⁾ This view resonates closely with Maslow's hierarchy of needs (pages 56-58) and Bandura's social learning theory (pages 53-55).

The following people are a sample of some of the most influential behavioural theorists that have influenced ideas about learning:

B. F. Skinner (1904-1990)

Skinner built on the work of Pavlov and Watson to develop the theory of operant behaviourism, which postulates that behaviour is shaped by environmental influences. For example, if an unconditioned stimulus like food is introduced, a person will salivate, producing an unconditioned response. If then, every time food is introduced a bell rings (a conditioned stimulus), eventually the person will associate the bell with the food and salivate when they hear the bell, even if no food is present. This type of association has been used effectively by the advertising industry. A product (for example a brand of bread) may be presented in a cosy environment reminiscent of a safe and trouble-free childhood. When a consumer meets the product in a shop, the feeling of safety, security and nostalgia may spur them into buying it, choosing it in preference to another brand.

Skinner showed that behaviour is not just determined by its antecedents such as a stimulus. It is also dependent on its consequences. He called this operant conditioning. Desired behaviour can be encouraged by positive reinforcement (extrinsic motivation), for example, if every time that someone returns a used bottle they receive a financial reward, they are more likely to keep returning bottles. Undesired behaviour can be discouraged by negative reinforcement (sanctions), for example, if every time someone sits in a particular chair they are told off, they are more likely to avoid that chair.

Sigmund Freud (1856-1939)

Freud suggested that human behaviour influenced and was a product of how the mind is organised, and that much of this is based on personality which develops from childhood experiences. He observed that the behaviour of many of his patients was caused by experiences and drives that they were not consciously aware they had. Freud concluded that behaviour was significantly determined by the unconscious mind (the id) which is replete with memories from early childhood. He suggested that people set up 'defence mechanisms' to cope with painful memories which they kept out of their conscious mind. Neurosis was an illness which prevented people from leading productive lives, and this developed by using up mental energy to construct and maintain defence mechanisms.

Freud believed that a substantial number of childhood memories deal with aspects of sex, arising from sexual functioning which begins at birth and then develops through several psychological stages. His theory of psychosexual development deals with normal development and how, in some people, it is interrupted and they become fixated at earlier, more immature periods.

Carl Rogers (1902-1987)

Rogers was a humanistic psychologist who believed that behaviour is determined by the interaction between a person's mental disposition and the environment within which they

function. He said that people want to behave in ways which are consistent with the way they see themselves (self-image) and the way they would like to be (ideal self). The closer that these are to each other, the greater will be the sense of self-worth and the more congruent a person will be. A state of incongruence exists if parts of the self-image are not acceptable and do not fit within the ideal self.

Rogers' person-centred ideas, along with those of Maslow, endow individuals with responsibility for their own actions and choices. The role of the learning facilitator or therapist is to help equip the person to reach their own conclusions about what motivates and influences them and thus be responsible for their future courses of action (i.e. their behaviour).

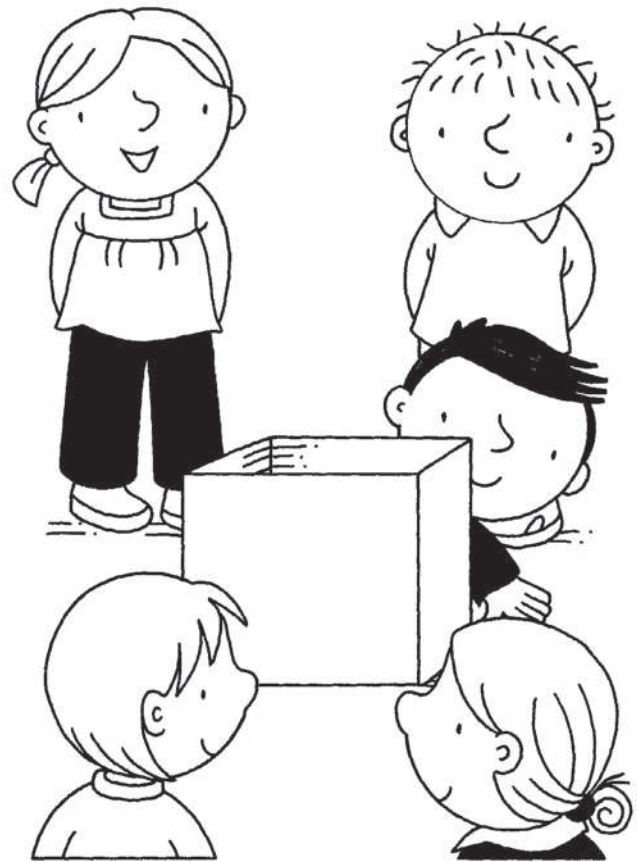
Putting the theories into practice

Schools and early years settings have become more proactive over the years in dealing with behaviour and now see it as an attribute to be managed. Effective management takes account of a wide spectrum of behaviour and is inclusive of children who were once labelled as disruptive but who are now thought of as having social, emotional and behavioural difficulties (SEBD).

Children who did not conform to behaviour expectations were chastised or punished. However, current thinking is based around the idea that behaviour is a function of the interaction between children's innate tendencies and the context within which they operate. It also recognises that learning is the central focus of the institution and that it is not behaviour per se which needs managing, but behaviour for learning. This includes behaviour which is appropriate to promote learning for the individual, the group or class, and the school or setting as a whole. Therefore effective management includes strategies for promoting children's concept of self and for maximising the learning potential of the social and physical environment.

Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD or ADD) is a condition which is thought to be present in about 3.5% of the school population, the vast majority of whom are boys. Typical symptoms relate to inattention, hyperactivity and impulsivity. There is some thought that the ADHD/ADD label is actually a common term which encompasses a range of conditions and it can be difficult to diagnose as not all children who present some symptoms have others. It is not always easy to tell whether the symptoms are the result of developmental, environmental, or cognitive factors. There is no single diagnostic tool to identify the disorder. Treatment can involve behaviour therapy and medication. Understandably there is a concern about medicating children, possibly in error. ⁽²⁾

In 1989 in England, the government-sponsored Elton Report looked into behaviour in schools. ⁽³⁾ The report indicated that different aspects of management within the institution influence students' behaviour. In early years settings, the overarching management



strategies are just as relevant. Alongside these, particular focus is given to developing adult knowledge of what motivates and interests individual children through observations, interactions, home visits and contact with families. The knowledge is used to promote self-concept by praise and demonstrating that artefacts and activities produced by the child are valued through display, engagement and positive reporting to carers and other staff.

The social and emotional aspects of learning are developed by encouraging fair play, turn taking, language development, caring for each other and the environment. Adults model the behaviour that is expected and children are helped to manage their own behaviour through discussion, stories (see pages 25-27 on Paley), rewards and sanctions, with the emphasis on positive behaviour management. ⁽⁴⁾ Children with special needs also benefit from these strategies although, depending on their needs, it may be necessary to enhance aspects of provision.

A lack of ability to communicate effectively can lead to frustration in a child and affect their behaviour. Inappropriate behaviour such as attention seeking can be one of the few strategies that a child has to influence the dynamics of a situation. The self-efficacy of the child can also be affected. A visual approach to communication may be beneficial, for example Makaton (a signing language) or the Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS).

Behaviour

Another key aspect is the appropriate scaffolding of activities so that the child can achieve an outcome and feel good about what they have done. Working in close liaison with parents and carers and with other agency staff is also often necessary to provide consistency and an understanding by all concerned of the strategies being employed.

Several schools and settings make use of persona dolls and puppets to deliver stories and model positive behaviour or inclusion. Scenarios can be acted out and discussed in adult-led sessions and then the children have access to the resources to reinforce and share ideas.

Influence

Classification systems for behavioural problems in children have been developed. These tend to be either clinical or empirical.⁽⁵⁾ The most widely used of the former is the Diagnostic Statistical Manual (DSM), although this was designed primarily for adults. To compensate for this, the Group for the Advancement of Psychiatry (GAP) developed the Psychopathological Disorders of Childhood system specifically for the classification of child-oriented and theoretically-based behaviour. This recognises the psychosomatic, psychosocial and developmental aspects of problem behaviour.

The empirical systems are based on observations of children's behaviours by early years practitioners and fall into two categories, conduct problems (the way children interact socially or with their environment) and personality problems (for example neurotic behaviours which indicate internal issues).

as stickers and star charts. It appears that setting up such a reward system, while affecting a short-term positive engagement with a set of behavioural expectations, can in the long-term diminish the intrinsic motivation of completing a task, or learning something new.⁽⁷⁾

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Comment

Although there are sound reasons for the early diagnosis of special needs, it is often difficult to know with young children whether behavioural difficulties are indicative of deeper issues or result from changes in circumstances or from slower than expected developmental maturity.

The recent Allen report on early intervention indicates that poor experiences for children up to the age of three can profoundly affect the way their emotions are 'wired' and this will affect their future responses to events and children's abilities to empathise with others.⁽⁶⁾

Practitioners can be alerted to potential issues by concerned parents or carers or by their own experience of the range of behaviour they would normally expect from children of a particular stage of development and the expectations prevalent in an early years setting.

It is worth noting the reservations that have emerged concerning the adoption of a behaviourist approach that focuses on rewards such

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Emotional intelligence

Some key thinking and theories about emotional intelligence

Emotional intelligence is a term that describes a set of competencies with which people can use the power of the feelings and emotions, both in themselves and others. It is more or less synonymous with the term emotional literacy, used more popularly outside the USA. ⁽¹⁾ The term “emotional intelligence” has been attributed to Salovey and Mayer, who first defined it as “the subset of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one’s own and others’ feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one’s thinking and actions.” ⁽²⁾

They recognised the link to the work of Howard Gardner in which he identified a range of different intelligences including what he called personal intelligences, which were divided into “inter-personal” and “intra-personal”. One aspect of these related to feelings ⁽³⁾ and was considered quite close to the notion of emotional intelligence.

In their original article, Salovey and Mayer initially proposed a three faceted model which, after further research and review developed into four, they described as the four branch model:

- Perceiving emotion – recognition and expression of emotion, including the ability to successfully judge emotions in the faces or voices of others.
- Using emotions to facilitate thought – engaging emotions to be part of and guide cognition to promote thinking.
- Understanding emotions – specific emotions convey their own discernable codes and actions associated with them.
- Managing emotions – the possibility of regulating and managing one’s own and others’ emotions to achieve social goals.



PROFILE

Psychology has always considered how emotions and reason interacted, and developed theories about how past experiences affect current emotional states. The way we deal with emotions and how we develop our capacity to do so as a form of ‘emotional intelligence’, is a relatively recent concept which has emerged over the past twenty years or so, popularised by Daniel Goleman in 1996.

LINKS

- *How Children Learn 1*
Guy Claxton
- *How Children Learn 3*
Ferre Laevers
Brain and Body
- *How Children Learn 4*
Vivian Paley
Ferre Laevers
Observation and assessment
Partnership with parents
Multi-professional working

Emotional intelligence

Daniel Goleman popularised the term “emotional intelligence” in his book of the same name. ⁽⁴⁾ He describes how the human brain has evolved and how emotional responses are so deeply seated within the brain that their influence over rational thought can be profound.

Unlike the Salovey and Mayer model, which restricted aspects of emotional intelligence to factors which were bound up with either emotions or intellect or both, Goleman used a broader consideration and regarded emotional intelligence as having five major components, each consisting of several elements. The first three components contribute to personal competence and the other two to social competence: ⁽⁵⁾

Personal competence

- Knowing one’s own emotions – being aware of oneself and identifying feelings as they happen.
 - Emotional awareness.
 - Accurate self-assessment.
 - Self-confidence.
- Managing emotions – dealing with one’s own feelings so that they are appropriate to the context.
 - Self-control.
 - Trustworthiness.
 - Conscientiousness.
 - Adaptability.
 - Innovation.
- Motivating oneself – organising one’s emotions in order to achieve a goal or outcome.
 - Achievement drive.
 - Commitment.
 - Initiative.
 - Optimism.

Social competence

- Recognising emotions in others – empathy linked to altruism.
 - Understanding others.
 - Developing others.
 - Service orientation.
 - Leveraging diversity.
 - Political awareness.
- Handling relationships – social competencies and interpersonal skills.
 - Influence.
 - Communication.
 - Conflict management.
 - Leadership.
 - Change catalyst.
 - Building bonds.
 - Collaboration and co-operation.
 - Team capabilities.

Putting the theories into practice

The Emotional Literacy Handbook ⁽⁶⁾ lays out ten principles that should be considered in developing an emotional literacy strategy for an educational organisation:

1. It is a process rather than an outcome.
2. It enhances our capacity to learn with and from each other.
3. It is developed through dialogue.
4. This cannot be achieved without reflection.
5. Dialogue helps us to construct new stories about ourselves.
6. It is sustained through continuing curiosity.
7. It is more effective to instigate small changes across an organisation than one big change in a part of the organisation.
8. It is just as important for adults as it is for children to practise.
9. Each and every interaction provides the chance to either promote or detract from emotional literacy.
10. All organisations have a pool of untapped resources to facilitate emotional literacy.

Emotions are a fundamental factor in the lives of young children and are therefore a necessary focus in early years provision. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) in England ⁽⁷⁾ contains requirements and guidance for children’s personal, social and emotional development.

While this provision benefits all children, it has a particular significance for children with special needs. There are often highly charged emotional factors within families which include such children, and parents and carers have to be considered carefully. Their influence and contribution to their child’s development needs to be recognised and respected and establishing good partnership working is important with effective consultation, communication and sharing of children’s learning and progress.

Children with additional needs are the same as other children in terms of their emotional ‘inner life’. In the introduction to the book, *The Inner Life of Children with Special Needs*, Ved Varma says, “the inner life of children contains dreams, fantasies, hopes, fears, beliefs and their unconscious life. These can be inferred from their preoccupations, stories, plays, games and behaviour.” ⁽⁸⁾

Children build trusting and supportive relationships with adults and other children when they feel secure, listened to, and feel that their actions and belongings are valued. Although provision should be adjusted to meet children’s specific needs to enable them to achieve success in what they do, there must be sufficient challenge for the children to enable them to get a sense of achievement. This promotes their self-esteem.

The development of social skills and appropriate behaviour can be problematic for children with additional needs. It is therefore important for adults to undertake careful observations of children to determine the skills and understanding they possess and then set

achievable targets for development, keeping the focus in terms of feedback on positive management, i.e. what the child is doing well rather than what they need to do better. Progress is more likely if all the adults with responsibility for the children, plus their parents or carers, provide a consistent approach and also model and highlight in others the desired behaviours and social interactions.

Children with SEN should be encouraged to take as much responsibility for themselves as is compatible with their level of development and ability, in both self-management activities such as putting on a coat, as well as creative and play activities. If help is required it should be provided at the minimal level needed for a successful outcome. The children should be allowed to take ownership of their specific achievements and feel proud of what they have accomplished. This will increase their 'self-efficacy' (see the chapter on Banduras, pages 53-55).

Influence

Emotional intelligence and emotional literacy have been taken up by all kinds of organisations as well as educational institutions, both in the public and private sectors. There are tests on the market which are designed to measure and score emotional competencies, known as EQ. Leadership training courses include aspects of emotional literacy.

Anna Timms⁽⁹⁾ reveals that a survey by Microsoft found that business leaders rated the importance of employees having soft skills above academic qualifications. Soft skills are the process skills that people use to function successfully in social situations and are similar to the personal and social competencies described by Goleman.

In the UK, the training of doctors now includes sessions which promote empathy, communication skills and the abilities to consider patients holistically, rather than just a bundle of symptoms.

Comment

Emotional intelligence and emotional literacy have become buzzwords in education. An entire industry has grown out of these ideas. Goleman points out that between his first and second books there was a huge growth in courses offering skill development and consultancy in emotional literacy and that many of them were just repackaging what was available before.⁽⁵⁾

Psychologists have argued over whether the intelligences identified by Gardner (and developed by others) are true intelligences (cognitive abilities) or simply sets of competencies (practical skills). However, this makes little difference to how the concept of emotional intelligence has been applied in practice. It is accepted that emotional health contributes

to general well-being and that reason alone does not account for the breadth of human behaviour on both a personal and social level.

While it is recognised that process skills and social and emotional competencies are relevant to young children, there continues to be a debate about the later stages of schooling and education and whether it is more important to teach subjects and knowledge. It would appear that employers want to take on people who have both the intellectual knowledge and the transferable skills that enable them to get on with others and be flexible members of the workforce.

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Where to find out more

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