

## Introduction:

Lev Semenovich Vygotsky is a Russian pioneering psychologist. He died of tuberculosis in 1934, at the age of 37, in Moscow.

He wrote six separate volumes, written over roughly 10 years, from Psychology of Art (1925) to Thought and Language [or Thinking and Speech] (1934).<sup>[1]</sup>

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<sup>[1]</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lev\\_Vygotsky](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lev_Vygotsky)



## **Vygotsky and children social development:**

Vygotsky believed that children social development is always the result of their collective actions and that these actions take place and are located in society.

Therefore, for Vygotsky changes in society especially changes in societal demands on the individual require changes in strategies for dealing with those demands.

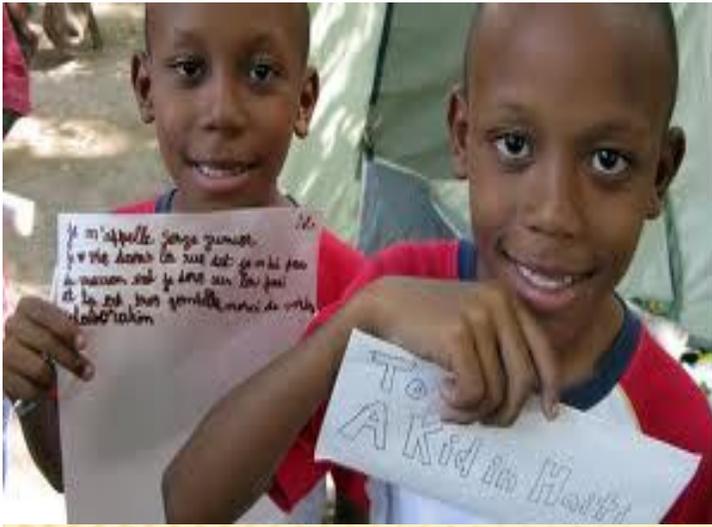
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Vygotsky argued that strategies for dealing with changes in societal demands are always collective; that is they always involve interaction with others. These collective strategies are seen as practical actions that lead to both social and psychological development.

In this sense, the child's interactions and practical activities with others lead to **his** /her acquisition of new skills and knowledge, which are seen as the transformation of previous skills and knowledge.



مثال: في البداية تحاول الطفلة الرضیعة التي تسقط لعبتها إبداء إيماءة ما تجاه اللعبة التي سقطت منها على مسافة بعيدة، في محاولة منها لاستعادتها لكن دون جدوى. هنا لدينا فعل (أي إيماءة الطفلة لمجرد... لكن عندما تأتي الأم للمساعدة... عندها يتغير كل شيء بشكل جذري، حيث تتحول إيماءة الطفلة إلى "إشارة". فمساعدة الأم لها أدت إلى وعي الطفلة بأن الإيماءة يمكن أن تستخدم كإشارة للآخرين لغرض المساعدة. وهنا يقول فيجوتسكي إن الفعل نفسه مر من خلال صيرورتين: الأولى تحول إيماءة متجهة نحو الشيء (اللعبة) إلى إشارة أو خطاب رمزي موجه نحو الآخر، وهنا تحدث عملية التدويت من خلال وجود الآخر، والثانية تحول سيكولوجي داخلي على مستوى الوعي بأن الإيماءة هي خطاب، وبالتالي تكرر عبر التكرار. ومن خلال هذا الفهم لعملية التعلم في مرحلة الطفولة المبكرة، استطاع فيجوتسكي أن يطور نظرية "منطقة النمو المحتمل" **Zone of proximal development**، وهي المنطقة التي يستطيع فيها الطفل تعلم أمور معينة فوق قدرته التطورية الفعلية "بإسنادات" من آخرين.



In the socio-cultural conception of development children cannot be regarded as cut off from their social and cultural environment. Their ties with other people form part of their very nature. It is thus impossible to analyse their development, aptitudes or education without taking social ties into consideration. The concept of the **proximal zone of development** illustrates this view precisely. This zone is defined as the difference (expressed in units of time) between the performance of the same child working with and assisted by an adult. For example, two children pass tests for 8-year-olds on a psychometric scale; with standardized assistance, the first attains the 9-year level and second the 12-year level; in this case the proximal zone is one year for the first child and four years for the second.

## Vygotsky and Language (*Language is a cultural tool*)

- For Vygotsky language is essential for the process of internalization (internalization and language encodes culture and is a tool for participating in culture).
- Vygotsky argues that language and other systems (writing, film, machines) are created by societies over the course of history and change with culture development.
- Thus, children through acquisition of and use of language come to reproduce a culture that contains the knowledge of generations.
- According to *Vygotsky* language plays 2 critical roles in cognitive development:
  - 1- It is the main means by which adults transmit info to children.
  - 2- Language itself becomes a very powerful tool of intellectual adaptation.



**Vygotsky** believed that language develops from social interactions, for communication purposes.<sup>[1]</sup>

Vygotsky provides the example of pointing a finger. Initially, this behavior begins as a meaningless grasping motion; however, as people react to the gesture, it becomes a movement that has meaning. In particular, the pointing gesture represents an interpersonal connection between individuals.<sup>[2]</sup>

[1] <http://www.simplypsychology.org/vygotsky.html>

[2] [http://www.doh.state.fl.us/alternatesites/cms-kids/providers/early\\_steps/training/documents/social\\_development.pdf](http://www.doh.state.fl.us/alternatesites/cms-kids/providers/early_steps/training/documents/social_development.pdf)

Piaget	Vygotsky
<p><b>Human development is always individualistic</b></p>	<p>Saw practical activities developing from the child's attempts to deal with everyday problems. In dealing with these problems the child always develops strategies collectively – that is in interaction with others.</p> <p><b>Human Development is primarily collective.</b></p>
<p>Concentrated more in the nature and characteristics of cognitive processes and structures.</p>	<p>Emphasized the developmental contexts and history of cognitive processes and structures.</p>
<p>Identify the abstract stages of cognitive development</p>	<p>Specify the cultural events and practical activities that lead to appropriation, internalization, and reproduction of culture and society.</p>

## **Weaknesses of constructivist model:**

1- Its main focus still remains exactly on individual development.

We can see this in repeated references to the child's activity, the child's development, and the child's becoming an adult. Piaget focused on the individual child's mastery of the world on her own terms. Constructivism offers an active but somewhat lonely view of children. Even with others (parents, peers, and teachers) are taken into account, the focus remains on the effects of various interpersonal experiences on individual development.

2- Overwhelming concern with the endpoint of development, or the child's movement from immaturity to adult competence.

## Extensions of Piaget and Vygotsky

Recent theoretical discussions and research have extended constructivist theory to focus more on children's agency

in childhood and the importance of peer interaction.

A- Tesson and Youniss: Argue that there has been too much emphasis on the details of stages in developmental psychology.

B- Rogoff: Argue that "human development is a process of people's changing participation in socio-cultural activities of their communities".