

APPLYING PIAGET'S THEORY TO CLASSROOM

**B.ED,
SEMESTER 2**

**BY:
PRIYANKA KUMARI**

APPLYING PIAGET'S THEORY TO CLASS-ROOM

(a) Pre-school and Primary Classes

1. Teacher should first of all be thoroughly familiar with Piaget's theory so that he may be able to know as to how his students organize and synthesize ideas.
2. The teacher should try to assess the level and the type of thinking of each child in his class. Each child may be asked to perform some of the Piaget's experiments and he must spend most of his time in listening to each child to explain her or his reaction.

3. Plenty of materials and opportunities to the children must be provided to learn on their own.
4. Situations are to be arranged in groups so as to facilitate social interaction and that children learn from each other. In a group advanced children are to be placed with those who are less mature in thinking so that the less mature may gain by being with the more mature ones.
5. Learning experiences are to be organized taking into consideration the level of thinking attained by an individual or group.
6. Teachers should keep in mind the possibility that pupils may be influenced by egocentric speech or thought.

(b) Secondary Classes

1. Teacher should become well aware with the nature of the concrete operational thinking and formal thoughts so that he can know when his students are employing either of these or a combination of them.
2. In order that the teacher may become aware of the type of thinking being used by individual students he must ask them to explain how they arrived at solutions to problems in response to the experimental situations similar to those devised by Piaget.
3. Students must be taught to be more systematic about solving problems.
4. Be cautious in regards to the class discussions becoming unrealistically theoretical and hypothetical. In such a situation call attention to facts and practical difficulties.
5. There is a possibility that younger adolescents may pass through a period of egocentrism which might lead them to act as if they are always on the stage and become extremely sensitive about the reaction of their peers.

Criticism of Piaget's Theory

The ideas put forth by Piaget and Montessori have been incorporated in some of the schools in Britain, America and Canada. But his theory has not found universal acceptance in practice. There are certain quite serious objections which are raised by some American and other psychologists. These psychologists do not agree with this view of Piaget that infants are born with some elementary mental structures that are starting points for their attempts to deal with their environment. According to Piaget each infant from the very beginning "organizes the consequences of action in terms of inborn schemes which are, in effect, the primitive categories of knowing."¹ The early structures are essential to the earliest intellectual activities of infants, but they diminish in importance as new structures are developed.² Most of the American psychologists are of the opinion that infants must learn to understand their world. Their success depends on the type of environment they experience. In Piaget's theory environment is not ignored but in Piaget's view the child is an active agent who constructs mental schemes that enable him to understand and deal with his environment.

Gagne³ also takes a view which is different from Piaget. According to him the stages described by Piaget are not necessarily the inevitable result of an inborn time-table ; but are instead a consequence of children having learned sets of rules that are progressively more complex. Gagne feels that these rules are taught by their physical and social environment.

Teachers who believe that learning is a process of discovery may follow Piaget and Montessori in organizing their teaching work. Those, on the other hand believe in learning being primarily produced by children's environment will follow Gagne and B. F. Skinner whose theory we shall be describing in the next unit of this book.

