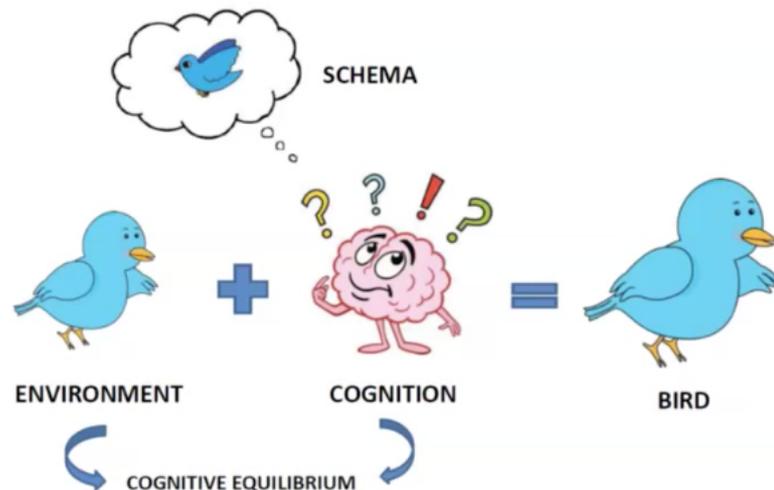


Piaget – sources of continuity:

- **Schemas** are categories of knowledge that help us to interpret & understand the world.
- As experiences happen, the information is used to modify & change previously existing schemas.
- If there is no discrepancy between your observation & your understanding, then you are in a state of **cognitive equilibrium**.



- **Assimilation** is where you use an existing schema to deal with a new object or observation. The goal of assimilation is to maintain the status quo – you are keeping your existing knowledge & schemas intact.
- **Accommodation** is where you make a new schema/change your existing knowledge of a topic when realising it no longer fits with your prior knowledge. This is how Piaget saw children to be ready for the next stage of development.

Piaget – sources of discontinuity:

- **Stage theory** is where children go through *discontinuous intellectual leaps* in childhood as a way of developing ways of thinking about the world. This is an **invariant sequence** (cannot go backwards) and is signified by large qualitative change at each stage.

Piaget's theory:

- ⇒ **Sensorimotor stage (0-2 years):** children use their **physical/motor skills** & their **senses** to explore the world.
- ⇒ **Preoperational thought stage (2-6/7 years):** children use **symbols** (words & images to represent objects but do *not* reason logically). The child begins to develop **mental representations** & communicate them (known as **semiotic function** – the ability to create representations & think symbolically).

This stage is split into two sub-stages:

- **Preconceptual stage (2-4 years):** where children have an increased use of verbal representation, but speech is egocentric (speak only about themselves).
 - **Intuitive stage (4-7 years):** speech becomes more social, less egocentric.
- ⇒ **Concrete operational stage (7-12 years):** children can think **logically** about concrete objects. Children are also able to **manipulate** mentally internal representations formed in the preoperational period.
- Abilities formed in this stage include seriation, inductive reasoning, transitivity, classification, decentring, reversibility, perspective-taking & **conservation** (the understanding that the quality, length or number of items is unrelated to its arrangement or appearance).
- ⇒ **Formal operational stage (12+):** children can think **abstractly** & are **flexible**. They can carry out systematic experiments, solve problems logically & in a methodological way, and can hypothesize and execute trial & error in their mind.

Criticisms of Piaget's theory:

- Focuses on inabilities rather than abilities.
- Less attention on the social context.
- Focused on decontextualized problems rather than everyday problems.
- Says little about language development.
- Suggests that intellectual development is largely complete by the age of 12.

Information processing account of development:

- Is focused on factors that support thinking – memory, attention, language development etc.
- Focuses on *quantitative* changes with age.
- For example, looking at speed of information processing, and how that changes across different ages.
- Unlike Piaget's stage theory, is a *continuous* model – it posits that development progresses continuously as we age.

Vygotsky's sociocultural theory:

- Sees the role of adults/more knowledgeable others in extending children's learning beyond areas in which they are independently capable.
- **Zone of proximal development:** if a child receives scaffolding from a more knowledgeable other (e.g. teacher, older sibling) in this zone, then they can assimilate new information into their current understanding & can work unassisted in the future.
- **Intersubjectivity** refers to a mutual understanding that people have during communication, where people are both focused on the same topic.
- **Joint attention** is a process in which social partners intentionally focus on a reference in the external environment. There is a triadic coordination of attention between the child, another person, & an object or event. This is very important in

scaffolding, because you need to be on the same page as the other person in terms of shared knowledge.