

# Social Development Theory

Socialize and Learn

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In the social development theory, Leo Vygotsky primarily explains that socialization affects the learning process in an individual. It tries to explain consciousness or awareness as the result of socialization. This means that when we talk to our peers or adults, we talk to them for the sake of communication. After we interact with other people, we tend to internalize what we uttered.

For example, a child tries to chronologically arrange the blocks that contain the letter A to Z. At first, his performance is poor but when his mother sits beside him and tells him how to arrange the letters properly, he begins to learn how to do so. The child will then master the knowledge of arranging the alphabet with the presence of his parent. His mother, on the other hand, gradually lets the child do the skill on his own, making the child more competent.

## A. Key Concepts

The Social Development Theory includes three major concepts. These are comprised of the Role of Social Interaction in Cognitive Development, the More Knowledgeable Other and the Zone of Proximal Development.

### 1. Role of Social Interaction in Cognitive Development

The Social Development Theory (SDT) mainly asserts that social interaction has a vital role in the cognitive development process. With this concept, Vygotsky's theory opposes that of Jean Piaget's Cognitive Development Theory because Piaget explains that a person undergoes development first before he achieves learning, whereas Vygotsky argues that social learning comes first before development. Through the Social Development Theory, Vygotsky states that the cultural development of a child is firstly on the social level called interpsychological, and secondly on the individual or personal level called intrapsychological.

### 2. The More Knowledgeable Other (MKO)

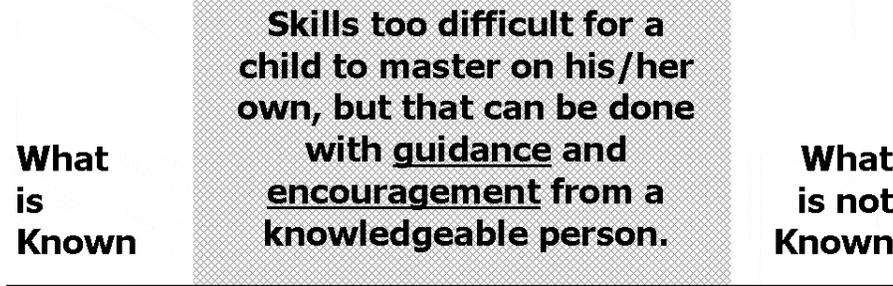
The MKO is any person who has a higher level of ability or understanding than the learner in terms of the task, process or concept at hand. Normally, when we think of an MKO we refer to an older adult, a teacher or an expert. For example, a child learns multiplication of numbers because his tutor teaches him well. The traditional MKO is an older person; however, MKOs could also refer to our friends, younger people and even electronic devices like computers and cellphones. For instance, you learn how to skate because your daughter taught you this skill.

### 3. The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)

The ZPD is the distance between what is known and what is unknown by the learner. It is the difference between the ability of learner to perform a specific task under the guidance of his MKO and the learner's ability to do that task independently. Basically, the theory explains that learning occurs in ZPD.

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# Zone of Proximal Development



Zone of Proximal Development (Source)

## B. Applications of the Theory

The traditional model where the teacher or tutor transmits or transfers information to her students is still believed in many educational institutions. On the other hand, the Social Development Theory has been able to change this tradition because it explains that the student (learner) must have an active role in learning for this process to occur faster and more efficiently. Because of Social Development Theory, many schools are now encouraging recitation so as to reciprocate the learning experience inside the classroom. This means that the teacher also learns from the students as the students learns from her.

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