Learning Activity #1

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Human development is composed of multiple different theories. Many different theorists have come up with variations of how children and adolescents mature and develop over their younger years of life. Three basic issues of human development include, nature vs nurture, continuous vs discontinuous, and early experience vs later experience. Each side of these issues pose separate scenarios of how each human develops.

First, the theory of nature vs nurture describes the issue of humans developing from either our genetic predisposition or from outside environmental factors. I would agree more with nurture. I believe that as we develop and get older, there are more outside influences than what we were born with. As children, we generally are exposed to a lot of different people and situations based off how socially involved our parents are. Being exposed to different situations, good or bad, mold how we act as we get older.

Second, continuous vs discontinuous development states either development is gradual or comes in stages. I do not believe there is anything in life that has a consistent, gradual progression. There are always going to be "bumps" or "hiccups" along the way. Even as children and adolescent's life is not perfect. The rate at which we develop is not set in stone, therefore this allows for children to develop in steps.

Third, early experience vs later experience plays a big role into development. There are some theorists that believe early experiences define how you develop more than later experiences. I could argue the opposite view. I do not believe that early experiences define how

we develop or mature, more than later experiences. I believe it is the combination between the two. Early experiences happen at a younger age than later experiences. While being exposed to different situations early could set a child up for developmental delays, late experiences could have a bigger influence on the child continues to grow and develop.

If I had to choose a theory that was similar to my own, I would choose Piaget's theory of cognitive development. I enjoy this theory because it combines outside influences, along with internal development for children up until the age of 11. I think it is important to realize that even though children will develop at their own rate, external influence is just as important. Piaget explains many different milestones for each stage for the children to have met in order to be considered "on track." During the first stage, sensorimotor, one of the basic developments is for the infant to interact with the environment around them. It is during this stage that infants make a dramatic growth, as they realize there is a world around them. In the preoperational stage, children become very egocentric. This stage shows how they develop internally. Children begin to think very concretely and only see their own views. The third stage shows children once again being influenced by the external stimuli, as they begin to think more logically and become less egocentric. They realize other people around them have opinions and views but remain concrete with their own opinions. I think it is important to find the balance between external and internal stimuli for development. Piaget's theory demonstrates a solid foundation for both. For this reason, I believe this to be one of the reasons this theory is more attractive than some of the others. Nature vs nurture is a very "either or" theory. A human develops either by means of what is inherited or by environmental influences. Erikson's theory of development showed conflict at each stage. There would either be a positive or negative outcome for each stage based off what

was happening in the child's life. Erikson did focus on external and internal influences, but the influences do not necessarily mean there will be a negative outcome at each stage.

Piaget's theory specifies a group of possible developments, all the while factoring in external and internal influences without having specific negative outcomes.