Psychosocial and Cognitive Theorists

**Kohlberg**

Kohlberg believed that moral reasoning proceeds through six fixed stages that can be accelerated through instruction. The first stage is punishment-obedience orientation that focuses on the physical consequences of an individual’s actions. The second stage is instrumental-relativist orientation, where obedience to laws should involve an even exchange between people. The third stage is called the good-boy nice-girl orientation. The focus is on what will impress others. The fourth stage is law and order orientation. This involves social order being maintained through fixed rules. Social contract orientation is the fifth stage. In this stage rules involve mutual agreements and individual rights are protected. In the sixth stage, called universal ethical principle orientation, moral decisions are based on consistent applications of self-chosen ethical principles. One way to implement Kohlberg’s theory in the classroom would be to show films that portray moral dilemmas and then discuss the film and pose critical questions in class.

**Piaget**

Piaget believed that as children develop, they progress through four stages of cognitive development. Sensorimotor is the first stage that lasts from birth to two years. Schemes are developed through sense and motor activities and the permanence of objects is recognized. The second stage is preoperational, which extends from two to seven years of age. The ability to conserve is acquired, but they are not capable of logical thinking. During concrete operational, which is the third stage. They are capable of logical thinking, but they can only relate to conditions that they have experienced. This stage lasts from seven, to eleven. Formal operational occurs at eleven years of age and they are able to think abstractly and solve problems systematically. When teaching in a style based on Piaget’s reasoning, one should gear instructions and activities to each child’s developmental level.

**Erickson**

Erickson described psychological growth from infancy to old age. Erickson believed people play an active role in their own development and that culture can also have an impact. The first stage is trust versus mistrust (birth-1), which is when one needs consistency in their environment to feel safe. The second stage is autonomy versus shame (2-3), which deals with the idea that children need to do things on their own at their own pace without someone else doing it for them. Initiative versus guilt (4-5) is the third stage. During this stage the child needs to have freedom to explore, experiment, and ask questions without feeling like a nuisance. During industry versus inferiority (6-11) one should be encouraged to persevere and finish tasks. The fifth stage, identity versus role confusion (12-18), focuses on the development of roles and skills to find a meaningful place in society. Intimacy versus isolation (young adult) is a time when close
committed intimate relationships are established. Generativity versus stagnation (middle age) focuses on having and raising kids to have a positive effect on future generations. The final stage, integrity versus despair (old age), deals with the acceptance of one’s life cycle and that they cannot start over. One way for a secondary teacher to implement Erickson, is to realize the significance of each student’s search for their own identity.