**Preoperational Stage**

**Name : Sunny**

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**Teacher : Jayme Brown**

**Word counts : 503**

Children grow and develop in stages through various experiences. Each stage has something in common, explained Jean Piaget who is Swiss clinical psychologist known for his work in child development. He said four stage of cognitive development in childhood, there are sensorimotor, preoperational, concrete operational and formal operational. I would like to discuss about egocentrism and conservation which are the most common things in preoperational stage (Two to Seven Years of Age). And also think about what the teachers need to know and understand of preoperational students.

First of all, according to Piaget child has difficulty understanding from other perspective. That is why children in this stage are egocentric. Here is example, there are two boys talking each other. One boy talks about his father but another boy talks about his favorite toy. It is a dialogue but it does not make any sense. This is common thing in preoperational stage because most of children in this stage are unable to take the point of view from other people. Second, children in preoperational stage cannot distinguish between conservation of matter, weight or volume. Piaget proved that children believe the two same amount of object are different when the one of the object transform in different shape. They answer one side has more even though both are same. This is classic experiment of conservation. Those theories are good explanation why children are selfish and self-centered in this stage. That is why teacher should be mind of these characters above then teacher have idea how to lead students.

We need to know and think about how to approach their students in preoperational stage. There are many learning approaches such as input approach, behaviorist approach, constructivist approach etc. Before start teaching in this stage, it is necessary to think about student characteristics and then choose right learning approach for them. Depends on situation, we need to combine with other approaches. Because all approaches has both strength and weakness.

In class, teacher try to use familiar words for children and share their own experience because they only able to consider things from their own point of view because of egocentrism. Here is good activity for this stage student called “pretend play”. This game helps children make creativity and imagination. Also they can distinguish their own from others in society due to understanding other’s feeling and improving their social adaptability. When we do activity with preoperational stage children, first of all teacher give instruction to students clear and simple. Teacher need to show demonstration so that they can understand easily. After that, teacher reminds them the rule by asking questions (CCQ: Concept Checking Question, ICQ: Instruction Checking Questions) to make sure they know how to do the play exactly. At the end, teacher must review new knowledge together with students. It will help them to memorize naturally. All those effort as a teacher mentioned above is to create a better environment for children to make them learning new knowledge and help them to be a member of society.

Reference <http://www.telacommunications.com/nutshell/stages.htm>