

<http://www.freudianslip.co.uk/havighurst.php>

Characteristics of Developmental Task

"The modern world needs people with a complex identity who are intellectually autonomous and prepared to cope with uncertainty, who are able to tolerate ambiguity and not be driven by fear into a rigid. Single solution approach to problems, who are rational and can control their behaviour in the light of foreseen consequences, who are altruistic and enjoy doing for others, and who understand social forces and trends."

Robert J. Havighurst

The process of living, from birth to death, consists of people working their way through from 1 stage of development to another, by solving their problems in each stage. If the individual fails to complete the task, it leads him to unhappiness, disapproval by society and problems in later tasks. On the other hand, if the individual completes the task successfully, it leads him to happiness and success with future tasks.

Havighurst stated that the number of tasks in different age levels depends on the person and the society he lives in. Some tasks are the same for everyone, regardless of where you live, as they are about human biology. E.g. learning to crawl and walk is pretty much same in all societies, as it relies on genetic factors. Some tasks are different in different societies. For example, some tasks may be in different forms in different culture or it may exist in 1 culture and not in the other culture. E.g. The task of getting a occupation is different in different cultures, in some cultures an individual gets his job while his very young, while in other cultures, he may get a job after long education and training.

Havighurst added that biology and society have a lot influence, but personal values of the people who prepare them have as much influences on identifying the task. He said that he described his developmental tasks on middle class Americans, however he did try to define a few points from lower-socio economic class and upper class as well.

Havighurst defined about 6-10 developmental tasks for each stage of a child's development.

Stages of Development

"A successful mother sets her children free and becomes free herself in the process."

Robert J. Havighurst

Havighurst identified six major stages in human life. They are:

1. Infancy & early childhood (Birth till 6)
2. Middle childhood (6-12)
3. Adolescence (13-18)
4. Early Adulthood (19-30)
5. Middle Age (30-60)
6. Later maturity (60 and over)

Sources of Developmental Tasks

"The 2 basic principle processes of education are knowing and valuing."

Robert J. Havighurst

In Havighurst's bio psychosocial model, the first important issue is biology, second is psychology and the last one is the sociology.

Havighurst identified 3 sources of developmental tasks:

1. Tasks that arise from physical maturation: Learning to walk, talk, control of bowel and urine, behaving in a acceptable manner to opposite sex, adjusting to menopause.
2. Tasks that arise from personal values: Choosing an occupation, figuring out ones philosophical outlook.
3. Tasks that have their source in the pressures of society: Learning to read, learning to be responsible citizen.

Developmental Tasks

(Ages 0-6)

Learning to walk.
Learning to crawl.
Learning to take solid food.
Learning to talk.
Learning to control the elimination of body wastes.
Learning sex differences and sexual modesty.
Getting ready to read.
Forming concepts and learning language to describe social and physical reality.

(Ages 6-12)

Learning physical skills necessary for ordinary games.
Learning to get along with age mates.
Building wholesome attitudes toward oneself as a growing organism.
Learning on appropriate masculine or feminine social role.
Developing concepts necessary for everyday living.
Developing concepts necessary for everyday living.
Developing conscience, morality and a scale of values.
Achieving personal independence.
Developing attitudes toward social groups and institutions.

(Ages 12-18)

Achieving new and more mature relations with age mates of both sexes.
Achieving a masculine or feminine social role.
Accepting one's physique and using the body effectively.
Achieving emotional independence of parents and other adults.
Preparing for marriage and family life.
Acquiring a set of values and an ethical system as a guide to behaviour.
Desiring and achieving socially responsible behaviour.

(Ages 18-30)

Selecting a mate.
Learning to live with a partner.
Starting family.
Rearing children.
Managing home.
Getting started in occupation.
Taking on civic responsibility.
Finding a congenial social group.

(Ages 30-60)

Assisting teenage children to become responsible and happy adults.
Achieving adult social and civic responsibility.
Reaching and maintaining satisfactory performance in one's occupational career.
Developing adult leisure time activities.
Relating oneself to one's spouse as a person.
To accept and adjust to the physiological changes of middle age.
Adjusting to aging parents.

(60 and over)

Adjusting to decreasing physical strength and health.
Adjusting to retirement and reduced income.
Adjusting to death of a spouse.
Establishing an explicit affiliation with one's age group.
Adopting and adapting social roles in a flexible way.
Establishing satisfactory physical living arrangements.

Robert J. Havighurst - Conclusion

Completing the Tasks

Havighurst categorised the tasks, in first category are the tasks, which has to be completed in certain period, and the second are the tasks that continue for a long, sometimes for a lifetime.

So what happens if the task is not completed in that stage or completed in a later date. Havighurst reply to that it is critical that the tasks should be completed during the appropriate stage, otherwise result will be the failure to achieve success in future tasks.

Criticism

Havighurst's developmental Task theory talks about the problem are faced by us in all stages of life and he explains them really well. We can all relate that biology has some kind of effects in our development, as well as psychology and society.

One thing Havighurst seems to miss is that his solutions to these problems, it is not so clear in this theory how we sort out these problems.

When it comes to if his theory is scientific, it is hard to say, some part of his theory can be tested, equally some parts are very difficult to test.

Havighurst's theory is easy to understand, and it is clear, there is no ambiguity. It is applicable to many cultures, even though he concentrated on middle class Americans.

It is disappointing that not many theorists are influenced by his theory.