In the work of “Play and its role in the mental development of the child” by L.S Vygotsky, it dives into the critical role of play. Vygotsky’s motivation for his work was to show just how important play is in a child’s life and also show how important imagination is since it plays a critical role and benefits the child. Vygotsky’s work tackled two problems, the first one being how play arises the development of the child and second, is play a leading form of activity for a child or simply the most frequently encountered. In his work he also speaks about ZPD, and how important it is to children. In his work he discusses about cognitive development of the child and how they perceive things around them, how play influences behavioral development and he believed that teachers and adults are responsible for a child’s developing brain due to social cultural theory.

In Vygotsky’s work, he explains how play affects a child’s cognitive development. When we hear the word play, we usually think of a physical activity, but never realize it extends from just that. It also involves the imagination, and this is what helps children with understanding their environment around them. Children used their imagination to break away from situational constraints that can appear in their life. Children will usually desire things, and sometimes that desire can’t be fulfilled, so the next option is to use their imagination to fulfill that desire. In play, children can separate meaning from objects which is something that adults can do very easily. As amazing as this is, there are some a few interesting things to note, which is that children aren’t doing it purposely, they actually have no idea that they are. This is evident because Vygotsky explained that children swap the meaning they give to an object to another object. For example, if a child in a play were to define a stick as a sword, all other sticks are swords, and no other object could ever be a sword. This is unlike an adult where they are able to say any object is a sword to them. Even though a child can break away from the meaning of an object unconsciously, they are fully aware that no other object can have the same meaning as an object that has already been defined in play. In play children make rules that have been influenced by an adult, which then they apply to a game which shapes their behavioral development.

Play helps shape the behavior of a child because of the rules that they set up before a game. Vygotsky stated that the rules that children make during play were never random, but rather a altered rule that came from adults, such as parents. These rules were important since they shaped the behavior of children since it prevented them from acting on impulse and made them follow the rules of a game. Vygotsky explained that children were told what to do by objects because the objects would exert some motivating force toward a child that would make them act. For example, a child, who is not in play, would shut a door, the object, and open it consistently because of the motivating force it was exerting. This is not the case when the child is in play, no motivating force that an object exerts can affect the child. The reason for this is because a child in play would prefer to follow the rules until the game is over, because a child feels a sense of accomplishment when they win in a game. For example, were to race against other children, and the rule was to start running once the count down reached 0, then they would run, opposed to acting on impulse and start running before the countdown reaches zero. Vygotsky is well know for his theory of Social Cultural theory which talks about adults being responsible for a child’s developing brain.

One well known theory from Vygotsky is the Social Cultural theory which focuses on the development of the child that is influenced by adults and culture. Social cultural theory suggests that a child's development is shaped by their social and cultural environment. According to his theory, children learn through interaction with their caregivers and other members of their community. The cultural beliefs that an adult may have has an influence in a child’s cognitive, emotional, and social development. There are opposing views to this which come from Piaget, because his theory states the interactions and the exploration that a child has is what influence their development. Unlike Vygotsky where he states it’s a social factor that influences development. Vygotsky believes that the development that occurs in a child can be completely different because of cultures, since not all adults have the same culture. Piaget disagrees with this and believes that development is largely universal.

What I could have done differently in my presentation, is add more information about Vygotsky’s work, and any those who have opposing views compared to his. In my presentation, I tried finding images that could best reflect on what was being said when it came to a child’s image and how he perceives things during play. Unfortunately, this was difficult, and I couldn’t find much since it involves the imagination and how children view things. Also, I could have talked more about how ZPD is used with Scaffolding, since it relates to ZPD. Scaffolding is a support mechanism that allows children who are in the ZPD to actually perform the task successfully. I believe if I talked about it more it could have had a clearer image of how these two things work together. I could have added some images on Scaffolding as well. I could also slightly touched on opposing views that other people have when compared to Vygotsky, such as Piaget. I didn’t talk at all about opposing views during the presentation, but I did go ahead and mention him in the slides after, and how he views things compared to Vygotsky.

In the work of "Play and its role in the mental development of the child" by L.S. Vygotsky, he emphasizes the crucial role of play in a child's life and the importance of imagination in their development. Vygotsky addresses two key questions: how play contributes to a child's development and whether it is the primary form of activity or simply the most common one. He introduces the concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) as a significant factor in children's learning and growth. Vygotsky explores the cognitive and behavioral aspects of play, highlighting how it influences a child's perception and understanding of the world. He argues that teachers and adults play a significant role in shaping a child's developing brain based on social cultural theory.

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