

# Budding Brains: Cognitive and Moral Development

## Human Development

Tanner Lusher, Kelsey Willems
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| **Grade Level** | 9th – 12th Grade | **Time Frame** | 90 minutes |
| **Subject** | Social Studies | **Duration** | 1-2 periods |
| **Course** | Psychology | | |

## Essential Question

How does the human mind learn to perform vital functions and make moral decisions?

## Summary

In this lesson, students discover how the human mind develops the ability to perform cognitive functions and engage in moral reasoning. First, students establish what they already know about how people learn. Next, students gain a basic understanding of cognitive and moral development by reading two articles focusing on the theories of Jean Piaget and Lawrence Kohlberg. Students extend their understanding further by comparing and contrasting the two theorists. Finally, students engage with different questions and scenarios in paired conversations before reflecting on how these concepts impact their own growth.

## Snapshot

### Engage

Students participate in a Commit and Toss activity to consider how people learn.

### Explore

Students use the Paired Texts H-Chart strategy to gain a basic understanding of cognitive and moral development.

### Explain

Students create a Double Bubble Map that will help them compare and contrast the major theories of Piaget and Kohlberg.

### Extend

Students consider how they learn while engaging in discussion using the Roundabout Conversations strategy.

### Evaluate

Students reflect on what they have learned and how it relates to their own human development using the How am I feeling? What Am I thinking? strategy.

## Standards

*Oklahoma Academic Standards (Social Studies: Psychology (9th through 12th grade))*

**PS.4.2:** Compare the theories of Jean Piaget, Sigmund Freud, Lawrence Kohlberg, Carl Jung, and Erik Erikson regarding human development.

## Attachments

- H-Chart—Budding Brains - Spanish.docx
- H-Chart—Budding Brains - Spanish.pdf
- H-Chart—Budding Brains.docx
- H-Chart—Budding Brains.pdf
- Kohlberg's Moral Development—Budding Brains - Spanish.docx
- Kohlberg's Moral Development—Budding Brains - Spanish.pdf
- Kohlberg's Moral Development—Budding Brains.docx
- Kohlberg's Moral Development—Budding Brains.pdf
- Lesson Slides—Budding Brains.pptx
- Piaget's Cognitive Development—Budding Brains - Spanish.docx
- Piaget's Cognitive Development—Budding Brains - Spanish.pdf
- Piaget's Cognitive Development—Budding Brains.docx
- Piaget's Cognitive Development—Budding Brains.pdf

## Materials

- Lesson Slides (attached)
- H-Chart handout (attached, 1 per student)
- Piaget's Cognitive Development handout (attached, 1 per pair)
- Kohlberg's Moral Development handout (attached, 1 per pair)
- Poster Paper (1 per pair)
- Markers
- Notebook paper
- Sticky notes (1 per student)
- Pencil/pen

10 minutes

# Engage

Facilitate the lesson using the attached **Lesson Slides.**

Transition through **slides 3-4** and go over the essential question and learning objectives in as much detail as you feel necessary. Advance to **slide 5** and ask students to take a moment and consider the following question:

*How do people learn?*

Pass out a sticky note to each student (or have students get out paper) and instruct students to write down a brief response to the question on the paper or sticky note.

Next, transition to **slide 6** and introduce the Commit and Toss strategy to students. Ask students to crumple-up their previously written response into a small ball and toss it into a designated area in the classroom. Students will then go pick up a paper that is not their own and read it to themselves. Call on students and ask them to read the response of one of their classmates to begin an initial discussion about how they believe people learn. Remind students that there is no right or wrong answer. The purpose of this activity and discussion is to establish what they already know or believe related to human development. Repeat this process as often as time allows.

30 minutes

# Explore

Display **slide 7** and review the definitions of cognition and morality in as much detail as needed. Ask whether students have any questions and clear up any misconceptions.

Proceed to **slide 8**. Pass out a copy of the attached **H-Chart** handout to each student and have them find a partner. Next, give each pair one copy of the attached **Piaget's Cognitive Development** handout and one copy of the attached **Kohlberg's Moral Development** handout. Have students determine who will read which handout. Introduce the Paired Texts H-Chart strategy to students by explaining that the left side of the H-Chart is where they will summarize the Piaget article and the right side is where they will summarize the Kohlberg article. Students will then combine what they have learned from both articles to answer the question in the middle of the H-Chart. Give students about ten minutes to read their specific articles and record the main ideas or takeaways from it on one side of the H-Chart handout.

When students are done summarizing their own article, instruct them to talk with their partner and share what they took away from their article. Remind students to take notes of what their partner said on the other side of the chart. Lastly, have students work together to apply what they learned from the readings to answer the essential question of the lesson in the middle section of the H-Chart. Share out as time permits.

25 minutes

# Explain

Pass out one poster paper and a few markers to each pair. Display **slide 9** and introduce the Double Bubble Map strategy by pointing out the graphic on the slide and explain to students that they will make their own version of this on the poster paper that you provided for them. (Alternatively, they could do this on their own notebook paper if supplies are limited.) Explain to students that they will work together to create a map as a visual representation to compare and contrast the processes of cognitive and moral development based on what they learned from reading the articles and the notes they took on their H-Chart. Give students about 5-10 minutes to complete their maps and then ask for volunteers to share out. As you move into discussion, feel free to unhide **slide 10** if you think having a visual for cognitive and moral development will help students better understand the concepts.

### Teacher's Note: Optional Gallery Walk

Another way to end this portion of the lesson is to have students participate in a Gallery Walk. Have students place their maps in designated areas in the classroom. Next, students walk around to examine the work of other groups to see what their peers have learned from the lesson thus far. Allow students approximately one minute to view maps before rotating.

15 minutes

# Extend

**Teacher's Note: Sensitive Conversations**

Some of these discussion questions may bring up difficult emotions for students. For example, when students are asked to describe their thought process behind their school attire some students may have limited resources and only have one pair of shoes they wear every day. This could be embarrassing for them, so having responsible responses already set in place for such situations may be helpful. Be aware of your student's individual circumstances and try to avoid spotlighting them.

Display **slide 11**. Introduce the Roundabout Conversations strategy to students before starting the activity. Explain that students must be in two evenly sized groups for this activity. Divide the students in a way that works best for you or that they are familiar with in your classroom. The first group makes a smaller inner circle facing right and the second group makes a larger circle around the inner circle facing left. Explain that students will move with the music and then stop when the music stops and talk about the question on the board with someone from the other circle. Below are the discussion questions:

- How do you know the difference between right and wrong?
- Describe your thought process when making a distinction between what you feel is right or wrong?
- How do you prefer to learn something new? (theoretical knowledge vs practical experience)
- What factors do you consider when you are getting dressed for school?

Transition to **slide 12**. There is animation on this slide so that you can display one question at a time. Prepare a classroom appropriate song on your computer or cell phone to play while students are walking between questions. Start the music and direct students to start walking in a circle in the direction they are facing. After a while, stop the music and have students turn and face the person from the other circle who is across from them. Give them 2-3 minutes to discuss their response to Question 1 with their partner; then start the music again. Be sure to "click" the slide to make Question 1 disappear; then "click" again to make Question 2 appear. Repeat this process for the remaining questions. Try to ensure that students are speaking with a new partner during each round.  Afterwards, as a class, ask for volunteers to share their responses to the questions as time permits.

**Teacher's Note: Optional ICAP Alternative**

As an additional activity, you can have students watch this K20 ICAP - Psychiatrist - Budding Brains video to learn more about how the concepts of cognitive and moral development influence a psychiatrist in their line of work and training.

K20 ICAP - Psychiatrist - Budding Brains

**Embedded video**
https://youtube.com/watch?v=YzrRtJXwJv0

Afterwards, facilitate a class discussion with students on what they noticed or learned about this field.

10 minutes

# Evaluate

Advance to **slide 13** and have students take out a piece of paper. Direct students to write responses to the following questions on the slide using the How Am I Feeling? What Am I Thinking? strategy.

- *How would you describe your understanding of how the human mind learns to perform vital functions and make moral decisions?*
- *How do you think this knowledge could be beneficial for your life as you grow older?*

Collect student responses as they walk out and use them for assessment or to inform what you still need to review on this topic.

## Resources


- K20 Center. (n.d.). Commit and toss. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/d9908066f654727934df7bf4f505b3d0
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Double bubble. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/3035
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Gallery walk / carousel. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/118
- K20 Center. (n.d.). How am I feeling? What am I thinking? Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/187
- K20 Center. (2023). K20 ICAP - Psychiatrist - Budding Brains [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YzrRtJXwJv0.
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Paired texts h-chart. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/132
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Roundabout conversations. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/196