

THE THREE MOUNTAINS EXPERIMENT

Overview

The aim of this practical role play activity is to help students understand the research of Piaget and Inhelder (1956).

Resources Required

- Summary of Piaget and Inhelder (1956) Handout
- Small toy/doll
- Camera/phone to take photos
- Play Doh to construct three mountain models

Teacher Instructions

Teaching and Learning Strategy

Place your students in groups of three. Then ask them to read the summary of Piaget and Inhelder (1956) on the handout provided. They then enact the study using the camera on their phones to take pictures of their mountain scenery.

Once the students have replicated the Piaget and Inhelder (1956) study, they should then consider the three key questions related to Piaget's theory. To introduce an element of competition, you can say that you will judge the group which produces the best role play and award a prize.

Stretch & Challenge

Piaget and Inhelder's (1956) research has been criticised for lacking ecological validity, as most children do not encounter mountain scenery on a regular basis. Ask your students to create their own version of the Piaget and Inhelder study to overcome this limitation.

PIAGET AND INHELDER (1956)

Piaget and Inhelder (1956) conducted an experiment where a child was seated at one side of a mountain scene, with a doll seated on a different side.

The child was then shown a series of pictures of the mountain scene and asked to select the one which corresponded most closely to the doll's view.

Four-year-old children almost always chose a picture that represented what they could see and showed no awareness that the doll's view. Six-year-old children frequently chose a picture different from their own view but rarely chose the correct picture for the doll's point of view. Only seven- and eight-year-old children consistently chose the correct picture.



Once you have conducted your own replication of Piaget and Inhelder's experiment, answer the following questions:

According to Piaget's theory, which concept was being investigated?

Does this study support or challenge Piaget's theory? Justify your answer.

What are the strengths/limitations of this research?