There are many great thinkers who have spent time thinking about how human beings grow and develop. This unit will focus on some of the more famous theories concerning human development.
Presentation Notes
A Look at Theories: Part II

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Every window gives us a different view, even if we are looking at the same landscape. That’s the way it is with theories. They allow us to view the situation and people from different perspectives.
Erik Erikson (1902 – 1994) was the German founder of the Psychosocial Theory who later became an American citizen, teaching at Berkeley and Harvard.

Erikson’s theory states that human beings go through many stages, generally based on age, as they add to their personality. He stated that these items will happen in this order and that children will learn one or the other.

http://www.erikson.edu/about/history/erik-erikson
Like Freud’s theories, the Psychosocial Theory states that childhood is very important in personality development. This theory accepts many of Freud’s ideas, including those of the id, ego, and superego. Unlike Freud’s theories, the psychosocial theory purports that personality continues to develop beyond five years of age.
Children are not simply biological organisms that endure.

Children develop in the context of society’s expectations, prohibitions and prejudices.

Personality is shaped over the life span; experiences later in life can heal problems in early childhood.

http://www.erikson.edu/about/history/erik-erikson
According to Erikson, children’s personality develops within these stages, and personality traits are established within them. For instance, around the age of 18 months, children will have learned either to trust or mistrust the world, based on the experiences that they have had to date. Let’s look at each of these stages. Erikson states that each conflict must be resolved before the person can move to the next stage.
From the very earliest days of life, infants begin to learn whether or not they can trust the world around them. Responsive, nurturing care teaches infants that the world is a safe place where their needs and wants are met. Children who are ignored, abused or neglected can learn that the world is NOT safe and that their needs will NOT be met. You can see, then, how important it is for children to be with parents or caretakers who love and respond to them in a non-critical way and are available to them at all times. Very young infants should never be punished, as they do not have the capability to change their behavior to suit the desires of others.

The next stage is the conflict between autonomy and shame or self-doubt. Young children begin to have some control over themselves and their lives. They begin toilet training, learning how to control bodily functions. They begin to be able to control their emotions, understanding that some emotions (and actions) must be moderated. When they learn that they have some control, they begin to have feelings of self-confidence and independence. Children who do not learn these things are often left feeling frustrated and doubtful of their own abilities. Allowing young children some control and some choices gives them a solid foundation for independence later in life.
Preschoolers start to show their power and control over their world and others. Have you ever seen a four-year-old girl “directing” the play of a pretend family? “You be the daddy. I’m the mother. He’s the baby.” Or maybe you’ve seen a five-year-old boy telling others how to build a tower or “fly” the airplane. In each of these examples, children are learning to assert themselves in socially acceptable ways. They are practicing leadership skills. Children who successfully negotiate this stage develop greater self-confidence, feel capable and learn to be leaders. Children who do not successfully negotiate this stage are left with feelings of self-doubt and a lack of initiative.

As children move into middle childhood, they are having more social interactions, more time with other children and adults. They begin to have pride in their accomplishments, and the encouragement of teachers and parents is very important during this time of life. Children are eager to know that their “work” is valuable, worthwhile and acceptable. If they are encouraged and supported in this, they will feel competent and have a belief in their own skills and abilities. Those children who are not supported and encouraged may feel that they can never be successful.
The Identity versus Role Confusion stage of the adolescent is when the adolescent works to achieve an identity...to know who he or she is. Achieving this requires “repudiation of other identities.” In other words, if the adolescent determines that he or she is one thing, it requires giving up another. For instance, if you take one job, that means that you are giving up others. This is a difficult thing for those people who think that the grass is always greener on the other side of the fence. Do you know people like that; people who cannot hold a job or remain in a club or group? Do you think this is harder for teens in our democratic society that allows so many choices?

Erikson felt that it was important for people to have long-term, special relationships with family and/or friends. Sometimes this includes a spouse and/or children. These relationships strengthen us and help carry us through life. Those people who are unable to form relationships can wind up being isolated and alone as they age. This is the age when people exhibit their creativity, productivity and concern for others. Those who don’t successfully resolve this conflict are often self-indulgent and self-absorbed.
Erikson said that people in middle and older age who are involved in life will reach the stage of generativity - feeling a part of the future world. These people are happy in their lives and work and face the future with optimism. Those not reaching this stage often feel unproductive and uninvolved in the world around them.

Erikson said that old age is a time for us to reflect on our lives. Have we been successful in reaching our goals and staying true to our values? Do we feel a sense of integrity and satisfaction with a life well-lived? Those who did not successfully reach this goal may feel bitter and that their lives were wasted.

As you can see, each of these stages and conflicts builds on the times before. According to Erikson, it is vitally important to overcome the conflicts at each stage of life in order to live a successful, happy, and satisfied life.
Erikson's Stages of Psychosocial Development - Part 1

This video reviews the first four stages of Erikson's developmental construct.

http://youtu.be/8_Iy-pFK3qI
Teacher note: Have students use the handout “Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs Notes” for note-taking.

Maslow felt that humans must meet certain needs, in a specific order, in order to reach the upper levels of self-realization (self-actualization) and transcendence. His levels are based on needs.
Have you ever left your house in a hurry, without eating breakfast? How did it affect your ability to focus in class, to learn, to remember? Until our basic physical needs are met, we have a very hard time thinking of anything else. Children who do not eat on a regular basis, either because of poverty or neglect, do poorly in school. They are simply too hungry to think about learning. The same is true if we do not have secure shelter or the ability to get a good night’s rest.

After those needs are met, we begin to think about the next level of needs, including the need for safety and freedom from anxiety. Once again, we cannot focus on higher-level thinking skills until these basic safety needs are met. If a family is worried about being safe in their home, it is difficult to focus on homework. Can you think of examples of these types of safety issues?

Love and belonging are basic human needs, and everyone needs to feel as if they belong. This attachment can happen in a nuclear family, in an extended family, or even in a close circle of friends. This is deeper, however, than simply a casual friendship. These needs for belonging involve deep and permanent ties. Children need to feel that they belong and, if they do not, that feeling of isolation can cause damage to their self-esteem.
When we rightly praise and encourage children, we help them move into Maslow’s next level, which develops confidence and self-worth. Allowing children to do things on their own and, consequently, achieve things on their own allows them to feel the sense of pride and accomplishment associated with that. Others begin to respect them for their unique abilities, and this, in turn, continues to build self-confidence. This is not only true for children, though. All of us need to do things that we can be proud of, to accomplish new things. As we move through life, this level allows us to be successful.

Self-actualized people are self-aware and fully use their talents, capabilities and potential. Self-actualization, according to Maslow, is a level that most people never fully achieve. Do you know of someone that you believe is (or was) self-actualized? Why do you believe that?
Complete the pyramid with the name of each level and the needs it represents, according to Maslow's Hierarchy of Human Needs.

Maslow’s Online Game
Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs.
http://www.purposegames.com/game/maslows-hierarchy-of-needs-quiz
Lawrence Kohlberg (1927 - 1987) was an American who studied the Levels of Morality.
Kohlberg's Levels of Morality

- Level II: Conventional (10 – 13 years)
  - Stage 3: Mutual interpersonal expectations. Children seek approval of others and adopt the “good boy-good girl” mentality. They base moral judgments on whether or not someone meant to do well.
  - Stage 4: Law-and-order mentality. Children are concerned with authority and maintaining the social order. Correct behavior is “doing one’s duty.”
Kohlberg’s Levels of Morality

- Level III: Post-conventional (13 years and older)
  - Stage 5: Social contract. Laws are obeyed because they have been accepted by society as a whole
  - Stage 6: Universal ethical principles. Individuals follow their own conscience about what is right. Behavior is the same no matter who is present.
Kohlberg’s Theory of Moral Development

Kohlberg's Theory of Moral Development
(click on link)

Kohlberg's Theory
Theory of Moral Development.
http://youtu.be/svDYaQUVWfI
Urie Bronfenbrenner (1917 – 2005)

The Ecological Systems Theory speaks to many of the things that impact growth and development. The theory looks at the child as developing within many different relationships in his/her surrounding environments.

The Microsystem is the child and his or her interaction with the immediate environment. These are generally two-person relationships, but they can happen at home, school, playgroups and so forth.

The Mesosystem moves out one level and discusses the relationship between Microsystems, such as our entire nuclear family, our home, the near neighborhood and school.

The Exosystem affects children, but may not have children in it. These are environments such as parents’ workplaces, religious settings and health services.

The Macrosystem is society at large, the culture and the world.

The Chronosystem looks at how ecological systems influence development over time and with transitions, such as divorce.
Urie Bronfenbrenner’s Theory

Ecological Systems Theory
(click on link)

Ecological Systems Theory
Urie Bronfenbrenner (1917-2005) developed the ecological systems theory.

The Life Course Theory is fairly new and refers to a sequence of socially defined, age-graded events and roles that individuals enact over time. Theorists have begun a move from only studying children to focusing on aging over the lifespan. They search for patterns of how things remain the same and how they change. These theorists note how individuals’ lives are impacted developmentally by an ever-changing society.

All life choices are influenced by what is happening around us. How have life events affected your choices? How did they impact the path that your parents or grandparents chose?
Dr. Kubler-Ross developed this list of stages to help people work through their grief. It’s important to remember that these are not rigid stages and that people will go through them at their own pace, perhaps in a different order, perhaps revisiting them. These are just designed to help people recognize that most people go through several levels before they are able to emerge “on the other side.”
Teacher’s note: This is a TedTalk, and it is about ten minutes long. Mrs. Sheeren shares how she is dealing with grief. This is a sensitive subject; please be conscious of students’ reactions.

OjaiWomen - Alana Sheeren - Owning Our Grief
Alana Sheeren believes in love, beauty and the transformative power of grief. After the stillbirth of her son she began writing about her personal journey into grief and whole-self healing.
http://youtu.be/gqX3Ygy8NOo
Theories help us understand human behavior by giving us many different ways to observe and process how we humans live our lives. No one theory will answer every question or help with every situation. Not only are each of the theories limited in some way, but the glorious reality is that every individual is unique, and every situation is different. Theories are a starting point for understanding human behavior.
Questions?
References and Resources

Images:
- Microsoft Clip Art: Used with permission from Microsoft.

Periodicals

Textbooks:
References and Resources

Websites:
- Bowee, C.G.
  Erik Erikson.
  http://webspace.ship.edu/caboer/erikson.html
- BrainyQuote
  Share our extensive collection of famous quotes by authors, celebrities, newsmakers and more.
  Enjoy our Quotes of the Day on the web, Facebook and blogs.
  http://www.brainyquote.com
- Davis, D. and Clifton, A.
  Psychosocial Theory: Erikson.
  http://www.haverford.edu/psych/dclavis/p109g/erikson.stages.html
- Elizabeth Kubler-Ross Foundation
  On death and dying.
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- Erikson Institute
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- Free Online Puzzle Maker
  Free puzzle maker—make crossword and word search puzzles instantly online!
  http://www.puzzle-maker.com
- Maslow’s Online Game
  Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs.
  http://www.purposegames.com/game/maslows-hierarchy-of-needs-quiz

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References and Resources

YouTube™:

- Ecological Systems Theory
  Uni Bronfenbrenner (1917-2005) developed the ecological systems theory.

- Erikson’s Stages of Psychosocial Development - Part 1
  This video reviews the first four stages of Erikson’s developmental construct.
  [http://youtube.be/tiyzF3b3](http://youtube.be/tiyzF3b3)

- Kohlberg’s Theory
  Theory of Moral Development.
  [http://youtube.be/sy7o6qGUfFW](http://youtube.be/sy7o6qGUfFW)

- OjaWoman - Alena Sheeren - Owning Our Grief
  Alena Sheeren, believes in love, beauty and the transformative power of grief. After the stillbirth of her son she began writing about her personal journey into grief and whole-self healing.
  [http://youtube.be/gaX3Yv8N0o](http://youtube.be/gaX3Yv8N0o)