



Adult Development & Complexity

CBODN 2015 Conference

April 24, 2015

Introductions

- Name
- What brought you here?

Agenda

- ▶ Adult Development: What is it and why should we care?
- ▶ Exercises: Identify developmental stage
- ▶ Assessments

Standing on Broad Shoulders...

- Piaget
- Loevinger
- Robert Kegan
- Susanne Cook-Greuter
- William Torbert
- Kurt Fischer
- Theo Dawson



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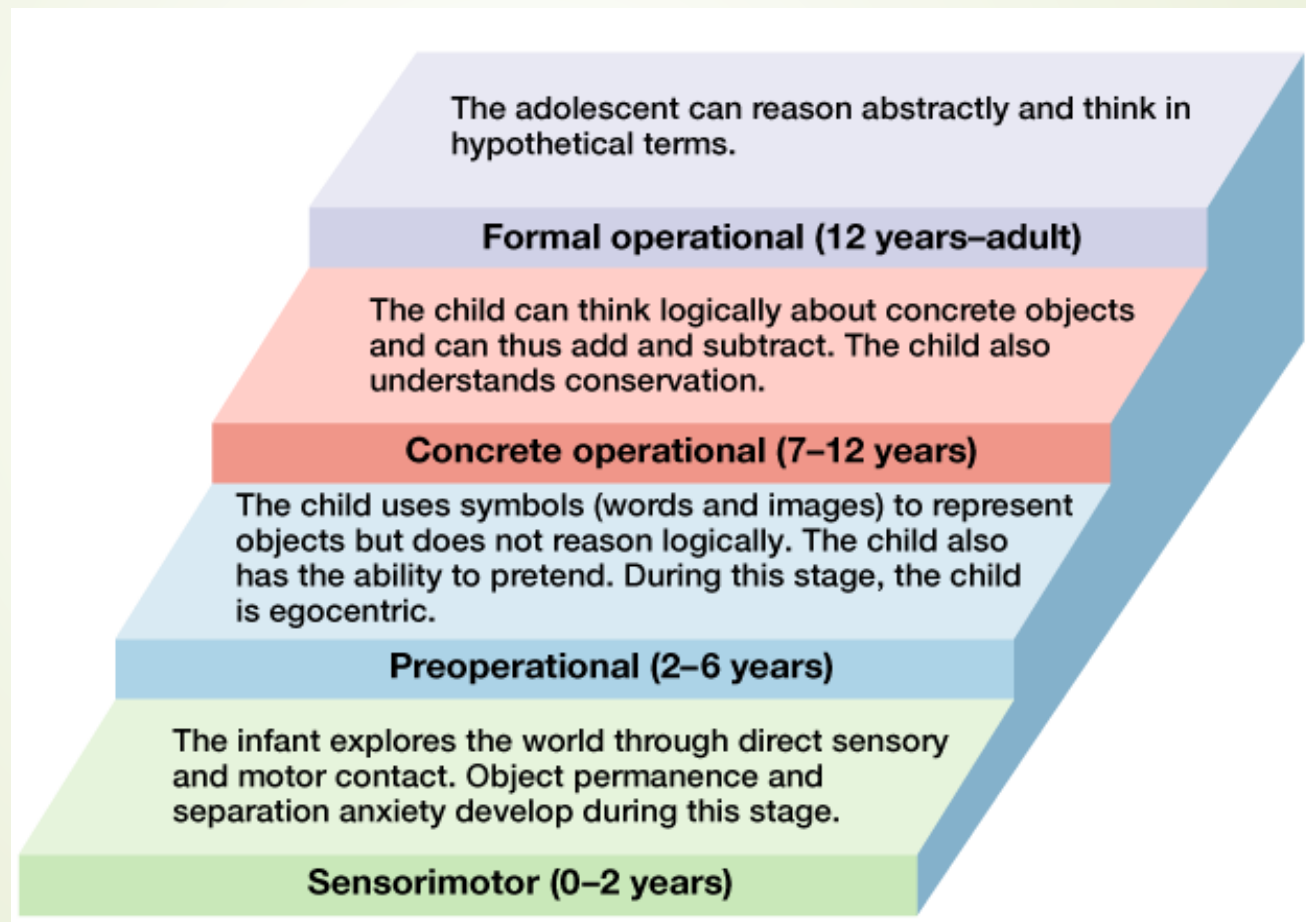
Adult Development

What is it, and why should we care?

Complexity

- ▶ In your work, what is something you easily do now that you either couldn't do before, or it was a stretch?

Piaget's Work with Children



Capacity for Complexity

- Ability to *perceive* complexity of your world
- Openness to feedback
- Hold ambiguity and paradox
- Stand outside of oneself and circumstances
- Take, seek, and coordinate perspectives
- See and consider interlocking systems

Increases as we develop to later stages

Subject-Object Relations

When something is “subject” to us:

- It is part of/fused with us
- We cannot see it
- We cannot make decisions about it

When something is “object” to us:


- We can stand outside of it and see/observe it
- We can make decisions about it

Why Is This Important?

- Our world, organizations, and work has increased in complexity over the last 50 years
- The majority of the population is at a developmental level that cannot manage this complexity
- To manage the complexity, leaders must be at a later developmental levels
- It is incumbent upon organizations to become a Deliberately Developmental Organization (DDO)*

*Kegan, R., Lahey, L., Fleming, A., Miller, M., & Markus, I. (April 2014). Making Business Personal. *Harvard Business Review*.

Adult Development Levels



Level	Category	Stages
3	Post-Conventional	6 – Universal principles
		5 – Relativity of rules
2	Conventional	4 – Fulfilling duties and upholding laws
		3 – Meeting expectations of others
1	Pre-conventional	2 – Getting what you want by trade-off
		1 - Punishment avoidance

Kohlberg's Theory of Moral Development

Pre-Conventional

- ▶ Typically attained during childhood or adolescence
- ▶ Most adults develop beyond this tier

Awareness limited to own perspective

Conventional

- ▶ Typically attained in adolescence or young adulthood
- ▶ Most adults develop to these levels, not beyond

Awareness of others: "I" → "We"

Post-Conventional

- ▶ Fewer than one-fifth of adults attain these stages
- ▶ Transition sometimes coincides with “mid-life crisis”

Awareness of “Us” → “All people everywhere”

Development Directions

Horizontal



- Additive
- New skills
- New information
- More knowledge
- Apply to other areas

Vertical

Up

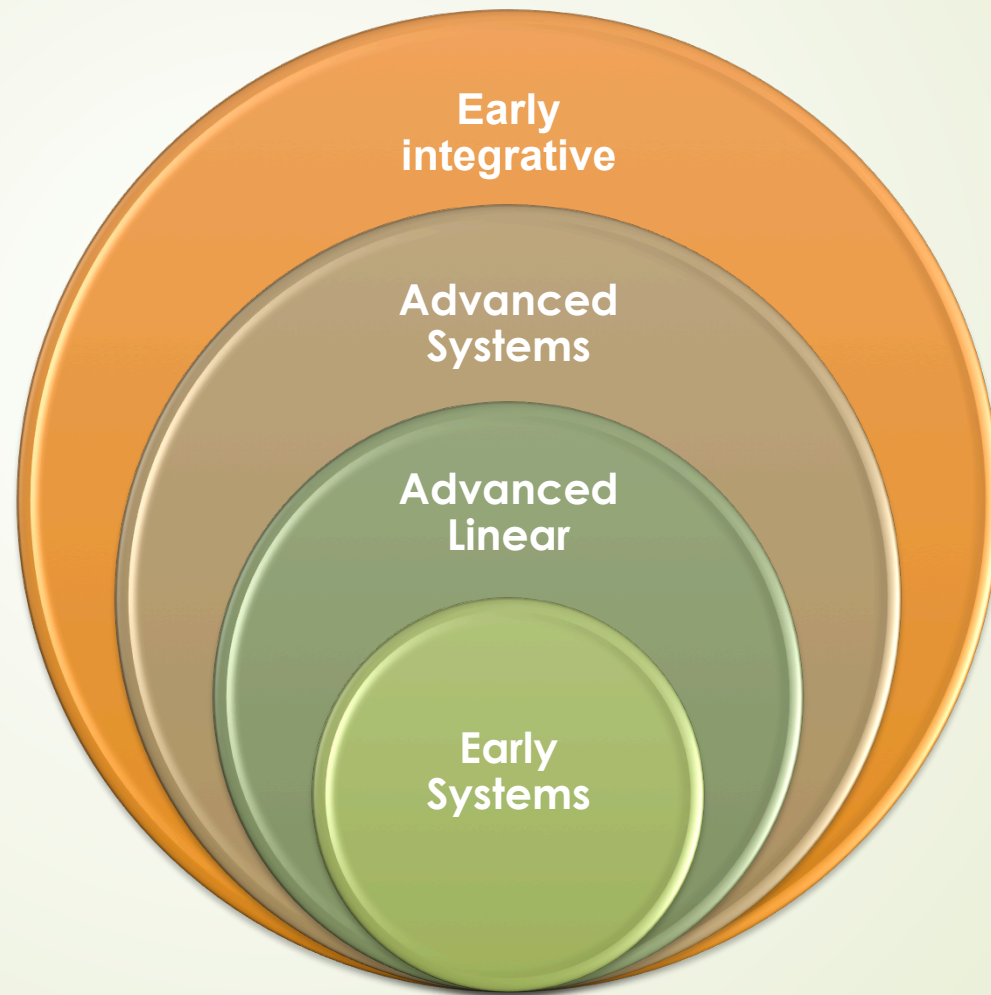
- Expanded worldview
- Nuanced meaning making
- Systems thinking

Down/Regression

- Life circumstances
- Environment
- Stress or illness
 - *May be temporary or permanent*

Nested Stages

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Advanced Linear Thinking

Frequency	60% of population
Management Level	Entry level (low-tech)
Thinking	Links ideas in chains of logical relations Reasoning: black and white"
Problem Solving	Can work successfully with simple workplace problems.
Solutions Agility	Single solutions: able to suggest a second solution to a complex problem, but it is either unworkable or is viewed as inferior to the first solution
Tensions & Polarities	Identifies personal and interpersonal tensions in specific situations, sees them as problems to solve
Perspective Taking	my perspective: likely to make decisions based primarily upon own way of seeing a situation

Early Systems Thinking

Frequency	30% of population
Management Level	mid-level and entry level (high-tech)
Thinking	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• One abstract system at a time• Reasoning: Shades of gray
Problem Solving	Works successfully with complicated workplace problems.
Solutions Agility	Stronger solutions: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• able to suggest a second workable solution to a complex problem• identifies some of its strengths• generally views it as inferior to the first solution
Tensions & Polarities	Balances tensions: identifies common tensions that arise at different layers in an organizational hierarchy and attempts to balance them
Perspective Taking	Our perspectives: appreciates that perspectives are limited, likely to invite input from others prior to making a decision

Advanced Systems Thinking

Frequency	9% of population
Management Level	Upper and senior level; top level in small organizations
Thinking	Can describe multiple abstract systems and identify several of their common elements
Problem Solving	Can work successfully with complex workplace problems
Solutions Agility	Multiple acceptable solutions: able to generate multiple viable solutions to a complex problem, and identify their relative strengths and weaknesses
Tensions & Polarities	Dynamic tensions: identifies several sources of tensions (within and between) layers in the management hierarchy, and strives to keep them in dynamic balance
Perspective Taking	Coordinating perspectives: appreciates that all perspectives are limited and fallible, likely to make others part of the decision-making process

Early Integrative Thinking

Frequency	<1% of population
Management Level	Top level (large organizations)
Thinking	Can describe several abstract systems and identify broad shared principles that govern their interaction.
Problem Solving	Can work successfully with chaotic workplace problems.
Solutions Agility	adaptive solutions: able to facilitate effective and timely response in a changing environment by rapidly generating multiple viable approaches to a wide range of highly complex problems
Tensions & Polarities	resolves tensions: simplifies the complex by identifying integrative principles that dissolve common tensions/polarities, and uses these principles to design systems, policies, and structures that optimize outcomes for all stakeholders
Perspective Taking	Appreciates that individuals and groups at all levels in a given system have a shared interest in creating and preserving an optimal institutional culture.



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Stage In Action

Scenario

Exercise: Form a Hypothesis

Different Names/Similar Theories

	What?	PHYSICAL	CONVENTIONAL	INDIVIDUAL	TRANSCENDENT
Piaget	Cognitive	Sensorimotor Preoperational	Concrete-operational	Formal operational	
Kohlberg	Moral	Pre-conventional	Conventional	Post-conventional	Universal
Fowler	Faith	Intuitive-projective Mythic-literal	Synthetic-conventional	Individualistic- reflective	Universalising
Loevinger	Ego	Impulsive Self-Protective	Conformist Self-aware	Individualist Autonomous	Integrated
Kegan	Experience	1 st and 2 nd order	3 rd order	4 th order	5 th order
Torbert	Leadership	Impulsive Opportunist	Diplomat Expert	Achiever Individualist	Strategist Magician
Greves	Values	Automatic/ Animalistic	Egocentric/ Absolutistic	Multiplicitic/ Relativistic	Systemic/ Experientialistic

Words of Caution

- Later is not better
- Later is not happier
- Later only means you can see and manage more complexity
- Moving whole stages takes *years*
- Stage transition is characterized by:
 - A certain amount of disorientation
 - No longer satisfied with what is
 - Things don't make sense the way they used to
 - Overall "ennui"



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Assessments

Assessments

- **MAP** – Loevinger, Cook-Greuter
- **SOI** – Kegan, Lahey
- **LAS** (LDMA, LSUA) -- Dawson

Making Meaning Together..

- ▶ How are you making meaning of this?
- ▶ What are the implications of this in your work?

Further Readings

- ▶ Cook-Greuter, S. (2004). Making the case for a developmental perspective. *Industrial and Commercial Training*, 36(6/7), 275-281.
- ▶ Garvy-Berger, J. (2012). *Changing on the job: Developing leaders for a complex world*. Stanford, California: Stanford Business Books, an imprint of Stanford University Press.
- ▶ Joiner, B., & Josephs, S. (2007). *Leadership agility: Five levels of mastery for anticipating and initiating change* (1st ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- ▶ Kegan, R., Lahey, L., Fleming, A., Miller, M., & Markus, I. (April 2014). Making Business Personal. *Harvard Business Review*.
- ▶ Kegan, R., & Lahey, L. L. (2009). *Immunity to change: How to overcome it and unlock potential in yourself and your organization*. Boston, Mass.: Harvard Business Press.
- ▶ Kegan, R. (1994). *In over our heads: The mental demands of modern life*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- ▶ Rooke, D., & Torbert, W. R. (2005). 7 Transformations of Leadership. *Harvard Business Review*, 83(4), 66-76.

Last Thoughts

*If we want to increase mental complexity, we need to move aspects of our meaning-making from subject to object, to alter our mindset so that a way of knowing or making meaning becomes a kind of “tool” that **we have** (and can control or use) rather than something that **has us** (and therefore controls and uses us.)*

Kegan & Lahey, *Immunity To Change*, p. 51

Thank you!