

## Sample Discussion Leader Handout

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Radziszewska, B. & Rogoff, B. (1991). Children's guided participation in planning imaginary errands with skilled adult or peer partners. *Developmental Psychology*, 27, 381-389.

### Introduction

1. The role of peers and adults: Vygotsky vs. Piaget
  - Vygotsky - cooperative interactions with skilled peers and adults lead to advances in development
  - Piaget - discussion and conflict among equals leads to advances in development
2. Guided participation: "*a collaborative process involving joint structuring of activities with participation by both partners in the thinking process*"
  - share in decision-making
  - explain process and strategies
  - model problem-solving

#### Purpose

- To investigate the effects of interactions with peers and adults on children's subsequent planning.
- To examine the processes involved in successful problem-solving (guided participation)

### Method

#### Subjects

- 30 boys and 30 girls, 9 to 10 years of age
- 20 same-age untrained peers, 20 same-age trained peers, 20 parents

#### Procedure

- Had children engage in errand-planning task. Children were given a map of stores and 5 items to retrieve. Asked to draw efficient route on map.
- 20 skilled peers were trained on the task
- Children had 2 trials with either the trained peer, adult, or untrained adult, then received posttest.

### Results

- Children with both trained and untrained peers produced longer routes than children with adults.
- Interaction with adults was more effective in producing planning efficiency
- Dyads with adults demonstrated more active participation, optimal strategy and strategic thinking. These activities were positively related to posttest performance.

### Discussion

- Mere exposure to skilled planning is not enough. To benefit from collaboration, the asymmetry present in adult-child interaction appears to be key.
- Guided participation seemed to be one way to explain why collaboration with adults produces better performance in the Target children
- Support for Vygotsky's (rather than Piaget's) ideas about the role of peers

### Discussion Questions

1) Does this study represent a true test of Vygotsky's ideas? Why or why not?

2) What are the limitations of this study? How would you make it better?

3) Radziszewska and Rogoff note that results of previous studies examining the effects of such collaboration are inconsistent. They explain that this is probably due to collaboration playing a specific role in cognitive development. Specific problems benefit from collaboration, while other problems/situations do not. Can you think of any kinds of tasks or problems where collaboration might NOT be useful? Why?