

The Nature and Ontogenesis of Meaning

Throughout its evolution, Piaget's theory has placed meaning at the center of all attempts to understand the nature and development of knowing. For Piaget, all knowing - whether sensorimotor, representational, or reasoned, and whether directed toward successful problem solutions or toward general understanding - is necessarily a construction which arises out of meaning making activity. It was in this context that the editors of this volume approached the board of directors of the Jean Piaget Society with a proposal to organize a recent annual symposium around the topic of the nature and development of meaning. In forming this symposium and in moving from symposium to integrated text, the editors wanted to insure both a breadth and depth to the analysis of the topic. Addressing philosophical, theoretical, and empirical perspectives, this issue-oriented volume provides an integrated exploration of the current understanding of the nature and development of meaning. Contemporary issues that frame alternative understandings of the nature of meaning - nativist vs. constructivist positions, and computational vs. embodied mind contexts - are examined as they impact on the investigation of meaning. Comparative, cognitive, and linguistic developmental dimensions of meaning are described and discussed.

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