Jean Piaget

...is considered by many to be the greatest child psychologist of the 20th century.
Piaget believed...

...that children are not simply mini-adults, but are qualitatively different.

They think differently.

They are cognitively different.
Einstein once said that Piaget’s theory that children don’t think like grown-ups was “so simple that only a genius could have thought of it”.
Piaget was intrigued by...

...the common errors that children make.
In a list of errors,

Piaget focused his attention on the wrong answers.
Yet he pointed out that these answers... often make sense within the framework of the child’s “way of knowing”.
Typical errors...

What if your name were Peter?

Then I’d be a boy.
Typical errors...

Do you have a brother?
Yes.

What’s his name?
Jim.

Does Jim have a sister?
No.
“Children have real understanding only of that which they invent themselves, and each time that we try to teach them something too quickly, we keep them from reinventing it themselves.”

Piaget
Piaget: What makes the wind?
Julia (age 5): The trees.
Piaget: How do you know?
Julia: I saw them waving their arms.
Piaget believed that it is important for children to practise the art of creating theories. They are like little scientists who learn through a process of active construction, rather than through passively receiving information.
Piaget - true or false? State your answer with an explanatory sentence.


2. Children learn through creating theories.

3. Children make a number of cognitive errors according to the maturational stage they are in.

4. It’s important to teach children to overcome their typical errors.

5. Piaget was interested in why children get certain answers right.

6. Children are like “little scientists”.

Piaget - true or false? State your answer with an explanatory sentence.

   False. Children think in a manner that is qualitatively different from adults.

2. Children learn through creating theories.
   True. They are like “little scientists” who actively construct their understanding of the world.

3. Children make a number of cognitive errors according to the maturational stage they are in.
   True. There are common faults in logic and reasoning that all children make.
Piaget - true or false? State your answer with an explanatory sentence.

4. It’s important to teach children to overcome their typical errors.

Often false. They need a stimulating environment in which they can figure out the right answers themselves, through constructing and experiencing. Trying to correct their common mistakes too early may be counterproductive.

5. Piaget was interested in why children get certain answers right.

False. He was intrigued by the reasoning underlying their wrong answers.

6. Children are like “little scientists”.

True. They actively construct rather than passively receiving information.
Little scientists,...
...not empty vessels into which learning can be poured
You are designing an educational program in a new primary school. You have complete freedom to apply Piaget’s ideas in your school.

• What activities, methods and strategies would you introduce?

• What aspects of our current education system might you modify or abolish?
• How might you advise teachers?
• How might you set up classrooms and playgrounds?
• What would you encourage children to do and develop?
• What would you modify or abolish?
## Activity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advice for Teachers</th>
<th>Classrooms / Playgrounds</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Methods / Activities</th>
<th>I would modify or abolish...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>