I believe that a theory of human development (HD) and learning cannot be ascribed to one theorist. This course has enabled me to put in words some of the thoughts I had about how children learn and develop. A few of the theorists that have influenced my thinking are Piaget, Bronfenbrunner, Pink, Skinner, Bandura and Vygostsky. I believe children’s development can be described in four main areas: 1) physical, 2) cognitive, 3) social and emotional, and 4) gender identity and sexuality. While learning and HD is a continuous process it does not occur at the same time or in the same way for every child. Children of the same age can be at different stages and can reach those stages in different ways. For example, children may learn to walk at different ages. One child may crawl and then walk while another child may skip the crawling stage.

I believe HD is influenced by the relationships of people and their environment. Children learn through modeling, imitation and through social construction of knowledge. Children construct their own understanding and knowledge by actively participating in their learning and then reflecting on those experiences. They then construct their identities based on their experiences. In the classroom, students can learn by becoming involved in authentic, real-world tasks and by reflecting on what they are learning.

I also believe that gender, birth order, motivation, social and economic status and culture all impact HD. When a child is learning and developing these factors have an impact on how they process information and we, as educators, need to be sensitive to their needs. This course has allowed me to examine my beliefs and understanding of how children learn and develop and I feel I can now better articulate the theories behind those beliefs.