

Ch. 5 Developing Through the Life Span

- Developmental Psychology examines our physical, cognitive, and social development across the life span, with focus on three major issues:
 - o Nature and nurture: How does our genetic inheritance interact with our experiences to influence our development?
 - o Continuity and stages: What parts of development are gradual and continuous? What parts change abruptly in separate stages?
 - o Stability and change: Which of our traits persist through life? How do we change as we age?
- Prenatal Development & the Newborn
 - o Conception
 - o Prenatal Development
 - Zygote → embryo → fetus
 - Zygote: conception to 2 weeks
 - Embryo: 2 weeks through 8 weeks
 - Fetus: 9 weeks to birth
 - o What are some newborn abilities and how do researchers explore infants' mental abilities?
 - Habituation-a decrease in responding with repeated stimulation
 - Researchers have used visual preference to test habituation
 - Ex. Used cat-dog hybrid images to test how infants categorize animals, suggests that infants focus first on the face (not the body)
 - o Physical Development
 - Brain Development
 - The brain is immature at birth. As the child matures, the neural networks grow increasingly more complex.
 - Motor Development
 - Sit, crawl, walk, run
 - Brain Maturation & Infant Memory
 - Infantile amnesia-our earliest memories seldom predate our third birthday
 - Cognitive Development
 - Cognition refers to all the mental activities associated with thinking, knowing, remembering, and communicating
 - o Jean Piaget (1896-1980)
 - Schemas: concepts or mental molds into which we pour our experiences
 - Assimilation vs. accommodation
 - o Piaget's Theory
 - Sensorimotor Stage (birth to 2 years)
 - Experiencing the world through senses and actions
 - Object permanence, stranger anxiety
 - Preoperational stage (2 to 7 years)
 - Representing things with words and images; using intuitive rather than logical reasoning
 - Pretend play, egocentrism
 - Concrete operational stage (7 to 11 years)

- Thinking logically about concrete events; grasping concrete analogies and performing arithmetical operations
 - Conservation, mathematical transformations
 - Formal operational stage (12 years through adulthood)
 - Abstract reasoning
 - Abstract logic, potential for mature moral reasoning
- o Alternative Viewpoint: Lev Vygotsky's Scaffolding
 - Emphasized how the child's mind grows through interaction with the social environment
 - By mentoring children and giving them new words, parents and others provide a temporary scaffold from which children can step to higher levels of thinking
- o Social Development: How do parent-infant attachment bonds form?
 - Stranger anxiety (develops around 8 months)
 - Origins of Attachment
 - Body contact
 - o Harlow Monkey experiment: The infants much preferred contact with the comfortable cloth mother, even while feeding from the nourishing mother.
 - Familiarity
 - o Critical period: an optimal period when certain events must take place to facilitate proper development
 - How do children's self-concepts develop?
 - Self-concept: an understanding and assessment of who they are
 - At 18 months, a child recognizes that the image in the mirror is "me"
 - Parenting styles
 - Authoritarian parents impose rules and expect obedience ("too hard")
 - Permissive parents submit to their children's desires, not enforcing limits or standards for child behavior ("too soft")
 - Authoritative parents are both demanding and responsive. They exert control by setting rules and enforcing them, but they also explain the reasons for rules. And, especially with older children, they encourage open discussion when making the rules and allow exceptions ("just right")
 - Optimal situation in parenting is to have warm control (loving, nurturing but also having limits/standards on behavior)
- o Adolescence
 - Physical development → puberty
 - Primary sex characteristics vs. secondary sex characteristics
 - Body changes (pituitary gland releases hormones that stimulate adrenal glands)
 - Females: breast development, enlargement of uterus, beginning of menstruation, pubic hair growth
 - Males: growth of penis/testes, beginning of ejaculation, larynx enlargement, facial/underarm hair growth
- o Cognitive Development
 - Moral Reasoning

- Kohlberg's Levels of Moral Thinking
 - o Preconventional morality (before age 9): self-interest, obey rules to avoid punishment or gain concrete awards
 - o Conventional morality (early adolescence): uphold laws and rules to gain social approval or maintain social order
 - o Postconventional morality (adolescence and beyond): actions reflect belief in basic rights and self-defined ethical principles
- o Social Development
 - Erik Erikson's stages of psychosocial development
 - Infancy: trust vs. mistrust
 - o If needs are dependably met, infants develop a sense of basic trust
 - Toddlerhood: autonomy vs. shame & doubt
 - o Toddlers learn to exercise their will and do things for themselves, or they doubt their abilities
 - Preschool: initiative vs. guilt
 - o Preschoolers learn to initiate tasks and carry out plans, or they feel guilty about their efforts to be independent
 - Elementary school: competence vs. inferiority
 - o Children learn the pleasure of applying themselves to tasks, or they feel inferior
 - Adolescence: identity vs. role confusion
 - o Teenagers work at refining a sense of self by testing roles and then integrating them to form a single identity, or they become confused about who they are
 - Young adulthood: intimacy vs. isolation
 - o Young adults struggle to form close relationships to gain the capacity for intimate love, or they feel social isolation
 - Middle adulthood: generativity vs. stagnation
 - o In middle age, people discover a sense of contributing to the world, usually through family and work, or they may feel a lack of purpose
 - Late adulthood: integrity vs. despair
 - o Reflecting on his or her life, an older adult may feel a sense of satisfaction or failure

IN-CLASS NOTES START HERE

- o Maturing beyond Egocentrism: Developing a "Theory of Mind"
 - Refers to the ability to understand that others have their own thoughts and perspective
 - Developmental milestone; underrated
 - Mind reading ability
- o Autism (social disorder)
 - Social skills are impaired
 - Difficulty in reading others' minds
- o Attachment (Social Development)
 - Refers to an emotional tie to another person
 - Sensitive, responsive caregiving promotes secure attachment