

Lifespan Developmental Psychology

PSY 355

Dr. Schuetze

- If a mother smokes during pregnancy, her baby may be mentally retarded.
- Newborns turn their heads in the direction of human voices but not in response to artificial sounds.
- Infants initially develop close attachment to their mothers merely because they provide nourishment.
- Children first recognize themselves in a mirror at about 3 years of age.
- Children who develop the most positive self-image tend to have been raised by permissive parents.
- Nine of 10 high-school seniors agree with the statement, "On the whole, I'm satisfied with myself."
- Menopause creates significant psychological problems for women.
- Survey research findings indicate that most people pass through a mid-life crisis during their mid-40s.
- Most mothers are depressed for a time after their children grow up, leave home, and marry.
- People in their twenties and thirties report greater life satisfaction than those in their sixties and seventies.

Lifespan Developmental Psychology

- Study of changes in peoples' lives from conception to death
- Views development as a continuing process throughout the life-cycle

Process versus Product Approach

- Product: Age-specific developmental milestones
- Process: Explanation of how developmental change occurs

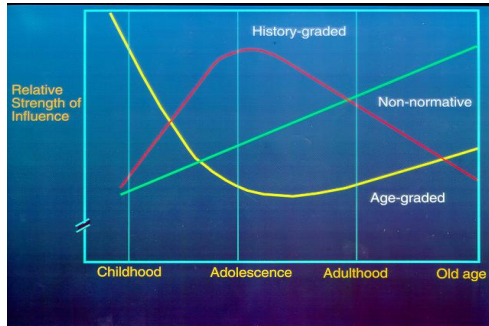
Example of Process versus Product Approach

<u>Year</u>	<u>Sitting</u>	<u>Walking</u>
1933	7 months	15 months
1967	5 1/2 months	12 months

Development is Influenced by 3 Factors

- Normative, age-graded events: events that are strongly related to chronological age.
 - Maturational
 - Social
- Nonnormative events: events not everyone experiences.
- Historical/cohort events: events associated with historical time.

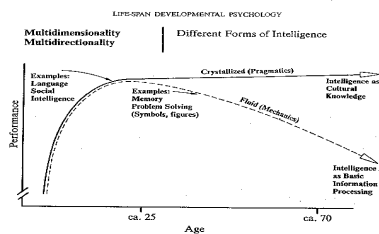
Strength of Influence Over Time



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Assumptions about Lifespan Development - Baltes

- Development is a lifelong process
- Development is multidimensional
- Development is multidirectional
- Human development is influenced by plasticity
 - Plasticity: capacity to change in response to positive or negative experiences.



Assumptions about Lifespan Development - Baltes

- Development is shaped by historical events
 - cohort: group of people who, because they were born within a few years of each other, experience many of the same historical and social differences.
- Development is shaped by cultural context
- Understanding development requires multiple disciplines

Themes of Development

Developmental Issues on which theorists often disagree.

Developmental Themes

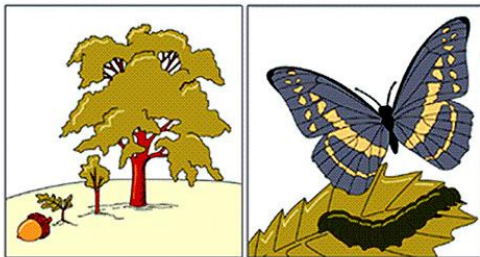
- Development proceeds:
 - a. Through stages so that the individual changes rather abruptly into a different kind of person than she/he was in an earlier stage.
 - b. In a variety of ways – some stage-like and some gradual or continuous.
 - c. Continuously – in small increments without abrupt changes or distinct stages.

Continuity versus Discontinuity

- Continuity: linear development - each development builds on previous developments. Continuous change.
- Discontinuity: series of discrete steps or stages. Abrupt, qualitative changes in development.

Santrock, Adolescence, 7e Copyright © 1998, McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc. All Rights Reserved.

Continuity and Discontinuity in Development



Developmental Themes

- Biological influences (heredity and maturational forces) and environmental influences (culture, parenting styles, learning experiences) are thought to contribute to development. Overall,
 - a. Biological factors contribute far more than environmental factors
 - b. Biological factors contribute somewhat more than environmental factors
 - c. Biological and environmental factors are equally important.
 - d. Environmental factors contribute somewhat more than biological factors.
 - e. Environmental factors contribute far more than biological factors.

Nature versus Nurture

- What is the relative importance of biological and environmental factors in development?

Nature versus Nurture: One Model

- Range of Reaction: Biology sets upper and lower limits for a characteristic. Environment determines where we fall between the two.

Scientific Method

- Attitude
- Process
- Systematic way of investigating an issue

Experimental Method

- Study carried out to investigate the relationship between factors by deliberately producing a change (manipulating) in one factor and observing the effect that change has upon other factors.
 - Asks if IV has a *causal effect* on DV?
 - Independent Variable (IV) → factor(s) to manipulate
 - Dependent Variables (DV) → factor to be observed (to assess the effect of the IV)
 - Experimental and Control Groups

Experimental Method

- Asks if variable *x* has a *causal effect* on variable *y*?
- Independent Variable → factor(s) to vary through experiment
- Dependent Variables → factor to be observed by experimenter (used to gauge the effect of the independent variable)
- Experimental and Control Groups

Correlational Techniques

- Examines two sets of factors to determine whether they are associated/correlated.
- Asks if there is an *association* between variable *x* and variable *y*?
- No manipulation of variables.
- Cannot draw causal inferences because of the lack of random assignment. $A \rightarrow B$ or $B \rightarrow A$, or $A \leftarrow C \rightarrow B$ could all be true.

Cross-sectional Approach

- Compares different groups of individuals at different age levels.
- If different groups differ, the assumption is that the differences are based on age differences.
 - Cohort Issues

Longitudinal Approach

- Involves the repeated measure of the same group over a long period of time.
 - Attrition issues

Comparison of Cross-Sectional and Longitudinal Approaches

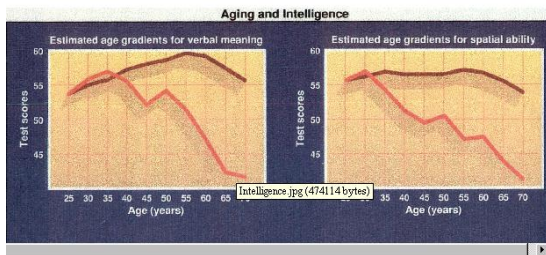
	<u>Longitudinal</u>	<u>Cross-sectional</u>
<u>Procedure</u>	Retest same subjects over time	Test subjects of different ages once
<u>Time</u>	Years per subject	Once per subject
<u>Cost</u>	Expensive	Inexpensive

Comparison of Cross-sectional and Longitudinal Approaches

	Longitudinal	Cross-sectional
<u>Advantage</u>	Examines individual development	Can collect large amounts of data quickly
<u>Disadvantage</u>	Requires long time Attrition	Can't examine individual changes

Comparisons between cross-sectional and longitudinal data on various measures of intelligence over the lifespan.

As this set of graphs show, the actual declines are *much* less pronounced when looking at the same people over time (longitudinal data) as opposed to comparing between younger and older people at the same point in time (cross-sectional data). Why might this be the case?



Sequential Study Example

	Testing Dates			
	1980	1990	2000	2010
1940	40	50	60	70
1950	30	40	50	60
1960	20	30	40	50
1970	10	20	30	40