

Lecture Two

Monday, 18 July 2016 11:12 PM

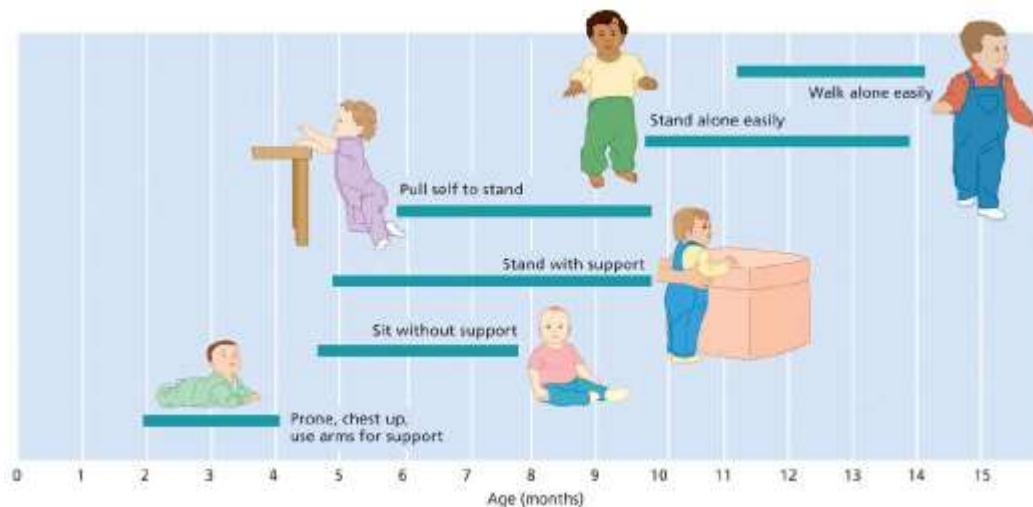
Developmental Psychology

Developmental psychology examines changes in physiology, cognition and social behaviour over the lifespan

Developmental changes occur in a time-ordered sequence that is characteristic to all humans:

- Orderly - tend to crawl before walk, walk before run etc.
- Cumulative - each milestone builds on the last - walking builds on standing
- Predictable - if we look across cultures, the progression across ages is the same across all

Progression of Human Development



Human development starts from the moment of conception. All human life begins from a single cell.

Prenatal development progresses through three stages:

1. Zygote/germinal stage - Conception to 14 days - bunch of little cells floating down fallopian tubes into womb
2. Embryonic stage - 2 weeks to 10 weeks - cell differentiation, organogenesis
3. Foetal stage - Week 10 to week 40 - growing, strengthening

Environmental Influences of Brain Development





- Malnutrition - leads to delays in brain development, especially in prefrontal cortex
- Enriched environments - fosters our brain development, theory = sensitive periods (Piaget)
- Physical contact - leads to deficits in brain development (IQ, language)
- Opportunities to develop physiological and cognitive skills
e.g. walking, language, social ability - to switch these on we need exposure

Cognitive Development

Cognitive development refers to transitions in children's patterns of thinking including:

- Reasoning
- Memory
- Problem solving
- Abstract thought
- Concept formation

Piaget's Stages of Cognitive Development

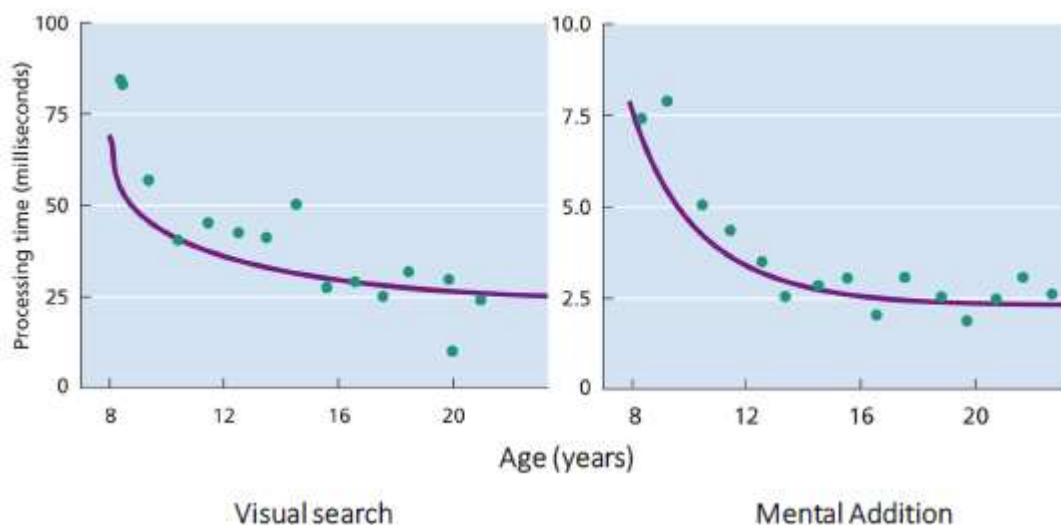
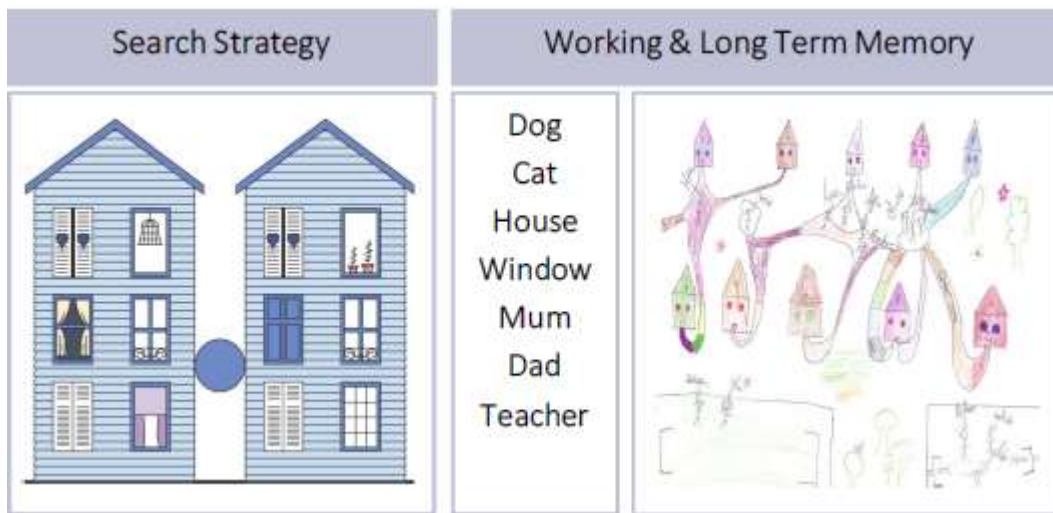
Sensorimotor Stage (0-2)	Preoperational (2-7)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Object permanence• Differentiates self from objects• Recognises self as agent	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Begins to think symbolically• Thinking is egocentric• Cannot achieve conservation  
Concrete Operational (7-11)	Formal Operations (+12)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Can reason on concrete objects & situations• Attains reversibility & conservation• Decentration	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Abstract reasoning• Systematic thinking versus trial and error  

Continuous Theories

Information Processing Approaches

- As children age, their cognitive abilities improve substantially
 - Information-search strategy
 - Processing speed, attention and response inhibition
 - Working and long-term memory

Information Processing



The visual search gradually lessens, kids become gradually better at a visual search task. Same with mental addition.

Moral Development

Morality (operational definition) “involves the ability to distinguish between right and wrong and to behave accordingly” (Weiten, 2005, p. 308)

Morale development can be examined:

- Cognitively (e.g. moral reasoning)
- Behaviourally (e.g. prosocial behaviour)
- Socio-emotionally (e.g. moral affect)

A Dilemma

A woman was near death from cancer. There was one drug that doctors thought might save her. A chemist had discovered it, but he was charging ten times what the drug cost him to make.

The sick woman’s husband Heinz, went to everyone he knew to borrow the money, but he could not get half of the cost. The chemist refused to sell it cheaper or to let Heinz pay later. Heinz got desperate and broke into the man’s store to steal the drug for his wife. Should Heinz have done that? Why, or why not?

Kohlberg's Stages of Moral Development

I. Pre-conventional - no personal code of morality, follow code put upon them by adults

- Punishment-obedience - "you shouldn't steal the drug, cos u will go to prison"
- Instrumental-hedonistic - "well you do what makes you happy"

II. Conventional - internalise moral standards, based on standards of our social groups (what is 'cool')

- Good-child orientation - "He should steal the drug, because it's what a good husband will do"
- Law-and-order orientation - "Don't steal, because it is against the law"

III. Post-Conventional - We have self-chosen principles of morality based on our own principles of fairness and justice

- Social-contract - "Well there are rules, but there are times where they can be broken"
- Universal ethical principles - "Human life trumps property rights"

Evaluation

Some support across culture & ages:

- Children progress from pre-conventional to post-conventional by adolescence
- Post-conventional reasoning is relatively uncommon even by adulthood

Western bias:

- Over emphasis on justice and fairness
- Cultural differences in ethical principles

Summary

- Developmental psychology examines changes over the lifespan
- Humans are the expression of their biology and environment
- There is rapid physiological, cognitive and moral development in the formative years
- Different frameworks can be used to characterise such changes