

What are the goals of Developmental Psychology?

1. Description

- Description involves recording behaviour and changes in behaviour. Often we try to work out what is average or typical at a certain age - we develop age norms.
- However, always keep in mind the (1) issue of variability (huge range is 'normal') and the (2) issue of multiple explanations for consistencies/differences (so we need to go beyond description to make use of normative information).
- E.g. what age do babies start to walk.
- However, the ages can be varied and can also be influenced by culture.

2. Explanation

- Often we can generate a number of possible explanations and need to engage in testing predictions
- Explanation of behaviour. Learnt behaviour.
- Different explanations have different implications for treatment/intervention

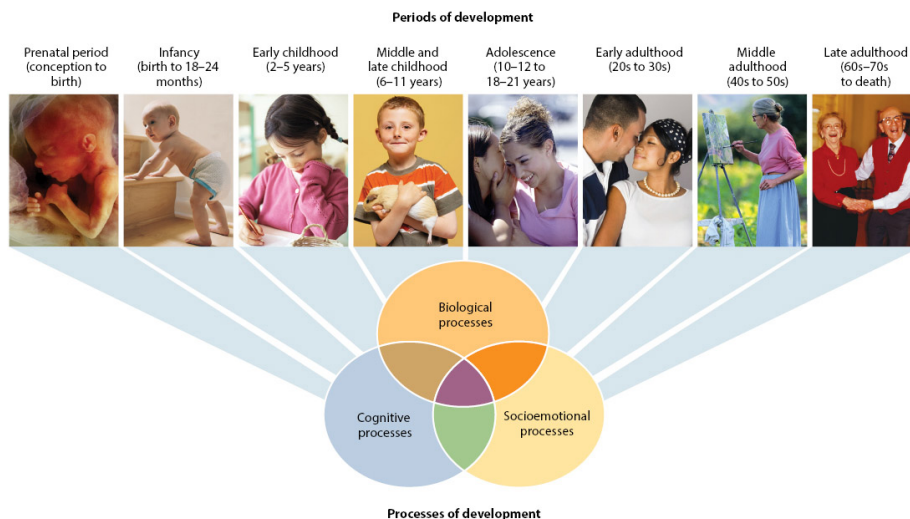
3. Optimisation

- Ultimately, it is our intention to make things better for people, whether we are educationalists, clinicians or whatever role we find ourselves occupying.
- Taking this information (tests, results, hypothesis) to make life better for people. (e.g. doctor, forensic scientist)

Domains of Development

- **Physical**
 - Biological changes
 - Life stages (puberty)
- **Cognitive**
 - Thinking
 - Language ability and use
 - Memory
- **Socioemotional**
 - Emotions
 - Interpersonal relationships

What are some of the themes that permeate the text?



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- The Lifespan Perspective (Baltes):
 - Lifelong
 - Multidimensional – e.g. working in a fast food place, increase in social skills but not cognitive.
 - Multidirectional
 - Multidisciplinary
 - Contextual – born and grow in historical context. E.g. going to school at the same age, or a society going to war at the same time.
 - A Co-Construction – interaction of different domains.

Methods in Developmental Psychology

- Most importantly: there are a large number of different designs adopted in developmental psychology
- All designs have advantages & disadvantages

1.) Cross-sectional

- Here we look at people in different cohorts (that is, born at roughly the same time) and test them on the same thing (e.g., intelligence).
- E.g. Conducting a survey for job satisfaction in the age groups of 20/30/40 etc.
- Advantage - is reasonably cheap and quick.
- Disadvantage - there can be huge problems with cohort effects since cohorts grow up in different contexts and have different experiences.

2.) Longitudinal

- Here you test the same people over time. This generates fine-grained analysis of developmental trajectories.
- Disadvantage - it is expensive and time consuming and is subject to selective attrition (there are particular patterns in the people who drop out), time-of-testing effects and effects due to sitting a test multiple times. (people could randomly die at a young/random age)

3.) Time lag/cross sequential (Schaie)

- The best of these methods combine features of the previous designs. In time lag, you test people from different cohorts at the same age. This allows you to look at the effect that cohort is having. We'll look more at these designs when we look at adulthood.
- E.g. testing people of age 10 and then again at age 20 on e.g. intelligence, and then you can test a new group of 10 yr olds and compare them to your old group.

Theories in Developmental Psychology

3 main classes:

- Psychoanalytic/psychodynamic, Behavioural/Social Cognitive, Cognitive-developmental (focus on children) and also Ecological

1.) Psychoanalytic

Freud

- Behaviour energized by psychodynamic forces
- Three components of personality: id, ego, superego
- Stages of psych-sexual development
 - - So: (1) early events can shape later development and (2) not all thought processes are conscious
- Freud believed early events could shape development.



1.) Psychoanalytic

Erikson

- People are born with basic drives but emphasis on social & cultural aspects of development
- Interested in the interaction of 'internal maturational plan' and 'external societal demands'
- Qualitative stages where we face potential conflicts or crises, e.g. basic trust versus mistrust
- He believed that you can carry baggage from these stages with you.

2.) Behavioural/Social Cognitive Theories

- Whole number of perspectives (e.g. *Pavlov, Watson, Skinner*)
- Interested in the external environment and their impacts.

B.F. Skinner (1904-1991)

- Operant conditioning
- **Reinforcement** strengthens response
 - Can be positive or negative
- **Punishment** weakens response
 - Can be positive or negative
- **Extinction** – Response disappears
- **Shaping** – Learning new behaviours

Albert Bandura

- Observational learning
- Imitation
- Modelling
- Believed that people learn before they are reinforced in behaviour.

3.) Cognitive – Developmental

Piaget

- Influential in his conclusions and in his methods
- Children go through same sequential discoveries, come to similar conclusions and do so in similar ways.
- Four major stages and process of transition between stages involves assimilation and accommodation
- Organisms adapting to their environment
- He was interested in the mistakes that children of the same age made.
- Children take in information from the world.

| Erikson's stages | Developmental period |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Integrity versus despair | Late adulthood (60s onward) |
| Generativity versus stagnation | Middle adulthood (40s, 50s) |
| Intimacy versus isolation | Early adulthood (20s, 30s) |
| Identity versus identity confusion | Adolescence (10 to 20 years) |
| Industry versus inferiority | Middle and late childhood (primary school years, 6 years to puberty) |
| Initiative versus guilt | Early childhood (preschool years, 3 to 5 years) |
| Autonomy versus shame and doubt | Infancy (1 to 3 years) |
| Trust versus mistrust | Infancy (first year) |

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| <p>Sensorimotor stage</p> <p>The infant constructs an understanding of the world by coordinating sensory experiences with physical actions. An infant progresses from reflexive, instinctual action at birth to the beginning of symbolic thought towards the end of the stage.</p> <p>Birth to 2 years of age</p> | <p>Preoperational stage</p> <p>The child begins to represent the world with words and images. These words and images reflect increased symbolic thinking and go beyond the connection of sensory information and physical action.</p> <p>2 to 7 years of age</p> | <p>Concrete operational stage</p> <p>The child can now reason logically about concrete events and classify objects into different sets.</p> <p>7 to 11 years of age</p> | <p>Formal operational stage</p> <p>The adolescent reasons in more abstract, idealistic and logical ways.</p> <p>11 years of age through adulthood</p> |
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