

Human Development

Developmental Psychology

Systematic changes and continuities in 3 domains:

- Physical Development
 - o Body and organ growth, signs of aging, changes in motor abilities
- Cognitive Development
 - o Perception, language, memory, problem-solving, mental processes
- Psychosocial Development
 - o Personal and interpersonal aspects of development, emotion, personality

Why study child development

- Effectiveness in raising children
 - o Emotional management
 - o Dealing with child inhibitions
- Choosing social policies
 - o Detection and prevention of developmental problems vs treatment
 - o Child testimony – used to be seen as not meaningful but now their opinions are taken seriously
- Understanding human nature
 - o Effects of early deprivation – how to intervene

Historical foundations

- Children were not perceived as fully fledged members of society – achieved adult status when they began to take adult-like tasks for the community
- Childhood was not regarded as a useful time for development
- Industrial revolution (18th century) – children came to work in factories and became more visible – this is when people started to believe that childhood influenced their development
 - o Earl of Shaftesbury – children under 10 should not work in mines
- Plato and Aristotle – both believed that long-term welfare of society depended on raising children appropriately
 - o Plato – emphasised self-control and discipline
 - Child born with innate knowledge
 - o Aristotle – concerned with fitting child rearing to needs of individual
 - Knowledge from experience
- John Lock and Jean-Jacque Rousseau refocused attention on child development
 - o Locke – child is a blank slate (tabula rasa)
 - Parents set the example of honesty, stability & gentleness
 - o Rousseau – children given freedom from the beginning
 - Learn from spontaneous interactions with objects and people
- Charles Darwin – theory of evolution
 - o Used his son as a case study
- Jean Piaget – conducted experiments on his children
- Child Development as a discipline
 - o Binet – measurement of IQ
 - o Sigmund Freud – psychoanalytic theory
 - o John Watson – behaviourist theory

Theories of Development

- Psychoanalytic theories
 - o Freud – Psychosexual development, early development
 - o Erikson – psychosocial development, lifetime development
- Learning theories
 - o Watson- classical conditioning
 - o Skinner – operant conditioning
 - o Bandura – social learning theory
- Theories of cognitive development
 - o Piaget – cognitive-developmental theory, biological aspect
 - o Vygotsky – sociocultural theory, effect of the environment on cognitive development
 - o Information processing perspectives – similarities between brains and computers

- Systems theories of development
 - o Gottlieb – ethological and evolutionary theories, imprinting and recognising the mother’s face and voice
 - o Bronfenbrenner – the bioecological model , how people change over generations

Theories in Perspective

- Freud, Erikson and Piaget
 - o Stage theorists
 - o Biological-maturational forces
 - o Parents are supporters of development
- Watson, Skinner and Bandura
 - o Learning theorists
 - o Emphasise environment more than biology
 - o Parents are children’s trainers
 - o Skinner – rewarding good behaviour and punishing bad behaviour
 - o A child simply observing the environment ends up acquiring information about that environment
 - o A lot about their development is self-propelled
- Vygotsky, Maslow and systems/information processing theorists
 - o Biology and environment are inseparable components of a larger system
 - o Parents are partners with their children in the development process

Enduring Themes

1. How do nature and nurture together shape development? (*Nature vs Nurture*)
2. How do children shape their own development? (*Activity vs Passivity*)
3. In what ways is development continuous, and in what ways is it discontinuous? (*Continuity vs Discontinuity*)
4. How does change occur (*Mechanisms of Developmental Change*)
5. Is development similar from person to person and culture to culture? (*Universality vs Context Specificity*)
6. How do children within a single cultural group become so different from each other? (*Individual differences*)
7. How can research promote children’s well-being (*Research and children’s welfare*)

Nature vs Nurture

- How do biological forces and environmental forces act and interact to make us who we are
- Researchers on the nature side emphasise the influence of heredity
 - o Universal maturational processes guided by genes
 - o Biologically-based predispositions produced by evolution
 - o Biological influences such as hormones and brain growth spurts

Development through maturation

- Development is largely a process of maturation
- Researchers on nurture side emphasise the changes in response to the environment – all external and social conditions, stimuli and events can affect us

Development through learning

- Development is largely a process of learning
- If development extends entirely on nature, we would expect all children to achieve similar developmental milestones at similar times because of maturation
 - o Differences among individuals are caused by differences in genetic make up
- If development extends entirely on nurture, we would expect outcomes to result entirely from individuals’ life experiences
- Developmental changes are the products of a complex interplay between nature and nurture
 - o A balance between the two

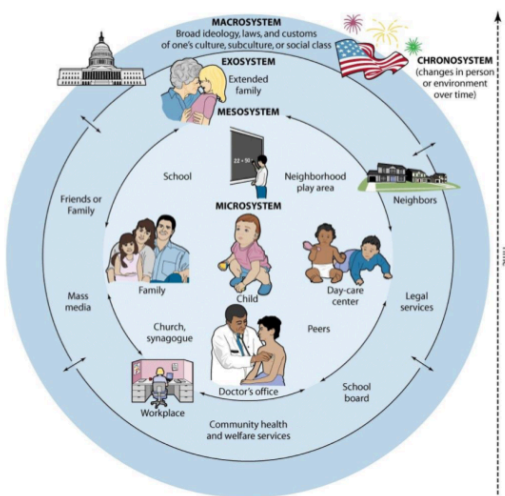
NATURE	NURTURE
Heredity	Environment
Maturation	Learning
Genes	Experience
Innate/Biologically-Based Systems	Cultural Influences

How we conceptualise development

- Bronfenbrenner became concerned that early developmental scientists were studying human development out of context – expecting it to be universal and failing to appreciate cultural and societal differences
- The person with their genetic makeup, biological and psychological characteristics is embedded in a series of environmental systems which interact with the individual overtime to influence development

Bronfenbrenner's Bio-ecological model

- Conceptualises the environment as a set of nested systems, each inside another
- Each structure emphasises a different level of influence
- The environmental forces at each level vary in effect on each child
- There is complex interconnectedness among the levels – called systems
 - Microsystem
 - Immediate physical and social environment
 - Parents, grandparents, child care
 - Mesosystem
 - Interrelationships or linkages between two or more microsystems
 - Problems a teenager faces at school may affect home life
 - Exosystem
 - Link involving social systems individuals do not experience directly
 - Changes in parents' workplace may affect home life
 - Macrosystem
 - Larger cultural context in which microsystem, mesosystem and exosystem are embedded
 - Cultural beliefs, customs, laws
 - Chronosystem
 - Changes in people and their environments occurring across time
 - Attitudes to child raising in the 20th century compared to now



Heritability

- The amount of variability in population that is attributable to heredity influence
- Behaviour geneticists use two major strategies to assess hereditary contributions to behaviour: selective breeding and family studies
- Estimates the amount of genetic variation between individuals in a population beyond that accounted for by genetic determination
- E.g. genetic determination of number of fingers is high and heritability of number of fingers is low

Counter play between genes and experience

Three key elements:

- Genotype – the genetic material an individual inherits
- Phenotype – the observable expression of the genotype
- Environment – all other aspects other than the genetic material itself

Genotype/Phenotype Relations

- Transmission of chromosomes and genes from parent to offspring