

PSYC105 SUMMARIES

DEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY

WHAT IS DEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY

Developmental psychology	Study of human behaviour as function of age Interested in children Psych process of <u>change</u> as function of cognitive development, biological maturation and social experience across lifespan
Changes	Systematic, orderly, patterned, relatively enduring Milestones e.g. crawling → walking, physical maturation at puberty
Continuities	Ways we remain same over time e.g. attachment from infancy → adulthood, temperament/ personality

WHERE DOES IT ALL START?

Development begins from conception

Vulnerability of developing embryo in womb

Early experience highly important – critical/ sensitive periods in development

Prenatal development	Blastocyst (mass of cells) → embryo → foetus
Obstacles to normal foetal development	i. Exposure to hazardous environmental influences – teratogens (smoking, alcohol etc.) ii. Gene/ chromosome errors iii. Placental failure iv. Premature/ traumatic birth
Early brain development	Serve and return interactions w adults shape brain architecture Facial expression and gestures → new neural connections formed
Conceptual challenges	Bidirectional influences – parental/ child reciprocal interactions, gene/ environment interactions

DEVELOPMENTAL THEORIES

Major theories	Psychoanalytic theory: Freud and Erikson Cognitive developmental theory: Piaget and Kohlberg Social cognitive theory: Bandura Ethological theory: Ainsworth and Bowlby (attachment)
Nature/ nurture	Maturation – unfolding of genetically programmed behaviour patterns... but environment (e.g. childrearing customs) has impact Environmentally/ culturally important skills acquired

COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT – PIAGET

Piaget's theory (importance of nature)	Constructivist – child actively constructs understandings through exploration/ experience Universal, qualitatively different stages
Equilibration	Move from one stage to next... balance btwn old/ new understandings
Assimilation	Integrate and interpret new experiences in terms of existing schemas
Accommodation	Modify/ create new schemas in response to experiences

Stage 1: Sensory-motor intelligence	Birth – 2 years Physical interactions w environment Object permanence
Stage 2: Pre-operational period	2 – 7 years Mental representations Pre-logical/ egocentric Conservation is a challenge
Stage 3: Concrete operations	7 – 11 years Mental operations – only for physical/ concrete materials
Stage 4: Formal operations	11 years + Hypothetical reasoning, abstract concepts
Object permanence	Illustrates ability to mentally represent objects in mind < 8 months: out of sight out of mind 9 months – 12 months: understands hidden objects still exist BUT A-not-B error – look for object in location A (last seen), not new location B 12 months+: objects continue to exist, can be moved while out of sight = invisible displacements
Conservation	Changing form of substance does not change its amount/ overall volume/ mass Preoperational child: errors related to perception → respond to most dominant perceptual aspect of task
Strengths	Learning = active process Children are not miniature adults Children think differently at different ages
Critiques	Stages too rigid Under-estimated children's abilities Universal theory? Western bias? → social context not sufficiently considered

COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT – OTHER THEORETICAL APPROACHES

Vygotsky (importance of nurture)	Sociocultural theory Children learn useful skills according to environment Importance of social context: role of peers, collaborative learning Scaffolding: adult structures learning so child grasps new knowledge Zone of proximal development: distance btwn child's current competency level and level they can achieve w guidance
Information processing/ neuroscience approach	Speed of processing info Development of memory strategies How info is organized/ retained/ retrieved

COGNITIVE LANDMARKS OF EARLY DEVELOPMENT: THEORY OF MIND (ToM)

Self-concept	Developing self-recognition/ self-awareness = initial steps on path to developing mature ToM
Rouge Test	Child btwn 15-25mths tries to rub off rouge Important developmental milestone: recognize themselves in mirror
Social cognition: ToM	Understanding of people as mental beings, each w own mental states e.g. thoughts, wants, motives, feelings Child btwn 18mths – 2yrs understand peoples desires differ

False Belief Task	Challenge for child to realize others may not know what they know Under 4: inability to put oneself in another mind Sally-Anne test evaluates child's ability to understand someone else believes something they know to be wrong
Influences on developing ToM	Nature: brain maturation, window for developing very consistent Nurture: social interaction – parental use of mental state language, individual differences e.g. children who engage in more pretend play pass test earlier

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT: ATTACHMENT

Attachment	Strong emotional connection shared w those to whom we feel closest
<i>John Bowlby</i>	Adaptive survival instinct: infants don't stray from caretakers who feed/protect them
<i>Konrad Lorenz</i>	Young geese followed around 1 st large moving object they saw after hatching → imprinting: occurs only during a critical period
Do humans have 'sensitive periods' for development of healthy interpersonal relationships?	Longitudinal study of adopted Romanian orphans Adopted <6mths: fared well later on Adopted >6mths: often exhibited -ve psych effects of early environment e.g. inattention, hyperactivity, difficulties attaching to adult caregivers
<i>Harry Harlow</i>	Tactile support from warm, cuddly caregiver (contact comfort) prevails nourishment for infant monkeys
<i>Mary Ainsworth (1978)</i> – the Strange Situation	Observe 1yr-old's reactions to being separated/ reunited w primary caregiver (usually mother) Classified 4 categories of infants' attachment relationships
1. Secure attachment	50-60%: distressed w separation, return brings joy Caregiver as <i>safe haven</i> (comfort when threatened) and <i>secure base</i> (reliable foundation to explore from) Protective/ resiliency factor: grow up more well-adjusted, helpful, empathetic
2. Insecure anxious-ambivalent	15-20%: panicked by mum's departure, mixed emotional reaction on return
3. Insecure-avoidant	15-20%: indifferent to mum's departure, little reaction on return
4. Disorganised	5-10%: inconsistent/ confused set of responses May appear dazed when reunited More probable to later develop clinically significant problems
Limitations	Attachment styles can vary w different caregivers Strange Situation procedure classifications vary
Origin of individual differences in attachment style	Attributable largely to parents' responsiveness to child Child's temperament has influence
Still-face procedure	Babies have mental representations of reliability/ predictability of parents Mother faces baby and holds 'still face' Reactions of baby observed Usually becomes agitated by failed attempts to evoke reaction in mother
Core features of sensitivity (<i>Ainsworth</i>)	Child will develop secure relationship if parent overall provides sensitive responsiveness: (i) notice and receive infants' cues, (ii) interpret signals accurately, (iii) responds promptly/ appropriately/ flexibly