

The Study of Development

The ways development is viewed Academically



Defining Development

- The pattern of movement or change that begins at conception and continues through the human life span
- Differing views of Developmental beginnings
 - Original Sin - children were perceived as being basically bad, born into the world as evil beings.
 - Tabula Rasa - children are like a “blank tablet,” and acquire their characteristics through experience.
 - Innate Goodness - children are inherently good.



Perspectives of Development

- **The Traditional Approach**
 - Emphasizes extensive change from birth to adolescence, little or no change in adulthood, and decline in late old age.
- **The Life-Span Approach**
 - Emphasizes developmental change during adulthood as well as childhood.



Characteristics of Life-Span Perspective

- Development is lifelong
- Development is multidimensional
- Development is multidirectional
- Development is plastic
- Development is contextual
- Development is studied by a number of disciplines
- Development involves growth, maintenance, and regulation



Characteristics of Life-Span Perspective

- Development is lifelong
 - No age period dominates development
- Development is Multidimensional
 - There are biological dimensions
 - There are cognitive dimensions
 - There are socioemotional dimensions
- Development is Multidirectional
 - Some dimensions or components of a dimension increase in growth
 - Some dimensions or components of a dimension decrease in growth



Characteristics of Life-Span Perspective

- Development is Plastic
 - Plasticity involves the degree to which characteristics change or remain stable
- Development is Contextual
 - Normative age-graded influences
 - Normative history-graded influences
 - Nonnormative life events



The Study of Development

- Development is studied by a number of different professions
 - Psychologists
 - Sociologists
 - Anthropologists
 - Neuroscientists
 - Medical Researchers
- There are three main goals in development
 - Maintenance
 - Growth
 - Regulation



Studies of Development: Biologically

- Involve changes in the individual's physical nature such as:
 - Height and weight gains
 - The development of the brain
 - Changes in motor skills
 - Cardiovascular decline



Studies of Development: Cognition

- Involve changes in the individual's thought, intelligence, and language such as:
 - Watching a mobile swing above a crib
 - Creating a two-word sentence
 - Memorizing a poem
 - Imagining being a movie star



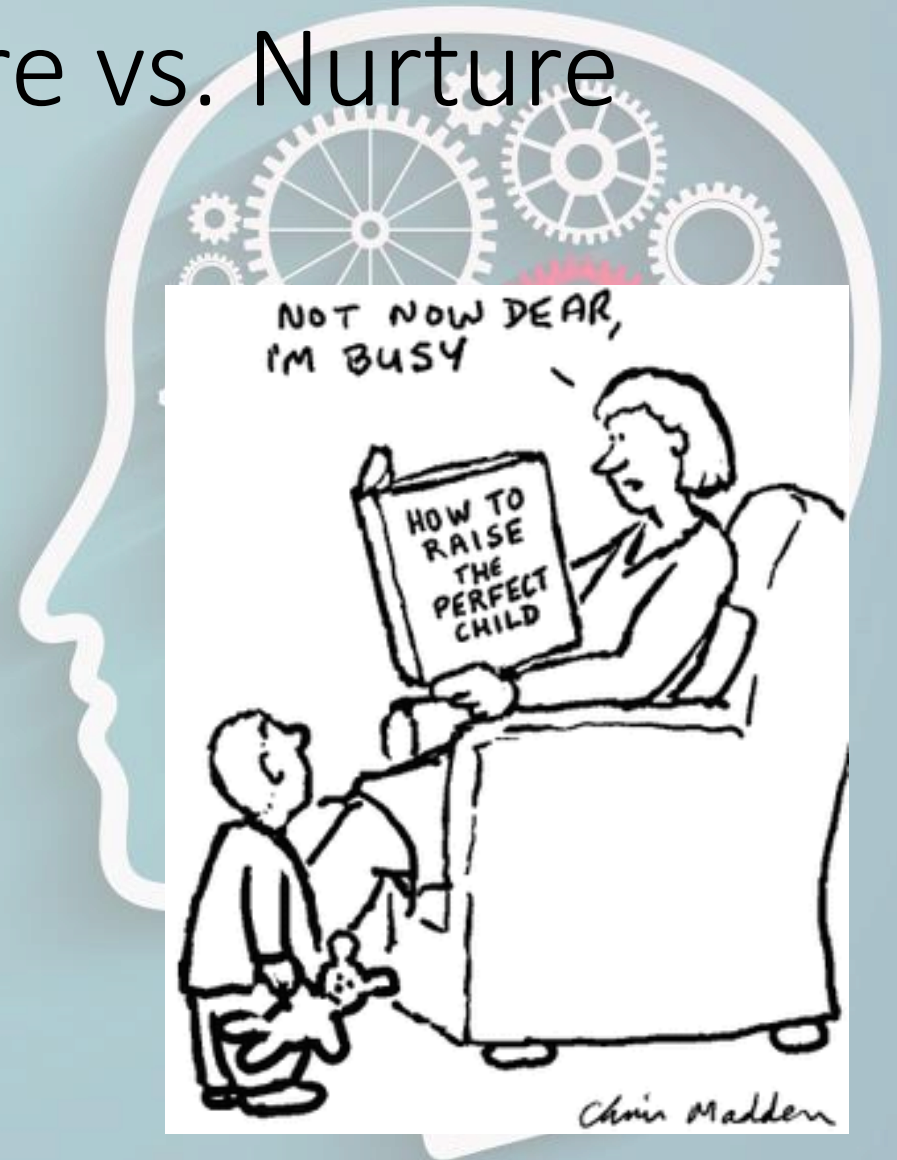
Studies of Development: Socioemotional

- Involve changes in the individual's relationships with other people, changes in emotions, and changes in personality such as:
 - An infant smiling from her mother's touch
 - A young boy hitting a playmate
 - A girl's joy at her senior prom
 - The affection of an elderly couple



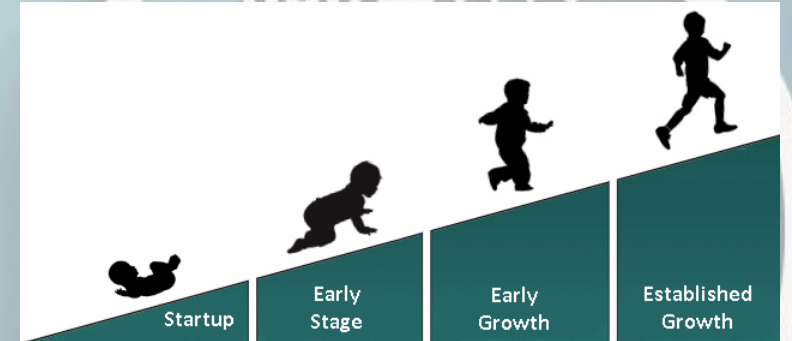
Developmental Issues: Nature vs. Nurture

- Involves the debate about whether development is primarily influenced by nature or nurture
 - Nature - An organism's biological inheritance
 - Ex. People are born a certain way
 - Nurture - An organism's environmental experiences
 - Ex. People are a product of their upbringing



Developmental Issues: The Continuity vs Discontinuity Issue

- This issue focuses on the extent to which development involves gradual, cumulative change or distinct stages
 - Continuity - Development results from a gradual process occurring over several weeks, months, and possibly years
 - Discontinuity - Development occurs through a sequence of stages in which change is qualitatively rather than quantitatively different



Stages of Skill Development
Retention and Return

Simulation Powered Learning
fissure

Return is improved performance and behavior change.
Integrated – you have integrated your new skill with all the skills you need to perform.

Automatic – you can do it without thinking about it. Students remember what they do. Simulation increases retention to 78%.
Return is application and skill building.

Awkward – you can do it, but you have to think about it. Students remember what they say or write - 10-20% retention from reading and audio visual.
Return is knowledge, but limited ability to apply it.

Frustrated – you become aware of a skill you don't have. Students remember what they hear, see and read - 5% retention from lectures.
The return from training is awareness of a needed skill.

Pool of Bliss – you don't know what you don't know, so you don't care.
If you don't train, there is no return.

Developmental Issues: Stability vs. Change

- This issue involves the degree to which we become older renditions of our early experience or whether we develop into someone different from who we were at an earlier point in development
- It considers the extent to which early experiences (especially in infancy) or later experiences are the key determinants of a person's development



Evaluating Developmental Issues

- Most life-span developmentalists recognize that extreme positions are unwise
- The key to development is the interaction of nature and nurture rather than either factor alone
- There still exists strong debate regarding how strongly development is influenced by each of the factors



Sources

- York University Department of Psychology

