

Developmental Psych Lessons

Day 1- Basics of Child Development

1. Nature vs. Nurture
 - a. Both influence each other
 - b. Inherit genes, but expression of those genes is influenced by environment
 - c. EX: Maternal stress may alter the genetic material of her fetus. Similarly, in later adulthood, an individual may have a genetic risk for developing Alzheimer's but not be afflicted by the disorder if he or she is intellectually or physically active.
 - d. Big Question: To what EXTENT are specific developmental things determined by nature/nurture, and how do they influence each other?
 - e. For our book, going to be looking at language, relationships, cognition
2. Critical Periods
 - a. In early development in particular, certain factors must be present at specific ages for growth to occur normally.
 - b. Biology:
 - i. Growth of the nervous system, which may be affected negatively by maternal illness early in pregnancy.
 - ii. Development of sensory abilities, such as depth perception in early infancy (3-8 months).
 - c. Environment:
 - i. Language: First few years of life. Ends somewhere between age 5 and puberty.
 1. EX: Deaf who are not exposed to a sign language as children never achieve full proficiency, even after 30 years of daily use. Most profound for individuals who receive no sign language until after the age of 12, even those deaf people who began learning a sign language at age 5 were significantly less fluent than native deaf signers (whose exposure to a sign language began at birth).
 - ii. Early infancy, during which the attachment bond is developed, is an example of a critical period in social/personality growth.
 - d. In general, as individuals grow older, the relevance of critical periods weakens considerably.
 - e. At later ages, there is evidence instead for considerable plasticity. People may suffer injuries or illnesses which they compensate for by recruiting other abilities.
 - f. Example—Older adults who have cerebral hemorrhage and lose language abilities can regain almost all, if not their entire, verbal facilities.
3. Theories of Child Development
 - a. Piaget
 - i. Intelligence = the ability to adapt to the environment through an equilibration process.

- ii. Child Development = child adapting to environment by using existing ideas about world, changing them in response to experiences
 - iii. Three Big Concepts:
 - 1. Schema: A concept or category about the world
 - 2. Assimilation: The tendency to interpret new experiences in terms of existing schemas
 - 3. Accommodation: Changes in schemas to incorporate information from experiences
 - iv. Children don't know "less" than adults do, it's that they know "differently."
- b. Erikson
- i. All stages present at birth, unfold according to environment
 - ii. Each stage = new challenges and hopefully mastery
 - iii. Each stage builds on successful completion of earlier stages
- c. Attachment Theory (Harlow, Bowlby, Ainsworth)
- i. Critical Period (about 0 -5 years). If an attachment has not developed during this period, then the child will suffer from irreversible developmental consequences, such as reduced intelligence and increased aggression.
 - ii. Infant needs to develop a relationship with at least one [primary caregiver](#) for the child's successful social and emotional development, and in particular for learning how to effectively regulate their feelings.
 - iii. Fathers or any other individuals, are equally likely to become principal attachment figures if they provide most of the child care and related social interaction.^[4]
 - iv. In the presence of a sensitive and responsive caregiver, the infant will use the caregiver as a "safe base" from which to explore.
 - v. The attachment relationship acts as a prototype for all future social relationships so disrupting it can have severe consequences.

Day 4- Development and Linguistics

Child Development Theories

1. Hang them up on the wall!
2. Go look at the two other theories.
3. What differences do you notice? What similarities?
4. As you read the book, your task will be to annotate for SPECIFIC stages and evidence of those stages for Genie

Linguistic Theories and Development

1. What is Language?

- a. Symbolization of thought
- b. Learned code
- c. Receptive = understanding
- d. Expressive = making others understand
- e. Speech vs. Language
 - i. Speech = physical
 - ii. Language = intellectual
 - iii. Ex: Could have great language skills, but low speech skills (stutter, pronunciation issues)
 - iv. Ex: Parrot has speech, but not language

2. Psamtik Experiment

- a. 7th Century BC, King of Egypt
- b. Believed they were most ancient race, wanted to prove that belief
- c. Hypothesis: If children had no opportunity to learn an language from older people around them, they would naturally speak the most primal language (Egyptian)
- d. Method: Took two infants of peasant, turned them over to herdsman. Children to be kept in a cottage, cared for, but totally isolated from spoken language.
- e. Findings: Children 2 years old, ran to herdsman, cried out, "Becos!" Psamtik made inquiries, learned this was the Phrygian word for bread.
- f. Conclusions: Phrygians were an older race than Egyptians.

3. Theories of Language Acquisition

- a. Nativist/Innate (Chomsky)
 - i. Children born with innate abilities to acquire universal grammar or SYNTAX (rules by which language is organized, what gives it meaning)
 - ii. Specific language depends on exposure
 - iii. Language is hard-wired/biological
- b. Learning Theory
 - i. Language depends entirely on imitation and selective reinforcement of a language

4. Stages of Language Acquisition

- a. 3 months–1 year: Babbling, in which children produce meaningless sounds; during this time, children may go through a critical period in which they are particularly sensitive to language cues.
- b. 1 year: Children start to produce simple short words that begin with a consonant sound; however, they understand more than they can speak.
- c. 18 months: Children put together short phrases, called telegraphic speech because the children leave out words not critical to the message such as the articles “a” and “the” and instead focus on verbs and nouns (in today’s parlance, perhaps this might be called texting speech!).
- d. 3 years: Children are starting to use grammar and develop larger vocabularies, but they make errors, called overgeneralization, in which they might use incorrect grammar such as saying “runned” for the past tense of “run” instead of “ran.”
- e. 5 years: Children begin to use the basic rules of language but not a full vocabulary; they do not have the ability to understand and use subtle grammatical rules.

Pass out books

1. Reading every day for the rest of the week, and probably all of next week as well. You will likely need to read some outside as well.
2. I will give you benchmarks—we’ll stop a few times a week to discuss and clarify what you’ve been reading
3. This book is HARD! Written at a college level.
4. Annotate with sticky notes, take notes, look up words
5. It’s okay if you don’t understand everything. Try to get the main ideas.
6. Annotate for a few things:
 - a. Child development (what stages/types of development do you notice? What connections can you make to the different theories and Genie?)
 - b. Linguistic Theory (what evidence does she provide for innate vs. learning theories? What type of linguistic development do you see in her story?_
 - c. Ethics- Was Genie exploited? Were the scientists ethical in the way they structured their research and treated her?
7. Chapter 1 = intro, Psamtik
8. Chapter 2, 3, 4 = Intro to Genie’s story, her background, story of discovery (GET THROUGH THIS BY THURSDAY)
9. Chapter 5, 6, 7 = Linguistic theories (READ FOR FRIDAY)
10. Chapter 8, 9, 10 = What research would be done, Genie’s development
11. Chapter 11, 12 = Feral children, ethics, scientific priorities (BY MONDAY)