

Seventh Edition

DEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY

Childhood & Adolescence



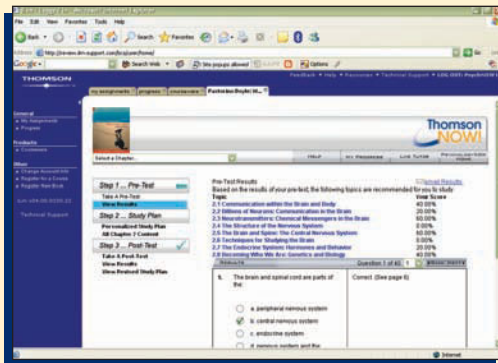
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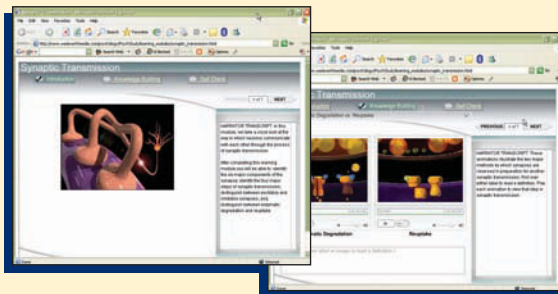


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Developmental Psychology

Childhood and Adolescence

SEVENTH EDITION

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Dedicated to
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Preface

Our purpose in writing this book has been to produce a current and comprehensive overview of child and adolescent development that reflects the best theories, research, and practical advice that developmentalists have to offer. Throughout our many years of teaching, we had longed for a substantive developmental text that was also interesting, accurate, up to date, and written in clear, concise language that an introductory student could easily understand. At this level, a good text should talk “to” rather than “at” its readers, anticipating their interests, questions, and concerns and treating them as active participants in the learning process. In the field of human development, a good text should also stress the processes that underlie developmental change so that students come away from the course with a firm understanding of the causes and complexities of development. Last but not least, a good text is a relevant text—one that shows how the theory and the research that students are asked to digest can be applied to a number of real-life settings.

The present volume represents our attempt to accomplish all of these objectives. We have tried to write a book that is both rigorous and applied—one that challenges students to think about the fascinating process of human development, to share in the excitement of our young and dynamic discipline, and to acquire a knowledge of developmental principles that will serve them well in their roles as parents, teachers, nurses, day-care workers, pediatricians, psychologists, or in any other capacity by which they may one day influence the lives of developing persons.

■ Philosophy

Certain philosophical views underlie any systematic treatment of a field as broad as human development. Our philosophy can be summarized as follows:

We Believe in Theoretical Eclecticism

There are many theories that have contributed to what we know about developing persons, and this theoretical diversity is a strength rather than a weakness. Although some theories may do a better job than others of explaining particular aspects of development, we will see—time and time again—that *different theories emphasize different aspects of development* and that knowledge of many theories is necessary to explain the course and complexities of human development. So this book does not attempt to convince its readers that any one theoretical viewpoint is “best.” The psychoanalytic, behavioristic, cognitive-developmental, ecological, sociocultural, information-processing, ethological, and behavioral genetic viewpoints (as well as several less-encompassing theories that address selected aspects of development) are all treated with respect.

The Best Information about Human Development Comes from Systematic Research

To teach this course effectively, we believe that one must convince students of the value of theory and systematic research. Although there are many ways to achieve these objectives, we have chosen to contrast the modern developmental sciences with their “prescientific” origins and then to discuss and illustrate the many methodological approaches that researchers use to test their theories and answer important questions about developing children and adolescents. We’ve taken care to explain why there is no one “best method” for studying developing persons, and we’ve repeatedly stressed that our most reliable findings are those that can be replicated using a variety of methods.

A Strong “Process” Orientation

A major complaint with many developmental texts (including some best sellers) is that they describe human development without adequately explaining why it occurs. In recent years investigators have become increasingly concerned about identifying and understanding developmental processes—the biological and environmental factors that cause us to change—and this book clearly reflects this emphasis. Our own process orientation is based on the belief that students are more likely to remember what develops and when if they know and understand the reasons *why* these developments take place.

A Strong “Contextual” Orientation

One of the more important lessons that developmentalists have learned is that children and adolescents live in historical eras and sociocultural contexts that affect every aspect of their development. We have chosen to highlight these contextual influences in three major ways. First, *cross-cultural comparisons* are discussed throughout the text. Not only do students enjoy learning about the development of people in other cultures and ethnically diverse subcultures, but cross-cultural research also helps them to see how human beings can be so much alike, and at the same time so different from one another. In addition, the impacts of such immediate contextual influences as our families, neighborhoods, schools, and peer groups are considered throughout the first 14 chapters as we discuss each aspect of human development and again in Chapters 15 and 16 as important topics in their own right.

Human Development Is a Holistic Process

Although individual researchers may concentrate on particular topics such as physical development, cognitive development, or the development of moral reasoning, development is not piecemeal but *holistic*: human beings are at once physical, cognitive, social, and emotional creatures, and each of these components of “self” depends, in part, on the changes that are taking place in other areas of development. This holistic perspective is a central theme in the modern developmental sciences—and one that is emphasized throughout the text.

A Developmental Text Should Be a Resource Book for Students—One That Reflects Current Knowledge

We have chosen to cite more than 800 new studies and reviews (most of which have been published since the fifth edition) to ensure that our coverage (and any outside readings that students may undertake) will represent our current understanding of a topic or topics. However, we have avoided the tendency, common in textbooks, to ignore older research simply because it is older. In fact, many of the “classics” of our discipline are prominently displayed throughout the text to illustrate important breakthroughs and to show how our knowledge about developing persons gradually builds on these earlier findings and insights.