Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this unit, students should be able to:

1. Appraise the stages of human development from conception to the end of life.
2. Discuss the importance of emotional attachment for infants.
3. Define moral development.
4. Summarize the development of language.
5. Appraise the development of gender and sexual orientation.
6. Explain the physiological changes of adolescence.
7. Describe the different approaches to the study of personality.
8. Assess how heredity can influence temperament and personality traits.
9. Determine the role social environment plays in shaping personality.
10. Compare and contrast cultural influences on personality.

Written Lecture

Chapter 13: Development Over the Life Span

Have you ever wanted to be an octopus? Did you ever think that you could benefit from having eight arms?

Although this might sound outlandish to some, this scenario would probably be quite beneficial for mom Nayda Suleman, who gained worldwide attention in 2009 after giving birth to eight babies through in vitro fertilization. However, are multiple births like this truly safe? Could the babies be at risk for various developmental complications? Would you be concerned that you could possibly endanger your child’s cognitive development? Is it really worth the risk?

In this chapter, you will learn about the development of one’s life from conception until death. Pay close attention to the section related to prenatal development. According to Wade & Tavris (2011) there are multiple factors that can harm the baby. It is important to avoid these known dangers to prevent avoidable complications.

How does your baby pass the time? Does she enjoy watching her favorite television show while you warm her bottle? Can certain marketed DVDs actually increase a baby’s brain development and IQ?

According to Christakis (2009) if one introduces a baby to television too soon, this could actually delay the baby’s development, particularly language acquisition. It has also been shown that children who were exposed to large amounts of television as babies have a greater propensity to experience attention issues in childhood. Keep this research in mind the next time you turn the television on your baby’s favorite cartoon.

Key Terms

1. Accommodation
2. Assimilation
3. Contact comfort
4. Developmental psychology
5. Fetal alcohol syndrome
6. Fetus
7. Jean Piaget
8. Maturation
9. Mental operations
10. Object permanence
11. Preoperational stage
12. Sensorimotor stage
13. Separation anxiety
14. Socialization
15. Zygote

Reading Assignment

Chapter 13: Development Over the Life Span
Chapter 14: Theories of Personality

Supplemental Reading

See information below.
Did your baby attend a day care center while you worked? Were you worried that this would have a negative impact on his development?

As you continue your exploration of this chapter, notice the information related to language and social development. Clark-Stewart (1991) purported that children actually do better when cared for outside of the home. Her research examined the intellectual and social development of 150 children between the ages of two and four. The children that attended day care centers had higher levels of cognitive development than those who stayed at home with their mothers or caregivers. So don’t feel guilty if you cannot stay at home like your neighbor. Your child just might be better off in the long run.

This chapter further discusses the cognitive, moral, and gender development of individuals. As you read the section on adolescence, be sure to reflect upon the moral dilemmas that you experienced as a teenager. Did you want to please your parents or your peers? What about teenagers today? Are they truly responsible for their actions? Research has proven that adolescent brains are not fully mature until the age of 20. In fact, the frontal lobes, the area in which most of our reasoning takes place, are usually one of the last areas to mature. It has also been shown that teenagers have a difficult time controlling their impulses. So, should a 16 year old be punished if he commits a horrific crime even though his brain is not fully mature? Is it fair to hold him accountable for actions that could truly be beyond his control?

As you conclude your examination of this chapter, examine the hopes and dreams you have for the future. Do you think you will have a mid-life crisis? What physical changes will your body endure as you age? Is there something that you can do to remain proactive in seeking to prevent depression, memory loss, and senility? In essence, will the ending of your story be as good as the beginning?

Chapter 14: Personality

Are you like everyone else in your family? What makes you unique?

In this chapter, Wade & Tavris (2011) confront the issue of personality. Everyone has one, but some are more pleasant than others. What accounts for these differences? Is there a way to predict the personality traits of another individual? As you examine this chapter, pay close attention to the theories related to personality. Which theory most closely aligns with your point of view?

Freud, Skinner, and Rogers all performed extensive research on human nature. Each scholar took a different approach in examining human nature. Freud’s works were often described as pessimistic and sexually driven. He posited that we have internal drives which cause major conflicts in order to seek sexual satisfaction and gratification. This is in stark contrast to Rogers’ theory. He purported that humans are innately good, and that we are in a constant quest to make ourselves better. Meanwhile, Skinner is positioned somewhere in the middle of the two theories. He argued that one’s environment has a strong influence on behavior. So keeping these three differing viewpoints in mind, which scholar receives your vote?

As you continue your examination of this chapter, you will be introduced to other theorists, and their works related to personality: Carl Jung, Clara Thompson, and Karen Horney, just to name a few. Notice the similarities and differences of each one’s approach. What would dinner talk consist of if you were fortunate enough to have all of these scholars around your dining table?
Are you Type A or B?

According to Pedersen & Denollet (2006) in the 1950’s, Friedman and Rosenman introduced these personality types to the world. Much interest and fascination were piqued as humans began to examine their personality tendencies against the described characteristics. A person with Type A was predicted to have an increased probability for developing heart disease. This was later dispelled, but a new prediction emerged. Individuals with Type D were later identified as possessing a higher propensity for cardiovascular disease. People with Type D personalities are described as having gloomy and worried dispositions. They are very introverted and standoffish. Recent studies have also discovered that these individuals have a greater risk for sudden cardiac arrest and hypertension. So what is the connection? If you tend to keep your emotions bottled up inside, are you truly helping others, or hurting yourself?

While reading this section, be mindful of the various influences on one’s personality. Wade & Tavris (2011) discuss the various roles that genetics, environment, and culture play on shaping one’s personality. For example, some cultures value independence over the needs of the group. On the other hand, group harmony takes precedence in many Asian cultures. These cultures value security, group norms, and obligations. This reinforces the importance of remaining cognizant of cultural influences. For instance, what is viewed as independent and self-reliant in America could be construed as egotistical and selfish in other nations. So the next time you get upset with a foreign business partner because he is late for a meeting, just remember that he might be delayed due to a call from a family member. His culture has shaped his values just as your culture has shaped yours.

As you conclude your study of this section, begin to examine your inner experiences. We must carefully balance all of the elements that influence our personalities. Maslow, Rogers, and May argued that we have a unique human capacity to influence our own actions and the future consequences. Additionally, the narrative approach posits that we influence our personalities by the stories that we tell others about our lives. So, which approach describes your personality?

References


Supplemental Reading

Click here to access a PDF of the Chapter 13 Presentation.

Click here to access a PDF of the Chapter 14 Presentation.

The project this week is to design a brochure related to attachment. Although the primary focus is to empower single mothers in regards to the importance of attachment, there is also research available that encourages increased interactions from fathers. For extra enrichment, go to the CSU Online Library and review the article by Goldberg in which she stresses the importance of father attachments.