**Course Learning Outcomes for Unit VII**

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

7. Analyze contributors to human action, motivation, and drive, including life experience and personality.
   7.1 Describe some inborn abilities that infants have and also some cultural influences on physical and psychological development.
   7.2 Outline the psychological and behavioral changes that women and men experience as they progress through emerging adulthood and middle age.
   7.3 Describe the factors that make most children resilient in the face of adversity, and comment on whether early childhood trauma foretells later adult maladjustment.
   7.4 List the Big Five personality traits, and describe the characteristics of each one.
   7.5 Discuss some ways in which peers influence the development of personality in children.

**Reading Assignment**

**Chapter 13:**
Development over the Life Span

**Chapter 14:**
Theories of Personality

**Unit Lesson**

**Chapter 13: Development over the Life Span**

*Have you ever wanted to be an octopus? Could you 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 via in vitro fertilization (IVF) assistance. However, are multiple births such as this truly safe? Should she have been concerned about possible risks for various developmental complications? Would you be concerned that you could possibly endanger your child’s cognitive development?

In Unit VII, 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, and Garry (2014), there are multiple factors that can harm the baby. It is important to avoid these known dangers to prevent avoidable complications.

*What does your baby do in his spare time? Does he or she enjoy watching a favorite television show while you warm the bottle? Can certain marketed DVD’s 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. Think about this research the next time you turn the television to Nick Jr.

*Did your baby attend a day care center while you worked? Were you concerned that this would have a negative impact on his or her 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 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. Therefore, do not feel guilty if you cannot stay at home like your neighbor. Your child just might be better off in the long run.

As a teen, did you want to please your parents or your peers? What about teenagers today? Are they truly responsible for their actions?

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. Research has revealed 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? Ponder your thoughts as you review this section.

As you conclude your examination of this chapter, examine the hopes and dreams you have for the future. Does your beginning in life directly correlate with your ending? 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: Theories of Personality

Are you just like your father? What makes you unique?

In this chapter, Wade, Tavris, and Garry (2014) 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. 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 and 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, and Garry (2014) 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 contemplate dating someone from another country, just remember that you may have differing value systems. Will you be up to the challenge?

As you conclude your examination of Unit VII, 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 future consequences. Consequently, the narrative approach posits that we influence our personalities by the stories that we tell others about our lives. So, what is shaping your personality?

References


Suggested Reading

Click here to access the Chapter 13 PowerPoint Presentation. Click here for the PDF version.

Click here to access the Chapter 14 PowerPoint Presentation. Click here for the PDF version.

Does one’s personality really matter? For extra enrichment, go to the CSU Online Library, Academic OneFile or General OneFile databases and review the following two articles discussing views on personality:


Learning Activities (Non-Graded)

Quiz

1. The newborn infant has a number of __________ such as sucking, grasping, and rooting, which aid in his or her survival.  
   a. cognitive skills  
   b. traits  
   c. motor reflexes  
   d. inborn perceptual abilities
2. Eve touches the cheek of her two-month-old daughter, Elise. In response, Elise turns her head toward the touch in search of something to suck. Elise is demonstrating the __________ reflex.
   a. sucking
   b. contact comfort
   c. rooting
   d. Babinski

3. Emerging adulthood, the years between the ages of 18 and 25, is considered to be a new phase of life in which:
   a. people feel that they are no longer adolescents but are not yet fully adult.
   b. rates of emotional distress increase greatly as people assume adult responsibilities.
   c. people living in non-industrialized cultures develop feelings of dissatisfaction with their countries and desire to move to more developed nations.
   d. crises similar to midlife crises commonly occur.

4. Which of the following statements is true of menopause?
   a. Women remain fertile even after menopause.
   b. Menopause produces physical symptoms in women as the vascular system adjusts to the decrease in estrogen.
   c. Approximately 60 percent of women experience severe physical and emotional symptoms as a result of menopause.
   d. The majority of women view menopause negatively.

5. Children who have been beaten, neglected, or routinely subjected to verbal or physical abuse by their parents are more likely than other children to:
   a. become delinquent and violent.
   b. have easygoing temperaments.
   c. have a secure attachment style.
   d. have good emotional balance.

6. According to research discussed in your textbook, which of the following is true about resilience?
   a. Most children do not recover from adversity.
   b. There is something special and rare about people who can recover from adversity.
   c. Those with an insecure attachment style recover more easily from adversity.
   d. Children are fairly resilient to trauma, especially if they have easygoing temperaments or personality traits.

7. Professor Benvolio’s personality course emphasizes the importance of Gordon Allport’s contributions to the field of psychology. Professor Benvolio would be most likely to agree that:
   a. people fail to understand the power of culture on behavior, and so they attribute another person’s mysterious actions to the individual’s personality rather than cultural norms.
   b. repression occurs when a person’s own unacceptable or threatening feelings are repressed and then attributed to someone else.
   c. the price of free will is often anxiety and despair, which is why many people try to escape from freedom into narrow certainties.
   d. most individuals have five to ten central traits that reflect a characteristic way of behaving, dealing with others, and reacting to new situations.

8. Amir is constantly worrying about things, even though he really does not have anything to worry about. He constantly complains about his coursework and gives up on difficult projects easily. Amir is best described as highly:
   a. antagonistic.
   b. extroverted.
   c. impulsive.
   d. neurotic.
9. When two psychologists surveyed 275 freshmen at Cornell University, they found that:
   a. most of them had “secret lives” that they never revealed to their parents.
   b. most of them had confessed at least one rule violation to their parents in the past year.
   c. the women shared their “private selves” with parents but the men did not.
   d. only stern and authoritarian parents had adolescents with “secret lives.”

10. Dee Dee’s parents place a high value on academic achievement, but her peers do not. In this situation, Dee is most likely to:
    a. split the difference and become an average student.
    b. suffer psychological damage.
    c. be more strongly influenced by the values of his parents.
    d. be more strongly influenced by his peers.

Quiz Answer Key

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Non-graded Learning Activities are provided to aid students in their course of study. You do not have to submit them. If you have questions, contact your instructor for further guidance and information.