Basic Concepts

- Developmental psychology
  - A study of cognitive, psychosocial and physical changes that transpire throughout the course of the human lifespan
  - Growth years
    - Period from infancy through adolescence

Study of Child Development

- The study of a process
- i.e. change over time
- stage:
  - a period of relative stability
  - qualitatively different
- transition:
  - a time of rapid change
  - bio-social-behavioral shift
Intriguing Questions

- What makes it possible for infants to acquire their native language so rapidly with no special training?
- When do children become aware that other people have thought processes of their own, and what makes this awareness possible?
- What leads to the marked differences in levels and forms of aggression between boys and girls early in childhood?

Intriguing Questions

- When do children begin to reason systematically, and what makes this form of thought possible?
- Is parent-child conflict a necessary part of adolescence?
- What goes on when children are playing?

Stages of Development

Bio-Social-Behavioral Shifts:
BSB Shifts & Subsequent Stages

Review: Cognitive Development
- Piaget's research
- Genetic Epistemology
- Stages of Intelligence
- Piagetian Tasks
- Construction of Knowledge

Genetic Epistemology

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Genetic Epistemology

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<th>Stage:</th>
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<td>Where does Piaget see development going?</td>
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Middle Childhood

Adolescence

Moral Development: Kohlberg’s stages

But remember Carol Gilligan

- The textbook describes what it provides as a ‘toolkit’ for understanding children’s development
- The next three slides describe some of the uses for this toolkit
- Then five more slides summarize major points about development
- (These will not be tested on the final exam!)
Uses for this ‘ Toolkit ’

- *helps us raise children*
  - when a 1-year-old screams when their mother leaves
  - when a 4-year-old insists that they are Darth Vader
  - when a 9-year-old’s room is filled with a rock collection
  - when a teenager seems hypersensitive to criticism

- *helps us evaluate claims in the media about children*
  - effects of video-games...
  - consequences of day care...

- *helps us evaluate policy and programs*
  - in schools: do they match children’s intelligence?
  - in hospitals: do they meet children’s emotional needs?
  - to support parents: do they interfere with their relations with their children?

- *helps us work with children*
  - healthy children in schools
  - sick children in clinics
  - children with special needs

- *helps us think about our own development*
  - the timing of events like divorce, birth of a sibling...

What is development?

- Development continues throughout life
- Development is change in an active, problem-solving organism
- Development is sequential
- Timing is important
- Development is patterned
- Development results from multiple influences
- Development is culturally mediated
- Development involves differentiation & integration
- The study of development affects children’s lives
1. Development continues throughout life
2. Development is change in an active, problem-solving organism
3. Development is sequential
   - there is an orderly sequence of stages
   - one thing must come before another: biologically, logically, psychologically
   - e.g. operational thinking before formal thinking

4. Timing is important
   - timing of key experiences
   - e.g. no linguistic input in first few years, no language
   - but children are resilient and flexible; they can recover remarkably well
   - this means prevention of problems is possible
5. Development is patterned
   - both qualitative, abrupt, stage-like changes and quantitative, gradual, continuous change

6. Development results from multiple influences
   - simultaneously, and in interaction
   - nature & nurture
   - bio-social-behavioral (bio-social-cognitive)
   - organism & environment (& culture)
   - a convergence of factors: e.g. score on a school test depends on nutrition, culture, socioeconomic background, experience, attitude, self-image...

7. Development is culturally mediated
   - foetus and mother are connected directly
   - newborn and mother are connected indirectly - their connection is mediated by culture
   - development is a co-constructive process

8. Development involves differentiation & integration
   - single-word utterances -> multiword sequences, then integrated into grammar

9. The study of development affects children’s lives
   - developmental research can guide social policy
   - as well as education, therapy, medicine...
   - we can change the trajectory of children’s development
"But if you think about it, the past has always been more important than the present. The present is like a coral island that sticks above the water, but is built upon millions of dead corals under the surface, that no one sees. In the same way, our everyday world is built upon millions and millions of events and decisions that occurred in the past. And what we add in the present is trivial.

"A teenager has breakfast, then goes to the store to buy the latest CD of a new band. The kid thinks he lives in a modern moment. But who has defined what a 'band' is? Who defined a 'store'? Who defined a 'teenager'? Or 'breakfast'? To say nothing of all the rest, the kid's entire social setting—family, school, clothing, transportation and government.

"None of this has been decided in the present. Most of it was decided hundreds of years ago. Five hundred years, a thousand years. This kid is sitting on top of a mountain that is the past. And he never notices it. He is ruled by what he never sees, never thinks about, doesn't know. It is a form of coercion that is accepted without question. This same kid is skeptical of other forms of control—parental restrictions, commercial messages, government laws. But the invisible rule of the past, which decides nearly everything in his life, goes unquestioned. This is real power."

I've enjoyed working with you this semester!
Good luck with the final exam!
Have a great winter vacation!