Influences on Development & Issues in Lifespan Development
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- **Normative Age-Graded Influences**

- Occurs in a similar way for most people in a given group.

- Affect most people, and- within a given culture- at about the same age.

- In any one culture, there will be some normative age-graded events; but many such events will be different from one culture to another.

- *Examples: Parenthood, marriage, entering the workforce, death of parents, retirement, entering kindergarten.*

- **Normative History-Graded Influences**

- Common to a particular cohort: a group of people who share a similar experience.

- These are major historical events of processes so large in scope that they affect the lives of virtually everyone who is living –when and where they take place.

- **Normative History-Graded Influences**

- The impact of these events on the individual varies depending on the age at which they are experienced.

- *Examples: depressions, wars, natural disasters, famines, droughts, acts of terrorism, riots, assassination of a national leader.*

- **Non Normative Life Events**

- Experiences that most people do not have, but if they do they have a profound impact on them.

- *Examples: the death of a parent when a child is young, life-threatening illnesses, birth defects, job promotion, divorce, loss of employment, early widowhood, study abroad, something joyous or adventurous.*

- **Context of Influences [An Ecological Model] (See Screen)**

- Urie Bronfenbrenner identifies 4 different levels of environmental influence, extending from the most intimate environment to the most global. Thus, to understand individual development, we must understand each person within the context of multiple environments.

■ Contexts of Influences

■ Micro-system is the everyday environment to home, school, or work, including relationships with parents, sibling, caregivers, classmates and teachers.

■ Meso-system is the interlocking of various systems a person is involved with – the linkages between home and school, home and work, work and community.

■ Exo-system is to the larger environment of institutions, like school, church, media, and government agencies.

■ Contexts of Influences

■ Macro-system is the overarching cultural patterns of government, religion, education, and the economy.

■ The Chrono-system adds the dimension of time. The influence of normative or non-normative change or constancy in the person and the environment.
Examples include: Changes in family structure, place of residence, employment, or economic cycles.

■ Issues in Lifespan Development

■ *Culture, Gender, Continuity & Discontinuity, Stability & Resilience, Sensitive Periods vs. Equal Potential, Maturation vs. Learning, Nature vs. Nurture.*

■ Culture and Development

■ We are a culturally diverse nation with many races and immigrants from around the world.

■ Children from different cultures bring their differences with them; different cultures may influence the relationships they form.

■ Diets are different. Learning styles vary, which can affect classroom achievement.

■ Values and beliefs are different.

■ Some children carry emotional scars.

■ Gender and Development

■ Are females receiving the support they need to fulfill their potential? Or is their development being frustrated by a form of discrimination so subtle and sophisticated that it has become part of our daily lives?

- What is the relationship between gender and development?

- Studies have focused on theoretical explanations, similarities and differences, and gender stereotypes.

Gender and Development

- Given the changing conditions in society – family, school, workplace – the role that women play, and can play, has serious developmental implications.

- Gender equity has been an issue.

Continuity vs. Discontinuity

- Do developmental changes appear as the result of a slow but steady progression (continuity) or as the result of abrupt changes and stages (discontinuity)?

- Continuities and discontinuities appear in all our lives because the term development implies change. Puberty, leaving home, marriage, and career, all serve to shape psychological functioning.

Continuity/Discontinuity

- Continuities will occur, however, because our initial experiences, our early learning, our temperaments remain with us.

- Some theorists see development as being discontinuous. Reasons cited are: there are periods in our lives that seem to be quite different from those preceding them; we negotiate transitions at appropriate times in our lives, such as leaving home, beginning a career, getting married, adjusting to the birth of children.

- Most believe that both continuity and discontinuity characterize development.

Stability vs. Resiliency

- If a child suffers emotional or physical neglect, abuse or malnutrition, does it mean the child is scarred for life?

- Human beings show amazing resiliency; yet, resiliency has its limits. This raises the question: Under what conditions will children and adults recover from damage?

- Proponents of stability believe that, since the damage will remain with the child for life, rehabilitation efforts are useless.

Stability vs. Resiliency

- Those who believe that human growth seems to have considerable flexibility take exactly the opposite view: since human beings demonstrate tremendous recuperative powers, refusal to offer help borders on the criminal.

- **Sensitive Periods vs. Equal Potential**

- The timing of experiences and an individual's reactions to them are crucial in development.

- At different times in our lives, are certain experiences more meaningful than similar events at other times (sensitive periods)? Or does each experience have the same chance to be meaningful (equal potential)?

- **Sensitive Periods vs. Equal Potential**

- Many developmental psychologists believe that at certain times in the lifespan, a particular experience has greater and more lasting impact than other times.

- These are called sensitive periods. Example: if bonding and attachment are omitted during the early days of life but comes at a later age (e.g. 5 yrs. of age), doe it produce the same results?

- **Sensitive Periods vs. Equal Potential**

- Most do not agree that "once missed, never catch up." But they do believe that no child or adult, can withstand sever deprivation, either physical or psychological, indefinitely. We all have our limits.

- **Maturation vs. Learning**

- Does development result from biological changes (maturation) or from learning from the environment?

- Does development unfold according to a preprogrammed genetic code or is development being programmed and reprogrammed by the environment?

- **Maturation vs. Learning**

- Development is the product of biological maturation.

- Development is the product of experience.

- Examples of Questions include:

--Do children acquire the ability to determine how far away objects are because their bodies and brains have matured or do they acquire depth perception through practice and interaction with the environment?

--At puberty, boys begin to outperform girls in math. Is this difference the result of our society treating boys and girls differently as they reach puberty? Or, is this the product of changes in the brain that occur at puberty?

--Is a child misbehaving and inattentive in class because her brain has not developed to the point where she can attend or because she is being rewarded for misbehavior?

■ Nature vs. Nurture

■ Is heredity or environment more important?

■ Heredity determines who we are. If the alcoholic, gambler, or the problem child is born that way, then parents are not to blame and social programs to rehabilitate them would be a waste of money.

■ If people's problems are due to their genes, money should be spent on developing chemical and genetic treatments and programs designed to ensure selective breeding.

■ Environment – not- genes – determines development. We should develop social programs to help troubled people. We should change the environment.