A PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE-SPAN DEVELOPMENT

Every age period of life is important
Focus: processes that took place

Perspectives that support this philosophy:

1. Development is multi dimensional & interdisciplinary
2. Development continues through the life span
3. Both heredity & environment influence development
4. Development reflects both continuity & discontinuity
5. Development is cumulative
6. Development reflects both stability & change
7. Development is variable
8. Development is sometimes cyclical & repetitive
9. Development reflects individual differences
10. Development reflects cultural differences
11. Development influences are reciprocal

1. Development is multi dimensional & interdisciplinary

- Human development is a complex process; divided into 4 dimensions:
  - Physical development
  - Cognitive development
  - Emotional development
  - Social development
- Even though each dimension is unique, there is interdependency among them.

**Examples:**
- Cognitive skills depend heavily on physical & emotional well-beings as well as social experiences.
- A “slow learner” may be also an emotionally disturbed teenager due to her physical appearance which may have kept her peers away.
Each dimension has general characteristics - according to life stages.
- Infants start to walk by the age of ≈ 12-18 months
- Unique characteristics of each dimension differentiate one person from others.

Physical Development
- Includes genetic foundation for development; physical growth of all components of the body; changes in motor development; senses; bodily systems
- Height & weight
- Main organ system (central nervous system, brain)
- Includes healthcare, nutrition, sleep, substance abuse, sexual functioning → healthy lifestyle

Cognitive Development
- Cognition = the act of knowing and perceiving
- Includes changes in intellectual processes (knowledge & ability) in
  - Thinking
  - Learning
  - Remembering
  - Judging
  - Problem solving
  - Communicating
- Perceiving, thinking, understanding & using these skills to survive/excel in life
- Influenced by both heredity & environment
EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Emotion is the state of feeling(s).
- Development of attachment, trust, security, love & affection; & other emotions/feelings & temperaments.
- Development of feelings & expressing them within the context of relationships with other people / objects.
- Development of concepts about self & autonomy.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

- Emphasizes socialization process; moral development & relationships with others.
- Various context of development: family, neighbourhood, community, state, country, world.
- Human beings can influence & be influenced by the whole process of social development.
2. DEVELOPMENT CONTINUES THROUGHOUT THE LIFE SPAN

- Development starts upon conception and ends with death.
- Some aspects of physical growth stop, developments in terms of change & adaptation continues.
- There are sickly infants/adolescents who manage to live as healthy adults.
- Emotional maturation; socialization continues; cognitive development continues.

3. HEREDITY & ENVIRONMENT INFLUENCE DEVELOPMENT

- Human development is influenced by both factors.
- The concept of “Nature (heredity) versus Nurture (environment)” stressed the importance of HOW to USE/CONTROL the influence of both in order to optimize development.
- Some aspects of development seemed to be influenced more by one factor over the other; but most aspects are influenced by both.
4. DEVELOPMENT REFLECTS CONTINUITY & DISCONTINUITY

- Certain aspects of development are gradually and continuously growing or changing (e.g. physical, language).
- Other aspects of development progress in distinct stages; each preceded by abrupt changes – from one stage to the other.
- Continuous development indicate high influence of environmental factors.
- Discontinuous/stage theory indicate heredity.

5. DEVELOPMENT IS CUMULATIVE

- Our lives are influenced by events that had happened before (earlier experiences).
- Early experiences accumulate and impacted later lives.
- Studies have shown relationships between negative experiences and bad outcomes.
- . NOT ALL CASES!

6. DEVELOPMENT REFLECTS STABILITY & CHANGE

- Certain aspects of development remain stable; others changed.
  - i.e. a problematic teenager may end up as a successful adult.
- Personality may or may not change over time.
7. DEVELOPMENT IS VARIABLE

- Human beings experience variability in growth & development.
- An adolescent may be big in size (height & weight/look) as compared to his/her peers; but still think like a small child.

8. DEVELOPMENT IS CYCLICAL & REPETITIVE

- Some aspects of development may repeat during different phases in life.
- Identity crisis is faced during adolescence; may be repeated at middle age.
- Adjustment phases occur as we grow (from childhood to adulthood/single to married/single again/working to retire).

9. DEVELOPMENT REFLECTS INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES

- Individuals differ in terms of timing and rate of development.
- Height, weight, maturity, body build, physical abilities, health, cognitive ability, emotional reactions, personality, social ability..., differ from one person to the other.
- General or average of these characteristics are normally referred to when we discuss development (i.e., average age when a child starts talking/walking/etc.).
10. DEVELOPMENT REFLECTS CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

- Cultural differences influence many aspects of development.
  - i.e. western values promote independence; others may promote closeness with parents; differences in racial/ethnic; educational level may influence quality of parent-child relationship; meaning of puberty, arranged marriage; age at marriage.
- Certain aspects of development are “prescribed” in certain culture.

11. DEVELOPMENTAL INFLUENCES ARE RECIPROCAL

- Reciprocal influences of environment & significant others on child well-being & children on caregivers.
  - A pleasant, easy to smile infant “attracts” more.
  - The effect is bidirectional, and thus influence overall development.

SUMMARY

- At least 11 established perspectives looking at how human beings develop within the environments.
- Each perspective focuses on certain concepts.
- Understanding the claims may increase our own understanding of who we are.
New (additional) perspective:

- Development involves changing of allocation & resources.
- Investment of resources (time, energy, talent, money & social support) are varied across life span.
- Resources are used for GROWTH, MAINTENANCE, RECOVERY, DEALING WITH LOSS.
- During childhood / young adulthood - resources go for growth; mid-life - balanced use; old age - regulations of losses.

DEVELOPMENTAL TASK AND CHALLENGES

DEVELOPMENTAL TASKS ....

- Emphasized the interrelationship of physical, social, emotional, and intellectual aspects of development.
Definition:

- A developmental task is a task to be performed or achieved during a certain period in a person’s life.
- It represents culture's definition of "normal" development at different points in the life span.

Definition:

- It consist of a set of skills and competences that are acquired as the person gains increased mastery over the environment.
- Many developmental tasks are related to the society in which an individual lives.

Most people accomplish developmental tasks in a certain order.
- Successfully accomplish one task before going on to a task at the next level.
- Interrelationship of the factors.
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### DEVELOPMENTAL TASKS

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### PSYCHOSOCIAL CRISIS

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