



## Pedagogical Foundations of Training Young Psychologists

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**Annotation:** This article Psychology at the beginning of the twenty-first century has become a highly diverse field of scientific study and applied technology.

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Psychology has been rich in comprehensive encyclopedias and in handbooks devoted to specific topics in the field. However, there has not previously been any single handbook designed to cover the broad scope of psychological science and practice. The integrated relations studied in contemporary scholarship are embedded in the actual ecology of human development. As a consequence, policies and programs represent both features of the cultural context of this ecology and methodological tools for understanding how variations in individual-context relations may impact the trajectory of human life. As such, the application of developmental science (through policy and program innovations and evaluations) is part of—synthesized with—the study of the basic, relational processes of human development. In sum, by focusing on the four themes of contemporary human development theory and research just described, chapters in this volume reflect and offer a foundation for continued contributions to developmental scholarship aimed at understanding the dynamic relations between individuals and contexts. As we believe is persuasively demonstrated by the chapters in this volume, contemporary human developmental science provides rigorous and important scholarship about the process of human development and applications across the life span. Together, these advances in the scholarship of knowledge generation and knowledge application serve as an invaluable means for advancing science and service pertinent to people across the breadth of their lives.

The interdisciplinary nature of much of today's developmental psychology is nicely evidenced by the Gunnar and Davis chapter titled "Stress and Emotion in Early Childhood." Workers in this area are bringing together psychological, biological, and neurological concepts to provide a deeper understanding of the dynamics of stress. The next chapter in this section, "Diversity in Caregiving Contexts," by Fitzgerald, Mann, Cabrera, and Wong, is yet another example of the emergence of applied studies. With more than 85% of young children in one or another form of child care, the need to assess the effects of amount and quality of early child care is imperative. This chapter not only reviews the few longitudinal studies in this field but also suggests important caveats in the interpretation of data from such investigations. In the third part of the book, which deals with childhood proper (ages 6–12), we again see how the study of this stage of development has grown in both breadth and complexity. The first chapter in this section, by Hoff, summarizes contemporary research and theory on language development in childhood. In so doing, Hoff highlights the biological, linguistic, social, and cognitive approaches to this topic as well as the many questions that still remain in the attempts to discover how children learn to talk. In his chapter titled "Cognitive Development in Childhood," Feldman summarizes the many changes undergone in a field that was once dominated by Piagetian research and theory. Neo-Piagetian approaches, information theory models, the individualization of normative development, and the use of brain imaging to study the development of mental processes are but some of the innovations that have transformed this area of investigation over the last few decades. Likewise, the chapter "Emotion and Personality Development in Childhood," by Cummings, Braungart-Rieker, and Du



Rocher-Schudlich, goes well beyond the identification of the primary emotions and their differentiation with age, which once characterized this field. Now researchers look at emotion in connection with many other facets of development from psychobiology to personality. Social-cultural variables are taken into account as well. What is striking with respect to emotions, as with so many other topics covered in this book, is how contextualized the treatment of this topic now is in contrast to the isolated way in which it was once approached. The following chapter, “Social Development and Social Relationships in Middle Childhood,” by McHale, Dariotis, and Kauh, is quite striking in its break with the past. For many decades childhood was a relatively neglected stage except perhaps for cognitive and moral development. But these authors make a strong case for the crucial importance of this period for the development of independence, work habits, self-regulation, and social skills. In their chapter titled “The Cultural Context of Child Development,” Mistry and Saraswathi give evidence that the road to cross-disciplinary research is not always smooth. They illustrate how the fields of cross-cultural psychology, cultural psychology, and developmental psychology do not always map easily on to one another. They give challenging examples of the kinds of research paradigms that might ease the integration of culture and development.

A very interesting approach to life-span development is offered by Connell and Janevic in their chapter titled “Health and Human Development.” These authors look at the important issue of how health habits, social involvement, and attitudes at one age period affect health at later periods. A telling example is the relation between a relative lack of physical activity in the early adult years and the contraction of diabetes at middle age. The authors suggest important contextual issues such as socioeconomic status, race, culture, and gender as other variables that enter into the health-aging connection. The final chapter, “Successful Aging,” ends on a positive note. In this chapter Freund and Riediger deal with models that have been suggested for successful aging. These models emphasize the importance of actively taking charge of one’s life and of continued engagement with the world. In so doing, older people can maintain high-level functioning and well-being. Further research in this area will be especially important as the proportion of our aging population increases with the entrance of the baby boomers into the senior citizen category. The review of these chapters thus gives evidence of the vigorous growth of child development as a discipline. Complexity of conceptualization and research design, interdisciplinary research, and an applied emphasis all characterize the field today. Although there is so much to admire in the progress we have made, it is perhaps a bit unappreciative to remark on an area that I feel continues to be neglected. This neglected area is education. Child development has so much to contribute to education, yet we continue to remain on the sidelines and limit our involvement to such issues as disabilities or reading problems. The reason may be that there is a whole field of educational research that purportedly is the science of education. But much of educational research is uninformed by developmental psychology. This is particularly true in the domain of content, where educational psychology is particularly remiss. Developmental psychology has a tremendous role to play. We need to explore how children learn different subject matters and look at this learning in the contextual framework that has become so prominent in so many other areas. It is sad to see so much fine developmental research with such clear implications for education, to never be employed in this way. I believe it is time to make education an important field for applied developmental science.

Such embeddedness may involve tests of theoretically predicated ideas that appraise whether changes in the relations within the system result in alterations in developmental trajectories that coincide with model-based predictions. Depending on their target level of organization, these changes may be construed as policies or programs, and the evaluation of these actions provides information about both the efficacy of these interventions in promoting positive human development and the basic, relational process of human development emphasized within



developmental systems models. As such, within contemporary developmental systems theory, there is a synthesis of basic and applied developmental science. That is, by studying integrated person-context relations as embedded in the actual ecology of human development, policies and programs represent both features of the cultural context of this ecology and methodological tools for understanding how variations in individual-context relations may impact the trajectory of human life. Thus, the application of developmental science (through policy and program innovations and evaluations) is part of—is synthesized with—the study of the basic relational processes of human development.

This dynamic synthesis of multiple levels of analysis is a perspective having its roots in systems theories of biological development (Cairns, 1998; Gottlieb, 1992; Kuo, 1976; Novikoff, 1945a, 1945b; Schneirla, 1957; von Bertalanffy, 1933); in addition, as noted by Cairns (1998), the interest in understanding person-context relations within an integrative, or systems, perspective has a rich history within the study of human development. For example, James Mark Baldwin (1897) expressed interest in studying development in context, and thus in understanding integrated, multilevel, and hence interdisciplinary scholarship (Cairns, 1998). These interests were shared as well by Lightner Witmer, the founder in 1896 of the first psychological clinic in the United States (Cairns, 1998; Lerner, 1977). Moreover, Cairns describes the conception of developmental processes—as involving reciprocal interaction, bidirectionality, plasticity, and biobehavioral organization (all quite modern emphases)—as integral in the thinking of the founders of the field of human development. For instance, Wilhelm Stern (1914; see Kreppner, 1994) stressed the holism that is associated with a developmental systems perspective about these features of developmental processes. In addition, other contributors to the foundations and early progress of the field of human development (e.g., John Dewey, 1916; Kurt Lewin, 1935, 1954; and even John B. Watson, 1928) stressed the importance of linking child development research with application and child advocacy—a theme of very contemporary relevance (Lerner, Fisher, & Weinberg, 2000a, 2000b; Zigler, 1999).

The field of human development has in a sense come full circle in the course of a century. From the beginning of the last century to the beginning of the present one, the history of developmental psychology has been marked by an increasing interest in the role of history—of temporal changes in the familial, social, and cultural contexts of life—in shaping the quality of the trajectories of change that individuals traverse across their life spans. As a consequence of incorporating into its causal schemas about ontogenetic change a nonreductionistic and a synthetic conception about (as compared to a Cartesian split view of) the influence of context—of culture and history—the field of human development has altered its essential ontology. The relational view of being that now predominates in the field has required epistemological revisions in the field as well.

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