

# Developing Through the Life Span

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## RESOURCES

### Introducing Developing Through the Life Span

*Classroom Exercise: Introducing Central Issues in Developmental Psychology*

The text indicates that much of research in developmental psychology centers on three major issues: nature and nurture, continuity and stages, and stability and change. You can introduce these central issues with Handout 1. (Note that the issue of nature and nurture was also introduced in Handout 2 in the Introduction to Psychology unit as one of the central issues in psychology.)

Items 1, 4, and 7 introduce the issue of stability and change. Respondents should reverse the number they gave for 4 (0 = 5, 1 = 4, 2 = 3, 3 = 2, 4 = 1, 5 = 0), then add the numbers in front of all three items. Total scores can range from 0 to 15, with higher scores reflecting a greater tendency to see human traits as persisting through life rather than as changing as a person ages. Items 2, 5, and 8 introduce the issue of continuity and stages. Respondents should reverse the number they gave for 4 (0 = 5, 1 = 4, 2 = 3, 3 = 2, 4 = 1, 5 = 0), then add the numbers in front of all three items. Total scores can range from 0 to 15, with higher scores reflecting a greater tendency to see development as a gradual, continuous process rather than as a sequence of separate stages. Items 3, 6, and 9 introduce the issue of nature and nurture. Respondents should reverse the number they gave for 3 (0 = 5, 1 = 4, 2 = 3, 3 = 2, 4 = 1, 5 = 0), then add the numbers in front of all three items. Total scores can range from 0 to 15, with higher scores reflecting a tendency to see nature as more important than nurture in influencing development.

*Student Project: Your Lot in Life*

Sharon Boland Hamill and Catherine Hale created this exercise to encourage students to relate the literature on developmental psychology to the everyday experiences of children and their parents. Although the exercise was originally designed for a developmental psychology course, it can readily be adapted to the introductory

course. You can use it to nurture students' critical thinking and communication skills.

Students are randomly assigned to the position of an individual who is dealing with a particular set of life circumstances and are asked to reflect on how their lot in life would affect development. Among the "lots" Hamill and Hale used were the following: "Your partner is of a different race and you are expecting your first child," "Your child is born blind," and "Your 8-year-old son has been diagnosed with attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder." Students may focus on the challenges facing the parents, the children, or both. They may choose to consider various aspects of development or explore one issue in depth. Hamill and Hale required students to write a paper based on library research and an investigation of community resources that might be relevant to their unique lot. In this way, they have a chance to review the empirical literature while also learning about local agencies that might help them to cope with their particular life circumstances.

For the introductory course, you may want to assign students to small groups to research a particular lot in life and then prepare either an oral or a written report. The exercise also lends itself well to research on the Internet that could be in addition to, or in place of, library research. Write the specific lots in life on slips of paper, place them in a hat, and have students randomly pick one out. If students complain that they did not get a good lot, remind them that we often do not receive what we hope for in life, but we must face the lot we have been given.

It is relatively easy to generate "lots" in addition to those suggested by Hamill and Hale. For example, you might consider some of the following (note that the same lot may be assigned to more than one student or small group):

- You learn that the mother of your adopted newborn is a heroin addict.
- Your adopted infant son suffers from fetal alcohol syndrome.
- Your newborn daughter was prenatally exposed to excess testosterone; as a result, she has masculine-appearing genitals.

- Your 2-year-old son is exceptionally inhibited and fearful.
- You are just divorced and are unexpectedly left with the task of providing full care for your 7-year-old daughter and 10-year-old son.
- Your 9-year-old daughter has started her growth spurt early.
- Your 15-year-old son has not yet started his growth spurt.
- Your unmarried 17-year-old daughter announces that she is pregnant.
- You’ve just retired at the age of 62.
- Your 70-year-old father has just been diagnosed with Alzheimer’s disease.

Hamill, S. B., & Hale, C. (1996). Your lot in life. *Teaching of Psychology, 23*, 245–246.

#### *Student Project: Newspaper Advice Column Letters as Case Studies in Developmental Psychology*

Patrick A. Cabe, Mary Helen Walker, and Miriam Williams suggest a writing project in which students relate specific problems raised in newspaper personal advice columns (e.g., “Dear Abby”) to developmental psychology concepts. Although the problems most often relate to adults’ circumstances, the scenarios range over the life span. You may want to assign this project after students have read the text chapter on development and you have discussed major concepts.

Have students select one problem from a recent column and prepare a one-page discussion paper in which they (1) concisely define the problem, (2) propose a solution, and (3) relate the problem and solution to course concepts. Depending on time constraints, you can have volunteers share their papers with the full class or in the context of a small group. Invite other students to react to the reports or offer additional views. Encouraging students to apply course concepts to everyday problems fosters both critical thinking and an appreciation of the relevance of developmental psychology’s principles and concepts.

Cabe, P. A., Walker, M. H., & Williams, M. (1999). Newspaper column letters as teaching cases for developmental psychology. *Teaching of Psychology, 26*, 128–130.

#### *Classroom Exercise/Student Project: Generating Lifelines*

Karen Yanowitz recommends that students generate their own lifelines before and after coverage of developmental psychology. The first will stimulate interest in the topic; the second provides students with the opportunity to apply what they have learned.

In class or between classes, instruct students to identify 10 past events that have had an impact on their lives. Have them give their age at which each occurred

and a brief description of what happened. In addition, have them hypothesize 10 future events that they believe will significantly affect their development. If time allows, have them discuss their lifelines in small groups. After completing your discussion of developmental psychology, have students prepare a second lifeline. Indicate that they can use the same lifeline or change it.

Yanowitz reports highly favorable student evaluations of the exercise both in terms of stimulating their interest and in helping them appreciate the personal relevance of developmental psychology. A significant proportion (71 percent) indicated that class coverage of developmental psychology caused them to alter their lifeline the second time around. Even students whose lifelines remained unchanged reported that they had developed a better understanding of why particular events in their lives were important.

Yanowitz, K. L. (2001). Looking to the future: Students’ evaluations of generating lifelines. *Teaching of Psychology, 28*, 209–210.

#### *Student Project: Writing Letters to Parent and Child*

Ellen Junn suggests that students’ understanding of developmental issues will be enhanced if they are asked to write two semiautobiographical letters, one to a future or actual child on the occasion of the child’s eighteenth birthday and a second to their (the students’) parents. The letters provide students with the opportunity to discuss developmental issues from a personal, concrete perspective. Junn reports that her students also become aware of their implicit, often very unrealistic ideas and attitudes regarding child development and parenting issues.

In the letter to their child, students are asked to address the following issues.

1. When and why did you decide to have this child?
2. What are the most important characteristics of a parent, and why?
3. Which of your strengths would make you a successful parent?
4. Describe the qualities you hope your child will possess, and why you think these qualities are important.
5. State your dreams for your child and pass on any words of wisdom.

In the letter to their parents, students are asked to cover the following issues.

1. Describe your general feelings about your present life and values and try to assess your parents’ influence on you.
2. Describe three strengths of your parents.
3. Describe a weakness of your parents or some characteristic that you would like to have changed.

4. Choose one or two areas of development—intellectual, moral, personality, social—in which your parents had the most influence and explain how or why.
5. Thank your parents for something special.

The letter-writing exercise could be used either before or after your students have read the text material and you have discussed development in class. Junn uses it to help students apply what they've learned. If used prior to coverage, however, it may motivate students to read and discuss the literature with greater personal interest and to recognize more quickly their misconceptions about development.

Junn, E. N. (1989). "Dear Mom and Dad": Using personal letters to enhance students' understanding of development issues. *Teaching of Psychology*, 16, 135–139.

#### *Student Project: Essay Exchange*

To help students understand people of different ages and backgrounds, Louise Katz suggests an essay exchange. Although her exchange involved a child development class and fourth-graders, the technique can be readily adapted so that your introductory students could exchange essays with any age group.

After you have identified a specific target group—elementary or secondary school students or even older adults in a retirement home, for example—have your class suggest questions that would help them to understand the interests, concerns, behaviors, motivations, and desires of the target group. Among the questions Katz's class raised were the following: "What do you like about being your age?" "What age would you like to be right now and why?" "Describe the best thing about being in your family." "Describe the best thing about you." "When you get angry, what do you do?" "What do you think is the best way to settle an argument?" "Is there anything that scares you about the future? Explain." "If you were granted two wishes, what would they be?" When the class has agreed on the set of questions to be answered, have each student also predict the target group's likely responses for later comparison.

Have the teacher or leader of the target group obtain answers to the questions. Also, have the target group ask questions of your students. Report the results back to the class and have your students write an essay responding to the following questions: "How did the target group's answers help you to understand them better?" "How did what you learned from their answers supplement or make clearer what you have learned in this course (text and lectures)?" and "Were you surprised by some of the group's answers? Which specific responses surprised you? Why? What had you predicted?" Finally, in their essays, have your students answer

the questions posed to them. In addition to the writing practice, your students will benefit from conversing directly with a different age group.

Katz, L. (1996). Essay exchange with children: An exercise for the child development class. *Teaching of Psychology*, 23, 112–115.

#### *Classroom Exercise: Life-Span Development*

Freda Reblsky has suggested a simple classroom exercise that is useful in introducing development. It helps students to examine their preconceived notions about people at varying ages.

Distribute a copy of Handout 2 to the students and ask them to write down three words that seem appropriate to each decade of life. Instruct them, as an example, to think of people between the ages of 30 and 39 and to ask themselves what words come to mind—for instance, working, married, parents. Give students about 15 minutes to complete the list. Then have them write the letter E next to the decade for which it was easiest to find words and the letter H next to the decade for which it was hardest to find words. Tally the results on the board by listing how many students judged each decade as easiest or hardest.

Begin a discussion by asking students why some decades are harder or easier to describe. Do the first two or three decades tend to be easiest? Why? Do they tend to think that no important changes occur after early adulthood? Did they respond to certain decades in terms of specific individuals, perhaps close relatives? Ask volunteers to read their words for a particular decade. The diversity is useful for showing how differently people view the same decade. If you can allow more time for the topic in the next class period, collect all the students' responses and prepare a frequency distribution of words by decade. Distribute a copy to each student as a basis for discussion. What words are most commonly associated with a particular decade? Why? Are there decades for which there is little uniformity in associations? If so, why? The discussion can eventually lead to a consideration of stage theories and criticisms of them. If you have time, ask students to generate hypotheses to try to explain the patterns they observed in the class responses and then discuss how they would design research to test the hypotheses.

Reblsky, F. G. (1981). Lifespan development. In L. Benjamin & K. Lowman (Eds.), *Activities handbook for the teaching of psychology* (pp. 131–132). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

#### *Classroom Exercise/Student Project: What Is the Ideal Age?*

Pose this question to open your discussion of development, or make it the basis for a student project. Ask students why they believe the age they selected is ideal.

You might also ask them, “What is the worst age to be, and why?” Their answers will naturally lead to a recognition of a most fundamental point: Development is lifelong, and at each age we are faced with different issues and challenges. If you are fortunate enough to have a class with students of varying ages, the discussion is likely to be particularly animated.

If you make the question the basis for an out-of-class project, have your students approach people of varying ages to see if their responses differ. Also have them ask, “How old do you feel?” and “When does old age begin?”

Market Facts Inc. asked these questions of more than 1000 adults. Their answers were revealing. Most respondents, regardless of their actual age, said they feel and act as if they are in their mid-thirties. Both men and women wanted to be about 32 years old. “Psychological age,” suggested the pollsters, “may be just as important as real age when trying to understand people’s behavior and such things as their buying decisions.” The sexes differed, however, on the age they considered to be “old.” Men thought old age occurred in the late sixties, and women said old age began in one’s seventies. *USA Today* reported that while, on average, Americans say old age begins around age 75, people may note different ages as “old,” depending on their generation. In a Harris poll, Generation Y (ages 21 to 31) said old age begins at 69, Generation X (32 to 43) said it begins at 74, Baby Boomers (44 to 62) claimed that it starts at 77, and the Silent Generation (63 to 83) said old age does not start until age 80.

A Harris poll asked 2306 American adults the following question: “If you could stop time and live forever in good health at a particular age, what age would it be?” In this poll, responses varied with the age group. For 18- to 24-year-olds, it was 27. For 25- to 29-year-olds, the age selected was 31. For 30- to 39-year-olds, the answer was 37. For 40- to 49-year-olds, the response was 40. For 50- to 64-year-olds, the age was 44; for those 65 and older, it was 59.

Healy, M., & Salazar, V. (2008, September 30). When does “old age” begin? *USA Today*, p. D-1.

Reilly, S., & Snider, J. (2003, October 30). No consensus on an “ideal age.” *USA Today*, p. 1A.

Staff. (1988, January/February). Age: All in your head. *Psychology Today*, 12.

## Prenatal Development and the Newborn Conception

### Lecture Break/Student Project: Conception Issues

The average age at which women are becoming mothers—at least in industrialized societies—is on the rise. Quick searches of the medical, counseling, and psychology literature reveal a proliferation of journal

articles, society meeting presentations, and symposia on this topic. Publications document the age trend in new motherhood as well as some of the ethical, medical, and psychological issues that arise with delayed motherhood. Many of these center on changes in women’s fertility with age, difficulties in conception, and the use of assistive reproductive technologies. A host of others detail the increased medical risks to both the mother and child before, during, and after labor and delivery.

If your class consists of mainly traditionally aged college students, many of your students may not have grappled with decisions related to conception and pregnancy, though they may know others who have. If the age range of your students is more heterogeneous, then chances are that some of your students may have personal experience with these issues. For an in-class activity, have your students work either in small groups or all together to construct answers to the following questions about delayed motherhood. You may want to structure students’ work to focus on specific psychological aspects (e.g., women’s self-concept, professional development, parenting styles, SES, social relationships), or leave the students to set their own boundaries on their responses to the questions.

- What are some reasons that women and families may be delaying motherhood?
- How might the decision to delay motherhood benefit a woman or her family psychologically?
- What psychological “costs” might be associated with delayed motherhood?
- What are some concrete examples of how the woman’s culture might influence the decision to delay motherhood?
- What other kinds of psychological questions can you generate about delayed motherhood?

For a more extensive projects or homework assignment, you can instruct students to conduct some Internet searches and review some of the scholarly literature on delayed motherhood and to incorporate their information into a poster, presentation, or paper.

You and your students may find the following resources on this topic helpful:

Blackwell, T. (October 13th, 2010). Women delay childbirth due to false fertility expectations, *National Post*. [www.geneticsandsociety.org/article.php?id=5422](http://www.geneticsandsociety.org/article.php?id=5422).

Daniluk, J. (2011, spring). Motherhood deferred: Addressing a growing trend. *Creating Families*.

Gregory, E. (2007). *Ready: Why women are embracing the new later motherhood*. Philadelphia, PA: Basic Books.

*Video: Life's Greatest Miracle* (PBS, 60 min.)

This hour-long PBS program, available for online viewing at [www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/miracle/program.html](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/miracle/program.html), provides marvelous “inside-the-womb” photography of the process of conception and prenatal development. The program is divided into eight chapters, so viewers can easily choose to view specific aspects of early life. Chapter titles (and contents) include Passing on Your DNA, The Egg’s Journey, The Sperm’s Journey, The First Two Weeks, The Embryo Takes Shape, Messages in the Genes, Feeding the Growing Fetus, and The Third Trimester. A teacher’s guide at the site provides more detailed information on the video’s content. Although the program is not available for downloading, it can be purchased from PBS for just \$19.99, either online or by calling 800-531-4727.

### Prenatal Development

*PsychSim 5: Conception to Birth*

This activity takes the student on a tour through the three phases of development between conception and birth, with conceptions and animations of each stage of the process.

*Lecture/Discussion Topic: Prenatal Sensory Development*

From the second month, a fetus may show reflexes that seem to involve the senses. However, because the brain is still immature, it feels things quite differently from the way we do. Although most nerve cells are produced during the first few months of prenatal development, the senses cannot work until these cells make synapses. Early reflexes and movements seem to function in making these connections, molding the senses, and training the fetal brain to perceive.

Keiko Ohnuma has provided a chronological summary of sensory development:

1. Nerve growth begins when a sheet of cells on the back of the embryo folds in the middle to form the future spinal cord. At one end, the tube enlarges to form the brain’s major sections.
2. First responses are reflexes, some of which occur even before the sense of touch is developed. The fetus will flex its head away from stimulation around the mouth as early as 7½ weeks. By month’s end the ears begin to take shape.
3. Touch receptors around the mouth are developed by the twelfth week and elsewhere by the fifteenth. Touching the palms makes the fingers close, touching the soles of the feet makes the toes curl down, touching the eyelids makes the eye muscles clench. Nerve cells have multiplied, synapses are being formed.
4. At 15 weeks the fetus can grasp, frown, squint, and grimace. It may suck its thumb and swallow. These

movements correspond to the development of synapses in the brain.

5. At 20 weeks nerve-cell production slows as the existing cells grow larger and make more complex connections. The senses of taste and smell are now formed. The nerve cells serving each of the senses are developing into specialized areas of the brain.
6. The fetus can feel movement and may respond to sound as early as 24 weeks.
7. At 25 weeks some babies born prematurely can survive. Nerve supply to the ears is complete. Brain scans show response to touch at 26 weeks and to light at 27 weeks. A light shone on the mother’s abdomen will make the fetus turn its head, indicating some functioning of the optic nerve.
8. The eyes open in the womb and the fetus may see its hand and environment. Some researchers put the start of awareness at the 32nd week, at which time neural circuits are as advanced as a newborn’s. Brain scans show periods of deep sleep.
9. The fetus begins to develop daily activity cycles. At 35 weeks hearing is mature. At birth the baby can see shapes and colors within 13 inches of its face; can distinguish loudness, pitch, and tone; and may even show a preference for sweets and for the scent of its mother’s skin.

Ohnuma, K. (1987, July/August). Making senses. *Hippocrates*, 73.

### The Competent Newborn

#### Infancy and Childhood

*Classroom Exercise: Identifying Developmental Landmarks*

To capture students’ attention and interest in infancy and childhood, introduce the topic with Handout 3. Prepared by Scott VanderStoep, the exercise can be completed by individual students or by small groups. Items refer to physical, cognitive, language, and social skills and will awaken students to the great differences among these areas of development. For some skills, students are likely to overestimate how long development takes; for other skills, underestimation is more likely. Have them compare their judgments with the following correct answers that you can present to the full class:

1. Laugh—2 months
2. Pedal a tricycle—24 months
3. Sit without support—5–6 months
4. Feel ashamed—2 years
5. Walk unassisted—12 months
6. Stand on one foot for 10 seconds—4½ years
7. Recognize and smile at mother or father—4–5 months
8. Kick ball forward—20 months
9. Think about things that cannot be seen—2 years
10. Make two-word sentences—20–22 months

*Classroom Exercise/Lecture Break: Judging Stages of Development I: Early Development*

A fun way to clarify for students the differences between the developmental stages of childhood is to have them bring in photos or short video clips showing them in some childhood activity. Announce this exercise a week or two in advance of your coverage of childhood development, so students have a chance to collect appropriate materials. Have the students break into small groups to share their materials. Each group should select one photo or one video and discuss their answers to the questions in Handout 4. Have each group turn in a written record of their answers.

In many cases, the groups will find it difficult to reach a consensus on some of the milestones identified in the handout. However, you can guide their discussions by reminding them of some of the key features that indicate development in each arena. Encourage students to think about the kinds of evidence that might indicate a child has reached a particular milestone in each category.

Alternatively, you can select a photograph or video depicting a child engaged in an activity and ask the students to discuss it, then answer the questions in Handout 4.

A third alternative is to ask students to pretend that they have been hired by a television producer as an “expert consultant” for their children’s programming division. Show your students a video clip from a popular children’s program (e.g., *Sesame Street*, *Dora the Explorer*, or *Yo Gabba Gabba!*) and ask students to identify the appropriate age group or target audience (or you can ask them to evaluate the content for appropriateness for children of specific ages, say, ages 3, 9, and 12). Have students provide at least one example of cognitive, social, moral, and physical development in the video that supports their conclusion.

## Physical Development

### Cognitive Development

*Classroom Exercise: Demonstrating Preoperational Thought*

The preoperational child’s difficulty with a simple Piagetian conservation task often surprises and amuses students. Eliot Shimoff describes a simple yet entertaining classroom demonstration that is strikingly similar to the classical Piagetian task, yet challenges most students.

Take a heavy electrical cord and shape it into a circle (Shimoff uses the power cord of an overhead projector). Ask your students to note the area of the circle. Then squeeze the top and bottom of the cord so it appears to form an ellipse. When you ask whether the total area has changed, most students will indicate

(incorrectly) that it has not. Now, draw a square with each side marked as 2 units. Asked to indicate the total area, everyone will say “4 square units.” Then redraw the square as a 1 × 3 rectangle (i.e., with the same 8-unit perimeter). The total area is now obviously 3 square units. Having seen that “flattening” the square changes its total area, most students will revise their earlier judgment that the area of the circle was unchanged when collapsed into an ellipse. Those who remain skeptical are often convinced when the ellipse is further deformed into a U-shaped figure. Note that in the Piagetian task, a child believes that physical properties change, when, in fact, they are conserved. Shimoff’s demonstration shows how students believe that a physical property is conserved even though it really changes.

Along these lines, a number of characteristics of preoperational thought make the water conservation task difficult. *Centration* refers to the child’s tendency to focus on only one dimension of reality, for example, the height of the water. *Irreversibility* describes the child’s inability to imagine reversing the physical action, that is, the pouring process that would return the water to its original container. In addition, preoperational children are said to be *concrete* and *perceptually bound*; that is, they use appearances rather than systematic reasoning, or perceptual cues rather than logical principles, in drawing conclusions.

Jane Holbrook provides a conservation-like challenge for adults that will help your students gain an appreciation for these characteristics of preoperational thought. Bring in (or have students imagine) two identical jars, with one jar containing exactly 200 red jelly beans and the other exactly 200 black jelly beans. Tell them that you are going to fill a scoop with 15 red jelly beans and pour them into the jar containing the black jelly beans. Then, you are going to shake that jar, mixing the beans. You will then scoop 15 beans (any 15) from the jar containing the black jelly beans and pour them into the jar containing the red jelly beans. (You will probably need to repeat this description so students are sure of the procedure.) Finally ask, “Will the number of red jelly beans in the jar that initially contained only black jelly beans be the same as the number of black jelly beans in the jar that originally contained only red jelly beans?” Some students will immediately recognize that the answer is “the same,” but most will not. Ask volunteers for their answers and reasoning or, if you wish to keep track of students’ initial responses, distribute a survey with a place to check “yes” or “no,” and a space to explain the answer. Before discussion, you can demonstrate the correct answer by going through the actual operations a few times.

Discussion will help students understand Piaget’s principles of preoperational thought. Centration is illus-

trated by the tendency to focus on one aspect of the task and lose sight of the whole context. For example, students are likely to say, “But the probability of getting the same number of red jelly beans the second time is very low,” “If you mixed them up, you just can’t end up with the same number,” “The chances of getting the same number must be 1 in a million.” By centering on the process of mixing, students turn the problem into a question of probability. Focused on the probability of scooping the same number of red and black beans, they cannot see that the actual numbers are irrelevant.

Centering will also be illustrated by focusing on (a) the colors, (b) certain words like *mix* or *same*, and (c) the process of scooping or pouring or mixing. In children, the centration is perceptual, in adults it is conceptual. Only by decentering—by giving up the focus on the chosen detail—will they reach a solution. Irreversibility is also illustrated. A student who cannot imagine reversing the scooping process (by which any single jelly bean must be replaced by a jelly bean from the other jar) typically does not recognize that the two jars together provide the whole context simultaneously. The student who knows the solution understands that it does not matter how many jelly beans of each color are removed each time, as long as the total number in the scoop remain the same. Pouring the jelly beans (like the water) could be repeated endlessly without changing the answer. Finally, the student concerned about the mixing, the colors, and the probability of coming up with equal numbers of red and black jelly beans can also be described as being concrete or perceptually bound. Similar to the child who is trapped by the height of the water, the adult is caught by the significance of the colors and specific words. These details distract from seeing the larger context.

The process by which they arrive at the correct solution helps students to learn more generally how one can get stuck on irrelevant details, see new approaches to a problem, and gain insight into the need to give up a particular point of view to achieve greater comprehension. Once they understand, they are often surprised at how they missed the obvious.

Holbrook, J. (1992). Bringing Piaget’s preoperational thought to the minds of adults: A classroom demonstration. *Teaching of Psychology, 19*, 169–170.

Shimoff, E. (1998). Piagetian conservation in college students: A classroom demonstration. *Teaching of Psychology, 25*, 48–49.

### *PsychSim 5: Cognitive Development*

This program explains, with examples, the important concepts of Piaget’s theory of cognitive development. Its concluding module simulates various tests of conservation, and the student sees how a child would actually respond to Piagetian questions.

### *Student Project: Egocentrism*

Egocentrism, the inability of the preoperational child to take another’s point of view, is illustrated by one child’s answers to the following questions. Why does the sun shine? To keep me warm. Why is there snow? For me to play in. Why is grass green? Because it’s my favorite color. To demonstrate egocentrism, bring a 4-year-old to class. In addition to the earlier questions, try some others. Have her shut her eyes, then ask if she thinks you can still see her. She is likely to say no. Also inquire as to how many brothers and sisters she has. Follow up by asking how many children her parents have. She’s likely to know the number of siblings she has but not the number of children her parents have.

The inability of the child to reverse information may be evident as well. Ask the child, “Do you have a brother or sister?” Assuming an affirmative answer, ask if “Jim,” “Mary,” etc., has a brother/sister. Similarly, ask the 6- or 7-year-old who can perform simple arithmetic problems, “What is 8 plus 4?” Assuming that you obtain a correct answer, ask, “What is 12 minus 4?” Does the child need additional time to answer the second question after correctly answering the first?

### *Classroom Exercise: The Autism-Spectrum Quotient*

The unit on Intelligence in these resources includes a measure of autism, Handout 4, Simon Baron-Cohen’s Autism-Spectrum Quotient (p. 587), along with a description of the measure and instructions for scoring. You may prefer to use the handout when you discuss cognitive development during childhood.

### *Classroom Exercise: “Reading the Mind in the Eyes”*

#### *Test: Sample Items*

People with autism are said to be “mind-blind”; that is, they have difficulty grasping other’s states of mind. Simon Baron-Cohen and his colleagues designed the intriguing “Reading the Mind in the Eyes” Test to assess this ability. More fundamentally, the authors believe that their test assesses empathy, that is, the capacity to put oneself in another’s shoes. Empathy fosters sensitive listening and effective communication. It motivates genuine caring and thus may provide the bedrock of human morality. We foster empathy through active listening and by assuming other people’s perspective.

Handout 5 also goes well with a discussion of moral development. The correct answers are flirtatious, confident, and serious. A total of 36 items appear in the complete test. Although the sample items do not provide an adequate measure of the ability to read the emotions of others, they do provide students with insight into the unique challenge of tuning into another person’s thoughts and feelings. Women tend to outperform men on the test.

Baron-Cohen and his colleagues administered the test to four groups, including adults with high functioning autism (HFA) or Asperger syndrome (AS), normal adults drawn from adult community education classes, normal adult undergraduate students at Cambridge University, and randomly selected individuals from the general population. Results indicated that the first group (HFA/AS adults) scored significantly worse than the other groups, who did not differ significantly from one another. Interestingly, no significant correlation was found between IQ and the Eyes Test, suggesting that the latter is independent of general (nonsocial) intelligence.

Baron-Cohen, S., Wheelwright, S., Hill, J., Raste, Y., & Plumb, I. (2001). The “Reading the Mind in the Eyes” test revised edition: A study with normal adults and adults with Asperger syndrome or high-functioning autism. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 42(2), 241–251.

### *Classroom Exercise: Assessing Empathizing and Systemizing*

Simon Baron-Cohen’s controversial theory of autism can be introduced with Handout 6. It contains two scales, which measure “empathizing” and “systemizing,” respectively. Respondents score each scale by adding the numbers they provided in response to the nine items. Total scores can range from 9 to 36, with higher scores reflecting a stronger tendency to empathize and systemize, respectively.

Do the women in your class score higher than the men on empathizing, and do the men score higher than the women on systemizing? Baron-Cohen suggests that women are naturally predisposed to be empathizers—that is, better at reading facial expressions and gestures—whereas men are inclined to be systemizers—that is, better at understanding things according to rules or laws as in mathematical and mechanical systems. Autism, proposes Baron-Cohen, represents an “extreme male brain.” In one study, his research team found that adults with mild autism scored lower than most women and men on an empathy test but scored higher than most men and women on a systemizer survey. In brief, they were more male than the men.

Research suggests that those with autism are not just extreme systemizers. They systemize in a unique and unusual way. When other children draw a picture of a train, they begin with a gestalt, that is, a series of long, flat rectangles with wheels below. In contrast, autistic children start with the peripheral details. They almost seem to be doing a tracing, in no particular logical order, to create the train. They seem to prefer parts over wholes, processing information one piece at a time instead of filtering it through general categories.

Although Baron-Cohen admits his model may be incomplete, he claims it sheds new light on the

repetitive behaviors and often narrow interests of persons with autism. “The old theories,” he argues, “said this was purposeless, repetitive behavior. The new theory says that the child, given his or her IQ, may be doing something intelligent: looking for predictable rules or patterns in the data.” In short, the empathizer-systemizer model helps to reveal the possible sanity and dignity of autistic behavior.

Baron-Cohen, S. (2004). *The essential difference: Male and female brains and the truth about autism*. New York: Basic Books.

Cowley, G. (2003, September 6). Girls, boys, and autism. *Newsweek*, 42–50.

### *Student Project: Conservation, Seriation, and Class Inclusion*

Classroom demonstrations of some of Piaget’s important concepts can be attempted if you or one of your students knows a confident 4-year-old who is eager to attend college for a day. Alternatively, have your students test 4- or 5-year-olds they know—perhaps the child of a relative, friend, or neighbor—and report their findings to the class.

According to Piaget, the preoperational child has not yet mastered the principle of conservation, the idea that properties such as mass, volume, and number remain the same despite changes in appearance. To test the child’s ability to conserve mass, roll equivalent amounts of clay into two balls. Ask the child, “Which has more clay, or are they both the same?” If the child doesn’t seem to understand the question, try, “If I take this one and you take that one, who has more clay, or do we both have the same amount?” Then flatten one of the balls into a pancake and repeat the question.

To test conservation of volume, show two identical glasses or bottles (you might borrow two beakers from a colleague in chemistry) holding equal amounts of water to the child and ask, “Which has more water, or are they both the same?” Or, “Suppose you were very thirsty and wanted to drink the water in one of the glasses. Is there just as much water in each glass?” Then pour the contents of one glass into a different-shaped container that is clearly taller and narrower (a graduated cylinder from chemistry). Repeat the question.

To test conservation of number, lay out two identical rows of seven pennies, buttons, or checkers, closely spaced together. Point to the rows and ask the child, “Which row has more *pennies*, or are they both the same?” Next, rearrange one row, spreading the coins out so that the row appears longer. Repeat the question.

Because children have difficulty focusing on more than one dimension at a time, Piaget also thought they could not order a series of objects, say, in terms of height. To demonstrate this difficulty with “seriation,”

purchase a  $1/4-1/2$ " dowel from a hardware store and cut it into pieces that differ by one inch intervals (e.g., 5", 6", and 7" pieces). Show the child how to place them in ascending order "like a staircase. Do you have stairs in your house?" After she watches you, ask her to "make a staircase."

Preoperational children also have difficulty understanding "class inclusion," or the relationship of sub-categories to categories. Cut old cereal boxes or other cardboard into 5 squares and 4 circles (4" figures work well) and cover them with construction paper of the same color, say, blue. Line them up by shape and ask: "Are there more squares or more blue ones?" Preoperational children will have difficulty understanding that "square" is a subset of "blue" and often say "more squares."

If possible, your students should test several children between 3 and 7 years of age and report the results to the class.

#### *Classroom Exercise/Student Project: The Water-Level Task*

Handout 7, Piaget and Inhelder's water-level task (WLT), can provide an interesting extension of the text discussion of cognitive development. The correct response to the problem is to draw a horizontal line across the bottle, reflecting the general principle that the surface of a liquid is always horizontal regardless of the orientation of its container.

The task was originally designed to investigate the development of children's spatial concepts. Children gradually come to construct a Euclidean (three-dimensional) conceptual system of horizontal and vertical axes with which to represent space. Piaget and Inhelder viewed the ability to perform accurately on the WLT as a key indicator that the child has developed a mature Euclidean reference system. Very young children typically represent the waterline as fixed relative to the sides of the container, regardless of the container's tilt. Next, they show the water as tilted in all but upright containers. Still later they err only when one axis of the container is not horizontal. Finally, at about age 9, children consistently produce horizontal lines.

However, in the mid-1960s, researchers found that undergraduate and even graduate students had difficulty with the task. A clear gender difference also emerged. Results across several experiments indicated that while about 50 percent of men performed very well on the task, only about 25 percent of women did so. Among the explanations offered for this gender difference have been (1) a recessive gene on the X chromosome that facilitates acquisition of the principle is more frequently found in men than women, (2) different levels of exposure to sex-related hormones during the prenatal period produce differences in spatial ability, and

(3) gender differences in the effectiveness of the vestibular system of the brain may influence the perception of gravitational upright, and thus the perpendicular horizontal. On the other hand, one socialization explanation proposes that in our culture boys are more strongly encouraged than girls to participate in activities that promote the development of spatial skills. A related interactional model states that males begin with stronger biologically based spatial interests and skills, and this leads them to seek out more spatial activities, further promoting their spatial ability.

More generally, both perceptual and cognitive factors seem to help explain individual differences in success at the WLT. For example, those who are generally more field independent (able to focus on a task or problem independent of its context) do better than those who are field dependent. One cognitive factor that may contribute to error is the strategy of mental rotation. Persons who encounter a tilted container mentally rotate it from its original position before drawing the waterline. The greater the tilt of the container, the greater the mental rotation. And research indicates that the amount of mental rotation is positively related to the size of a respondent's error.

Vasta, R., & Liben, L. S. (1996). The water-level task: An intriguing puzzle. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 5, 171-177.

#### *Lecture/Discussion Topic: Preoperational Thought and Moral Development*

Piaget contended that moral development closely coincides with cognitive development, that the characteristics of preoperational thought have important implications for the child's moral development. For example, children have difficulty forming moral judgments until they shed egocentric thinking and are able to assume another's perspective. And they cannot move beyond law-and-order morality until they escape literal thinking.

According to Piaget, children pass through two stages of morality: the morality of constraint (or heteronomous morality) and the morality of cooperation (or autonomous morality). "Heteronomous" literally means "subject to another's law." From 4 through 7 years of age, the child's respect for authority leads him or her to regard adult rules as sacred, unchangeable things. Moral wrongness is defined in terms of adult sanctions. That is, acts that are wrong are acts that adults punish. Moral responsibility is understood as obedience to authority. The child's cognitive limitations lead him or her to think of wrongdoing in highly literal, objective terms without regard to intentions; to view moral values as absolute and universal; and to believe that justice is served by severe, expiatory punishment rather than by restitution to the victim.

Autonomous (“subject to one’s own law”) morality develops at about 8 years of age. Presumably, it grows out of the mutual respect that peers begin to feel for one another, as well as a decrease in egocentrism. Rules are regarded as products of group agreement, as instruments of cooperative action. Thus, they can be changed by mutual agreement. Along with greater moral flexibility comes the tendency to judge acts by intentions rather than by consequences, to favor punishment in the form of restitution rather than expiation, and to abandon the belief in “immanent justice” (that misconduct is automatically punished).

Students will be interested in the stories Piaget would tell children to assess the nature of their moral judgments. One example: Philip was outside when his mother called him in for dinner. As he opened the dining room door, he accidentally knocked over a tray of cups, breaking all eight of them. Compare him with John who came home from school hungry. Though his mother told him not to eat before dinner, he climbed up to the cupboard anyway to steal a cookie; while up there, he broke one cup. Who is naughtier, Philip or John? The younger child judging on the basis of consequences views Philip the naughtier. He broke eight cups. The older child examines intentions and judges John to be more culpable.

Or consider the case of Michael. After school he ran into the supermarket, stole three large, red apples and ran out the door. As he fled, a police officer saw and chased him. In attempting to escape, Michael crossed a bridge. As he reached the top, the bridge cracked, Michael fell into the water, and he was captured. Would the bridge have broken if Michael had not stolen the apples? The child who maintains a belief in immanent justice will say that the bridge cracked because of the boy’s misconduct.

Or, finally, six boys were playing football. In the course of their play, they trampled some recently planted shrubs and flowers. What should be done to them? Give them a spanking, never allow them to play football again, or have them plant new shrubs and flowers? Only the older child sees the wisdom of the last alternative.

Piaget, J. (1965). *The moral judgment of the child*. New York: Free Press.

*Lecture/Discussion Topic: Vygotsky’s Sociocultural Theory of Cognitive Development*

You may want to provide students with the following information about Lev Vygotsky’s important sociocultural theory of cognitive development.

Vygotsky argued that children’s efforts to understand their world are embedded in a social context. They strive to understand their universe by asking questions of others—for example, “How do machines

work?” “Why is the sky blue?” “Why does the weather change?” In answering such questions, adults guide a child’s growth in important ways. They not only provide instruction but also foster the child’s motivation and interest. Adults present challenges for new learning.

Thus, in many respects, the young child is an *apprentice in thinking*. Parents, child-care workers, and older siblings act as mentors stimulating intellectual growth. Children learn to think through *guided participation* in social experiences that explore their world. Vygotsky argued that what children can do with the help of others may be more indicative of their mental development than what they can do alone.

In an earlier edition of her text, Kathleen Berger provided the rich example of an adult helping a child to assemble a jigsaw puzzle. The parent or older sibling may begin by praising the child for choosing a hard puzzle and then might encourage the child to look for a puzzle piece of a particular size or color. When the child seems stymied, the tutor may become more directive by selecting an appropriate piece or by rotating a puzzle part so that its precise location becomes obvious. Throughout the process, the tutor praises successes, maintains enthusiasm, and helps the child to recognize that together they are reaching their goal. The critical dimension of guided participation is that two partners interact to accomplish the goal. Throughout the interaction, the tutor remains sensitive and responsive to the child’s needs. Eventually, the child will succeed independently of the adult’s help.

Vygotsky maintained that for each developing individual there is a *zone of proximal development*, a range of skills that the child can perform with assistance but not quite independently. How and when children master important skills is partly linked to the willingness of others to provide *scaffolding*, or sensitive structuring of children’s learning encounters.

Words, according to Vygotsky, are part of the scaffold. First, internal dialogue, or *private speech*, helps people to develop new ideas. Young children usually utter private speech aloud. They review what they know, explain events to themselves, and decide what comes next. Second, language promotes thought as the mediator of the social interaction that is vital to learning. The *social mediation* function of speech happens during both explicit instruction and during casual conversation. Language permits a person to enter and cross the zone of proximal development. Words bridge the child’s current understanding and what is almost understood.

Vygotsky’s theory helps us to appreciate that cognitive accomplishment occurs in a social context. Adult instruction and encouragement are crucial to the child’s intellectual growth.

Berger, K. (2008). *The developing person through the life span* (7th ed.). New York: Worth.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1978, English trans.). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1987). *Thinking and speech*. New York: Plenum Press.

## Social Development

### *Classroom Exercise/Student Project: Measures of Attachment Type*

Handout 8 provides Cindy Hazan and Phillip Shaver's measure for retrospective assessment of childhood attachment to parents, as well as Hazan and Shaver's measure of adult attachment types. Having students complete these scales provides a good introduction to the text discussion of social development.

Part (a) assesses the student's childhood attachment type, based on the categories described by Mary Ainsworth and her colleagues who studied infant-mother patterns in their Strange Situation laboratory paradigm. Ainsworth and colleagues delineated three types of attachment—secure, anxious/ambivalent, and avoidant—noting that the mother's sensitivity to her infant's needs during the first year of life is a major determinant of whether the infant forms secure attachment relationships. For example, if the mother is slow or inconsistent in responding to her infant's cries or if she regularly intrudes on the infant's desired activities, she is likely to produce an infant who cries more than usual, explores less than usual, and seems generally anxious. If instead the mother consistently rebuffs or rejects the infant's attempt to establish physical contact, the infant may learn to avoid her. Attachment theorists argue that the type of attachment has a profound impact on the child's developing personality and is central to social functioning well beyond the childhood years. John Bowlby argues that in fact the nature of this early relationship shapes beliefs about oneself and others that influence social competence and well-being throughout life.

Hazan and Shaver used infant attachment theory as the basis for examining how adult love relationships are related to early parent-child interactions. In part (b), respondents are asked to choose the category that best describes them as they are now. Roughly half of all respondents categorize themselves as secure, and the other half are evenly split between avoidant and anxious, which parallels the distribution found in research on infant attachment types.

Research findings have indicated that adults with different styles differed predictably in the way they experienced love. Secure lovers had relationships characterized by happiness, trust, and friendship. They emphasized being able to accept and support their partner despite their partner's faults. Moreover, their relationships tended to endure longer. The avoidant lovers

were marked by fear of intimacy, emotional highs and lows, and jealousy. Anxious/ambivalent lovers experienced love as involving obsession, desire for reciprocity and union, emotional highs and lows, and extreme sexual attraction and jealousy. Joan Tucker and Sherry Anders have studied undergraduate dating couples and found significant relationships between attachment style and both relationship satisfaction and partner perception accuracy. Both avoidantly attached men and anxiously attached individuals of both sexes reported lower relationship satisfaction. In addition, anxiously attached men showed consistently lower accuracy in perceiving their partners' feelings about the relationship. As attachment theorists predict, the nature of adult attachment is correlated with early attachment style.

Hazan and Shaver have found that adult attachment style is also related to feelings about work. Securely attached respondents had higher levels of work satisfaction in terms of job security, co-workers, income, and opportunities for challenge and advancement. Anxious/ambivalent attachment was associated with feelings of job insecurity, lack of appreciation and recognition by co-workers, and not getting deserved promotions. Avoidantly attached respondents reported dissatisfaction with co-workers but were similar to secure respondents in their satisfaction with job security and opportunities for learning.

Hazan, C., & Shaver, P. (1990). Love and work: An attachment-theoretical perspective. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 59, 270–280.

Hazan, C., & Shaver, P. (1987). Romantic love conceptualized as an attachment process. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 52, 511–524.

Myers, D. G. (2010). *Social psychology* (10th ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.

Tucker, J. S., & Anders, S. L. (1999). Attachment style, interpersonal perception accuracy, and relationship satisfaction in dating couples. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 25, 403–412.

### *Lecture/Discussion Topic: Attachment Style, Compassion, and Self-Esteem*

Research has found that early attachments form the foundation for our adult relationships. Indeed, research suggests that attachment style predicts both our willingness to help those in distress and our self-esteem.

Mario Mikulincer and Phillip Shaver report that people who enjoy the benefits of secure social attachments find it easier than those who have insecure attachments to perceive and respond to other people's suffering. Presumably, compassionate reactions are products of a "caregiving behavioral system" in which securely attached individuals, because they feel safe and less threatened, have more psychological resources

to devote to noticing and reacting favorably to other people's suffering.

Mikulincer and Shaver find that both dispositional and experimentally induced attachment security is linked to compassion and altruism. For example, secure individuals (as compared with their insecure counterparts) describe themselves as more sensitive to their romantic partners' needs and more likely to provide emotional support. Similarly, when an experimenter induced secure attachment, the participant was more inclined than an insecurely attached person to care for a confederate of the experimenter diagnosed with cancer.

Of special interest are the investigators' reports of the psychological and behavioral effects of subliminally exposing participants to security-related words (e.g., love, hug) or instructing them to imagine a scenario in which they or another felt safe and secure. Such manipulations reduce negative reactions to outgroup members and generally enhance levels of compassionate feelings. Most notably, priming research participants with representations of attachment security increased their willingness to switch roles with a suffering victim (participants see a staged case and are given the opportunity to take the distress or suffering on themselves, thereby setting the victim free). The researchers raise the interesting question of whether participation in compassionate actions might alleviate attachment insecurity by bolstering a person's sense of being needed as well as by bolstering prosocial working models of self.

Noting that securely attached people have relatively higher self-esteem than those who are insecurely attached, Lora Park and her colleagues wondered how attachment style might be associated with specific bases for self-esteem (see the Contingencies of Self-Worth Scale in the Personality unit). Using a sample of 795 college students, they found that attachment security was positively related to basing self-worth on family support. In contrast, those with a preoccupied or fearful attachment style were more likely to base their self-worth on physical attractiveness.

Park's research team suggests that preoccupied individuals, who receive inconsistent care, may conclude that they are unlovable unless they satisfy others' expectations. To maintain a sense of security and relational closeness, they may base their self-esteem on others' reactions and validation such as others' social approval or merely on their own physical appearance. Taking into account the source of self-esteem may help us better understand how the self-concept predicts everyday behavior.

Mikulincer, M., & Shaver, P. (2005). Attachment, security, compassion, and altruism. *Current Directions in Psychological Science, 14*, 34–38.

Park, L., Crocker, J., & Mickelson, K. (2004). Attachment styles and contingencies of self-worth.

*Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 30*, 1243–1254.

### *Classroom Exercise: Dimensions of Parenting*

Research suggests two important dimensions of parental behavior: warmth/responsiveness and control/demandingness. Warm parents are affectionate and involved with their children, respond to their emotional needs, and spend considerable time with them. At the other end of this continuum are parents who are relatively uninvolved and sometimes even hostile to their children. Such parents seem more focused on their own needs and interests than on their children's.

A second dimension of parental behavior concerns the control that parents exercise over their children's behavior. It reflects the degree to which parents set and uphold standards for the child's behavior and communicate these standards to the child. Once standards have been set, they are consistently enforced. Those who exercise no control allow their children to do whatever they like and thus may fail to teach their children cultural standards for behavior.

Draw perpendicular lines on the chalkboard, with warmth being horizontal and control being vertical. Have your students rate their parents (or each parent or caregiver) on these dimensions, using, say, seven-point scales. Also ask them to indicate how they are parenting (or intend to parent) their own children, and why? What are the implications of being high or low on each of these dimensions?

Finally, using the grid on the chalkboard, explain four parenting styles, three of which are introduced in the text.

*Authoritarian parents* combine high control with little warmth. They lay down the rules and expect them to be obeyed without discussion. The rules are not explained. Authoritarian parents aim to cultivate hard work, respect, and obedience.

*Authoritative parents* combine high control with high warmth. They exert control not only by setting rules and enforcing them but also by explaining the reasons and, especially with older children, inviting discussion.

*Permissive parents* offer warmth but little control. Such parents generally accept their children's behavior, make few demands, and punish them infrequently.

*Neglectful parents* provide neither warmth nor control. They may meet basic physical needs but minimize the amount of time they spend with their children and avoid becoming emotionally involved with them.

Explain that each style is associated with different levels of childhood competence. Authoritarian parents tend to have children who show “enforceable competence.” The children usually do what they are supposed to do as long as the authority figure retains a means of enforcement. However, they are likely to rebel when the authority figure is absent or no longer poses a threat. Authoritative parenting is associated with high overall competence in the children, who demonstrate high self-esteem and high achievement. Moreover, these children tend to be self-motivated and respond appropriately to authority. Permissive parents are likely to have children who show certain specific competencies. They perform well when tasks interest them. Neglectful parenting is associated with the least competent children. That is, the children show low self-esteem, low achievement, and are prone to delinquency.

Kail, R. V., & Cavanaugh, J. C. (2010). *Human development: A life-span view*. (5th ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson.

#### *Classroom Exercise: Parental Authority Questionnaire*

Handout 9, the Parental Authority Questionnaire (PAQ), takes a different tack for discussing child-rearing practices. It is designed to assess parental authority, or disciplinary practices, from the point of view of the recipient (regardless of age). Although the handout refers to mothers only, a form for fathers can be created by changing the references. Alternatively, you might use only one form that refers to “parents.” Three subscales measure the following parental styles: permissive—relatively warm, nondemanding, noncontrolling parents (items 1, 6, 10, 13, 14, 17, 19, 21, 24, 28); authoritarian—parents who value unquestioning obedience and attempt to control their children’s behavior, often through punitive disciplinary practices (items 2, 3, 7, 9, 12, 16, 18, 25, 26, 29); and authoritative—parents who use firm, clear but flexible and rational modes of child-rearing (items 4, 5, 8, 11, 15, 20, 22, 23, 27, 30). The inventory is easily scored by adding the individual items on each subscale. Total subscale scores can range from 10 to 30.

The PAQ can be used in a variety of ways. After completing the scales, students can write a short paper on why they think their parents chose a particular style and its effects on them and their siblings. The PAQ can also be used as the basis for small-group discussions in which students may, if they wish, describe their parents’ styles or the style they are likely to follow in raising their own children. In a larger class discussion or lecture you might emphasize that correlation evidence linking parenting style with certain childhood outcomes need not reveal cause and effect. For example, children’s traits might influence parenting more than vice versa. Even assuming a causal connection in which

style shapes a child’s traits, the style adopted depends in large part on what particular traits are prized.

Buri, J. R. (1991). Parental Authority Questionnaire. *Journal of Personality and Social Assessment*, 57, 110–119.

#### *Classroom Exercise/Critical Thinking Break: It Really Is Mom’s Fault!*

This exercise is designed to help students think about the relative influence of parenting on development. Before class meets, plan to break your students into small groups and prepare slips of paper so that you have one slip of paper for each group. On half the slips of paper, write “No, it isn’t your Mom’s fault! She can’t ‘make you crazy.’” The rest of the slips should say “Yes, it is your Mom’s fault! She can ‘make you crazy.’” In class, say that toward the end of the meeting you will be holding a debate on whether one’s mother really can “drive a person crazy.” When your students break into groups, have one person from each group select a slip of paper determining the position their group must take in the debate (they can draw from a bowl or other handy container).

Instruct each group to come up with at least three different factual statements drawn from psychological science to support the position they have been asked to take in this debate. As you will see, the groups will come up with interesting “takes” not only on what it means for a mother to “drive someone crazy” (i.e., relating to stress/frustration, conflict, or psychopathological symptoms) but also on what might be deemed “factual statements” or “psychological science.” You don’t have to actually hold a debate in class. You can collect the group responses and assemble them out of class to present later and “debrief” with your students. Or, you can process the outcomes of their discussions with them by creating a grid of “pro” and “con” facts on the board.

#### *Feature Film and Lecture/Discussion Topic: Places in the Heart and Spanking*

An effective way of stimulating discussion on attachment and responsive parenting is to elicit student reaction to the practice of spanking. Start by showing a poignant clip from the feature film *Places in the Heart*, the story of a stubborn young widow (played by Sally Field) who, during the Depression, struggles to keep her cotton farm. In the course of the film, her normally well-behaved son, Frank, is caught smoking behind the school. When he is brought home by his teacher, his mother must decide on appropriate discipline. Frank shows his mother how his father used to spank him. With much ambivalence, she carries out the punishment. The clip begins 50:47 minutes into the film (teacher finds Frank smoking) and runs for just

2:30 minutes (Frank's mother laments both the loss of her husband and her use of corporal punishment). Ask students if they were spanked as children and how they think it affected them.

In a fall 2006 survey of 1031 U.S. adult residents, Scripps Howard News Service and Ohio University found that 79 percent said they were spanked as a child, 69 percent said they think spanking is "sometimes necessary to maintain discipline," and 55 percent said they, personally, have spanked a child. Only 25 percent said spanking is never necessary. Twenty-two U.S. states still allow spanking in schools. Singapore and South Korea also allow it. In contrast, spanking is banned in every country in Europe and in Japan, South Africa, and New Zealand. Interestingly, the Scandinavian countries were among the first to ban spanking by parents. As of 2010, the Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children (see [www.endcorporalpunishment.org](http://www.endcorporalpunishment.org)) reported that 29 countries had prohibited all corporal punishment in all settings, including the home. Another 16 countries still permit corporal punishment by law in one or more settings, but the government has made a public commitment to enact full prohibition.

In discussing the effects of spanking, you may want to anticipate the text treatment of punishment in the chapter on learning. Although swift and sure punishment can suppress unwanted behavior, it often does not guide one toward more desirable behavior. It can also have undesirable side effects such as creating fear—children may come to feel helpless and depressed—or teaching aggression as a way of coping with problems. For these reasons, most psychologists emphasize reinforcement over punishment.

Murray Straus, co-director of the Family Research Laboratory at the University of New Hampshire, has provided one of the most recent challenges to the practice of spanking. At the American Psychological Association's Summit on Violence and Abuse in Relationships (February 2008), Straus presented the results of his analysis of four studies. The consensus was that spanking and other corporal punishment by parents is associated with an increased probability of sexual problems as a teen or adult. These problems included verbally and physically coercing a dating partner to have sex, risky sex such as premarital sex without a condom, and masochistic sex such as being aroused by being spanked when having sex. Straus concludes, "These results, together with the results of more than 100 other studies, suggest that spanking is one of the roots of relationship violence and mental health problems. . . . Furthermore, because other research shows spanking is not more effective than other discipline methods, there is no need to expose children to the harmful effects of spanking. We can help prevent mental health problems and relationship violence from

happening by a national health policy recommending never spanking."

Not all mental health professionals would agree that parents should never resort to corporal punishment (as Dr. Spock advised in his classic *Baby and Child Care*, which has sold more than 43 million copies). Summarizing the findings of an American Academy of Pediatrics–sponsored conference devoted specifically to reviewing the research on spanking, Stanford Friedman and Kenneth Schonberg of Albert Einstein College of Medicine state, "Given a relatively healthy family life in a supportive environment, spanking in and of itself is not detrimental to a child or predictive of later problems." And in summarizing the results of her longitudinal Family Socialization Project (FSP), Diana Baumrind reports that almost all FSP parents, including the most effective, spanked their preschool children, although generally less than once a week. By the time their children were 9 years of age, only one-third of the parents spanked as often as once a month; by adolescence physical punishment was very rare. She concludes, "It is *how* discipline is administered, not whether the parent spansks or uses time-out that determines its meaning to the child, and its related beneficial or detrimental effects. Within the context of an authoritative childrearing relationship, aversive discipline is well-accepted by the young child, effective in managing short-term misbehavior, and with no documented harmful long-term effects."

Elizabeth Thompson Gershoff completed a large-scale meta-analysis of 88 studies on corporal punishment. She looked for associations between parental use of corporal punishment and 11 child behaviors and experiences. The strongest association was between immediate compliance by the child and physical abuse of the child by the parent. In a reply to Gershoff's report, researchers Diana Baumrind, Robert Larzelere, and Philip Cowan suggest that because the original studies in the meta-analysis included episodes of extreme and excessive physical punishment, her finding is not an evaluation of *normative* corporal punishment. They write, "The fact that some parents punish excessively and unwisely is not an argument, however, for counseling all parents not to punish at all." In response, Gershoff states, "Until researchers, clinicians, and parents can definitively demonstrate the presence of positive effects of corporal punishment, including effectiveness in halting future misbehavior, not just the absence of negative effects, we as psychologists cannot responsibly recommend its use."

Jennifer Lansford of Duke University and her colleagues examined the relationship between the use of spanking (as well as other forms of physical discipline) and children's adjustment in six countries (China, India, Italy, Kenya, the Philippines, and Thailand). The research team wondered if different cultural norms

regarding the acceptability of physical discipline would have an effect on this relationship. Their careful analyses indicated that “physical discipline was less strongly associated with adverse child outcomes” in countries where spanking or other physical discipline was considered the norm. At the same time, they reported that while countries with the lowest use of physical discipline showed the strongest association between mothers’ using physical discipline and children’s behavior problems, in all six countries higher use of physical discipline was associated with more aggression and anxiety in children.

In reviewing the research on spanking, Alan Kazdin and Corina Benjet reach the following conclusions.

1. Frequent and harsh punishment is often associated with undesirable mental and physical health outcomes.
2. The effects of very mild, occasional spanking are not well researched. Clear conclusions cannot be reached from the available studies.
3. Caution against the use of spanking is advised because nonaversive alternatives for achieving the same disciplinary goals are available. In addition, the line between mild spanking and severe corporal punishment that is known to be dangerous has not been empirically established. Finally, mild spanking can readily escalate into more severe hitting.

For a more general review of the literature on physical punishment, see the Lecture/Discussion Topic by that name in the Learning unit in these resources.

Gershoff, E. T. (2002). Corporal punishment by parents and associated child behaviors and experiences: A meta-analytic and theoretical review. *Psychological Bulletin*, *128*, 539–579.

Global Report 2010. (2010). *Ending legalised violence against children*. Retrieved May 25, 2011, from [www.endcorporalpunishment.org/pages/pdgs/reports/GlobalReport2010.pdf](http://www.endcorporalpunishment.org/pages/pdgs/reports/GlobalReport2010.pdf).

Hargrove, T., & Stempel III, G. H. (October 31, 2006). Support for torture is linked to attitudes on spanking. [www.newspolls.org/story.php?story\\_id=59](http://www.newspolls.org/story.php?story_id=59).

Kazadin, A. E., & Benjet, C. (2003). Spanking children: Evidence and issues. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, *12*, 99–103.

Lansford, J., et al. (2005). Physical discipline and children’s adjustment: Cultural normativeness as a moderator. *Child Development*, *76*, 1234–1246.

Mattox, W. (1996, November 14). Yes, you can spank responsibly. *USA Today*, p. 15A.

University of New Hampshire (2008, March 2). Spanking kids increases risk of sexual problems as adults. *ScienceDaily*. Retrieved July 19, 2008, from [www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2008/02/080228220451.htm](http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2008/02/080228220451.htm).

#### *Classroom Exercise: Parenting and Children’s Traits*

Handout 10, created by Frank M. Bernt, can initiate a lively discussion of child-rearing practices. What traits do your students consider important in raising their own children? After students have completed the handout, you can tabulate the results for the entire class to discuss, or, alternatively, have them discuss their responses in small groups, trying to reach consensus on those traits they consider most important. Student responses naturally lead to a discussion of how different parenting styles, (e.g., authoritarian, permissive, authoritative) might foster or inhibit the development of such characteristics. Also, be sure to ask whether students would want to add any traits to the list.

Using the table on the next page, report to your students how parents have rated these traits from 1929 to 1997. (Because each respondent identified three essential traits, each column adds up to 300 percent. Alwin’s numbers, when rounded, add up to 295 percent.)

In reviewing the literature, Bernt notes how parental values have changed over the years, most notably, from heteronomy values (obedience, good manners, and loyalty to one’s church) to autonomy values (independence and thinking for oneself). Duane Alwin points out that, “Parents are motivated to prepare their children for a future life and they make their child-rearing choices within the framework of the constraints and opportunities posed by history, culture, and social structure. Given this *motivational assumption* (sic), there is, thus, a strong reason to expect parents to adapt their values to their beliefs about the kind of qualities that will be required of their children in a future world” (Alwin, 2001, p. 100). Ask students if they believe there have been other recent changes. If so, what might account for the shifts?

	Lynds (1929)	Alwin (1978)	Bernt (1989)	Bernt (1997)
Frankness/honesty	27	26	56	38
Desire to make a name for one's self	5	1	3	4
Concentration	9	7	0	0
Social mindedness	13	26	48	30
Strict obedience	45	17	8	0
Appreciation of art, music	9	5	12	8
Economy in money matters	25	17	11	30
Loyalty to the church	50	22	12	11
Knowledge of sexual hygiene	15	8	3	4
Tolerance of others	6	47	15	11
Curiosity	1	10	17	4
Patriotism	21	4	5	4
Good manners	30	23	8	30
Independence	25	76	40	34
Academic achievement	19	6	17	30
Willingness to work hard	—	—	45	64

Source: Bernt, F. M. (1999). The ends and means of raising children: A parent interview activity. In L. T. Benjamin, B. F. Nodine, R. M. Ernst, & C. B. Broeker (Eds.), *Activities Handbook for the Teaching of Psychology*, Vol. 4, p. 247, Table 55–2. Copyright © 1999 by the American Psychological Association. Reprinted by permission.

Of course, these data represent what parents report as the most important traits in their children. How these beliefs and parental values are translated into parent behaviors and discipline strategies may be a different thing all together. For instance, a parent who stresses obedience to authority may be more likely to use relatively punitive discipline strategies (e.g., spanking, grounding) and may tend toward being more authoritarian in his or her parenting style. You may want to discuss with your students how the parental values represented here may correlate with the different parenting styles identified in the text.

Alwin, D. (2001). Parental values, beliefs, and behavior: A review and promulga for research into the new century. *Advances in Life Course Research*, 6, 97–139. doi:10.1016/S1040-2608(01)80008-3.

Bernt, F. M. (1999). The ends and means of raising children: A parent interview activity. In L. T. Benjamin, B. F. Nodine, R. M. Ernst, & C. B. Broeker (Eds.), *Activities Handbook for the Teaching of Psychology* (Vol. 4, pp. 244–252). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

#### *Classroom Exercise/Critical Thinking Break: Can You Raise a “Genderless” Child?*

Is it possible to raise a child to be gender-neutral? Kathy Witterick and David Stocker of Toronto, Canada, aim to find out. They are raising three children in a traditional suburban neighborhood and have chosen to keep the sex of their third child a secret from friends and family. As they did with their two older children—5-year-old Jazz and 2-year-old Kio—the parents have

given their youngest child a gender-neutral name (Storm) and do not use gendered pronouns to refer to the child. Their intention is to avoid gender stereotyping of their children by other people and to instill a sense of “freedom” in their children to make their own choices about “who they are” and what they want to share with other people. They also engage in other nontraditional parenting practices such as co-sleeping and unschooling (an offshoot of home schooling in which learning is viewed as a function of exploring and asking questions).

Have your students read the original news story about this family posted online in the *Toronto Star* ([www.thestar.com/article/995112](http://www.thestar.com/article/995112)). You may also consider having them read a follow-up story detailing the reader responses to the original article ([www.thestar.com/news/article/995846--star-readers-rage-about-couple-raising-genderless-infant](http://www.thestar.com/news/article/995846--star-readers-rage-about-couple-raising-genderless-infant)). Then, ask your students (working in small groups or together as a class) to answer the following questions. They can do this during class time in 15 to 20 minutes or they can prepare extended answers in a homework assignment.

- Are the parents keeping Storm's gender secret? Or Storm's sex? What's the difference between the two?
- Identify three psychological phenomena that concern the parents in raising their children in a traditional suburban neighborhood in North America. How do the parents hope to overcome those concerns by allowing their children to dress, play with, and act in ways that cross gender boundaries?
- What concerns have others expressed (or that you have) about the impact of the parents' efforts on

the cognitive, social, or physical development of the three children being raised in this “genderless” experiment?

You might also design a classroom debate in which half your class takes a position supporting the parents identified in these articles and the other half takes a position against the parents’ decision.

## Adolescence

### *Classroom Exercise: Introducing Adolescent Development*

Scott VanderStoep designed Handout 11 as an introduction to a discussion of adolescent development. The day before you discuss the topic, have each of your students complete and return it to you. For the next class session, make enough copies of their responses so that, after dividing the class into groups of five, each group can receive a copy of everyone’s response. Have them “analyze” the data. Ask each group to draw inferences about the types of events considered to be “highs” and “lows” in adolescence. For example, they might categorize the events into athletics, academics, and social. They should look for age and gender differences of the highs and lows. For example, are men more likely to report athletic highs than women? Is younger adolescence a time of greater lows and older adolescence a time of greater highs? Finally, have the groups report their findings to the entire class.

### *Student Project: Interviewing Adolescents*

Paula Schwanenflugel suggests that interviews can be effectively used to teach adolescent development. Each student interviews an adolescent on the specific topic(s) of development to be covered the following week and writes a report. Lectures and class discussions then focus on the reports, with you discussing the degree to which the data are consistent with the research findings discussed in the text. Since students will interview adolescents of different ages, the class is likely to become aware of developmental changes that occur within this distinct period of life. Your students will also become familiar with one of the major ways in which research psychologists have studied development, namely, through the interview.

Schwanenflugel’s structured interviews cover different aspects of adolescent psychology. Handout 12a provides instructions and questions for gathering data on historical perspectives on adolescence. The data will show that concepts of adolescence vary over time. Handout 12b gives instructions and questions for assessing the adolescent’s relationship with peers. Here the data will show that concepts of friendship are changing throughout adolescence. Tell students they may deviate somewhat from the list if they see that

more accurate information will be gained from rephrasing or asking additional questions, or if the respondent seems hesitant about answering. Scott VanderStoep provides an alternative questionnaire (Handout 12c) that compares peer influence with that of parents. Remind your students that parental permission must be obtained before interviewing an adolescent. Interviews rarely require more than 20 minutes.

Schwanenflugel, P. (1987). An interview method for teaching adolescent psychology. *Teaching of Psychology*, 14, 167–168.

## Physical Development

### *Student Project: Writing About Puberty*

John Charlesworth Jr. and John Slate have developed an exercise that is designed to increase knowledge about the changes occurring during puberty and decrease the discomfort many students experience in talking about those changes. Although they present the exercise as a small-group project, depending on your time and goals it could also be used as a writing project for individual students.

After briefly discussing the physical changes that occur in adolescence, have students imagine they have a child about to enter adolescence. Because they will soon leave on a journey that will prevent them from having contact with the child for the next 10 years, this will be their last opportunity to help the child deal with these changes. The only form of communication is by mail. The letter should be worded so that it can be understood by the child and will give him or her a positive attitude toward the changes to be experienced.

Although you may assign male students to write to a son and female students to a daughter, Charlesworth and Slate suggest forming small groups of men and women who compose a letter to a son and one to a daughter. Have each group read its letters in class and ask students from other groups to comment on the letters in terms of content, phrasing, degree of positiveness, and so forth.

The authors note that there is likely to be some initial discomfort, but overall reaction has been extremely favorable. Many participants expressed increased confidence in their ability to discuss the topic, and several wanted copies of the letters to use eventually with their own children.

Of course, the exercise can be modified in a variety of ways, depending on the nature of your class. To conserve class time, the different letters can simply be distributed to the rest of the class. To reduce students’ initial discomfort, you may want to form small groups of the same gender. If you use the exercise as an individual project, you can, with students’ permission, simply read the best letters in class.

Charlesworth, J. Jr., & Slate, J. (1986). Teaching about puberty: Learning to talk about sensitive topics. *Teaching of Psychology, 13*, 215–217.

*Lecture/Discussion Topic: Is 16 Too Young to Drive a Car?*

This question is likely to stimulate a lively class discussion. States vary in the age at which a full, unrestricted license can be obtained. For many states, it continues to be 16 (in Montana, it's only 15); for others, it ranges up to 18. Research indicating that adolescents' brains are a work in progress has added momentum to the movement to raise the driving age.

As the text indicates, frontal lobe maturation lags the emotional limbic system. The prefrontal cortex, the very last part of the brain to develop fully, is home for the so-called executive functions, including the setting of priorities, suppressing impulses, and weighing the consequences of one's actions. Neuroscientist Elizabeth Sowell states, "Scientists and the general public had attributed the bad decisions teens make to hormonal changes. But once we started mapping where and when the brain changes were happening, we could say, 'Aha, the part of the brain that makes teenagers more responsible is not finished maturing yet.'"

Those who support raising the driving age cite that generally we cannot vote, buy cigarettes, or join the military until age 18. And most cannot buy alcohol or gamble until age 21. In terms of the hazards of driving, motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for U.S. teens, accounting for more than one in three deaths in this age group. In 2009, eight teens ages 16 to 19 died every day from motor vehicle injuries. Per mile driven, teen drivers ages 16 to 19 are four times more likely than older drivers to crash. A *USA Today*/CNN/Gallup Poll found that nearly two-thirds of Americans now think a 16-year-old is too young to have a driver's license. In 2005, only 37 percent of those polled think it is alright to license 16-year-olds, compared with 50 percent who thought so in 1995.

Basing its decision in part on the teen brain's immaturity, the Supreme Court declared juvenile death sentences unconstitutional. Many states have begun to move in the direction of raising the driving age by imposing restrictions on youthful drivers by barring late-night driving and limiting the number of passengers they can carry. Other nations also make it harder for teens to get a license. In fact, some European nations do not even allow learners' permits until age 17 or 18.

Not all scientists agree with the ongoing efforts to connect the research findings on teen brain immaturity with teen behavior and public policy. The critics observe that there is no sharp transition in brain development that signals maturity. Is it 18, 21, 25, or older? The brain continues to develop well into adulthood. For example, myelin formation measured by the total vol-

ume of white matter in the entire brain does not reach its peak until around age 45. "Brain science offers no simple take-home messages about adolescents," suggests B. J. Casey of Cornell University's Weill Medical College. Brain-scanning techniques, notes Casey, remain "a crude level of analysis."

"Juvenile death sentences bother me, but this is an ethical issue," states Harvard psychologist Jerome Kagan. "The brain data don't show that adolescents have reduced legal culpability for crimes." Moreover, if incomplete brains automatically reduce adolescents' capacity to restrain their darker impulses, he adds, "we should be having Columbine incidents every week." Finally, Kagan observes that frontal lobe development should be roughly the same across the world. Still, rates of teen violence and murder vary from remarkably low to alarmingly high from country to country.

Bower, B. (2004, May 8). Teen brains on trial. *Science News, 165*, 299.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2010, October 18). Teen drivers: Fact sheet. Retrieved May 25, 2011, from [www.cdc.gov/MotorVehicleSafety/Teen\\_Drivers/teendrivers\\_factsheet.html](http://www.cdc.gov/MotorVehicleSafety/Teen_Drivers/teendrivers_factsheet.html).

Davis, R. (2005, March 2). 16: Is it too young to drive a car? *USA Today*, pp. 1B–2B.

## Cognitive Development

### *Classroom Exercise: Formal Operational Thought*

The stage of formal operations is marked by a capacity to reason hypothetically and deduce consequences. Handout 13 provides specific problems that will illustrate important aspects of the abstract, logical thinking that characterizes formal operational thought. Various educational programs have utilized such problems to promote students' "level of thought" and, more specifically, their abilities in the sciences.

According to Barbel Inhelder and Jean Piaget, the first problem requires *combinatorial reasoning*. The best approach is a very methodical one in which one begins by mixing each liquid separately with the activating solution (1 + X, 2 + X, 3 + X, 4 + X), then mixes two liquids at a time with X (1 + 2 + X, 1 + 3 + X, 1 + 4 + X, 2 + 3 + X, 2 + 4 + X, 3 + 4 + X), then three at a time with X (1 + 2 + 3 + X, 1 + 2 + 4 + X, 1 + 3 + 4 + X, 2 + 3 + 4 + X), then all four at once (1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + X). One who carefully tests each combination would score at the formal operations level on this task.

The second task assesses the *separation and control of variables*, another skill fundamental to scientific thinking. To determine which factors contribute to rod flexibility, one must systematically hold constant all the variables except one. For example, to know if material is an important factor, you would bend a brass rod,

a copper rod, and a steel rod of the same length and diameter. One could compare flexibility, say, among the short and thick brass, copper, and steel rods. To find out if length is important, one would compare short and long rods that are of the same material and of the same thickness. You could compare the short and thick steel rod with the long and thick steel rod. Finally, to decide if diameter made a difference, one would compare rods of the same material and length and different diameters. One might test this by bending a short and wide brass rod with a short and thin brass rod.

Your students will find the last problem to be the most challenging of the three. In addition to illustrating hypothetical reasoning, its solution requires two other aspects of formal thought that few adults fully master, namely, noncontradiction and impossibility. Without them one cannot solve the sister puzzle. One should begin by assuming that Carol lied about there being two or three liars. Then it follows that none or one of the women lied. Carol, then, is the *only* liar. That means Amy and Barbara told the truth. But that is *impossible* because the man had only one lost sister. The assumption that Carol lied must be wrong since it leads to a *contradiction*. Carol must be telling the truth. Thus, there are at least two liars, Amy and Barbara. Neither of them, then, can be the sister. Carol is.

Halpern, D. (2003). *Thought and knowledge: An introduction to critical thinking* (4th ed.). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Inhelder, B., & Piaget, J. (1959). *The growth of logical thinking from childhood to adolescence*. New York: Basic Books.

### *Classroom Exercise: Kohlberg's Theory of Moral Development*

In introducing Kohlberg's theory of moral development, you may want to present your class with his best-known dilemma:

In Europe, a woman was near death from a very bad disease, a special kind of cancer. There was one drug that the doctors thought might save her. It was a form of radium that a druggist in the same town had recently discovered. The drug was expensive to make, but the druggist was charging 10 times what the drug cost him to make. He paid \$200 for the radium and charged \$2000 for a small dose of the drug. The sick woman's husband, Heinz, went to everyone he knew to borrow the money, but he could get together only about \$1000, which was half of what it cost. He told the druggist that his wife was dying and asked him to sell it cheaper or let him pay later. But the druggist said, "No, I discovered the drug and I'm going to make money from it." Heinz got desperate and broke into the man's store to steal the drug for his wife. [Source: Kohlberg, L. (1969). Stage and sequence: The cognitive-developmental approach to

socialization. In D. A. Goslin (Ed.), *Handbook of socialization theory and research* (p. 379). Chicago: Rand McNally.]

Ask students to give their own best judgment as to what Heinz should have done and why. Strong differences in opinion inevitably occur and stimulate both a lively classroom discussion and an active interest in Kohlberg's theory of moral development.

Kohlberg was more interested in respondents' reasons than their *yes* or *no* answers. A person could argue that Heinz should or should not steal the drug and be at any of Kohlberg's stages of moral reasoning. Reasons for stealing the drug at each level of moral judgment follow:

#### **Preconventional Morality**

1. Avoids punishment—"Heinz's father-in-law might make big trouble for him if he let his wife die."
2. Gains rewards—"Heinz will have someone to fix fine dinners for him if his wife lives."

#### **Conventional Morality**

3. Gains approval/avoids disapproval—"What would people think of Heinz if he lets his wife die?"
4. Does duty to support society/avoids dishonor or guilt—"Heinz must live up to his marriage vow of protecting his wife."

#### **Postconventional Morality**

5. Affirms agreed-upon rights—"Everyone agrees that people have the right to live."
6. Abstract, autonomous moral principle—"Saving a life takes precedence over everything else, including the law."

You might conclude by noting that at one time Kohlberg proposed a possible seventh stage of moral development. Presumably, this stage reflected a cosmic orientation in which one is motivated to be true to universal principles and feels oneself part of a cosmic direction transcending social norms.

Alternatively, Mary Vandendorpe suggests applying Kohlberg's theory to two realistic moral dilemmas—exceeding the 55-mph speed limit and cheating in school. Ask your class to think of reasons for and against these two behaviors. Then divide the class into small groups and have each group classify each reason into one of Kohlberg's levels.

Kohlberg, L. (1969). Stage and sequence: The cognitive-developmental approach to socialization. In D. A. Goslin (Ed.), *Handbook of socialization theory and research*. Chicago: Rand McNally.

Vandendorpe, M. M. (1990). Three tasks of adolescence: Cognitive, moral, social. In V. P. Motosky, C. C. Sileo, L. G. Whittemore, C. P. Landry, & M. L. Skutley (Eds.), *Activities handbook for the teaching of psychology* (Vol. 3, pp. 126–127). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

## Social Development

### *Classroom Exercise: Erikson's Stages*

Handout 14 contains selected items from Rhona Ochse and Cornelis Plug's self-report questionnaire assessing the personality dimensions associated with Erikson's first seven stages of psychosexual development. It can serve to make the stages personally relevant to students and thus provides a good introduction to his theory.

Erikson suggested that personality development follows a fixed sequence of stages, each being critical for the development of a certain bipolar dimension of personality. In each stage, conflict arises between newly emerging personality needs and social demands and culminates in a crisis, not in the sense of a catastrophe but rather represents a turning point in development. One is better able to cope with future conflicts if past crises have had a positive outcome. Erikson noted, however, that all the personality components develop to some extent throughout life, even before their critical stages. To some extent, they may develop in parallel and are interdependent even before the relevant crises are resolved.

Items on the handout were derived from Erikson's statements about each stage. Scores for each subscale range from 0 to 15, with high scores reflecting greater strength on a particular personality dimension. The response to item 1 should be reversed (0 = 3, 1 = 2, 2 = 1, 3 = 0) and then added to the numbers given in response to items 2, 3, 4, and 5 to obtain a trust score. Responses to items 7, 8, and 9 should be reversed and added to items 6 and 10 to assess autonomy. Answers to 12 and 15 should be reversed and added to items 11, 13, and 14 to measure initiative. Answers to 16, 18, and 19 should be reversed and then added to 17 and 20 to calculate industry. Responses to 21 and 25 must be reversed and added to 22, 23, and 24 to obtain a measure of identity. Answers to 26, 28, and 30 are reversed and added to 27 and 29 to give intimacy. Responses to 31 and 33 are reversed and added to 32, 34, and 35 to provide a generativity score. In both sexes, the authors found that the scores on each dimension were related to an independent measure of well-being.

Ochse, R., & Plug, C. (1986). Cross-cultural investigation of the validity of Erikson's theory of personality development. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 50, 1240–1252.

### *Student Project/Classroom Exercise: Applying Erikson's Psychosocial Stages*

Linda Zimmerman has designed a questionnaire (see Handout 15) that challenges students to apply Erikson's stage theory to their own lives. This project helps students come to a better understanding of Erikson's theory as well as to their own personal development.

Designed as a small-group project (Zimmerman suggests groups of four) in which students share their past, present, and future life story with others, it can be easily modified as an individual course paper or even an abbreviated classroom exercise. Students would reflect on, say, their past life and how they resolved the psychosocial tasks that define Erikson's first four stages (see the questionnaire's section "Past Self").

Note that the questionnaire as presently constructed recognizes that most students are in the adolescent or early adulthood stages and thus wrestling with issues of identity and intimacy. If you have students in middle or late adulthood, you may want to reframe some of the questions.

Zimmerman suggests that students begin by thinking and writing about their past, present, and future selves. They may include drawings, personal photos, and magazine pictures to convey their self-understandings. Students then form groups of four to tell their life story, explaining how they see the most important aspects of their lives, including past, present, and future. Central to the exercise is the application of Erikson's theory to their life experience.

Zimmerman, L. (2006, August 24). Erikson exercises. Message posted to PSYCHTEACHER@list.kennesaw.edu.

### *Classroom Exercise: Objective Measure of Ego-Identity Status*

Erik Erikson argued that the adolescent's task is to form an identity. If most of your students are in their late teens or early twenties, they may be in the process of solidifying their sense of self by testing and integrating various roles. Handout 16 is Layne Bennion and Gerald Adams' Objective Measure of Ego-Identity Status. It was designed to measure the four different modes of reacting to the identity crisis of late adolescence described by James Marcia. According to Marcia, achieving identity status involves crisis and commitment as applied to occupational choice, religion, and political ideology. Crisis refers to the adolescent's attempts to choose among meaningful alternatives; commitment refers to the adolescent's personal investment in the task.

"Identity-achievement" individuals have considered several occupational choices and reevaluated past beliefs—they've gone through a crisis period—and they've committed to an occupation and an ideology, whether or not their decisions conflict with parental wishes. "Identity-diffusion" individuals lack commitment; they may or may not have experienced a crisis period. Clearly, they have not decided upon an occupation nor are they much concerned about it. They are uninterested in ideological matters or they take a smorgasbord approach in which they sample from all.

Between these two extremes are the “moratorium” and “foreclosure” statuses. Moratorium adolescents are still in the crisis period, unable to make a commitment. In their struggle, they are attempting some compromise among parental wishes, society’s demands, and their own capabilities. Foreclosure individuals have made a commitment without experiencing a crisis. The line between parental goals and their own is unclear. They are becoming what others have intended for them. Their personalities may be marked by rigidity; if faced with a situation in which parental values were nonfunctional, they might feel extremely threatened.

The identity-achievement score is the sum of items 8, 13, 15, 18, 20, 22, 33, 35, 40, 42, 45, 46, 49, 51, 55, and 60. The identity-moratorium score is the sum of 5, 9, 11, 12, 14, 26, 31, 32, 34, 36, 43, 47, 48, 54, 57, and 61. The identity-foreclosure score is the sum of statements 3, 17, 21, 24, 27, 28, 37, 38, 39, 41, 44, 50, 58, 62, 63, and 64. The identity-diffusion score is the sum of items 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 10, 16, 19, 23, 25, 29, 30, 52, 53, 56, and 59.

Bennion, L. D., & Adams, G. R. (1986). A revision of the extended version of the objective measure of ego-identity status: An identity instrument for use with late adolescents. *Journal of Adolescent Research, 1*, 183–198.

Marcia, J. E. (1966). Development and validation of ego-identity status. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 3*, 551–558.

#### *PsychSim 5: Who Am I?*

This activity is a review of Erikson’s perspective on identity formation and Marcia’s steps or stages in the identity process during adolescence. It is designed to help students reflect on their own progress toward achieving a secure and stable identity.

#### *Classroom Exercise: Who Am I?*

If your students are predominantly young adults, they are probably trying out different roles in an effort to achieve a clear sense of identity. A simple exercise, suggested by Larry Bugen, may prove useful in introducing this aspect of development. Have your students write down 10 different answers to the question, “Who am I?” Suggest that they may respond in terms of their roles or responsibilities, the groups they belong to, their beliefs, their personality traits or qualities, their needs, feelings, or behavior patterns. Instruct them to list only those things that are really important to them, those that, if lost, would make a real difference in their sense of identity.

When they have completed their list, have them consider each item separately. Ask them to imagine what life would be like if that were no longer true. For example, what would the loss of a parent mean to those who wrote down “son” or “daughter”? After the

students have reviewed items in this way, have them rank-order the items in terms of importance. To determine the rank of each item, they should consider the adjustment required if they “lost” the item.

Finally—and this is optional—students might form small groups to discuss the “Who am I” and “Identity Review” exercises. Encourage openness and comparisons with others, although no one should be forced to share his or her list.

Bugen, L. A. (1979). *Death and dying: Theory, research, practice*. Dubuque, IA: Wm. C. Brown.

#### *Classroom Exercise: The Life Cycle*

Peggy Brick provides several suggestions for introducing stage theories of development. In outlining Erikson’s theory in class, you might ask students to include in their notes for each stage the name of a person they know. The theory is likely to become less abstract and more meaningful as they check the stages against the reality of living examples.

Brick also suggests having students examine the life cycle in terms of their own lives by constructing a “life line.” They should turn a piece of notebook paper lengthwise, then draw a straight line across the middle of the page. Have them label their birthdate on the far left, a projected death date on the far right, and the day’s date at the appropriate place to the left of the middle. They should fill in the left side by noting important events from their childhood and adolescence. Perhaps they will include an illness, a family move, a birthday party, the beginning of school. Finally, have them project themselves into the future. What would they like to have accomplished in 5 years, in 10 years, by the time they are middle-aged, by the time they retire? What do they hope to have accomplished by the time they die? Discussion can proceed with students pairing up to compare and contrast their individual life lines. Conclude the exercise by having volunteers tell the class what they learned from the exercise.

You can effectively couple this exercise with Handout 17, Bugen’s Life/Values/Goals Inventory, in order to help students discuss later life and the topic of death and dying. Ask them to consider the question, “How does the awareness of our mortality influence our attitudes toward life?”

Brick, Peggy. (1981). The life cycle. In L. T. Benjamin & K. D. Lowman (Eds.), *Activities handbook for the teaching of psychology* (pp. 128–130). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Bugen, L. A. (1979). *Death and dying: Theory, research, practice*. Dubuque, IA: Wm. C. Brown.

#### *Classroom Exercise: Gender Differences in Smiling*

Angela Lipsitz provides a wonderful classroom exercise that enables students to collect data on a gender

difference—smiling in yearbook photos—as well as review some basic methodological concepts. The exercise can be used to extend the text discussion of adolescent development to include gender differences or in relation to the text discussion of gender differences in social connectedness.

For the activity, ask each student to bring a coed yearbook to class. Explain that they will be studying an important gender difference by using the class sections of their annuals for data collection. The null hypothesis is that there are no gender differences in smiling. Ask your class to propose an alternative hypothesis. Invariably, your class will hypothesize that women smile more. They will need an operational definition of smiling. Have them examine the faces in their yearbooks to come up with possibilities. Write the proposals on the chalkboard and have them reach a consensus. Typically, they arrive at “teeth showing,” “visible cheek lines,” and “upturned mouth.” Although no one definition is likely to capture all cases, it is important that they apply the operational definition rigorously.

For data collection, students will find it easier and more enjoyable to work in pairs. They are to record whether each person is smiling, keeping separate tallies for each gender. They should try to avoid using classes with extremely small photos (bring several extra yearbooks to class yourself). Also, for classes of several hundred or more, have them record data for every other page or even every third page. For small classes, have them record data for more than two classes. When they finish, have them record their data on the chalkboard or on a transparency. They should indicate yearbook publication date, school type (college, high school), class level (sophomore, junior), total class size, coders' genders, percentage of men smiling, percentage of women smiling. Lipsitz reports that, averaging across yearbooks, students will find about 90 percent of females smiling and about 67 percent of males smiling.

In reviewing methodological concepts, be sure to note the null hypothesis, alternative hypothesis, and operational definition. Ask why an operational definition was necessary (easier to make judgments and to reduce potential bias). Then ask students to explain the gender differences. Some explain gender differences in terms of a female deficit model—for example, women lack self-confidence or they have lower social status. An alternative explanation may be that women have greater concern for interpersonal harmony. Ask students why they think women smile more in yearbook photos. Are women happier? The literature on depression suggests otherwise. Students are likely to come up with other explanations such as photographers encouraging women but not men to smile, women liking their photo taken, and parents not wanting to purchase photos of unsmiling daughters. Some may even suggest that

smiling is a more important part of the female role; for men, smiling may even be viewed as inappropriate role behavior. Finally, ask students if they can think of situations in which men would smile more often than women. Perhaps while watching a baseball or football game or a violent or sexually explicit movie? This raises the question of external validity. The data show a gender difference in smiling in yearbook photos but not in other situations. In terms of smiling in yearbook photos (differences are found across ages, schools, and time periods), the external validity of the class data is high; in terms of smiling in general, the external validity is low.

As time allows, other methodological issues can be raised—for example, interrater reliabilities, statistical tests (say, chi squares on the results), and effect sizes. Additional analyses could examine whether there are other differences in the data, such as public versus private schools, age levels, or older versus recent yearbooks.

Lipsitz, A. (1997, May 23). Gender differences in smiling: An annual exercise. Poster presented at the Fourth Annual American Psychological Institute on the Teaching of Psychology, Washington, D.C.

#### *Lecture/Discussion Topic: Adolescents' Friendships*

Thomas Berndt proposes two questions that you might use in introducing the major theoretical perspectives on adolescents' friendships.

First, “How can you tell that someone is your friend?” Researchers have used this question to assess age changes in conceptions of friendship. Although both elementary school children and adolescents say that friendships involve mutual liking, prosocial behavior, companionship, and a relative lack of conflicts, many adolescents but few children refer to intimacy in friendships. Adolescents are likely to say that they “talk about their problems with best friends,” and “a best friend really understands you.” This age difference may be due in part to the fact that adolescents spend more time with their friends than younger children do. Friendships are more significant relationships in adolescence than earlier in life.

Girls also describe their friendships as more intimate than do boys. Although some researchers have suggested that this is merely a matter of style, others suggest that male friendships are less intimate because boys trust their friends less than girls do. The sex difference does not simply reflect a developmental delay for boys; adult women also tend to have more intimate friends than do men.

Berndt notes that those who focus on the features of friendship, and particularly differences in intimacy, tend to emphasize the positive characteristics of friend-

ship. Equally important for future research are the negative features of friendship. For example, although adolescents being interviewed often mention conflicts with friends, researchers have tended to ignore these comments. Berndt regards this as a serious omission because more recent studies suggest that such conflicts can lead to an aggressive interaction style that is then later displayed with other partners. Adults concerned about adolescents' friendships should try not only to enhance the positive features of close friendships but also to reduce their negative features.

Now have your class respond to Berndt's second question.

You and your friends found a sheet of paper that your teacher must have lost. On the paper are the questions and answers for a test that you are going to have tomorrow. Your friends all plan to study from it, and they want you to go along with them. You don't think you should, but they tell you to do it anyway. What would you really do: study from the paper or not study from it?

Researchers have used scenarios such as this one to measure how adolescents are influenced by their friends' attitudes and behavior; however, in this case the tendency is to emphasize negative influence. Berndt points out that influence is a mutual process. Adolescents influence their friends as well as being influenced by them. Models of group decision making describe friends' influence better than do models of individuals conforming to a majority. Adolescents admire and respect their friends, so they may agree with friends simply because they trust their judgment. Over time, this mutual influence increases the similarity between adolescents and their friends. Moreover, this mutual influence may be just as likely to lead to more desirable attitudes and behaviors as to undesirable ones. Berndt concludes that to understand friends' influence better, theorists need to abandon the simplistic hypothesis of peer pressure toward antisocial behavior and consider the multiple processes of friends' influence and the varied effects of these processes.

Berndt, T. (1992). Friendship and friends' influence in adolescence. *Current Directions in Psychological Science, 1*, 156–159.

#### *Lecture/Discussion Topic: A Generation Gap?*

The majority of adolescents report that they like their parents. Researchers have been surprised at how closely most adolescents reflect the social, political, and religious views of their parents. While daily decisions—regarding how to dress, for example—are influenced more by peers than by parents, long-range decisions, such as career choice or the resolution of deep moral issues, are affected more by parental opinions. In short,

most families easily bridge the generation gap because it is rather narrow.

The issue provides the basis for lively small-group and full-class discussions. Simply ask students to reflect on the similarities and differences between their own attitudes and lifestyles and those of their parents (alternatively, older students can compare their views with those of their adolescent or adult children). To get the small-group discussions started, list some of the following areas on the chalkboard for their consideration: political attitudes and party affiliations, religious values, careers and education, hobbies and use of leisure time, money and budget matters, sexual issues. After students have discussed the issues with their group, lead a general class discussion, asking the following questions: How are your parents' or children's views different from your own? Why do you think your children or parents hold the views they do? Is there a generation gap?

### **Emerging Adulthood**

#### *Lecture/Discussion Topic: Emerging Adulthood*

If your students are 18 to 25 years old, you might begin by asking them if they believe they have reached adulthood. Research suggests that the majority of Americans in their late teens and early twenties say neither *yes* nor *no*. In addition, ask your class to define adulthood. Findings indicate that qualities of character rather than demographics define adulthood for 18- to 25-year-olds. "Accepting responsibility for one's self" and "making independent decisions" are the criteria most often mentioned. "Becoming financially independent" also ranks near the top. Interestingly, parenthood ranks low in young people's criteria for adulthood. Still, for those who have had a child, becoming a parent is the most important marker of transition to adulthood.

Emerging adulthood is a relatively new developmental period that was originally proposed by Jeffrey Jensen Arnett. It extends from the late teens through the twenties with a focus on 18- to 25-year-olds. For many it is not simply a time of transition into adulthood, suggests Arnett, but a distinct period of life marked by frequent change as various possibilities in love, work, and worldviews are explored. It exists only in cultures that allow young people a prolonged period of independent role exploration during this time of life.

Emerging adulthood is marked by relative independence from social roles and from normative expectations. Little about the future has been decided as different directions remain possible. While American adolescents live at home with one or both parents, are unmarried, and are enrolled in school, most 30-year-olds are married, have become parents, and have finished school. However, between these two periods, and especially from 18 to 25, a person's demographic status is very difficult to predict. Jensen suggests that

the demographic diversity and the unpredictability of emerging adulthood reflect the experimental and exploratory quality of the period.

In emerging adulthood, dating is likely to take place in couples (rather than in groups) and focuses on exploring the potential for emotional and physical intimacy (rather than recreation). Work experiences are oriented toward preparation for adult work roles. Graduate school has become increasingly common and sometimes allows emerging adults to switch direction from the occupational preparation they had chosen as undergraduates. Changing worldviews are often a central aspect of cognitive development. Postsecondary education fosters such exploration. By graduation, emerging adults have often committed themselves to a worldview different from the one they brought in with them.

Several types of risky behavior, including unprotected sex, most forms of substance abuse, and high-speed as well as intoxicated driving, reach their peaks in the years of emerging adulthood. For those in their early twenties, physical proximity to parents is often inversely related to the quality of their relationships with them. In both Europe and the United States, *autonomy* and *relatedness* are complementary rather than opposing dimensions of relationships with parents.

Arnett states:

Emerging adulthood merits scholarly attention as a distinct period of the life course in industrialized societies. It is in many respects the age of possibilities, a period in which many different potential futures remain possible and personal freedom and exploration are higher for most people than at any other time. It is also a period of life that is likely to grow in importance in the coming century, as countries around the world reach a point in their economic development where they may allow the prolonged period of exploration and freedom from the roles that constitute adulthood.

Arnett describes five central features of emerging adulthood. They include the following:

1. *Age of identity exploration*: Young people are exploring who they are and what they expect out of work, school, and love.
2. *Age of instability*: Young people are repeatedly changing residence as they go to college or university or live with friends or romantic partners. This instability ends in the thirties as families and careers become established.
3. *Age of self-focus*: Free of parental supervision and the society-directed routine of high school, young people are trying to decide what they want to do, where they want to go, and who they want to be with before those important matters are limited by the constraints of family and career.
4. *Age of feeling in-between*: Emerging adults will say that they are taking responsibility for themselves but still do not completely feel like an adult.
5. *Age of possibilities*: Optimism abounds. Many, if not most, emerging adults believe they are very likely to live “better than their parents have.” In contrast to parents who have divorced, they are often convinced they will find a lifelong soul mate.

Arnett, J. J. (2000). Emerging adulthood: A theory of development from the late teens through the twenties. *American Psychologist*, 55, 469–480.

Arnett, J. J. (2004). *Emerging adulthood: The winding road from the late teens through the twenties*. New York: Oxford University Press

Arnett, J. J., & Tanner, J. L. (Eds.) (2005). *Emerging adults in America: Coming of age in the 21st century*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

#### *Classroom Exercise/Lecture Break: Judging Stages of Development II—Adolescent and Adult Development*

To help students distinguish the stages of development during adolescence and adulthood, select a popular or current television program that most students may have watched or that they have access to on the Web. Identify one character in that program for your students to observe, and show them a brief video clip of that character either interacting with other people or animals, or “thinking aloud” alone. Based on the information in the clip, ask students to identify the stage(s) of development the character is currently experiencing. You can select a specific theory for them to work with (e.g., Kohlberg’s theory of moral development, Erikson’s psychosocial stages, or Marcia’s theory of ego-identity status, which is described briefly in the Classroom Exercise: Objective Measure of Ego-Identity Status), or you can ask different small groups of students to work with different theories for a “fuller picture” of the character’s developmental status. Ask each group to identify at least three different pieces of “evidence” that the character has achieved the stage of development they have identified.

#### *Lecture/Discussion Topic/Critical Thinking Break: Failure to Launch?*

Many colleagues complain with increasing frequency about the phenomenon of overinvolved parents, those who “helicopter” around their children, seeming to make the decisions for their nearly adult children, monitoring their activities (and academic performance), and serving at a moment’s notice when they receive calls for financial or emotional assistance. The concept of helicoptering parents is not new, of course, but the term was not coined until the early twenty-first century to describe this kind of “hyperparenting” phenomenon. These parents operate out of fear of harm to their chil-

dren; they want to protect them. (See a witty article about this trend in *Time* magazine at [www.time.com/time/nation/article/0,8599,1940395,00.html](http://www.time.com/time/nation/article/0,8599,1940395,00.html)).

Research supports the idea that symptoms of anxiety and neuroticism in students is associated with “helicoptering” by their parents. In one study by Neil Montgomery, about 10 percent of a large sample of college freshmen reported having at least one hovering, intrusive parent. As described by Montgomery, unlike the rest of the sample, students in this “helicoptered” group were dependent, . . . vulnerable, . . . self-conscious, . . . anxious, . . . impulsive, not open to new actions or ideas.” Although Montgomery’s findings are only correlational, they are suggestive of a relationship that should be explored further for cause and effect.

The effects described by Montgomery may be related to the “failure to launch” phenomenon researched and written about in the marriage and family therapy literature. Failure to launch is described as a problem that arises when young people experience difficulty successfully transitioning from adolescence to young adulthood. The stuff of many Hollywood coming of age movies (including a movie by that name) and novels, a failure to launch successfully into adulthood can have real, devastating affects on a young person’s family as well as on the self-esteem and self-efficacy of the young person himself or herself. In fact, Japan is witnessing the growth of a similar problem of social withdrawal among Japanese youth known as *Hikikomori*. It represents a major social issue that has developed only within the last 30 years.

The May/June 2010 issue of *Family Therapy* contains some excellent brief articles and reviews that you and your students can read together. In discussing the failure to launch phenomenon and *hikikomori*, experts suggest some family intervention and therapy strategies to build independence and resilience in adolescents transitioning to adulthood. You may also be interested in viewing portions of the “Inside the Teenage Brain” episode of PBS’ *Frontline* program (see [www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/teenbrain](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/teenbrain)). The website includes videos from the program, interviews with behavioral and neuroscience researchers, expert parenting advice, and online activities you and your students will find informative and interesting.

Have your students generate some causal hypotheses about why there may be a relationship between the hovering, intrusive, anxious parenting style of helicoptering parents and some of the difficulties in social, cognitive, and emotional development of adolescents who fail to “launch” into adulthood. Have your students speculate how the helicoptering parenting style might lead to more dependence and less resilience to stress when children become young adults. How might they test the hypotheses that they come up with?

Rettner, R. ‘Helicopter’ parents have neurotic kids, study suggests. *LiveScience*. [www.livescience.com/culture/helicopter-parenting-100603.html?loc=interstitialskip](http://www.livescience.com/culture/helicopter-parenting-100603.html?loc=interstitialskip). (Based on research presented at the 22nd Annual Convention of the Association for Psychological Science, May 2010, Boston, MA.)

## Adulthood

*Lecture/Discussion Topic: 2002—American Perceptions of Aging in the Twenty-First Century*

In 2002, the National Council on the Aging conducted a survey of Americans older than 65. The results provided important insights into how senior citizens view themselves and their lives. Intended as a follow-up to the “Myth and Reality of Aging” survey conducted in 1974, this survey found that the perception of being old is more strongly linked to physical and/or mental decline than it is to having reached a particular birthday. In answer to the question, “What is old?” the respondents noted that “middle age” starts around 50 and one becomes “old” around 70 and “very old” around 80.

Other important findings regarding those older than 65 are the following:

- About half the respondents consider themselves to be in excellent or very good health. Nearly three-fourths of all the seniors and two-thirds in the 75-plus age group report that their health conditions pose no significant limitations. High blood pressure and arthritis, reported by half the seniors, are the most common health problems. Ten percent of the seniors were diagnosed with depression.
- Slightly less than half view the “golden years” as the best years of their life, with two-thirds finding the senior years to be better than they expected.
- Memory loss was the primary worry about living 10 more years. This was followed by the fear of experiencing pain, long-term care costs, being unproductive, and outliving their pension.
- Viewed as “very” or “somewhat serious problems” for those over 65 were health (92 percent), money (88 percent), loneliness (84 percent), and crime (82 percent).
- Ninety percent look back at their lives with satisfaction, and most consider themselves to be open-minded and adaptable. The majority have a positive attitude.
- Family and friends, health, and spirituality were viewed as the most important keys to a vital life.

*Classroom Exercise/Student Project: Is There a Prime of Life?*

Douglas A. Hershey and Joy M. Jacobs-Lawson’s “prime of life” exercise provides a good introduction to adult development. It will help you to (1) identify some

important dimensions of adult development, (2) discuss the ages at which each life dimension reaches its peak and is at its worst, and (3) calculate the average quality of life during each decade of development. Perhaps most importantly, the activity debunks the notion that a single stage of life represents one's peak.

Ask students, "Is there such thing as a prime of life and if so, at what age is it?" Students are likely to give different ages along with different reasons for their selection. When a MetLife poll asked respondents "How old do you wish you were?" they received diverse answers. Overall, 35 percent wished they were somewhere between 21 and 30, with another 17 percent wishing they were between 31 and 40. Just over 1 in 10 wished they were between 41 and 50, 6 percent answered 51 to 60, and 13 percent wished they were less than 21 years. Eight percent were not sure.

Instead of there being one prime, suggest that adulthood involves different dimensions that each show a different developmental pattern. In short, life-span development is both multidimensional and multidirectional.

Ask students to identify life domains that may contribute to the quality of life. Among those they are likely to list are health, financial/economic, work and career, cognitive abilities, leisure and recreation, family life, social/interpersonal, and educational/learning. Draw a grid on the chalkboard with seven decades of life (twenties through eighties) forming the columns and seven to nine different life domains forming the rows. Identify important life events, such as independence from parents (early twenties), marriage (late twenties) retirement (mid-sixties), and death (mid-eighties), as reference points along the bottom of the grid. Consider distributing photocopies of an empty grid so that each student can track scores for each life domain. Beginning with an easy-to-visualize domain such as financial status, have students identify the decade of life in which it peaks for most people. Place two plus (++) signs in that box. Similarly, have them identify the decade in which this same domain is at the lowest and place two minus signs (--) in the appropriate box. Don't let debate ever continue too long before asking for a show of hands. Once these anchors are identified, for each of the remaining decades have them suggest a single plus (good), single minus (poor), or combination plus-minus (neutral) for the remaining decades. Hershey and Jacobs-Lawson suggest that the preexercise discussion and selection of the domains takes about 10 minutes and completion of the prime of life grid about 25 to 30 minutes.

The scoring grid will clearly show that different life domains peak and decline at different stages of life. Clearly, there is no single prime or single low point of life. As part of the discussion, you might plot the values

for each row of the grid individually on a line graph (the decades along the horizontal axis and "quality of life" along the vertical, using "very poor," "poor," "neutral," "good," and "very good").

Hershey and Jacobs-Lawson note that early developmental theories near the turn of the twentieth century focused on the nature of the declines that occur over the life course. More recent models of adult development recognize both the multidimensional and multidirectional aspects of adult change.

Note that the grid gives the class's perception of quality of life during adulthood, not necessarily the actual developmental differences in life quality. Typical students' perceptions will mirror actual patterns identified in research. Nonetheless, in conclusion it is worth noting the following research findings:

1. Biological fitness and physical abilities seem to reach their peak in the early twenties and then decline slowly throughout adulthood.
2. Cognitive abilities such as working memory, attention, and speed of processing change little through young adulthood and middle age. Between 65 and 75 there are significant declines followed by further substantial declines.
3. Crystallized cognitive abilities improve through young adulthood, slow somewhat in middle age, and then plateau or show modest decline into old age.
4. Older workers tend to enjoy greater satisfaction than their younger counterparts. After age 60, job satisfaction tends to decline.
5. Personal income peaks between 45 and 54 and is at its lowest after 65.
6. There are few changes in the amount of social support across the life span. However, in old age, casual friendships are less common and existing friendships take on added importance.
7. During the middle years, more passive leisure activities (e.g., reading and television viewing) replace more active ones (e.g., bowling and bike riding).
8. Establishing independence from family shifts to caring for children during early adulthood and then to caring for aging parents in middle age. In late life, friendships tend to replace the support that once was received from family members.

Hershey, D. A., & Jacobs-Lawson, J. M. (2001). Developmental differences in the quality of life: A classroom teaching exercise. *Teaching of Psychology, 28*, 114–117.

MetLife Mature Market Institute (2005, July). How old is old? MetLife mature market poll on attitudes about age. Retrieved on July 21, 2008, from [www.metlife.com/FileAssets/MMI/MMIStudiesHowOldisOld.pdf](http://www.metlife.com/FileAssets/MMI/MMIStudiesHowOldisOld.pdf).

*Student Project: Birthday Cards and Aging*

Stephen Fried suggests that students investigate the attitudes about aging reflected in birthday cards. After first asking permission of the manager in a greeting card shop, they should analyze 20 cards for people older than 25, describing each card's content and indicating its connotation about aging. They might also consider whether birthday cards intended for different age groups reflect different attitudes toward aging. During the class sessions in which the activity is due, Fried divides students into small groups and asks them to discuss their feelings with their peers. Alternatively, you can have students bring old birthday cards from home for analysis. If you have some, bring them as well.

Fried, S. B. (1988). Learning activities for understanding aging. *Teaching of Psychology, 15*, 160–162.

*Student Project: Writing a Biography*

An English department colleague suggested that preparing an older person's biography can be a wonderful learning project that also provides the basis for a major course paper. Early each semester, she obtains names from a nearby retirement home and links each student in her writing course with a resident. The students initiate contact with the residents and, typically, spend a great deal of time with them over the course of the semester, becoming increasingly familiar with the major challenges and joys of a lifetime. There's even the real potential for strong and lasting friendships to develop across the generations. At the end of the course, all the students and residents meet at the retirement home in a partylike atmosphere (sometimes even inviting the resident's close family) and students present their biographies. It is a project that can be readily adapted to life-span psychology. Although it can be the basis for a major course paper, it can also provide the content for a much shorter writing assignment.

**Physical Development***Student Project: Attitudes Toward Older People*

Paul Panek suggests a way to get students to think about older people. He proposes that data collection be done out of class, but this exercise is readily adapted for use in class. Simply ask students to write down three terms or words that come to mind when they hear the words "old person." Collect the responses and before the next class tabulate the results, summarizing the individual responses and their frequency. Distribute your table or put it on the chalkboard. Have students judge by majority vote whether each response is positive (e.g., wisdom), negative (e.g., senile), or neutral (e.g., easy to please).

Panek reports that the vast majority of responses will be negative. In one class, 4 of the general catego-

ries were neutral, 5 were positive, and 14 were negative. Frequency of response produced a similar pattern: 9 responses were neutral, 27 were positive, and 53 were negative.

Mark Snyder and Peter Miene examined reasons that young people harbor negative stereotypes of older people, as well as possible ways of changing them. Undergraduates were assigned to one of three conditions in which they read different stories, each reflecting a different theory of why people stereotype others. All the stories described the experiences of a young person who reluctantly volunteers to spend time with a range of older adults in nursing homes and other settings. Based on the underlying logic of one of the three theories, the character gains insight into the reasons for his or her stereotypes and the functions they serve. After reading the stories, the research participants answered open-ended questions designed to mirror the experiences of the character.

The cognitive approach states that stereotypes reflect people's attempt to simplify a complex world. As a result, all people from a particular group are viewed as sharing the same negative traits. The character in the story comes to realize that older people are as diverse as people of his or her own age.

The psychodynamic approach suggests that stereotypes are self-protective; people defend against aging because they are worried about their own aging. The character in the story comes to appreciate that he or she has been blaming older people themselves for the hardships tied to old age.

The sociocultural approach argues that young people are influenced by society's beliefs about older people because they have little contact with them. The character in the story realizes that he or she can form his or her own ideas about older people.

In the second part of the study but prior to the students' reading of the stories, the researchers assessed the degree to which participants who had read the stories held stereotypes of older people. They then determined the amount of change produced after reading the stories, using the responses of control participants as a baseline. Results indicated that only the psychodynamic approach made a difference. But interestingly, it had opposite effects on men and women. In the control condition, female undergraduates showed significantly more negative stereotyping of older people than men did. But compared with the control women, the negative stereotyping by women who read the psychodynamic story plummeted. The reverse was true for the men. The psychodynamic intervention actually made the men negatively stereotype older people more.

In explaining these findings, Snyder and Miene suggest that women may fear aging more because they are taught that they grow uglier and more incapacitated with age. Men are socialized to think more positively

about aging. After reading the psychodynamic vignette, men confronted their fears for the first time. However, they didn't get beyond those fears, as the women did.

Robert Goodale suggests another exercise to be performed out of class. Several days before physical development in later life is to be discussed, have students locate a person of their own age and an elderly individual. Ask the peer to draw a picture representing a typical scene in the life of an older person. Similarly, ask an older person to draw a typical scene in his or her own life. Participants should be told that artistic merit is irrelevant. On the scheduled class day, tape the drawings to the walls and chalkboards, putting drawings by younger people separate from those by older people. Ask the students to compare the views of young people with those of older people. Goodale reports that while the young typically see older people as sedentary, older people portray themselves as involved and active. Discussion can focus on a number of issues. Do the pictures drawn by the two groups confirm the differences found by Goodale? Where they don't, why might that be? Why do misconceptions about aging arise? What can be done to alter them? How might beliefs about old age influence interactions with older people? How do students imagine their own old age?

Neil Lutsky has suggested that the attribute "loss of health" is largely responsible for perceivers giving negative ratings to "old age." In other words, "old" has a very circumscribed meaning centered on health states and as such may not be synonymous with other descriptions of elderly people and aging. Lutsky suggests giving students a more neutral stimulus designation, such as "a person 70 years old" or even "an older person."

Goodale, R. A. (1981). Age-old beliefs. In L. T. Benjamin & K. D. Lowman (Eds.), *Activities handbook for the teaching of psychology* (pp. 133–134). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Lutsky, N. (1986). A negative attitude toward a classroom technique eliciting attitudes toward elderly persons. *Teaching of Psychology, 13*, 148–149.

Panek, P. E. (1984). A classroom technique for demonstrating negative attitudes toward aging. *Teaching of Psychology, 3*(3), 173–174.

Snyder, M., & Miene, P. (1994). Stereotyping of the elderly: A functional approach. *British Journal of Social Psychology, 33*, 63–82.

### *PsychSim 5: Signs of Aging*

In this activity, the student explores the main aspects of physical aging in middle age and late adulthood.

### *Student Project: Growing Old*

For an out-of-class project, Randall Wight asks his students to dress up as senior citizens, including wearing earplugs to reduce hearing, wrapping their joints with elastic bandages to create stiffness, and either using or

discarding their glasses to impair eyesight. Then they spend five hours role-playing older versions of themselves. Their reports include photographs of how they looked and, most important, their experiences.

Students typically report that they gain valuable insights from the experience. Even mundane activities such as walking across the street acquire new meaning—"With our legs wrapped, we walked considerably slower than most people. Inevitably, cars had to wait on us . . . not only do you feel a bother to other people, you worry about your life." Another student described how it felt to be ignored, while a third was accosted by a group of teens in a passing car who screamed insults. Not all had negative experiences. For example, one student was offered \$10 as he rummaged through a garbage can for food. A male student reported that "the highlight of my experiment came when a little old lady on the opposite bench winked at me."

Hall, H. (1988, December). Trying on old age. *Psychology Today, 67*.

### *Classroom Exercise: Alzheimer's Quiz*

Handout 18 will enable students to assess their knowledge of Alzheimer's disease. It also provides a good introduction to classroom discussion of the topic. Neal Cutler asked the questions of a cross section of 1500 people older than 45 in the United States. Students will be interested in comparing their own responses with those of the sample, as well as learning the following correct answers, which you can present in class (the percentages in parentheses refer to responses of a national sample).

1. False. There is no evidence that Alzheimer's is contagious, but given the concern and confusion about AIDS, it is encouraging that nearly everyone knows this fact about Alzheimer's. (True—3%, False—83%, Don't know—14%)
2. False. Alzheimer's is associated with old age, but it is a disease and not the inevitable consequence of aging. (True—9%, False—80%, Don't know—11%)
3. False. Alzheimer's is a disease of the brain, but it is not a form of insanity. The fact that most people understand the distinction contrasts with the results of public-opinion studies concerning epilepsy that were taken 35 years ago. At that time, almost half of the public thought that epilepsy, another disease of the brain, was a form of insanity. (True—7%, False—78%, Don't know—15%)
4. True. Despite announcements of "breakthroughs," biomedical research is in the early laboratory and experimental stages and there is no known cure for the disease. (True—75%, False—8%, Don't know—17%)

5. True. Memory and cognitive decline are characteristic of the earlier stages of Alzheimer's disease, but physical decline follows in the later stages. (True—74%, False—10%, Don't know—16%)
6. True. Most people know that this is the earliest sign of Alzheimer's disease. (True—62%, False—19%, Don't know—19%)
7. False. Most people also know that while Alzheimer's produces memory loss, memory loss may have some other cause. (True—16%, False—61%, Don't know—23%)
8. False. Apart from age, research has not uncovered any reliable demographic or ethnic patterns. Although there are more older women than men, both sexes are equally likely to get Alzheimer's. (True—15%, False—45%, Don't know—40%)
9. True. Alzheimer's produces mental and physical decline that is eventually fatal, although the progression varies greatly among individuals. (True—40%, False—33%, Don't know—27%)
10. False. At present there is no definitive blood test that can determine with certainty that a patient has Alzheimer's disease. Accurate diagnosis is possible only upon autopsy. Studies suggest that genetic or blood testing may be able to identify Alzheimer's, but more research with humans is needed. (True—12%, False—24%, Don't know—64%)

Cutler, N. *Psychology Today* (May 1987), p. 93.

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### *Lecture/Discussion Topic: Using the Arts to Cope With Alzheimer's Disease*

More and more families around the world are grappling with the impact of Alzheimer's disease and other dementias. To date, Alzheimer's is the most common form of dementia, accounting for 50 to 80 percent of all dementia cases. It is not a normal part of aging, its symptoms always worsen over time, and there is no known cure (see the Alzheimer's Association website at [www.alz.org](http://www.alz.org) for more information). Families who struggle with this disease often describe shock, disappointment, and fear upon learning of the diagnosis. They dread what Nancy Reagan labeled former U.S. President Ronald Reagan's battle with Alzheimer's disease: the "long, long goodbye."

In the last 15 years or so, research on Alzheimer's has resulted in medications to slow down the progress of the disease, and novel strategies for managing the symptoms of Alzheimer's disease have been implemented. All of these advances have given Alzheimer's families some hope in their efforts to honor their loved ones and care for them with dignity.

CBS's *60 Minutes* aired an episode chronicling the Reagans' relationship and the impact of President Reagan's Alzheimer's disease on their family. Titled

"The Reagan's Long Goodbye," it was first shown on September 25, 2002, and has been rerun frequently since then. A transcript of the moving episode can be found on their website ([www.cbsnews.com/stories/2002/09/246011/main523094.shtml](http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2002/09/246011/main523094.shtml)). Another particularly moving production about the impact of Alzheimer's disease on families is the film *The Long Goodbye* (produced by Luminous Films and aired on ABC1 in Australia). The film follows three families over a three-year period and was made in an effort to celebrate "the capacity of the human spirit to search for meaning and hope when the end is known and inescapable." The film is available from Ronin Films ([www.roninfilms.com.au/](http://www.roninfilms.com.au/) or e-mail to [@roninfilms.com.au](mailto:@roninfilms.com.au)).

Art therapy has been particularly successful as a tool for both Alzheimer's patients and their families to cope with the increasing impairments caused by the disease. Through poetry, painting, drawing, and other media, men and women with Alzheimer's are able to express their feelings and experiences even as they lose the ability to communicate verbally. This can be tremendously helpful in maintaining a connection between family members and loved ones with the disease. One touching case about the power of art is described in the book *The Broken Jar* by Daniel Potts. A neurologist, Potts writes about the progression of Alzheimer's in his father Lester Potts, who spent most of his life as a sawmill worker. After losing the ability to communicate verbally with his family, Lester became sullen and socially withdrawn. He was moved to a full-time care facility where he was brought to a watercolor painting activity. He showed a remarkable ability with the paintbrush, a talent that had been previously unknown. He soon became famous for his artwork depicting boyhood scenes in and around his country home in Alabama. His personality, dreams, and lifelong experiences continued to be expressed—and recognized—by his family. Lester's remarkable story inspired his son, Daniel, to write poetry. Daniel's collected works are presented in *The Broken Jar* along with some of his father's paintings. The story of Lester and Daniel Potts has been described in several videos on the Internet. The best one that is short enough to present in class is posted on the YouTube channel for *UAB Magazine* titled "Painting in Twilight: An Artist's Escape from Alzheimer's" ([www.youtube.com/watch?v=I\\_Te-s6M4qc](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I_Te-s6M4qc), 7:46 minutes in length). In addition to telling the story of Lester Potts, it depicts the changes in painting that typically take place in Alzheimer's patients.

Potts, D. C. (2006). *The broken jar*. Tuscaloosa, AL: Word Way Press.

### **Cognitive Development**

#### *Classroom Exercise: Selective Optimization With Compensation*

Paul and Margaret Baltes' theory of *selective optimiza-*

*tion with compensation* (SOC) assumes that at all stages of human development individuals manage their lives successfully through the three processes of selection, optimization, and compensation. Particularly in middle adulthood, however, people seek to maintain a balance in their lives by looking for the best way to compensate for physical and cognitive losses and to become proficient at activities they can perform well.

*Selection* focuses on setting goals. Developing, elaborating, and committing to goals organizes behavior over time. The process contributes to the feeling that one's life has purpose and meaning. *Elective selection* may involve a commitment to focus on one's career instead of one's hobbies until a certain professional level is achieved. *Loss-based selection* involves reconstructing one's goal system, for example, committing oneself to collecting stamps instead of playing tennis when arthritic pain is too great to continue with tennis.

*Optimization* "involves the acquisition and investment of goal-related means." To achieve desired ends in selected domains, acquiring, applying, and refining goal-related means are vital. The kinds of means that help one to attain important goals vary with the goal domain under consideration. For example, the specific means for achieving good performance in math may be very different from achieving trust and intimacy in a close relationship.

*Compensation* also involves means. Compensation refers to the use of alternative means to maintain a given level of functioning when specific goal-relevant means are no longer available. It is different from loss-based selection in that compensation does not involve a shift in the goals themselves but in finding new means to achieve those goals. Older adults may use hearing aids and glasses, as well as invoke the help of others, in pursuing long-established goals.

Handout 19 represents a brief measure of the three processes central to the SOC model. Elective selection points are scored for choosing 1A, 2A, and 3B. Loss-based selection points are scored for choosing 4A, 5A, and 6B. Optimization points are scored for 7B, 8B, and 9A. Compensation points are scored for circling 10B, 11A, and 12A. Total scores can range from 0 to 12, and scores on each subscale can range from 0 to 3. A large sample of older adults obtained a mean of 5.8 on the entire scale, and means of 1.3, 1.4, 1.6, and 1.5 on elective selection, loss-based selection, optimization, and compensation, respectively.

Research on the SOC model suggests an increase in the use of these life management strategies from early to middle adulthood and a decrease in late adulthood. The researchers hypothesize that as people move through adulthood, they acquire and refine their knowledge and use of SOC strategies. Because these strategies require both significant effort and resources, one can expect declining usage in late adulthood.

People who use SOC report higher levels of well-being, including the experience of positive emotions, personal growth, and purpose in life. SOC related positively to measures of tenacious goal pursuit, flexible goal adjustment, and "hierarchical thinking style" (i.e., a preference for developing a clear goal hierarchy and investing in these goals according to their importance). The specific strategies of optimization and compensation were also linked to a preference for trying out new and varying ways of pursuing goals. Self-reported SOC is positively associated with the personality traits of conscientiousness and extraversion; it is unrelated to agreeableness. Among college students, self-reported SOC was associated with greater academic success, including more time spent studying.

Freund, A. M., & Baltes, P. B. (1998). Selection, optimization, and compensation as strategies of life management: Correlations with subjective indicators of successful aging. *Psychology and Aging, 13*, 531–543.

Freund, A. M., & Baltes, P. B. (2002). Life-management strategies of selection, optimization, and compensation: Measurement by self-report and construct validity. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 82*, 642–662.

#### *Lecture/Discussion Topic: Living to 100*

Ask your class, "Would you want to live to 100?" The surprising results of a survey conducted for the American Association of Retired Persons indicated that only 1 in 4 Americans hopes to reach the 100-year milestone. On average, Americans prefer to call it quits at 91. The reasons most frequently given for not wanting to live to 100 were worries about declining health and concerns about not having financial support. Other concerns were the possibility of losing mental faculties, increasing dependence on others, being isolated or alone, and living in a nursing home.

Centenarians are an extremely fast-growing age group in the U.S. population—from an estimated 50,000 in 2005 to an astonishing 1 million by the year 2050 and close to 2 million by 2080. These predictions by the U.S. Census Bureau are considered to be fairly reliable; they are based partly on the likelihood that larger age groups, such as the immense "baby-boom" generation, will be able to reach 100 and partly on further advances in health care and the treatment of killer diseases. Currently, about 1 percent of each generation reach the 100-year mark.

Do centenarians share common characteristics that provide clues to successful aging? "Centenarians are a pretty diverse group," explains Dr. John Thompson, a researcher at the Sanders-Brown Research Center on Aging at the University of Kentucky in Lexington. "They don't exhibit as uniform a physical or emotional profile as some investigators had expected." For example, some researchers have speculated that those

reaching 100 would tend to be calm, serene “Type B” personalities, leading relatively stress-free lives. Although some fit this profile, others are fiery “Type A” personalities who seem to thrive on tension.

Leonard Poon, director of the University of Georgia Gerontology Center, calls American centenarians “expert survivors.” Out of 16 personality traits, he found that the expert survivors exhibited four important coping mechanisms. First, Poon states, “centenarians are dominant.” They want to have their way and are not easily pushed around. Second, many are also characterized by “suspiciousness.” That is, they do not simply accept the information they are given but will question it and think through an issue. Third, they tend to be practical rather than idealistic. And, finally, in their approach to life they are likely to be more relaxed. In short, they are strong but not inflexible people.

There do, however, seem to be some commonalities beyond the genetic propensity to long life. (Research shows that the vast majority have had at least one close relative who made it into the 90s or above). For example:

1. Even those with serene temperaments tend to be active, generally *physically* active, people.
2. Centenarians set standards for themselves and follow them rigorously.
3. They tend to have led people-centered lives, often helping those in distress. Clearly, those over 100 are not self-centered.
4. They have a bright, positive outlook on life. Even at 100, they continue to look forward to the future.
5. Although they are not all avid churchgoers, most say they enjoy active spiritual lives. They also enjoy very strong social support networks.
6. Perhaps most important, centenarians take an active interest in the world around them. They cherish life and enjoy simple pleasures with obvious enthusiasm. “When you reach 100, each day is a day to treasure,” says 100-year-old Jay Hoover. “I have very few regrets about my life. And I wouldn’t change places with anyone.”

Brandt, E. (1988, October 16). To cherish life. *Parade Magazine*, pp. 4–8.

Corliss, R., & Lemonick, M. D. (2004, August 30). How to live to be 100. *Time*, 40–48.

(1999, May 27). 100-year life span isn’t preferred. *Grand Rapids Press*, p. A7.

## Social Development

*Lecture/Discussion Topic/Critical Thinking Break:*  
*Friendship in Marriage and The Marriage Ref*

To begin a discussion of intimacy during adulthood, you can first describe the fascinating research by John Gottman, a psychologist at the University of

Washington who tracked 650 couples for 14 years, then have students complete his relationship quizzes. Gottman published the results of his study in 1999. He maintains that the most important factor in a lasting marriage is friendship. Successful couples have “a mutual respect for and enjoyment of each other’s company.” Couples who stay together know each other intimately—they are well versed in each other’s likes, dislikes, personality quirks, hopes, and dreams. They have an abiding regard for each other and express this fondness everyday in both big and little ways. Indeed, according to Gottman, the quality of this friendship determines whether a couple is satisfied with the sex, romance, and passion in their marriage.

Among Gottman’s unexpected findings is that anger is not the most destructive emotion in a marriage. Both happy and unhappy couples fight. In fact, arguments are inevitable. “When you pick someone to marry,” suggests Gottman, “you have immediately inherited your set of unresolvable relationship problems.” The real obstacles to a happy marriage are criticism, contempt, defensiveness, and stonewalling. Gottman’s research points to three characteristics of successful couples that can be used by others to avoid these pitfalls. First, they develop a “love map” of their spouse’s dreams and fears. From this, they both learn what’s behind their conflicts and are thus better able to work toward a satisfactory compromise. Second, couples need a “fondness and admiration” system. They need to develop concrete ways of showing affection and respect. The gestures can be small, such as “I watched you playing with our daughter last night; it was really quite lovely.” Third, partners in a solid marriage make frequent “bids” for one another’s attention, and those bids are acknowledged and responded to. This bid for attention may be as simple as one partner calling attention to a newspaper article and getting positive feedback rather than disinterest. This type of response to a bid is what Gottman calls “turning toward.” When a person turns toward his or her partner, this acts as a positive reinforcer for future bids. “In lab settings,” says Gottman, “we can see that in marriages where things are going well, couples are making up to 70 bids in 10 minutes. In marriages where things are not going well, they make seven. . . . These are the small moments in which we are aware that a partner is responding to us and is not on automatic pilot,” concludes Gottman.

Partners may also “turn away” from a bid, or “turn against” it. Both types of responses serve to deny the bidders the emotional connection they are seeking. Turning away involves a passive ignoring of the bid, which can take the form of absentmindedness, preoccupation, changing the subject, or other forms of non-responsiveness. Turning against involves responding in an antagonistic manner, for example, by behaving in a way that actively punishes the bid attempt. Laughing

at the bidder, criticism related to the bid, arguing about the bid, and the like are all examples of turning against.

Repeated turning away and turning against are related to the appearance of what Gottman calls the “Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse”: criticism, contempt, defensiveness, and stonewalling. The presence of these “horsemen” in a relationship indicate trouble: the more of them that are evident, the more strained the relationship has become.

To help your students think critically about Gottman’s work and its application in his outreach programs, as well as how Gottman’s work might help them improve those relationships, first have them go to [www.gottman.com](http://www.gottman.com) and review the information about the organization. In particular, they should read the sections on “Marriage & Couples,” “Parenting,” and “Research.” Then, ask them to complete Handouts 20a and 20b. Students may do this exercise individually or in small groups, as a classroom activity, or as a Critical Thinking Break (the discussion here assumes that the class has been divided into small groups).

For scoring Handout 20a, students should give themselves one point for each “True” answer. Total scores above 15 indicate a strong relationship; scores between 8 and 14 indicate a need for improvement and work on the basics, particularly on improving communication. Scores of 7 or less indicate that your relationship may be in serious trouble.

Scoring Handout 20b is as follows: For questions 1–3, a score below 8 means that you are direct in your relationship; a score of 8 or higher means you may be too reticent in bidding. For questions 4–6, a score below 8 means that you are not very forceful in expressing your needs; a score of 8 or higher suggests that your anger is turning your partner away. For questions 7–9, a score below 8 means that you trust each other; a score of 8 or higher indicates a problem with the level of trust in your relationship.

After completing the quizzes, the groups should discuss the website and each person’s quiz results.

Students should then access NBC’s TV program *The Marriage Ref* at [www.nbc.com/the-marriage-ref](http://www.nbc.com/the-marriage-ref). As a group, they should select one couple and watch the video about them. Everyone should watch the same video. Then, as a group, discuss it and answer the questions in Handout 20c.

Gottman, J. (1999). *The seven principles for making marriage work*. New York: Crown.

Gottman, J. M., & DeClaire, J. (2002). *The relationship cure: A five-step guide for building better communications with family, friends, and lovers*. New York: Three Rivers Press.

Kantrowitz, B., & Wingert, P. (1999, April 19). The science of a good marriage. *Newsweek*, pp. 52–57.

*Feature Film: Tuesdays With Morrie* (ABC, 60–89 min.)

One of the videos relating to Mitch Albom’s best-selling book *Tuesdays With Morrie* can provide a wonderful conclusion to your classroom discussion of life-span development. Morrie Schwartz, terminally ill with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), teaches Mitch, his former student, important lessons in living and dying in their weekly visits. ABC’s 1999 adaptation of the book (89 minutes) was produced by Oprah Winfrey and starred Jack Lemmon. It won three Emmys and was released in video for general purchase in March 2001. *Tuesdays with Morrie* can be purchased for \$9.99 at [amazon.com](http://amazon.com). A shorter video (60 minutes) of Morrie Schwartz and Mitch Albom’s appearances on ABC’s *Nightline*, anchored by Ted Koppel, is also available at [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com). *ABC News presents Morrie Schwartz: Lessons on Living* can be purchased for \$13.49.

#### *Classroom Exercise: The Death-Bed Test*

How we live shapes how we feel when we die. In their final years, according to Erik Erikson’s psychosocial theory, the elderly wonder whether they found purpose or failure in life. Answers lead to either *integrity*—the feeling that one’s life has been meaningful—or *despair*—the conclusion that the time has been wasted.

To set life’s priorities, we might anticipate Erikson’s end-of-life stage, suggest Christopher Peterson and Martin Seligman. The death-bed test helps us to identify important human strengths and thus what’s really worth pursuing in life.

Pose the following question to your class:

Imagine you have lived a rich, meaningful life, and now are on your death bed. As you reflect back, what memories fill you with happiness, pride, and satisfaction? Verbalize at least one, more if you can.

Adults’ answers are not likely to be designer clothing, an expensive house, a sport utility vehicle, or a luxury yacht. It may not even be their greatest educational or career achievement. Most people say that the best things in life have been close, satisfying relationships, especially bonds with family and friends. Robert Sears reports that in actual late-life reminiscences, even those who have enjoyed exceptional career success attach greater meaning to their close relationships than to their stellar accomplishments.

Peterson, C., & Seligman, M. E. P. (2004). *Character strengths and virtues: A handbook and classification*. Washington, DC, and New York: American Psychological Association and Oxford University Press.

Reis, H. T., & Gable, S. L. (2003). Toward a positive psychology of relationships. In C. L. M. Keyes & J. Haidt (Eds.), *Flourishing: Positive psychology and the life well-lived* (pp. 129–159). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Sears, R. R. (1977). Sources of life satisfactions of the Terman gifted men. *American Psychologist*, 32, 119–128.

Suzuki, D. (2000, February 22). A death-bed test for life's priorities. *Sydney Morning Herald*. Retrieved August 22, 2003, from <http://old.smh.com.au/news/literarylunches/suzuki.html>.

### *Student Project: Preparing an Obituary*

Cathy Lawrenz reports that having students prepare their own obituary at the start of her human development class helped to facilitate a more gripping and personally meaningful study of life. Her student project can readily be adapted for use in the introductory class.

Introduce the exercise by asking your class who has experienced a birth and who has experienced a death (a pet, a friend, a relative). Ask volunteers to briefly share those experiences if they feel comfortable doing so. Before assigning the writing project, remind students of the chapter's central theme: development is lifelong. Death is the final challenge. All of us will face our own deaths and experience the deaths of loved ones and friends. How we think about our own mortality can shape how we face life.

In preparing the writing assignment, students should read the newspaper obituary section (several editions if a small-town paper), noting the important elements in the death notices. Have them identify (preferably in writing) both the commonalities and unique features of the entries. They should decide for themselves the length and specific content of their own obituary.

At the next class period, have your students form small groups and report both what they learned from the newspaper and, only if they feel comfortable doing so, read their own obituary. Have them compare and contrast what they have decided to include. Finally, bring the class together as a whole to discuss both newspaper findings and the content of their personal obituaries. Ask your class what the exercise reveals about life as well as death. The discussion provides a good introduction to end-of-life issues but also a good conclusion to your discussion of human development.

Lawrenz, C. (2002, May). Framing human development by looking at death. Paper presented at the Creative Classroom session of the annual meeting of the Council of Teachers of Undergraduate Psychology/Midwestern Psychological Association, Chicago.

### *Classroom Exercise: Thinking About Death*

Handout 21, designed by Jerrold Greenberg, provides an excellent stimulus to a discussion of death. Distribute a copy to each student. Although the questions can be answered in class, it is better to give students time to reflect on them between class sessions.

You can begin a discussion by asking whether it is wise for young, healthy people to think about their own

death. Is it not better to live with the time you have and forget how it ends? Humorist Woody Allen has said he doesn't mind dying—he just doesn't want to be there when it happens. Moreover, he'd rather achieve immortality by not dying than by his works living on. Or, is Herman Fiefel correct in suggesting that accepting the inevitability of death gives meaning to life? Did American poet Jesse Stuart speak the truth when, in recovering from a near-fatal heart attack, he said, "No man really begins to live until he has come close to dying"? Research has suggested that a higher perceived purpose in life is associated with less fear of death.

You might mention later that in 1991, Chicago inventors Chip Altholz and Barry Faldner created the Timisis LifeClock to remind us of our mortality (which they manufactured and sold through 2007). Owners of the clock, shaped like a 3D-isosceles triangle, programmed their age and gender into the memory and the clock counted down the hours, minutes, and seconds left in their lifetime, assuming men live 75 years and women, 80. Every minute the clock also flashed one of 160 motivational messages designed to inspire productivity and creativity. When asked if the clock was a morbid reminder of certain death, Altholz said *no*. "When you see that time quantified, the quality of your life starts to increase."

Ask students if they had difficulty answering any of the questions on the handout. Had they reflected on these issues prior to the exercise? Ask for volunteers to share their answers. You might also disclose some of your own responses. Finally, you may want students to turn in their handouts anonymously, so you can provide a summary of the results at a later class period.

Bolt, M. (1978). Purpose in life and death concern. *Journal of Genetic Psychology*, 132, 159–160.

Greenberg, J. (1999). *Comprehensive stress management* (6th ed.). Boston: McGraw-Hill.

### *Classroom Exercise/Student Project: End-of-Life Care*

Facing death with dignity and openness helps people complete the life cycle with a sense of life's meaningfulness and unity. Alexandra Drane and Mathew Holt founded Engage With Grace ([www.engagewithgrace.org](http://www.engagewithgrace.org)) to foster discussion about end-of-life issues. They observe that we make decisions throughout our lives about where we want to live, what activities to engage in, and with whom to spend our time. However, as we get close to death "we get frozen in our tracks and can't talk about our preferences for end-of-life care."

Drane and Holt's One Slide Project poses five questions as talking points that are designed to facilitate life's most difficult discussions. Handout 22 includes a simple adaptation of the slide, which can be found in its original form at [www.engagewithgrace.org/Questions.aspx](http://www.engagewithgrace.org/Questions.aspx). The authors suggest that the questions can be

used in a host of settings, including family dinners, long car rides, business events, and even the classroom. You can use them in small-group discussions during class or have students use them with family members or roommates as an out-of-class project. Volunteers might later share the outcome of their discussions with the full class. In distributing the handout, ask your class if they know what a living will, a health care power of attorney, or an advanced directive refer to (question 5). Having students discover the meaning of these terms is a useful exercise in itself.

More information and resources can be found at the Engage With Grace website. For example, according to Drane and Holt, research indicates that most Americans would prefer to die at home, but up to half die in hospital settings. More than 80 percent of Californians say their loved ones “know exactly” or have a “good idea” of what their wishes would be if they were in a persistent coma, but only 50 percent say they have talked to them about their preferences. The website includes a video of Za’s story (see [www.engagewithgrace.org/About.aspx#story](http://www.engagewithgrace.org/About.aspx#story)), the moving account of a young mother who was taken from the hospital to die at home. You may choose to show it in class.

### Reflections on Stability and Change

#### *Classroom Exercise: Personal Stability and Change*

In introducing a discussion of stability and change, you might ask your students to reflect on how they have changed and remained the same from, say, their middle school years to their college or university years. More specifically, you might follow Randy Larsen and David Buss’ suggestion to have them identify three characteristics that have changed noticeably during that period. These may be personality characteristics, interests, attitudes, values, and life goals. Then have them identify three characteristics that have not changed. Again, these may be traits, interests, values, objectives, or attitudes toward specific issues. Have students share their responses in small groups or volunteer in full class. It should be clear that life requires both stability and change. Stability provides our identity; change lets us adapt and grow with experience.

Larsen, R. J., & Buss, D. M. (2008). *Personality psychology: Domains of knowledge about human nature* (3rd ed.). Boston: McGraw-Hill.

#### *Lecture/Discussion Topic: Resilient Youth*

Robert Jay Lifton’s book *The Protean Self* addresses the question of stability and change in personality. Lifton views the human capacity for transformation and change to be a healthy response to the fragmentation and uncertainties of the modern world. Named after the Greek god Proteus, who changed shape from lion to serpent to water to tree, the “protean self” also enables

us to overcome early painful experiences and to grow into healthy, productive adults.

Lifton cites the case of a 70-year-old Boston lawyer who had been a judge and a leader in human-rights struggles. Physically abused by a violent father through most of his Chicago childhood, he managed to survive by telling himself stories. In addition to showing an early talent for writing, he created alternative worlds by immersing himself in schoolwork as well as childhood play. From elementary school through law school, teachers took an interest in him and he responded energetically and creatively. Later, when practicing law, he found himself increasingly motivated to work for victims. When asked how this came about he responded unhesitatingly, “The first serious victim . . . that evoked my sympathy and concern was me.” He had transformed his own experience into a commitment to combat the victimization of others. He went on to describe how, with the help of a nurturing marriage, he has been able to cope with the anxiety and inner doubt derived from his shattering early years.

Some researchers believe that the study of “transcenders”—those people who thrive despite traumatic upbringings—can provide new insights into the nature of development. Take the case of Elizabeth, the subject of Karen North’s doctoral dissertation. Abandoned by her mother, Elizabeth was raised by an abusive aunt who delivered bone-breaking beatings and on one occasion stripped her naked and dunked her in a vat of scalding water. For years, her uncle sexually molested her. Elizabeth claims the turning point came in the fourth grade when her aunt shaved her head. A well of pride, anger, and determination broke through, and she rejected all her aunt said, making her own life better. Having no family bathtub, she made the swim team so she could get a daily shower. Too poor to own a musical instrument, she joined the school band anyway, playing whatever instrument the school had to offer. Although she was told she was dyslexic, she worked her way through undergraduate and graduate school, and eventually became a family therapist.

In a concise review of the literature, Emmy Werner identifies a common core of personal dispositions and sources of social support that contribute to resilience in development. First, infants and young children who survive seem to have temperamental characteristics that elicit positive responses from others. They are often described as affectionate, alert, good-natured, and easy to deal with. Resilient children also seem to develop a coping pattern that combines autonomy with an ability to ask for help from substitute caregivers. In middle childhood and adolescence, they display good communication and problem-solving skills. Often they have a special interest or a hobby that they share with a friend, which gives them a sense of pride. Believing in their

own effectiveness (an internal locus of control), they have a positive self-concept. Second, despite hardships of poverty, family discord, or parental psychopathology, resilient children usually have the opportunity to establish a meaningful bond with at least one competent and emotionally stable person who is attuned to his or her needs, possibly from grandparents or older siblings. They also seem to be especially adept at recruiting surrogate parents. Werner also notes that several studies have shown that the extended families of resilient children have held religious beliefs that provide stability and meaning in times of hardship and adversity. Third, research suggests that resilient youngsters tend to seek out peers and elders in the community as sources of comfort and turn to them for support and counsel in times of crisis. Teachers often provide positive role models who listen, challenge, and support. Finally, troubled teens who rebound in their twenties or even early thirties have often been shaped at a critical time by adult education programs, volunteer military service, active participation in a church community, or a supportive friend or marital partner.

Norman Garmezy of the University of Minnesota refers to Emmy Werner as “Mother Resilience” and gives her credit for nurturing the field. He cites her longitudinal study of 505 native Hawaiians as the best single study of resilience in children. As the children of poor sugar plantation workers in a world where alcohol dependence and abuse were a way of life, many of them were unemployed and involved in lives of crime by the time they reached their twenties. However, an amazing one-third did well in school, began promising careers, and defined themselves as capable and competent adults. Following the sample into middle adulthood, Werner found a majority of the 505 research participants had determined not to repeat their parents’ lives. Although more than half had fallen into crime as teenagers, only 10 percent of women in that same group and one-fourth of men still had criminal records in their thirties. Most of them had to struggle, but in the end they were successful. Werner reports on the research in her book *Overcoming the Odds*.

Clearly, the work on resilience challenges the notion that having a bad beginning translates into becoming a bad adult and that abused children necessarily grow up to be abusers. In her review of resilience research, Deborah Blum notes that Werner’s statistics are being replicated. A clear one-third of abused children grow up determined never to lay a hand on their children, and they don’t. About one-third of poor and neglected children do well in school, work toward careers, and often help to support their siblings.

Kathleen Berger reviews three important dimensions of resilience defined as “a dynamic process encompassing positive adaptation with the context of significant adversity.”

First, resilience is not a stable trait but a *dynamic process*. A given child is not resilient in all situations. He or she may become a good reader in a crowded classroom with an ineffective teacher but may suffer a loss of self-esteem if rejected by peers. Another child may be resilient socially, perhaps seeking out one supportive friend in the face of social rejection, but fail academically in that crowded classroom.

Second, resilience is not the absence of pathology but a *positive adaptation* to stress. A socially alienated child would not be considered resilient if merely not depressed. She would be considered resilient if her isolation prompts her to find other sources of social support, for example, an aunt or a Sunday school teacher.

Third, the adversity must be *significant*. Empirical studies tell us which stresses are not adverse (e.g., maternal employment, single parenthood), which stresses are minor (e.g., large class size, poor vision), and which ones are major (e.g., parental neglect, peer victimization).

*The Resilience Guide for Parents and Teachers* is available at the APA Help Center (<http://apahelpcenter.org/resilience.aspx>). In addition to defining resilience, the guide provides specific recommendations for building resilience in children and teens. Basic to promoting resilience in children and teens are caring and supportive relationships within and outside the family. Relationships that foster love and trust, provide role models, and offer encouragement and reassurance bolster a person’s resilience. Additional factors associated with this important human strength are the (1) abilities to make realistic plans and identify steps to carry them out, (2) a positive view of oneself including confidence in one’s strengths and abilities, (3) skills in communication and problem solving, and (4) the capacity to manage strong feelings and impulses. All of these are factors that people can develop in themselves.

Berger, K. (2010). *Invitation to the life span*. New York: Worth.

Blum, D. (1998, May/June). The art of overcoming: The new science of resilience. *Psychology Today*, 32–36, 66–69.

Kersting, K. (2005, April). Resilience: The mental muscle everyone has. *Monitor on Psychology*, 32–33.

Lifton, R. J. (1993). *The protean self: Human resilience in an age of fragmentation*. New York: Basic Books.

Rogers, T. (1991, January 23). Psychologists studying those who overcome. *Grand Rapids Press*, p. C4.

Werner, E. E. (1995). Resilience in development. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 4, 81–85.

Werner, E. E., & Smith, R. (1992). *Overcoming the odds: High risk children from birth to adulthood*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

## HANDOUT 1

Each of the following statements introduces a commonly held opinion. You will probably agree with some and disagree with others. Read each statement carefully; then, using the scale below, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statements by writing the number that corresponds to your opinion in the space next to each statement.

- 0 = disagree strongly**
- 1 = disagree somewhat**
- 2 = disagree slightly**
- 3 = agree slightly**
- 4 = agree somewhat**
- 5 = agree strongly**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. A person who is socially outgoing as a child is also likely to be an adult who is socially outgoing.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Human development is better thought of as a slow, continuous process rather than as a series of steps.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Differences in male and female behavior are more the result of socialization than biology.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. People of one age think and act very differently when they arrive at a later age.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Adult life consists of a series of unique challenges, each defining a new stage of life.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Individual genetic makeup more than experience explains why some children are strong-willed and others are compliant.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. An adolescent with low self-esteem is also likely to feel less than worthy as an adult.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. The child's understanding of the world unfolds slowly and gradually rather than through discrete stages.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Nature rather than nurture shapes whether adults tend to be optimistic or pessimistic about life.

## HANDOUT 2

### The Decades of Life

**Decade**

0–9	_____	_____	_____
10–19	_____	_____	_____
20–29	_____	_____	_____
30–39	_____	_____	_____
40–49	_____	_____	_____
50–59	_____	_____	_____
60–69	_____	_____	_____
70–79	_____	_____	_____
80–89	_____	_____	_____

## HANDOUT 3

### Developmental Hallmarks

Give your best estimate of the age at which about 50 percent of children begin to:

1. Laugh \_\_\_\_
2. Pedal a tricycle \_\_\_\_
3. Sit without support \_\_\_\_
4. Feel ashamed \_\_\_\_
5. Walk unassisted \_\_\_\_
6. Stand on one foot for 10 seconds \_\_\_\_
7. Recognize and smile at mother or father \_\_\_\_
8. Kick ball forward \_\_\_\_
9. Think about things that cannot be seen \_\_\_\_
10. Make two-word sentences \_\_\_\_



HANDOUT 5

The *Reading the Mind in the Eyes Test* assesses our ability to read the emotions of others. Your task is to pick the word (from the four that surround each photo) that best describes what the person is thinking or feeling.

grateful

flirtatious



hostile

disappointed

ashamed

confident



joking

dispirited

serious

ashamed



bewildered

alarmed

Source: Baron-Cohen, S., Wheelwright, S., Hill, J., Raste, Y., & Plumb, I. (2001). The “Reading the Mind in the Eyes” test revised edition: A study with normal adults and adults with Asperger syndrome or high-functioning autism. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 42(2), 241–251.

## HANDOUT 6

Use the following scale in responding to the statements below:

**1 = strongly disagree**

**2 = slightly disagree**

**3 = slightly agree**

**4 = strongly agree**

### The Empathy Quotient

- \_\_\_\_\_ A. I can easily tell if someone wants to enter a conversation.
- \_\_\_\_\_ B. I tend to get emotionally involved with a friend's problems.
- \_\_\_\_\_ C. I can easily work out what another person wants to talk about.
- \_\_\_\_\_ D. I get upset if I see people suffering on news programs.
- \_\_\_\_\_ E. I don't tend to find social situations confusing.
- \_\_\_\_\_ F. Friends usually talk to me about their problems, as they say I'm understanding.
- \_\_\_\_\_ G. I can usually appreciate the other person's point of view, even if I don't agree with it.
- \_\_\_\_\_ H. It upsets me to see an animal in pain.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I. I can easily tell if someone else is interested or bored with what I am saying.

### The Systemizing Quotient

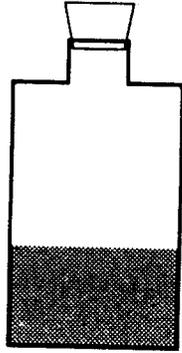
- \_\_\_\_\_ A. I prefer to read nonfiction than fiction.
- \_\_\_\_\_ B. If I were buying a car, I would obtain specific information about its engine capacity.
- \_\_\_\_\_ C. When I read something, I always notice if it's grammatically correct.
- \_\_\_\_\_ D. I can easily visualize how the freeways in my region link up.
- \_\_\_\_\_ E. I am fascinated by how machines work.
- \_\_\_\_\_ F. When I'm walking in the country, I'm curious about how the various kinds of trees differ.
- \_\_\_\_\_ G. When I listen to a piece of music, I always notice the way it's structured.
- \_\_\_\_\_ H. If there were a problem with the electrical wiring in my home, I'd be able to fix it myself.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I. If I had a collection (CDs, stamps), it would be highly organized.

# HANDOUT 7

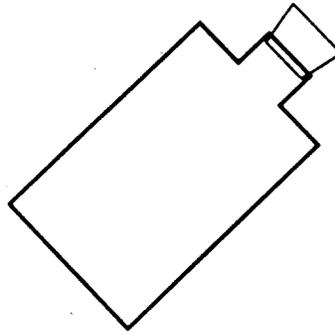
## The Water-Level Task

Figure A shows a bottle with some water in it. In Figure B, the bottle has been tilted. Draw a line to show how the water line would look.

A.



B.



## HANDOUT 8

(a) Read the following three paragraphs and check the one that best describes your relationship with your mother when you were a child growing up. Then do the same for your relationship with your father.

Mother      Father

- |       |       |  |
|-------|-------|--|
| _____ | _____ | 1. <i>Warm/Responsive</i> —She/he was generally warm and responsive; she/he was good at knowing when to be supportive and when to let me operate on my own: our relationship was almost always comfortable, and I have no major reservations or complaints about it.   |
| _____ | _____ | 2. <i>Cold/Rejecting</i> —She/he was fairly cold and distant, or rejecting, not very responsive: I wasn't her/his highest priority, her/his concerns were often elsewhere; it's possible that she/he would just as soon not have had me.   |
| _____ | _____ | 3. <i>Ambivalent/Inconsistent</i> —She/he was noticeably inconsistent in her/his reactions to me, sometimes warm and sometimes not; she/he had her/his own agendas which sometimes got in the way of her/his receptiveness and responsiveness to my needs; she/he definitely loved me but didn't always show it in the best way. |

Source: Reprinted by permission of Cynthia Hazan from Hazan, C., & Shaver, P. (1986). *Parental Caregiving Style Questionnaire*. Unpublished.

(b) Which of the following best describes your current feelings? (Read the descriptions below and choose the one that best summarizes your feelings and behavior in romantic love relationships.)

1. *Secure*—I find it relatively easy to get close to others and am comfortable depending on them. I don't often worry about being abandoned or about someone getting too close to me.
2. *Avoidant*—I am somewhat uncomfortable being close to others; I find it difficult to trust them completely, difficult to allow myself to depend on them. I am nervous when anyone gets too close, and often, love partners want me to be more intimate than I feel comfortable being.
3. *Anxious/Ambivalent*—I find that others are reluctant to get as close as I would like. I often worry that my partner doesn't really love me or won't want to stay with me. I want to get very close to my partner, and this sometimes scares people away.

Source: Hazan, C., & Shaver, P. (1990). Love and work: An attachment-theoretical perspective. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 59, 272. Copyright © 1990 by the American Psychological Association. Reprinted with permission.

## HANDOUT 9

**Parental Authority Questionnaire Pertaining to Mothers**

*Instructions:* For each of the following statements, write the number of the 5-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 5 = *strongly agree*) that best describes how that statement applies to you and your mother. Try to read and think about each statement as it applies to you and your mother during your years of growing up at home. There are no right or wrong answers, so don't spend a lot of time on any one item. We are looking for your overall impression regarding each statement. Be sure not to omit any items.

- 1 = Strongly disagree**  
**2 = Disagree**  
**3 = Neither agree nor disagree**  
**4 = Agree**  
**5 = Strongly agree**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. While I was growing up my mother felt that in a well-run home the children should have their way in the family as often as the parents do.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Even if her children didn't agree with her, my mother felt that it was for our own good if we were forced to conform to what she thought was right.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Whenever my mother told me to do something as I was growing up, she expected me to do it immediately without asking any questions.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. As I was growing up, once family policy had been established, my mother discussed the reasoning behind the policy with the children in the family.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. My mother has always encouraged verbal give-and-take whenever I have felt that family rules and restrictions were unreasonable.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. My mother has always felt that what children need is to be free to make up their own minds and to do what they want to do, even if this does not agree with what their parents might want.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. As I was growing up my mother did not allow me to question any decision she had made.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. As I was growing up my mother directed the activities and decisions of the children in the family through reasoning and discipline.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. My mother has always felt that more force should be used by parents in order to get their children to behave the way they are supposed to.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. As I was growing up my mother did *not* feel that I needed to obey rules and regulations of behavior simply because someone in authority had established them.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. As I was growing up I knew what my mother expected of me in my family, but I also felt free to discuss those expectations with my mother when I felt that they were unreasonable.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. My mother felt that wise parents should teach their children early just who is boss in the family.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. As I was growing up, my mother seldom gave me expectations and guidelines for my behavior.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. Most of the time as I was growing up my mother did what the children in the family wanted when making family decisions.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 15. As the children in my family were growing up, my mother consistently gave us direction and guidance in rational and objective ways.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 16. As I was growing up my mother would get very upset if I tried to disagree with her.

## HANDOUT 9 (*continued*)

- \_\_\_\_\_ 17. My mother feels that most problems in society would be solved if parents would *not* restrict their children's activities, decisions, and desires as they are growing up.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 18. As I was growing up my mother let me know what behavior she expected of me, and if I didn't meet those expectations, she punished me.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 19. As I was growing up my mother allowed me to decide most things for myself without a lot of direction from her.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 20. As I was growing up my mother took the children's opinions into consideration when making family decisions, but she would not decide for something simply because the children wanted it.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 21. My mother did not view herself as responsible for directing and guiding my behavior as I was growing up.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 22. My mother had clear standards of behavior for the children in our home as I was growing up, but she was willing to adjust those standards to the needs of each of the individual children in the family.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 23. My mother gave me direction for my behavior and activities as I was growing up and she expected me to follow her direction, but she was always willing to listen to my concerns and to discuss that direction with me.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 24. As I was growing up my mother allowed me to form my own point of view on family matters and she generally allowed me to decide for myself what I was going to do.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 25. My mother has always felt that most problems in society would be solved if we could get parents to strictly and forcibly deal with their children when they don't do what they are supposed to as they are growing up.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 26. As I was growing up my mother often told me exactly what she wanted me to do and how she expected me to do it.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 27. As I was growing up my mother gave me clear direction for my behaviors and activities, but she was also understanding when I disagreed with her.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 28. As I was growing up my mother did not direct the behaviors, activities, and desires of the children in the family.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 29. As I was growing up I knew what my mother expected of me in the family and she insisted that I conform to those expectations simply out of respect for her authority.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 30. As I was growing up, if my mother made a decision in the family that hurt me, she was willing to discuss that decision with me and to admit it if she had made a mistake.

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## HANDOUT 10

**Traits of Greatest Importance to Parents**

*Instructions:* Below is a list of traits that parents might consider important when raising their children. After reading through the list, place pluses next to the three that you consider to be most important; place minuses next to the three that you consider to be least important.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Frankness/honesty in dealing with others
- \_\_\_\_\_ Desire to make a name for one's self
- \_\_\_\_\_ Concentration
- \_\_\_\_\_ Social mindedness (concern for others)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Strict obedience to authority
- \_\_\_\_\_ Appreciation of art, music, and literature
- \_\_\_\_\_ Economy in money matters (financial good sense)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Loyalty to the church
- \_\_\_\_\_ Knowledge of sexual hygiene
- \_\_\_\_\_ Tolerance of others
- \_\_\_\_\_ Curiosity
- \_\_\_\_\_ Patriotism
- \_\_\_\_\_ Good manners
- \_\_\_\_\_ Independence
- \_\_\_\_\_ Academic achievement
- \_\_\_\_\_ Willingness to work hard

Source: Bernt, F. M. (1999). The ends and means of raising children: A parent interview activity. In L. T. Benjamin, B. F. Nodine, R. M. Ernst, & C. B. Broeker (Eds.), *Activities Handbook for the Teaching of Psychology* (Vol. 4, p. 251). Copyright © 1999 by the American Psychology Association. Reprinted by permission.

## HANDOUT 11

### Adolescent Development

Gender (circle one):      Male              Female

Think of a high point (a positive experience) and a low point (a negative experience) from your adolescence.

#### **High Point**

Why was this a high point?

Age when this occurred? \_\_\_\_\_

How easily did you recall this incident? (circle one)

very easily      easily      with difficulty      with great difficulty

#### **Low Point**

Why was this a low point?

Age when this occurred? \_\_\_\_\_

How easily did you recall this incident? (circle one)

very easily      easily      with difficulty      with great difficulty

## HANDOUT 12a

**Historical Perspectives on Adolescence**

Next week, we will be examining historical views of adolescence. However, we don't have to go very far to find a real "history" of adolescence. I want you to interview someone who is over 70 years old. Find out about his or her adolescence and how it differed from that of today's typical American adolescent. Here is a list of suggested questions (but you may develop some of your own).

1. Did you attend high school? Did you want to? What kinds of subjects did you study? What kind of homework did you have? Did most of the adolescents in your neighborhood go to high school?
2. How many hours per week did you work (not including school-related work)? How much did you contribute to the family income? Did you want to go to work?
3. What were your clothes like? Were you concerned about fashion?
4. Did you date in high school? At what age were you allowed to date? What did you typically do on a date?
5. How did you and your friends spend your free time?
6. What was your most nagging problem as a teenager?
7. What do you see as the main difference between the teenagers of today and yourself as a teenager? What do you think of today's teenagers?

## HANDOUT 12b

### Adolescents' Relationships With Peers

Next week, we will be examining the characteristics and concepts of adolescent friendships. I want you to interview a person between ages 10 and 19. Here is a list of suggested questions.

1. What makes a friend different from an acquaintance?
2. What happens when you and your friend have a fight? Is that person still your friend? How do you try to resolve the problem that caused the fight?
3. List the names of the people in your group of friends. Whom do you typically hang out with after school? Whom do you typically hang out with on weekends? Whom do you typically invite to your parties?
4. Who is the most popular person in your group? What is that person like? Why do you think that person is popular?

## HANDOUT 12c

### Parental and Peer Influence

1. What role do your friends play in your life?
2. What role do your parents play in your life?
3. Do you depend more on your parents' advice or your friends' advice when it comes to questions of:  
dress  
schoolwork  
out-of-school activities  
moral questions  
values
4. What do you think is the most troubling aspect of being your age?

Source: Scott VanderStoep, personal communication. Reprinted by permission.

## HANDOUT 13

1. Your assignment is to mix chemicals until a yellow color is obtained. You are given four bottles of odorless, colorless liquid that appear to be identical except for being labeled 1, 2, 3, and 4. A fifth bottle, labeled X, is the “activating solution” needed to produce the chemical reaction that gives the color yellow. The amount of each chemical is not important, nor is the order in which the liquids are combined. Describe how you would approach this problem by writing down all the tests you would perform.
2. Your problem is to determine which of several factors affects the flexibility of rods. Assume that you are given a long vertical bar with 12 rods hanging from it. Each rod is made of brass, copper, or steel, and they come in two lengths and two thicknesses. Your task is to determine which of the variables (material, length, or thickness) affects how much the rods will bend. You can test this by pressing down on each rod. You can perform as many comparisons as you like until you can explain which factors are important in determining flexibility. Describe what you should do to show that length, diameter, or the material is important in determining flexibility. Write down your answer.
3. Your task is to determine which of three women—Amy, Barbara, or Carol—all of whom claim to be a man’s long-lost sister, is truly his sister. You may assume that he has only one missing sibling. “I am your long-lost sister,” says Amy. “She’s lying—I’m your long-lost sister,” Barbara insists at the family reunion. “At least two of us always lie,” smirks a third woman, Carol. Which one is the man’s sister?

Source: Problems 1 and 2 are adapted by permission of Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc., and the author from Halpern, D. (2003). *Thought and knowledge: An introduction to critical thinking* (4th ed.). Based on Inhelder, B., & Piaget, J. (1959). *The growth of logical thinking from childhood to adolescence*. New York: Basic Books. Problem 3 is adapted from *Time* (1993, November 29), p. 84.

## HANDOUT 14

**Erikson's Stages**

Indicate how often each of these statements apply to you by using the following scale:

- 0 = never applies to you**  
**1 = occasionally or seldom applies to you**  
**2 = fairly often applies to you**  
**3 = very often applies to you**

## Trust Versus Mistrust

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. I feel pessimistic about the future of humankind.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ 2. I feel the world's major problems can be solved.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ 3. I am filled with admiration for humankind.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ 4. People can be trusted.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ 5. I feel optimistic about my future.

## Autonomy Versus Shame and Doubt

- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. When people try to persuade me to do something I don't want to, I refuse.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ 7. After I have made a decision, I feel I have made a mistake.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ 8. I am unnecessarily apologetic.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ 9. I worry that my friends will find fault with me.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ 10. When I disagree with someone, I tell them.

## Initiative Versus Guilt

- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. I am prepared to take a risk to get what I want.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ 12. I feel hesitant to try out a new way of doing something.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ 13. I am confident in carrying out my plans to a successful conclusion.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ 14. I feel what happens to me is the result of what I have done.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ 15. When I have difficulty in getting something right, I give up.

## Industry Versus Inferiority

- \_\_\_\_\_ 16. When people look at something I have done, I feel embarrassed.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ 17. I get a great deal of pleasure from working.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ 18. I feel too incompetent to do what I would really like to do in life.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ 19. I avoid doing something difficult because I feel I would fail.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ 20. I feel competent.

## HANDOUT 14 (*continued*)

### Identity Versus Identity Diffusion

- \_\_\_\_\_ 21. I wonder what sort of person I really am.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 22. I feel certain about what I should do with my life.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 23. My worth is recognized by others.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 24. I feel proud to be the sort of person I am.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 25. I am unsure as to how people feel about me.

### Intimacy Versus Isolation

- \_\_\_\_\_ 26. I feel that no one has ever known the real me.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 27. I have a feeling of complete “togetherness” with someone.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 28. I feel it is better to remain free than to become committed to marriage for life.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 29. I share my private thoughts with someone.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 30. I feel as though I am alone in the world.

### Generativity Versus Stagnation

- \_\_\_\_\_ 31. I feel that I have done nothing that will survive after I die.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 32. I help people to improve themselves.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 33. I feel my life is being wasted.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 34. I have a good influence on people.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 35. I enjoy guiding young people.

Source: Ochse, R., & Plug, C. (1986). Cross-cultural investigation of the validity of Erikson's theory of personality development. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 50, 1240–1252. (Scale items appear on pages 1251–1252.) Copyright © 1986 by the American Psychological Association. Adapted with permission.

HANDOUT 15

**Erickson’s Psychosocial Stages**

**Past Self**

1. When you look back on your childhood and very early years how do you believe you felt most of the time? Circle one of the following and add your own descriptors: happy, sad, in conflict, at peace, secure, angry, confused, loved, successful, responsible, afraid

---

2. Tell your group a story about an important event in your childhood. This should be something you vividly remember or something you were told about yourself and enjoy remembering.
3. Circle what you believe was your resolution at each of the psychosocial stages below and then give a reason for your choice:

Age	Stage	Why?
0-1	Trust vs. mistrust	_____
1-2	Autonomy vs. shame	_____
3-5	Initiative vs. guilt	_____
6-12	Competence vs. inferiority	_____

4. What new insight do you have into your own development?

**Present Self**

5. What activities currently are of the greatest interest to you? (Example: friends, work, music, hobbies, family gatherings, religious activities, school, etc.)? Write a brief sentence explaining each choice.
6. How do you feel most of the time? (busy, overwhelmed, angry, peaceful, confused, happy, competent, tense, etc.) List all that apply and write a brief explanation.
7. What is most important to you in your life right now? What do you value?
8. If you are in Erikson’s “Identity vs. Role Confusion” stage: How are you doing with this struggle? If you have passed that stage, what stage are you in, and how are you doing? Explain.
9. Briefly discuss your intimate (close) relationships with friends, relatives, and the opposite sex? Are these relationships satisfying? How are you doing with the struggle of “Intimacy vs. Isolation”?
10. How might fear of rejections or feelings from unresolved early conflicts get in the way of letting people get to know the real you?

**Future Self**

11. What are your fondest future dreams (could be regarding work, love, friendship, community, religion, children, marriage, personal achievement, wealth, material possessions, etc.) In other words, how do you envision your future life?
12. In what ways would you like your life to be like your parents and/or grandparents’ lives, and in what ways would you like your own life to be different from theirs?
13. How will/do you handle each of Erikson’s last two stages, namely generativity vs. stagnation, and integrity vs. despair?

Source: Linda Zimmerman, Erikson’s Psychological Stages. Copyright © Linda Zimmerman. Reprinted by permission.

## HANDOUT 16

## The OM-EIS

Use the following 5-point scale to indicate the extent to which you agree with each of the items on this questionnaire.

1	2	3	4	5
strongly disagree				strongly agree

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. I haven't chosen the occupation I really want to get into, and I'm just working at whatever is available until something better comes along.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. When it comes to religion, I just haven't found anything that appeals and I don't really feel the need to look.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. My ideas about men's and women's roles are identical to my parents'. What has worked for them will obviously work for me.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. There's no single "life-style" which appeals to me more than another.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. There are a lot of different kinds of people. I'm still exploring the many possibilities to find the right kind of friends for me.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. I sometimes join in recreational activities when asked, but I rarely try anything on my own.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. I haven't really thought about a "dating style." I'm not too concerned whether I date or not.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Politics is something that I can never be too sure about because things change so fast. But I think it's important to know what I can politically stand for and believe in.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. I'm still trying to decide how capable I am as a person and what jobs will be right for me.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. I don't give religion much thought and it doesn't bother me one way or the other.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. There's so many ways to divide responsibilities in marriage. I'm trying to decide what will work for me.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. I'm looking for an acceptable perspective for my own "life-style" view, but I haven't really found it yet.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. There are many reasons for friendships, but I choose my close friends on the basis of certain values and similarities that I've personally decided on.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. While I don't have one recreational activity I'm really committed to, I'm experiencing numerous leisure outlets to identify one I can really get involved in.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 15. Based on past experiences, I've chosen the type of dating relationship I want now.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 16. I haven't really considered politics. It just doesn't excite me much.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 17. I might have thought about a lot of different jobs, but there's never really any question since my parents said what they wanted.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 18. A person's faith is unique to each individual. I've considered and reconsidered it myself and know what I can believe.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 19. I've never really seriously considered men's and women's roles in marriage. It just doesn't seem to concern me.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 20. After considerable thought I've developed my own individual viewpoint of what is for me an ideal "life-style" and don't believe anyone will be likely to change my perspective.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 21. My parents know what's best for me in terms of how to choose my friends.

HANDOUT 16 (*continued*)

- \_\_\_\_\_ 22. I've chosen one or more recreational activities to engage in regularly from lots of things and I'm satisfied with those choices.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 23. I don't think about dating much. I just kind of take it as it comes.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 24. I guess I'm pretty much like my folks when it comes to politics. I follow what they do in terms of voting and such.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 25. I'm really not interested in finding the right job; any job will do. I just seem to flow with what is available.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 26. I'm not sure what religion means to me. I'd like to make up my mind but I'm not done looking yet.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 27. My ideas about men's and women's roles come right from my parents and family. I haven't seen any need to look further.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 28. My own views on a desirable life-style were taught to me by my parents and I don't see any need to question what they taught me.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 29. I don't have any real close friends, and I don't think I'm looking for one right now.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 30. Sometimes I join in leisure activities, but I really don't see a need to look for a particular activity to do regularly.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 31. I'm trying out different types of dating relationships, I just haven't decided what is best for me.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 32. There are so many different political parties and ideals, I can't decide which to follow until I figure it all out.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 33. It took me a while to figure it out, but now I really know what I want for a career.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 34. Religion is confusing to me right now. I keep changing my views on what is right and wrong for me.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 35. I've spent some time thinking about men's and women's roles in marriage and I've decided what will work best for me.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 36. In finding an acceptable viewpoint to life itself, I find myself engaging in a lot of discussions with others and some self-exploration.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 37. I only pick friends my parents would approve of.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 38. I've always liked doing the same recreational activities my parents do and haven't ever seriously considered anything else.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 39. I only go out with the type of people my parents expect me to date.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 40. I've thought my political beliefs through and realize I can agree with some and not other aspects of what my parents believe.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 41. My parents decided a long time ago what I should go into for employment and I'm following through on their plans.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 42. I've gone through a period of serious questions about faith and can now say I understand what I believe in as an individual.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 43. I've been thinking about the roles that husbands and wives play a lot these days, and I'm trying to make a final decision.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 44. My parents' views on life are good enough for me, I don't need anything else.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 45. I've tried many different friendships and now I have a clear idea of what I look for in a friend.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 46. After trying a lot of different recreational activities, I've found one or more I really enjoy doing by myself or with friends.

## HANDOUT 16 (*continued*)

- \_\_\_\_\_ 47. My preferences about dating are still in the process of developing, I haven't fully decided yet.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 48. I'm not sure about my political beliefs, but I'm trying to figure out what I can truly believe in.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 49. It took me a long time to decide but now I know for sure what direction to move in for a career.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 50. I attend the same church my family has always attended. I've never really questioned why.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 51. There are many ways that married couples can divide up family responsibilities. I've thought about lots of ways and now I know exactly how I want it to happen for me.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 52. I guess I just take life as it comes, and I don't see myself living by any particular viewpoint to life.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 53. I don't have any close friends. I just like to hang around with the crowd.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 54. I've been experiencing a variety of recreational activities in hopes of finding one or more I can enjoy for some time to come.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 55. I've dated different types of people and now know exactly what my own "unwritten rules" for dating are and who I will date.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 56. I really have never been involved in politics enough to have made a firm stand one way or the other.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 57. I just can't decide what to do for an occupation. There are so many that have possibilities.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 58. I've never really questioned my religion. If it's right for my parents it must be right for me.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 59. Opinions on men's and women's roles seem so varied that I don't think much about it.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 60. After a lot of self-examination I have established a very definite view on what my own life-style will be.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 61. I really don't know what kind of friend is best for me. I'm trying to figure out exactly what friendship means to me.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 62. All of my recreational preferences I got from my parents and I haven't really tried anything else.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 63. I date only people my parents would approve of.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 64. My folks have always had their own political and moral beliefs about issues like abortion and mercy killing and I've always gone along accepting what they have.

Source: Bennion, L. D., & Adams, G. R. (1986). A revision of the Extended Version of the Objective Measure of Ego-Identity Status: An identity instrument for use with late adolescents. *Journal of Adolescent Research, 1*, 183–198. Copyright © 1986 by Sage Publications, Inc. Reprinted by permission.

## HANDOUT 17

**Life/Values/Goals**

As you think about your death and as you see your life now, try to answer the following.

1. What three things would be said about you and your life if you died today?
  - a.
  - b.
  - c.
2. Given the likelihood that you will not die today, and have time left to change some things in your life, what three things would you most like to have said about you and your life?
  - a.
  - b.
  - c.
3. If someone were to witness a week of your life, what assumptions would that person make about your values?
  - a.
  - b.
  - c.
4. What values do you hold that are not evident from the way you live your life?
  - a.
  - b.
  - c.
5. What three goals are important to you as you plan your life?
  - a.
  - b.
  - c.

## HANDOUT 17 (*continued*)

6. What keeps you from achieving what you want for your life?
  - a.
  - b.
  - c.

Source: From Bugen, L. A. (1979). *Death and dying: Theory, research, and practice*, p. 457. Copyright © 1979 Wm. C. Brown Publishers, Dubuque, Iowa. Reprinted by permission of The McGraw-Hill Companies.

## HANDOUT 18

### Alzheimer's Quiz

	<u>True</u>	<u>False</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>
1. Alzheimer's disease can be contagious.	_____	_____	_____
2. A person will almost certainly get Alzheimer's if he or she just lives long enough.	_____	_____	_____
3. Alzheimer's disease is a form of insanity.	_____	_____	_____
4. There is no cure for Alzheimer's disease at present.	_____	_____	_____
5. A person who has Alzheimer's disease will experience both mental and physical decline.	_____	_____	_____
6. The primary symptom of Alzheimer's disease is memory loss.	_____	_____	_____
7. Among persons older than age 75, forgetfulness most likely indicates the beginning of Alzheimer's disease.	_____	_____	_____
8. An older man is more likely to develop Alzheimer's disease than an older woman.	_____	_____	_____
9. Alzheimer's disease is usually fatal.	_____	_____	_____
10. Alzheimer's disease can be diagnosed by a blood test.	_____	_____	_____

Source: N. Cutler. Alzheimer's quiz. In J. Horn & J. Meer, *The vintage years: Alzheimer's quiz*. Reprinted with permission from *Psychology Today Magazine*, May 1987, p. 89. Copyright © 1987 Sussex Publishers, Inc.

## HANDOUT 19

For each of the 12 items below, circle the one (A or B) that describes you better.

1. A. I concentrate all my energy on a few things.  
or  
B. I divide my energy among many things.
2. A. I always focus on the one most important goal at a given time.  
or  
B. I am always working on several goals at once.
3. A. Even when I really consider what I want in life, I wait and see what happens instead of committing myself to just one or two particular goals.  
or  
B. When I think about what I want in life, I commit myself to one or two important goals.
4. A. When things don't go as well as before, I choose one or two important goals.  
or  
B. When things don't go as well as before, I still try to keep all my goals.
5. A. When I can't do something important the way I did before, I look for a new goal.  
or  
B. When I can't do something important the way I did before, I distribute my time and energy among many other things.
6. A. When I can't do something as well as I used to, I wait and see what happens.  
or  
B. When I can't do something as well as I used to, I think about exactly what is important to me.
7. A. When I do not succeed right away at what I want to do, I don't try any other possibilities for long.  
or  
B. I keep working on what I have planned until I succeed.
8. A. I prefer to wait for a while and see if things work out by themselves.  
or  
B. I make every effort to achieve a given goal.
9. A. When something matters to me, I devote myself fully and completely to it.  
or  
B. Even when something matters to me, I still have a hard time devoting myself fully and completely to it.
10. A. When things don't go as well as they used to, I accept it.  
or  
B. When things don't go as well as they used to, I keep trying other ways of doing it until I can achieve the same result I used to.

HANDOUT 19 (*continued*)

11. A. When something in my life isn't working as well as it used to, I ask others for advice or help.  
or  
B. When something in my life isn't working as well as it used to, I decide what to do about it myself, without involving other people.
  
12. A. When it becomes harder for me to get the same results, I keep trying harder until I can do it as well as before.  
or  
B. When it becomes harder for me to get the same results as I used to, it is time to let go of that expectation.

Source: Freund, A. M., & Baltes, P. B. (1998). Selection, optimization, and compensation as strategies of life management: Correlations with subjective indicators of successful aging. *Psychology and Aging, 13*, 531–543. (Scale items appear in Table 2, p. 533.)

## HANDOUT 20a

### Knowing Your Partner

Circle “T” for True or “F” for False in responding to each item.

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| T | F | 1. I can name my partner’s best friends.  |
| T | F | 2. I can tell you what stresses my partner is currently facing.                       |
| T | F | 3. I know the names of some of the people who have been irritating my partner lately. |
| T | F | 4. I can tell you some of my partner’s life dreams.                                   |
| T | F | 5. I can tell you about my partner’s basic philosophy of life.                        |
| T | F | 6. I can list the relatives my partner likes the least.                               |
| T | F | 7. I feel that my partner knows me pretty well.                                       |
| T | F | 8. When we are apart, I often think fondly of my partner.                             |
| T | F | 9. I often touch or kiss my partner affectionately.                                   |
| T | F | 10. My partner really respects me.  |
| T | F | 11. There is fire and passion in this relationship.                                   |
| T | F | 12. Romance is definitely still a part of our relationship.                           |
| T | F | 13. My partner appreciates the things I do in this relationship.                      |
| T | F | 14. My partner generally likes my personality.  |
| T | F | 15. Our sex life is mostly satisfying.  |
| T | F | 16. At the end of the day my partner is glad to see me.                               |
| T | F | 17. My partner is one of my best friends.   |
| T | F | 18. We just love talking to each other.   |
| T | F | 19. There is lots of give and take (both people have influence) in our discussions.   |
| T | F | 20. My partner listens respectfully, even when we disagree.                           |
| T | F | 21. My partner is usually a great help as a problem solver.                           |
| T | F | 22. We generally mesh well on basic values and goals in life.                         |

Source: *Newsweek*—Kantrowitz, B., & Wingert, P. The science of a good marriage, pp. 52–57. © 1999 Newsweek, Inc. All rights reserved. Reprinted by permission.

## HANDOUT 20b

**Bids for Connection: The Building Blocks of Emotional Connection**

- 0 = disagree strongly**
- 1 = disagree somewhat**
- 2 = neutral**
- 3 = agree**
- 4 = agree strongly**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1 I sometimes get ignored when I need attention the most.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. This person usually doesn't have a clue as to what I am feeling.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. I often have difficulty getting a meaningful conversation going with this person.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. I get mad when I don't get the attention I need from this person.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. I often find myself becoming irritable with this person.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. I often feel irritated that this person isn't on my side.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. I have trouble getting this person to listen to me.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. I find it difficult to get this person to open up to me.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. I have trouble getting this person to talk to me.

## HANDOUT 20c

1. Review the Gottman Institute's website. Are the claims of the organization supported with good science? Provide an answer to either a, b, or c below.
  - a. If so, what information do you consider good science?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - b. If not, is it "supported" with bad science? If so, what is the bad science and why is it bad, or what would make it good science?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - c. If the claims are not supported at all, what would be good scientific support, and why would this be good science?
  
2. Discuss results from the Relationship Quiz with members of your group. Answer both a and b below.
  - a. Did each of you find that your results were consistent with what you expected? Why or why not?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - b. How consistent were the results across the group?
  
3. Which video from *The Marriage Ref* did you select as a group to watch? Why did you select that one?

## HANDOUT 20c (*continued*)

4. As a group, identify three different “bids for connection” between the spouses in the video. Explain how each bid was made, who made it, and then whether the “receiving spouse” turned toward, turned away, or turned against it. Say how the turning was done.

Bid #1:

Bid #2:

Bid #3:

5. As a group, identify one example of each “Horseman of the Apocalypse” that you observed in the video of the spouses’ interaction with each other. Explain how each one was manifest in the partner’s behavior.

Criticism:

Contempt:

Defensiveness:

Stonewalling:

## HANDOUT 21

### Thinking About Death

To learn more about your thoughts and feelings about death, complete the following statements:

1. Death is \_\_\_\_\_.
2. I would like to die at \_\_\_\_\_.
3. I don't want to live past \_\_\_\_\_.
4. When I die, I would like to have at my bedside \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.
5. When I die, I will be proud that when I was living I \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.
6. My greatest fear about death is \_\_\_\_\_.
7. When I die, I'll be glad that when I was living I didn't \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.
8. If I were to die today, my biggest regret would be \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.
9. When I die, I will be glad to get away from \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.
10. When I die, I want people to say \_\_\_\_\_.

Source: Hardt, D. V. Development of an investigatory instrument to measure attitudes toward death. *Journal of School Health*, Vol. 45, No. 2, pp. 96–99. February 1975. Reprinted with permission. Copyright 1975 American School Health Association, Kent, Ohio.

## HANDOUT 22

1. On a scale of 1 to 5, where do you fall on this continuum?

1	2	3	4	5
<i>Let me die without any medical intervention</i>				<i>Don't give up on me no matter what, try any proven and unproven intervention possible</i>

2. If there were a choice, would you prefer to die at home or in a hospital?
3. Could a loved one correctly describe how you'd like to be treated in the case of a terminal illness?
4. Is there someone you trust whom you've appointed to advocate on your behalf when the time is near?
5. Have you completed any of the following: written a living will, appointed a health care power of attorney, or completed an advanced directive?

Source: Reprinted by permission of Engage With Grace.

