Chapter Exercises

# Chapter 1: Understanding Human Development: Approaches and Theories

**Chapter Exercise #1: Development is Multidimensional**

**LO 1.1** **Outline five principles of the lifespan developmental perspective.**

Directions: This assignment can be completed independently or in small groups. Throughout the textbook, you will learn about the three domains of development—physical, cognitive, and psychosocial—and how they change across the lifespan. It is important to keep in mind that these domains are multidimensional. That is, each of these areas overlaps and interacts. Take a physical milestone of infancy, for example: crawling. Compared to a less mobile baby, a crawling baby is able to explore her environment, actively seeking out and investigating toys and objects, which contribute to gains in cognitive development. At the same time, parent-child interactions change, which have important consequences for psychosocial development. Adults often celebrate these milestones with reinforcement—hugs, clapping, exclamations (“Good job!”), etc.—while also setting limits in order to protect the curious, inexperienced baby. Parents are frequently observed redirecting their babies, physically moving them from potential hazards, and using verbal prompts, such as “No. No.”

Select an important developmental milestone. You may choose any age range and the milestone can be physical, cognitive, or psychosocial. Briefly summarize the importance of this milestone. Next, explain how it contributes to changes in the other two domains of development.

**Chapter Exercise #2: Developing a Theory Notebook**

**LO 1.3** **Summarize five theoretical perspectives on human development.**

Directions: This assignment should be completed independently and will be an ongoing project. Throughout this course, you will be exposed to many developmental theories. You will likely find some more appealing and plausible than others. In a notebook that will be turned in toward the end of the semester, list the major theoretical perspectives on human development. For each perspective, list concepts or characteristics that you believe are most applicable and those that you believe are inadequate or incorrect. As you learn more about these theories over the course of the semester, list research that supports your views. You may find that your views change. Make revisions to your theoretical perspective as needed, briefly explaining any changes that you make. Some students will find that their views are consistent with a single theory, whereas others discover that they prefer a perspective that combines various aspects of different theories. Your instructor will provide you with a final due date for this assignment.

**Chapter Exercise #3: Applying Bronfenbrenner’s Bioecological Theory**

**LO 1.3** **Summarize five theoretical perspectives on human development.**

Directions: This assignment can be completed independently or in small groups.

Think about a recent controversial topic in the news. For example, there have been multiple stories about white police officers harming or killing minorities, acts which subsequently sparked violent protests across the country. A celebrity icon, Bill Cosby, has been publicly accused of sexual assault against at least 40 women. In another example, the United States Supreme Court recently ruled that gay and lesbian adults have the right to marry in all 50 states. In each of these examples, public opinion varies widely.

Select one of the topics listed above or choose a topic of interest to you. Next, review Bronfenbrenner’s bioecological theory. How might each level of Bronfenbrenner’s model explain different reactions to this topic? For instance, how might individual factors (microsystem), family circumstances or religion (mesosystem), mass media (exosystem), and cultural attitudes or ideologies (macrosystem) influence differing opinions about gay marriage? What role do sociohistorical conditions (chronosystem) play? What are the advantages of trying to understand contextual factors that contribute to an individual’s development?

**Chapter Exercise #4: Evolutionary Psychology and Human Development**

**LO 1.3** **Summarize five theoretical perspectives on human development.**

Directions: This assignment should be completed independently outside of class. Although controversial, evolutionary psychology helps to provide insight into multiple aspects of human development. Evolutionary psychology applies principles of evolution and scientific knowledge about the interactive influence of genetic and environmental mechanisms to understand the changes people undergo throughout their lifetime. Select one of the following topics: obesity, aggression, marriage, gender differences in sexual behavior, mate selection, homosexuality, prosocial behavior, mental illness, racism, parenting, or child maltreatment. Next, conduct an online search for an article or two that explains your topic from an evolutionary perspective. Be sure to cite the website(s) or article(s) that you used for this assignment.

Based on your research, answer the following questions:

1. Briefly describe your topic.
2. What is the adaptive value of the topic you researched? Keep in mind that “adaptive” does not necessarily mean favorable. For example, eating high-calorie, high-fat foods may have helped ancient man survive harsh winters but today, it is associated with health problems and premature death.
3. How does the behavior contribute to the survival of our species?
4. How has the behavior evolved over time? That is, how does it compare to our ancestors’ behavior?
5. What scientific evidence is provided in the article(s) that supports the evolutionary perspective?
6. Do you agree with the evolutionary explanation of your topic? Why or why not?

**Chapter Exercise #5: Ethical Issues in Research**

**LO 1.5 Discuss the ethical responsibilities of researchers to protect their participants.**

Directions: This assignment should be completed independently outside of class. Although research today must adhere to stringent ethical guidelines, this has not always been the case. Select one of the following well-known research studies: The Stanford Prison Experiment, Milgram’s Obedience Study, The Little Albert Experiment, Asch Conformity Experiments, or Harlow’s Monkey Experiments. You can locate original footage for any of these studies on YouTube.

After watching the video, answer the following questions:

1. Briefly describe the study that you selected.
2. Using the ethical principles in your textbook, describe violations that you observed in the footage.
3. Can you think of ways in which the study could be modified in order to adhere to ethical principles?
4. Why do researches have responsibilities to participants, as well as society?