

Developmental Area

A significant proportion of theories within this discipline focus upon development during childhood, as this is the period during an individual's lifespan when the most common change occurs. Developmental psychologists study a wide range of theoretical areas, such as biological, social, emotion and cognitive processes. There are clearly identifiable systematic changes that occur in an individual's behaviour from conception to death.

1. Principles and Concepts:

1. Theories focus on development, particularly in childhood
2. Covers a range of theoretical areas such as biological, social, emotional and cognitive
3. Believes there are clear and identifiable changes that occur during the lifetime
4. Changes during our lifetime occur due to both nature and nurture

2. Research to Illustrate the Area:

Bandura (transmission of aggression) - Shows the way in which children's behaviour can be influenced by the behaviour of role models. It shows how impressionable children are and if they witness aggression as a child then they can develop to become an aggressive individual.

Chaney (Funhaler) - Illustrates a way in which children's behaviour can be influenced by external factors, in this case positive and negative reinforcements. Shows how children can be influenced by both social and emotional factors and how this can change their behaviour.

Kohlberg (stages of moral development) - Investigates how moral thinking develops as a person gets older. Mainly focuses on development, and how this can change through social and emotional factors, and how this changes during our lifetime.

Lee (evaluations of lying and truth telling) - Suggests how the develop of moral thinking is unaffected by culture which shows it supports the nature side of the debate, as moral thinking is not affected by where you grew up so is down to your biology.

Casey (delay of gratification) - Suggests how children who are low delayers as children will remain low delayers as adults, and the fact that children who struggle to delay are most likely unable to delay when they are adults as you develop throughout life.

Freud (Little Hans) - Looked at emotional development and showed that a child's early experiences will shape their personality later in life. He believed that all children pass through a number of psychosexual stages and this therefore alters the speed of which they develop.

3. Strengths and Weaknesses of the Area:

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Useful- Adds evidence to nature/nurture debate- Strong theories- Practical applications- Shows development over time- Longitudinal information- Scientific evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Ethical issues involved- Susceptible to demand characteristics- Low ecological validity- Rigid stages of development- Too deterministic- Social desirability bias- Participants are children

SAMPLE QUESTIONS

- (a) (i) Outline **two** defining principles and concepts of the developmental area. [4]
- (ii) Explain how Lee et al.'s (1997) study into lying and truth-telling relates to these principles and concepts. [4]
- (b) Describe **one** application of the developmental area. [4]
- (c) Consider the strengths and weaknesses of the developmental area in psychology. [8]
- (d)* Discuss the individual/situational debate in psychology. Use examples of research from the developmental area to support your answer. [15]

