

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

by Diane E. Papalia, Sally Wendkos Olds, and Ruth Duskin Feldman
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ANDREIA SCHINDLER *

Human Development is a strong and well written collection of research into the human development, an objective combination of new research and real-life applications that looks into issues concerning the physical, cognitive, and psychosocial human development in various multicultural and cross-cultural environments. The accessible content delivery of this book/textbook and the reader-friendly language make it a useful tool for teaching persons of different ages and backgrounds about the most important aspects of the human development from birth to death.

This book is the result of a successful collaboration among three well-known specialists in developmental psychology: Diane E. Papalia, Sally Wendkos Olds, and Ruth Duskin Feldman, and stands out as a very thorough assemblage of topics related to the physical, cognitive, social, and psychological human development from birth to death.

As one reads *Human Development*, one is continuously pleased with the diligent, yet accessible, content delivery of this book/textbook. The authors designed the book as a learning tool for people of various ages and backgrounds and present the content using an original instructive learning system and a reader-friendly and dynamic writing style that allow the text to become even more accessible to the reader.

The book content stands out as being very comprehensive as the authors are collating the existing research and data in order to present, in a technical, yet elegant and easy to understand manner, an otherwise scientific collection of research into the human development. The book provides the reader with an objective combination of new research and real-life applications, covering issues concerning the physical, cognitive, social, and psychological human development in various multicultural and cross-cultural environments.

The text is chronologically organized in seven parts, including a total of nineteen chapters; furthermore, each chapter is set out in a number of concise and well-organized sections. Each chapter is written in a coherent manner and looks into a particular period of the lifespan; the authors had also considered topics that

* “A.I.Cuza” University, Faculty of Philosophy and Socio-Political Sciences, Department of Sociology and Social Work; Master program; Bd. Carol I no. 11, 700506, Iași, România; schindlerandrea@gmail.com

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deal with adult development and aging, as well as topics concerning persons with disabilities. New theories and concepts are presented gradually, allowing for an easy understanding, practicing, and mastering of the key concepts.

In *Part I: About Human Development* the authors reflect upon the systematic and adaptive character of human development, considering the main characteristics of physical, cognitive, and psychosocial influences and contexts based upon several theoretical perspectives. They are also looking into the advantages and disadvantages of research methods, according special attention to research ethics.

Part II: Beginnings uncovers the main aspects of prenatal development based on research data regarding the mechanisms of heredity, its nature and development, and the link between environment and heredity. Besides considering cultural aspects regarding birth and development, the book presents aspects such as psychosocial development, emotions, temperament, first social experiences, self awareness, autonomy, attachment, roots of moral development. It also provides the reader with several approaches to cognitive development.

Part III: Early Childhood pays special attention to issues pertaining health and safety of the child, memory development, intelligence, language development, formal and non-formal education. The authors had also included in this section topics on the changes and cultural influences of self awareness, self-esteem, perspectives regarding the gender development and its influences on the expansion of game as the child's main occupation , influence of parenting styles and discipline on child's development.

Part IV: Middle Childhood looks into issues regarding the physical and cognitive development of the school child and the maturation of ego (self-awareness). This part also includes a section designated for the education of children with special needs including enrichment and acceleration programs for the gifted.

Part V: Adolescence pays close attention to subjects such as brain development and its influence on rationing and behavior, the most frequent health issues in adolescence, cognitive maturation, physical health, characteristics and treatments of frequent emotional and behavioral problems. It also provides the reader with novel information about adolescent identity, sexuality, family and peer relationships, educational and vocational issues, and antisocial behavior and delinquency.

Part VI: Young Adulthood considers aspects such as health and good shape, sexuality and reproduction, moral judgment, education and work, lifestyles, parenting roles, and ending of marriage.

Part VII: Middle Adulthood deals, among other issues, with topics like physical changes, physical and mental health, cognitive loss and gain, creativity, work, and education. Even though aging and genetics determine some physiological changes, one's lifestyle and behavior influence their onset and size.

Part VIII: *Late Adulthood and the End of Life* talks about theories of biological aging: the theory of genetic programming and that of variable rate or error, along with topics on the individual variations of physical changes, physical and mental health, theories and research regarding the development of personality, strategies and resources that contribute to the wellness and mental health of the elderly. This section also discusses matters about decision-making regarding work and retirement, financial resources and housing aspects, long term-relationships, widowhood, divorce and re-marriage, and parent-adult offspring relationships.

The authors take into consideration the differences in traditions and attitudes regarding death amongst various cultures and the “mortality revolution” in developed countries and, most important, how the elderly cope with loss, fear of death, active euthanasia and assisted suicide, and death.