

Journal of Human Development

Perspectives on human development across the lifespan

A Student Journal

Volume 1, Number 1



In this issue:

Introduction to Developmental Psychology



Saskatchewan Education



Saskatchewan Education

Ages and Stages

A Journal of Developmental Psychology to support Psychology 30, a course offering of Saskatchewan Education

In this issue: *Introduction to developmental psychology*

Volume 1, Number 1

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Abstract: For all the people of the earth, the Creator has planted a *Sacred Tree* under which they may gather, and there find healing, power, wisdom and security. The roots of this tree spread deep into the body of Mother Earth. Its branches reach upward like hands praying to Father Sky. The fruits of this tree are the good things the Creator has given to the people: teachings that show the path to love, compassion, generosity, patience, wisdom, justice, courage, respect, humility and many other wonderful gifts.

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To truly make *Ages and Stages* your own, we provide a space where you can keep sayings, pictures, poems, anecdotes, musical lyrics, anything that you find intriguing, inspiring, amusing or thought provoking.

From both perspectives....

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Should families be limited to two children?

Welcome to Ages and Stages!

Ages and Stages is a student Journal of Developmental Psychology, which is meant to accompany Psychology 30: Human Development. In this article, we outline the aims of the course, as well as describe the course content and organizational structure.

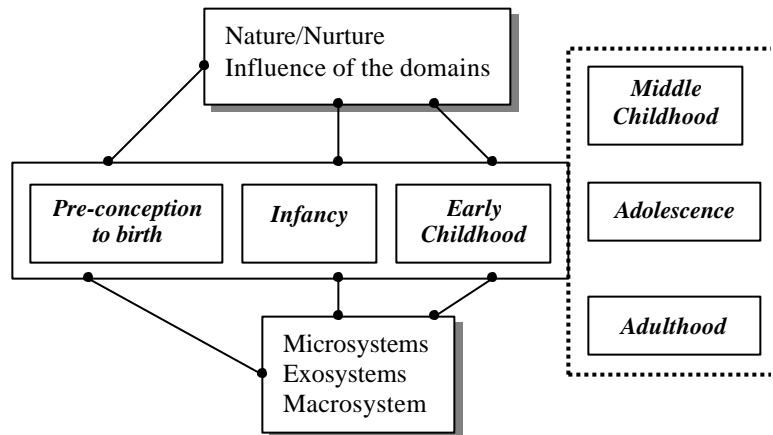
Welcome to *Ages and Stages*! It is our hope that this journal of developmental psychology will help you in organizing and understanding the basic concepts of developmental psychology as you move through the course content of Psychology 30: Human Development.

The aim of this course is on practicality and applicability. While it is very important that you have some understanding and appreciation for the different perspectives on the developmental changes through the stages of life from conception to death, the aim of this course is to present the concepts of developmental psychology in a practical, relevant, contemporary, research-oriented, and applicable framework. You will not just be studying **about** developmental psychology, you will be **applying** it to issues in your lives, and those of your families, friends, classmates, and community members.

As a way of organizing the concepts and information about the various aspects of developmental psychology, Saskatchewan Learning has created this journal, which we have titled, *Ages and Stages*. There will be one volume for each of the 4 required units of study in the course; Introduction to developmental psychology, Prenatal development, Infancy and Early childhood. The last three units, Middle Childhood, Adolescence and Adulthood, are optional, and may not necessarily be a part of the

course content. In each volume, as your table of contents for this volume shows, will be a number of articles which directly relate to the concepts and understandings being taught in class. This journal can also serve as a reflective journal, a study guide, as well as a notes and research organizer. Each article will explain and describe the concept or topic, using a variety of forms including text, graphics, pictures, poetry and short stories. You are encouraged to do the same. Use your copy of *Ages and Stages* to help organize your thinking about developmental psychology in the form or medium that suits your individual preference and style. If you are a person who can understand visual images or graphics such as a concept map or web, then use *Ages and Stages* as the format within which you make sense of this course by creating concept webs or visual metaphors. If you are a learner who learns best by the printed word, then underline, highlight, number in the margins and use your copy to facilitate your learning!

Looking through the eyes of the developing person ...



Looking through the eyes of the systems of support ...

No doubt you have some questions about exactly what the concept map shows. To begin with, the concept map shows that we will be looking at the changes across the lifespan from two perspectives: (1) from the perspective of the developing person, in other words what are the

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issues, challenges and changes which a human at that particular stage of development is experiencing; and, (2) from the perspective of the various support systems which foster and promote healthy development. These systems of support include your parents, family, friends, neighbors, community members, as well as institutions such as day cares and schools. As you consider the developmental process from the perspective of the developing person, you will be addressing the issues of the relative influences of heredity (Nature) and the environment (Nurture), as well as the interactions and influences of the **biological, cognitive, socioemotional** and **spiritual** domains.

For example, at the conception to birth stage, you will be looking at the process of development from the perspective of the unborn child, including physical development, development of the brain, the influence of heredity and our genetic makeup. From the perspective of the systems of support, the question might be: What does it take to have the healthiest baby possible? For example, what effects do smoking and drinking have on the unborn baby? What prenatal programs exist? Should you talk to your unborn child?

There are four required units of study in Psychology 30, An introduction to developmental psychology, Pre-conception to Birth, Infancy (zero - two years of age), and Early Childhood (two – six years of age). So much of what happens to us as we grow older is determined in the first six years, that special attention is given in this course to those early, critical years of development. That is not to say that development is a “fait accompli” by the age of six, far from it! But for the purposes of this course, we have decided to make the units of study Middle Childhood (six – 12 years of age), Adolescence and Adulthood, optional units of study as time, interest and need dictate.

Unit One is titled, What is developmental psychology? In this unit of study, you will begin to lay down the foundation so that you will not only begin to understand the basic perspectives,

Unit One: What is developmental psychology?

concepts and terms used in developmental psychology, but you will also learn the various ways and means of collecting, processing and communicating information about the “changes across the stages”.

The first stage of development you will study is the stage from before conception occurs, until the actual process of labour and delivery. We begin Unit Two by having you consider the vitally important question: Why do you want to become a parent?, and related to that, What are the issues, challenges and responsibilities of creating human life? This is a time of phenomenal physical development, in fact, at one point in the fetal development stage, 16 000 neurons (brain cells) are being created every minute! And so your first unit of study will look at the developmental process from conception to labour and delivery from the perspectives of both the developing fetus and the systems of support, in particular, the expectant mother.

Unit Three will examine the stage from birth until the age of two years. While the emphasis during the first stage (from the perspective of the developing person) was on physical development, now the emphasis becomes shared between the physical, cognitive (thoughts, learning, intelligence, memory), and socioemotional (emotions, personality or temperament, attachment, sense of Self-identity) aspects of development. Here the influences of the sociocultural context become increasingly important in terms of child rearing practices, roles of the father and mother, economic situation, nutrition, early experiences to promote cognitive development and the beginnings of personality (e.g., shyness, aggressiveness, inquisitiveness). You will also examine issues such as breast feeding versus bottle feeding, attachment issues, daycare versus parental care, as well as gender differences in development and how our culture promotes gender role identity.

As each stage not only has its own unique issues and challenges, so too it serves as the foundation upon which the next stage of development is built. The final stage of the

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Unit One: What is developmental psychology?

required units of study, Unit Four, is the Early Childhood stage, or the period of development from two years of age until six, or the time at which most children begin their formal period of schooling. This period of development has been termed “The Play Years” (Berger, 2000), because the primary context for socioemotional and cognitive development in particular, is in *playing* with other children. This is a period of development during which the child begins to make sense of the world around them, as exemplified by their seemingly never-ending questioning! Why is the sky blue? Why can't I have this, or that? Why can't I do this, or do that? Why, Why, Why? This is also the period in which the child learns about socialization, about getting along with other children, about their own unique identity in terms of self-identity and self-concept, and most especially about gender roles and identity. You will look at the issues of day care and pre-school, early intervention programs, cultural differences in terms of gender roles and identity, parenting issues, and the like.

Units of Study Five (Middle Childhood), Six (Adolescence), and Seven (Adulthood), are optional units of study, and may or may not be included in the course content. However, the approach will remain the same, in terms of considering the developmental process from the perspectives of both the developing person, and from the systems of support.

Can you see now why this journal is called *Ages and Stages*? It is our hope that you will find this course enlightening, challenging, informative, practical, relevant, and thought provoking. The story of the human journey is a complex and fascinating one, we hope that this course fuels that sense of wonder.

Making connections ...

- Create a collage to illustrate the course content
- Why do you think the editor of *Ages and Stages* chose the cover graphic? What do you think it means? What connection would that graphic have to developmental psychology?
- Design your own cover graphic!
- Human development has been described, in metaphorical terms, as being like a staircase, a vine, or a seedling (Santrock, 2000). Explain each metaphor.
- Define the following terms:
 - Heredity
 - Cognition
 - Socioemotional aspect
 - Culture
 - Nature/Nurture

An introduction to developmental psychology

In conversation with Dr. Katherine Robinson, a developmental psychologist from the University of Regina, *Ages and Stages* explores the basic concepts of developmental psychology.

Ages and Stages: How would you define developmental psychology?

I think that developmental psychology is essentially concerned with change, and the change process at different ages. While much attention is placed on child development, developmental psychology deals with how human beings change across time, and that time is not just childhood.

Ages and Stages: What do developmental psychologists do?

Because I teach at the University of Regina, my primary focus is academic, on the teaching of the concepts of psychology. But a large part of my responsibilities also involves research with children, going out to see what children do, and how they change. Developmental psychologists also perform community work, for example working with parenting groups, or support groups for parents with children with special needs. Developmental psychologists also work closely with educators to assist them with children with developmental problems and learning disabilities. You will also find developmental psychologists working with and for social welfare groups, and involved in legal issues related to psychology, for example, determining how reliable eyewitness testimony is in children, or the validity of childhood memories in legal cases.

Ages and Stages: What skills and training are required to become a successful developmental psychologist?

Developmental psychologists begin their training by completing a university undergraduate degree, usually an Honors degree in psychology. After that three or four year degree is completed, then you would apply to do graduate work, and begin work on a Masters degree. Following the two year Masters program of studies, Developmental psychologists will then apply to do a Doctoral degree with a specialization in developmental psychology. In terms of skills, I would say that interest in being a researcher, interest in working with children, adolescents, or the elderly, would be the basis for considering a career in developmental psychology.

Ages and Stages: In what ways has developmental psychology directly impacted our lives?

There are a lot of different areas in developmental psychology and everybody has their own specific interests and applicability. We deal with a wide range of subjects like conduct disorders, and so for example we will be looking at the social aspects of conduct disorder. Is it the peers or the parents, or perhaps is there a cognitive base to the conduct disorders? These findings can be applied to all aspects of our lives, most particularly in this case, Education. But developmental psychology can tell us a lot about more than just parenting. It can tell us about learning, it can tell us about play and it's

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importance and role in child development. It can tell us about how we develop our sense of being male or female. And so there are many applications of developmental psychology to all areas of our lives.

Ages and Stages: Of the many perspectives on human development, is there presently one which seems to dominate?

Developmental psychology is like all other aspects of psychology, there are a variety of different sub-groups. In general, when we think of developmental psychology we think of three main groups: physical development, cognitive development, and socioemotional development. All of those three interact to produce the person.

But there is no one dominant grand theory, for example, Piaget is probably the most famous developmental psychologist, but even Piaget's work applies mainly to cognitive development and he has little to say about what happens in adulthood.

People like Erikson have a much broader perspective, in the sense that he starts out at infancy and goes all the way through to late adulthood. But Erikson's theory is more concerned with the social aspects of development and the sense of personal identity, so again, he has not developed a single grand theory.

Ages and Stages: To what extent does culture influence our development?

Culture is gaining in its influence on developmental research, it is becoming one area of developmental psychology that we are realizing we must focus on. A lot of the research that has been done up to this point has focused on a very small sub-group of the total population, primarily middle class children who come from a Caucasian background. Of course, that does not reflect the reality of today's society, we are very much a multicultural society. So we need to address the cross-cultural aspects of

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development, in other words are there some aspects of development that are universal, and what aspects are culturally based? We also need to look within the cultures to look at the differences and diversities and look at the ways in which these theories of development actually apply to different groups within a culture.

Ages and Stages: What are the most important, current issues in developmental psychology today?

I would say that one of the biggest hurdles which developmental psychologists have to cross is the Why? question. We have done a pretty good job, at least for a small part of the population about how development occurs. But we have been having a hard time explaining why it occurs!

What is it that leads to change? What is it that leads a child to develop object permanence? Piaget did a wonderful job of describing the changes that the child goes through in understanding that objects do not just disappear when they are out of sight, but we still do not know why? We need to address the why question in terms of what cognitive structures in the child's brain are changing so that the child develops object permanence. And so there is an increasing focus on change mechanisms, not just describing what happens as they develop into adults.

Also, I think that on the topic of the Nature/Nurture question, developmental psychologists generally agree that there is an interaction, it cannot be explained simply by one or the other, but as an interaction between the two. However, a recent theory by Judy Harris proposes that in terms of the Nurture side of the issue, that it is peers, rather than parents, who have the most influence on development. We have, at least up to this point, generally accepted the view that it was the parents who were the primary sources of influence on development. But now this position has been put forward, and it has provoked a lot of research. It does not matter if you agree or disagree, but a lot of

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research has been, and will be, devoted to this question of the relative influence of the parents and peers.

Ages and Stages: Dr. Robinson, we sincerely thank you for taking the time to share your thoughts and ideas on the topic of developmental psychology.

How can developmental psychology be of benefit in my life?

Unit One: What is developmental psychology?

Making connections ...

- Find current newspaper or magazine articles that deal with issues in developmental psychology. With a partner, create a role play in which the two of you take opposing sides on the issue.
- Create your own *Ages and Stages* article!
- Interview a family member, friend, or senior. You can select an issue from the many which were raised by Dr. Robinson, or you can use the issue that you found in the newspaper or magazine article. Hint: Prepare the questions in advance, use a tape recorder, and then transcribe the interview later!
- How would an understanding of human development aid you as a family member?
- Using a comparison chart, list the similarities and differences between social psychology and developmental psychology.

What am I interested in learning?

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An Aboriginal perspective on social psychology

In conversation with Mr. Bill Asikinack, Assistant Professor, Department of Native Studies with the Saskatchewan Indian Federated College, and Traditional Leader of the Crane Clan in his family in the Ojibway Nation, *Ages and Stages* explores the basic concepts of social psychology from an Aboriginal perspective.

Ages and Stages: From an Aboriginal perspective, how would you define social psychology?

In our culture, Aboriginal people do not have a term like “social psychology” as it is used in the Western world. From our perspective, we seek to understand our holistic relationship to Nature and others, understanding our role and place in Creation. In life, we seek meaning, which helps provide purpose, and understanding how to live in harmony with Nature and others. This process starts with the individual and moves outwards. In our culture, the medicine wheel represents all aspects of our Being; physical, spiritual, mental, and emotional. Each of these aspects must be equally developed in a healthy, well-balanced individual through the development and use of our will.

Ages and Stages: How was this understanding communicated?

Through the oral tradition of storytelling. Storykeepers, or storytellers, would instruct and guide the people using “Lessons from Nature”. In some instances there were men’s stories, and stories meant primarily for women (but I am sure that these were not kept exclusive to either group!). Some nations only told stories at certain times or for a very specific purpose, while others would tell stories as the need arose. This was the case with my people, I can remember being told stories whenever a lesson was needed to be learned!

Unit One: What is developmental psychology?

Ages and Stages: Who were, or are, the “psychologists” in the Aboriginal culture?

Storytellers, or storykeepers. This was not a male or female dominated role. I heard as many stories from women as I did men. It was the women were mostly responsible for the transmission of cultural values and attitudes, because at a certain age the young males would go off with the older males to learn the skills of hunting and providing, while the girls would stay with their mothers and grandmothers for a longer period of time.

Ages and Stages: How did the storykeepers influence their people?

The storykeepers would observe behaviour and tell stories to indirectly guide and direct behaviour. The stories were always directly applicable to what the storykeepers had seen or heard. But one fascinating aspect of the stories was that they were always expressed in a positive way, the stories were never “negative words”. The stories were also never told in a direct manner, as a list of do’s and don’ts. Instead, it was storytelling in an allegorical and metaphorical way. For example, I remember one story that was told to me when I was fishing. The story involved the black water monster, who would rise up and take me away from this reality to the next unless I paid careful attention to the signs around me. How would I interpret or explain this story in ways that non-Aboriginals could understand? Well, the black water is a sign in nature of an impending storm. Being caught out in that storm could be dangerous. So it was left up to me to get the meaning from the story. I was never told to watch the water because black water meant possible danger. I would use an onion as an example for the type of stories that I heard when I was a child. Every time I heard a story, I would peel away one layer of meaning, and another layer would appear.

Ages and Stages: What skills or training were necessary to become an Aboriginal “social psychologist”?

In our tradition, the Elders would have selected, and trained, young people in the art of storytelling. The storyteller was developed from within the group, it was an active process of selection by the Elders who

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recognized that certain individuals had a “gift”. That gift was then promoted, and the young storytellers would then develop the ability to tell their stories in exactly the same way. Storytellers would sometimes have visited other nations to share stories, and these stories would then become part of the storykeeper’s stories. A storyteller had a very high social status, a prominent role in the culture.

Ages and Stages: What are the Aboriginal perspectives on various aspects of human thought and behaviour? Let’s begin with the issue of Self identity.

Children were named in a formal naming ceremony by a name-giver, a person charged with the responsibility of naming the baby. Children were named for a purpose, to learn certain things. The whole community knew the name and fostered the development of the qualities and attributes associated with the name. In a very real sense, then, part of the sense of identity would come from your given name. The community became responsible for helping the child fulfill their name.

Ages and Stages: What is the Aboriginal perspective on child rearing and parenting?

In our culture, the child had control over their own development but the parents (and the community) were always watchful, so that the child would develop into a “proper” adult whose skills would be useful to the survival of the community. As I have already described from my upbringing, child development was guided through stories, and interpretation left up to developing individual. You remember the story of the black water, water monster, in contemporary sense, black water means impending storm.

Ages and Stages: What is the role and importance of spirituality to Aboriginal peoples?

It’s the whole world to an Aboriginal person. Spirituality is central to our way of Being. In our tradition, we celebrate life, give thanks every day. I remember a story when I was in Navajo country in the United States, and a small cactus was pointed out

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to me. I was reminded that this small plant was absolutely critical to my survival, because if I had nothing else, that the milk of this cactus would provide enough nutrition to survive in the desert. That's what I mean about giving thanks, and appreciating the gifts of Creation.

Ages and Stages: What is the Aboriginal perspective on the role of the family?

In the Aboriginal culture, the family is what has been described as an "extended" family, it involves the whole community. There is an active connecting to the extended family, recognizing the need to involve many people in the development and guidance of the child. Family, then, could be defined as “people who have influence on the developing person”.

Ages and Stages: How would you describe the Aboriginal worldview?

A worldview is the fundamental set of values that direct our behaviour, it is how we view our relationship to all Creation. From our perspective, Humankind is the least of all of Creation (because humans depend on the animals and plants. They do not need us to survive, we need them. In our worldview, everything is related to everything else, and everything has purpose.

Ages and Stages: Mr. Asikinack, we sincerely thank you for taking the time to share your thoughts and ideas on the topic of an Aboriginal perspective on developmental psychology.

Looking through the eyes of.... What do you see?

In this article, we consider the two perspectives upon which this course is based: (1) the perspective of the developing person and the physical, mental and emotional changes across the lifespan; (2) the perspective of the systems of supports as described by Urie Bronfenbrenner (1979), support systems such as the family, friends, classmates and Health agencies which promote and nurture healthy development.

In this article, we consider the two perspectives upon which this course is based: (1) the perspective of the developing person and the physical, mental and emotional changes across the lifespan; (2) the perspective of the systems of supports as described by Urie Bronfenbrenner (1979), support systems such as the family, friends, classmates and Health agencies which promote and nurture healthy development.

Let's begin by examining the influence that our physical, mental and emotional aspects bring to bear on our thoughts, feelings and behaviours. To describe the physical influences on our development is to consider how certain traits are inherited from our parents. One way to find out whether a trait is inherited is to study twins.

Identical twins develop from a single fertilized egg and share the same genes. In a few cases, identical twins have been separated at birth. Psychologists at the University of Minnesota have been studying identical twins who were separated at birth and reared in different environments (Holden, 1980) One of the researchers, Thomas Bouchard, reports that despite very different social, cultural, and economic backgrounds, the twins shared many common behaviours. For example, in one set of twins (both named Jim), both had done well in math and poorly in spelling while in school; both worked as deputy sheriffs; vacationed in Florida; gave identical names to their children and pets; bit their fingernails; had identical smoking and drinking patterns; and liked mechanical drawing and carpentry. (Kasschau, 1995, p. 101-103)

Our mental state is directly tied to how we feel, and how we behave. How we think influences how we feel and how we act. Many people behave as if they were controlled by their bodies. They cannot separate what their bodies want from what is true and good. To exercise this kind of discipline requires discipline and determination to fulfill our purposes and achieve our goals. Our feelings do not "happen" to us like a rock dropped on our heads. Yet wise teachers and elders know that feelings can be realized and controlled by an act of our will. Indeed, feelings can be refined, evaluated and developed. Just as the body can be trained and developed through the exercise of the will, so too can our feelings be disciplined. For example, people who fly into uncontrollable anger because they have been denied something they wanted, have not learned to discipline the powers of emotion. On the other hand, to hold in feelings of hurt or anger without being able to release them can be extremely damaging to our physical, mental, emotional and spiritual well-being. The most difficult and valuable gift is the capacity to express feelings openly and freely in ways that do not hurt other beings. To own feelings of hurt can prevent us from being a clear-thinking and effective human being. (Bopp, 1985)

Now let's turn our attention to the relative influence of the environment in terms of influencing our behaviour. According to Urie Bronfenbrenner (1979), each person is significantly affected by interactions among a number of overlapping ecosystems.

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Unit One: What is developmental psychology?

At the center of the model is the individual. Surrounding the individual are the systems of support that most directly and immediately influence the individual. These are termed the **microsystems**. The primary microsystems for children include the family, peer group, classroom, neighbourhood, and sometimes a church, temple, or mosque as well. Interactions among the microsystems, as when parents and teachers coordinate their efforts to educate the child, take place through the **mesosystem**. Surrounding the microsystems is the **exosystem**, which includes all the external networks, such as community structures and schools, medical, employment, and communications systems, that influence the microsystems. And influencing all other systems is the **macrosystem**, which includes cultural values, political philosophies, economic patterns, and social conditions. Together, these systems are termed the social context of human development. (Berger, 2000, p. 5)

Using the Bronfenbrenner ecological model as our guide, let's investigate how we as individuals guide and direct our own behaviour. As we described earlier, humans have a biological basis to helping others, in fact, we are more likely to help others in need if we are related to them, and the closer that relationship, the stronger the drive to help. This was explained by psychologists as one way of preserving the continuation of the species! But in addition to having the biological capacity to behave altruistically, we also have the capacity to learn to behave altruistically under certain circumstances. We learn our social behaviour by watching others, and so it only makes sense that we would be more likely to help others if we had observed our parents, friends, peers, and other significant adults in our lives, demonstrating those helping behaviours.

The sociocultural context plays an important role in the learning environments of schools. In a typical U.S. classroom session, teachers talked to students as a group; then students worked at their desks independently.

Reinforcement or other feedback was usually delayed or absent. In contrast, the typical Japanese classroom placed greater emphasis on cooperative work between students (Kristof, 1997). Teachers provided more immediate feedback on a one-to-one basis, and there was an emphasis on working in teams made up of members with differing abilities, so that faster learners could help teach slower ones. The Japanese children also practised more. (Bernstein and Nash, 1998, p. 176)

Still another example of the influence of the environment has to do with people's perceptions of what is considered appropriate in social situations. People tend to judge others based on the eye contact they engage in. Canadians generally prefer modest amounts of eye contact rather than constant or no eye contact. Job applicants, for example, are rated more favourably when they make moderate amounts of eye contact, speakers who make more rather than less eye contact are preferred, and witnesses testifying in a court trial are perceived as more credible when they make eye contact with the attorney questioning them. (DePaulo, 1992) However, all of this is true only in Western cultures, which foster an individualistic stance; in some non-Western cultures - for example, Japan or among First Nations people - making direct eye contact may be a sign of disrespect, arrogance, and even a challenge. (Lefton, 2000, p. 459)

There is some fascinating research on the influence of culture on our behaviour. In one example, the cultural influence on perception was investigated. If people in different cultures are exposed to substantially different visual environments, some of their perceptual experiences may differ as well. Researchers have compared responses to pictures containing depth cues by people from cultures that do and do not use pictures and paintings to represent reality (Derogowski, 1989). People in cultures that provide little experience with pictorial representation, like the Me'n or the Nupa in Africa, have a more difficult time judging

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distances shown in pictures. So, although the structure and principles of human perceptual systems tend to create generally similar views of the world for all of us, our perception of reality is also shaped by experience, including the experience of living in a different culture. (Bernstein and Nash, 1998, p. 104)

In summary, we are influenced by all aspects of our being: physical, mental, emotional and spiritual. Most psychologists now agree with the position that our behaviour is determined by the *relative* influences of biology and the environment, and that in certain situations one aspect might exert more influence on our behaviour than the other. Using Bronfenbrenner's ecological model as our guide, we described some of the influences from the various systems of support that surround the individual. Those systems include the microsystems of family, friends, peers and the classroom, outward to the exosystems of school, community, the media, and further outward to the macrosystems of society, the cultural context, and the political and economic situations that we live in.

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Making connections ...

- Find examples of the ways in which the cultural industries of fashion, music and beauty influence us.
- **I AM CANADIAN.** What does it mean to be Canadian? How do we demonstrate our national identity?
- Research your family history. Where do you come from? Design a family tree.
- Complete the Who I Am Template included in the *Ages and Stages Making Connections* section.
- Interview a classmate. During the course of the interview, complete the Ecological Model template in terms of the network of support systems that nurture and promote the healthy development of your classmate.

Understanding contemporary perspectives on developmental psychology

Abstract: In the Western tradition, there are six dominant perspectives that seek to explain human thought and behaviour. In this article, we describe each perspective, and then invite you to look at a situation from each perspective.

What are the contemporary perspectives which try to explain human thought and behaviour? This article will present a description of six of the “grand theories”, compare them in table format for their perspectives on continuous or stage theory, the relative influence of biological and environmental factors, the importance of cognition, and the research methods used. Finally, each of these perspectives will be used as a lens to interpret human behaviour.

Lifespan development has produced a number of broad conceptual perspectives representing different approaches to development. Each broad perspective encompasses a number of theories, explanations and predictions concerning phenomena of interest. A theory provides a framework for understanding the relationships among an organized set of principles or facts. The six major theoretical perspectives include:

- **Psychodynamic Perspective: Focusing on the inner person.** Advocates of the psychodynamic perspective believe that behaviour is motivated by inner forces, memories and conflicts that are generally beyond people’s awareness and control.

- **Freud’s psychoanalytic theory** suggests that unconscious forces act to determine personality and behaviour. To Freud, the unconscious is a part of the personality about which a person is unaware. It contains infantile wishes, desires, demands and needs that are hidden, because of their disturbing nature, from conscious awareness. Freud suggested that the unconscious is responsible for a good part of our everyday behaviour. According to Freud, one’s personality has three aspects: the id, the ego and the superego.

The **id** is the raw, unorganized, inborn part of personality that is present at birth. It represents primitive drives related to hunger, sex, aggression and irrational impulses. The id operates according to the “pleasure principle”, in which the goal is to maximize satisfaction and reduce tension.

The **ego** is the part of the personality that is rational and reasonable. Providing a reality check for the demands of the id, the ego acts as a buffer between the outside world and the primitive id. The ego operates on the “reality principle”, in which instincts are restrained in order to maintain the safety of the individual and help integrate the individual into society.

Finally, Freud proposed that the **superego** represents a person’s conscience, incorporating distinctions between right and wrong. It develops around age 5 or 6 and is learned from an individual’s parents, teachers and other significant figures.

- **Erikson’s psychosocial theory** suggests that developmental change occurs throughout our lives in eight distinct stages. The stages emerge in a fixed pattern and are similar for all people. Erikson argues that each stage presents a crisis or conflict that the individual must resolve. Although no crisis is ever fully resolved, making life

increasingly complicated, the individual must at least address the crisis of each stage sufficiently to deal with demands made during the next stage of development.

- **The Behavioural Perspective: Considering the outer person.** The behavioural perspective suggests that the keys to understanding development are observable behaviour and outside stimuli in the environment. If we know the stimuli we can predict the behaviour. Behavioural theories reject the notion that individuals universally pass through a series of stages. Instead, people are assumed to be affected by the environmental stimuli to which they happen to be exposed. Developmental patterns, then, are personal, reflecting a particular set of environmental stimuli, and development is the result of continuing exposure to specific factors in the environment.

- John B. Watson and B.F. Skinner's theories of **classical and operant conditioning** hold that all behaviour is learned as a response to external stimuli. Classical conditioning occurs when an organism learns to respond in a particular way to a neutral stimulus that normally does not evoke that type of response. In operant conditioning, Skinner demonstrated that individuals learn to act deliberately on their environments in order to bring about desired consequences. In a sense, then, people operate on their environment in order to bring about a desired state of affairs. Reinforcement is the process by which a stimulus is provided that increases the probability that a preceding behaviour will be repeated. In addition, punishment will decrease the probability that the preceding behaviour will occur in the future.

- According to **social-cognitive learning theorist** Albert Bandura, when we see the behaviour of a model being rewarded, we are likely to imitate that behaviour. Behaviour is learned through observation and imitation, not conditioning through reinforcement or punishment.

- **The Cognitive Perspective: Examining the roots of understanding.** The cognitive perspective focuses on the processes that allow people to know, understand and think about the world. The cognitive perspective emphasizes how people internally represent and think about the world. By using this perspective, developmental psychologists hope to understand how children and adults process information, and how their ways of thinking and understanding affect their behaviour.

- No single person has had a greater impact on the study of cognitive development than **Jean Piaget** who proposed that all people pass in a fixed sequence through a series of universal stages of cognitive development. In each stage, he suggested that not only did the quantity of information increase, but so did the quality of knowledge and understanding. Piaget suggests that the growth in children's understanding of the world can be explained by two basic principles. **Assimilation** is the process in which people understand an experience in terms of their current state of cognitive development and way of thinking. In contrast, **accommodation** refers to changes in existing ways of thinking in response to encounters with new stimuli or events.

- Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky's **sociocultural theory** proposes that a full understanding of development is impossible without taking into account the culture in which children develop. Sociocultural theory proposes that children's understanding of the world is acquired through their problem-solving interactions with adults and other children. As children play and cooperate with others, they learn what is important in their society, and at the same time, advance cognitively in their understanding of the world.

- **The Humanistic Perspective: Concentrating on the unique qualities of human beings.** Rejecting the notion that development is largely determined by unconscious processes, by learning from our environment, or by rational cognitive processing, the humanistic perspective contends that people have a natural tendency to make decisions about their lives and control their behaviour. The humanistic perspective emphasizes free will, the ability of humans to make choices and come to decisions about their lives.

- **Carl Rogers** suggested that all people have a need for positive regard that results from an underlying wish to be loved and respected. Because it is other people who provide this positive regard, we become dependent on them. Consequently, our view of ourselves and our self-worth is a reflection of how we think others view us.

- **Abraham Maslow** suggests that self-actualization is a primary goal in life. Self-actualization is a state of self-fulfillment in which people achieve their highest potential in their own unique way. (Feldman, 2000)

- **The Evolutionary Perspective: Focusing on biology as the determinant of development.** The Ethological Theory stresses that behaviour is strongly influenced by biology, is tied to evolution, and is characterized by critical or sensitive periods. (Santrock, 1999) Evolutionary approaches grow out of the groundbreaking work of Charles Darwin.

- **Konrad Lorenz** discovered that newborn geese are genetically preprogrammed to become attached to the first moving object they see after birth. His work, which demonstrated the importance of biological determinants in influencing behaviour patterns, ultimately led developmentalists to consider the ways in which human behaviour might reflect inborn genetic patterns.

- The evolutionary perspective encompasses one of the fastest growing areas within the field of lifespan development, **behavioural genetics**. Behavioural genetics studies the effects of heredity and genetics on behaviour. As technology improves, and researchers continue to map the human genome, there is an increasing understanding of the role and function of the genetic codes and their influence on development.

- **The Sociocultural Perspective: Emphasizing the systems of support.** The Ecological model, the major proponent of which is Urie Bronfenbrenner, seeks to explain individual knowledge, development, and competencies in terms of the guidance, support, and structure provided by society and to explain social change over time in terms of the cumulative effect of individual choices. (Berger, 2000)

- According to **Urie Bronfenbrenner**, each person is significantly affected by interactions among a number of overlapping ecosystems. At the center of the model is the individual. Microsystems are the systems that intimately and immediately shape human development. The primary **microsystems** for children include the family, peer group, classroom, neighbourhood, and sometimes a church, temple, or mosque as well. Surrounding the microsystems is the **exosystem**, which includes all the external networks, such as community structures and local educational, medical, employment, and communications systems, that influence the microsystems. And influencing all other systems is the **macrosystem**, which includes cultural values, political philosophies, economic patterns, and social conditions. Together, these systems are termed the social context of human development. (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, quoted in Berger, 2000)

Grand Theories of Human Development

Psychodynamic Perspective: Focusing on the inner person. Advocates of the psychodynamic perspective believe that behaviour is motivated by inner forces, memories and conflicts that are generally beyond people's awareness and control.

The Cognitive Perspective: Examining the roots of understanding. The cognitive perspective focuses on the processes that allow people to know, understand and think about the world. The cognitive perspective emphasizes how people internally represent and think about the world. By using this perspective, developmental psychologists hope to understand how children and adults process information, and how their ways of thinking and understanding affect their behaviour.

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Research Methodologies in Developmental Psychology

By Dr. Mark Burgess and Dr. Stephen Kemp

Abstract: A variety of research methods have helped psychologists answer the previous questions and illuminate our understanding of many areas of our lives. Psychology can be a lot of fun. It is also challenging, creative, and is personally and scientifically rewarding when the research is done properly. This article outlines how we answer psychological questions. Rather than focusing exclusively on the answers themselves, we will focus on the ways answers are discovered.

How do young children learn the skills of becoming a good friend? Why do people join gangs and cults? At what age is a child able to resist temptation? Why do some people help in a crisis, and other people just stand and watch?

A variety of research methods have helped psychologists answer the previous questions and illuminate our understanding of many areas of human thought and behaviour. Psychology can be a lot of fun. It is also challenging, creative, and is personally and scientifically rewarding when the research is done properly. This article outlines how we answer psychological questions. Rather than focusing exclusively on the answers themselves, we will focus on the ways answers are discovered.

Naturalistic Observation

There are a variety of observational research styles and these are arranged according to the degree of observer intervention. In Naturalistic research, the observer does not intervene at all. For all intents and purposes, the researcher is invisible and works hard not to interrupt the natural dynamics of the situation being investigated. For example, if we were interested in the social interactions of school children we might observe their behavior at recess. In a situation such as this, the researcher might be looking for specific behaviors according to a predetermined set of criteria (such as fighting, sharing, conversations, etc). On the

other hand, naturalistic methods may also be used when little is known about the phenomenon being investigated and the researcher uses her observations to develop hypotheses.

Pros and Cons: Naturalistic methods can give us rich descriptions about the nature of the social world where there is little or no manipulation of the environment. On the other hand, Naturalistic methods limit the extent to which we can draw meaningful conclusions about the causes of behaviors due to the lack of control over the situation.

Participant Observation

Researchers intervene to a greater extent when they engage in participant observation. Some of the “heavyweight champions” of social psychology (Festinger, Reicher, and Schachter) adopted this method for research on cult members. Cults and doomsday groups have enjoyed a long history. Ordinarily such groups (a) predict a calamity and the date on which it will occur, and (b) prepare for the tragic event. For example, members of the “Heaven’s Gate” group were looking forward to leaving their “Earthly vessel” (the body) when a spaceship following the Hale-Bopp comet would take them to a higher level! Festinger and his colleagues infiltrated a group called the “Seekers”. The Seekers were led by a middle-aged housewife who received messages from “Guardians” located on the planet “Clarion.” The Guardians’

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messages informed Mrs. Keech of the time and date of a massive flood that would wipe-out the United States. In return for their faithfulness, members of the Seekers would be rescued by a spaceship! So far the world hasn't ended, meaning the cult members must cope with the obvious fact that they, and we, are still here!

Pros and Cons: One of the advantages of participant observation is that we can gain access to situations that would otherwise remain closed, and therefore get a better idea of the experience under investigation. However, if people know they are being studied they will likely alter their behavior to present themselves in a more desirable manner. Even if the researcher's successfully conceals his identity from the rest of the group (as was the case with the Seekers), he will unconsciously alter the group dynamics simply as a result of being a group member. Also, the researcher may even develop sympathies for the people being studied (or learn to despise them!) and develop an exaggerated bias for or against the group.

Field Experiments

In field experiments, researchers set up all aspects of a particular event and have almost complete control over the social context. The people being studied are not aware that they are being observed even though the researcher is controlling the situation. An example would be a study in which a researcher wanted to know under what conditions people are likely to help others in need. The researcher might "fake" an accident, or "fake" a person in distress such as a person appearing to be having a heart attack. In this mode of research, the participants are unaware that they are involved in a controlled situation and that their responses are being observed.

Pros and Cons: The researcher has an enormous amount of control over the social context and this is helpful in enabling us to make causal

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statements. On the other hand, the situation lacks the natural aspect of the observational methods.

Experiments

Experimental research does allow us to identify causal relations. For example, following a brutal assault and eventual murder of a young woman in New York City, psychologists wanted to know why nobody did anything to help the victim. In fact, 37 people witnessed the event, yet nobody even called the police. Darley and Latane (1968) predicted that increasing numbers of bystanders at an emergency actually decreases the probability that any one bystander will intervene and help the victim. They set out to investigate the phenomenon of bystander intervention experimentally.

Darley and Latane (1968) had participants arrive at a laboratory and wait in a foyer area with other supposed participants (these were actually part of the researcher team). One of the "fake participants" who had already claimed to suffer from epilepsy started to have a "seizure". The researchers had hypothesized that if nobody else was present, the participant would go for help more frequently (and more quickly) than if one or more other people were present. In fact, this was true, 85% of participants intervened if they were the only ones present, whereas only 62% intervened if one other person was present, and 31% intervened if four other people were present. The researchers had complete control over the experimental context. They controlled all aspects of the situation in order that they could confidently state that the number of people at an emergency does indeed impact the likelihood of a particular person lending a hand.

Pros and Cons: Experimental researchers take care to create an environment in which they can make causal statements. They manipulate variables, randomly assign participants to various conditions, and seek to control other influences that could affect their research. However, in working so hard to control all

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aspects of the situation except the one variable they are examining, the researcher may create an environment that is rather artificial and may not easily generalize to the real world. Also, there may be some important areas of life that we cannot study experimentally for ethical reasons. For example, we might want to know about the effects of bullying, but would be unable to investigate the phenomenon experimentally as it would be unethical to place people in those kinds of situations.

Interview

The interview method of research, typically, involves a face-to-face meeting in which a researcher (interviewer) asks an individual a series of questions. The interviewer usually tape records or writes down the participant's responses. To enhance the value of the interview, the researcher should prepare questions in advance, even though there is a likelihood of the "conversation" going off on a number of different tangents.

Pros and Cons: The advantage of an interview over a survey or questionnaire is that it allows for a wider range of responses. But, the interview technique is time consuming, and, as with questionnaires, no cause-and-effect relationships can be inferred. (Lefton, 2000, p. 14)

Survey, or Questionnaire

Conducting research using a survey involves going out and asking questions about the phenomenon of interest. The survey method is especially useful for collecting data from a large number of people and is often the only way of obtaining data about thoughts, feelings, and private behaviour not open to direct observation.

Pros and Cons: The strength of the questionnaire is that it gathers a large amount of information in a short space of time. Its weaknesses are that it is impersonal, it gathers only the information asked by the questions, it limits the participants' range of responses, it cannot prevent some respondents

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leaving some questions unanswered or from being untruthful in their responses, and it does not provide a structure from which cause-and-effect relationships can be inferred. (Lefton, 2000, p. 14)

Summary

There are a variety of techniques available for psychological investigation. Which technique is actually chosen depends largely upon the researcher's own research interests, methodological training, and personal preference. It is important to acknowledge that any one method is not superior to another. Rather, different methods are appropriate under different circumstances, and their combined impact has increased our understanding of the social environment considerably.

Issues in the Methods and Ethics of Research

Abstract: What are the issues and concerns in conducting research? In this article we describe and explain the methods issues of reliability, validity, and correlation and causation, as well as the ethical issues of confidentiality, informed consent, bias, and animal research.

What are the issues and concerns in conducting research? There are two aspects to this question: (1) What do we need to consider so that the research process is conducted properly?; (2) What do we need to consider so that the research process is conducted appropriately? The first aspect of the proper conduct of research, deals with the *methods* of research, and the questions we need to address to ensure that the research yields results that will be useful. The second aspect, the appropriateness of the research process, deals with the *ethics* of the study, or issues of honesty, openness, fairness, and correctness.

In terms of the methods issues in conducting research, there are three that we need to address. The first is the issue of reliability. **Reliability** is defined as “the extent to which the research yields the same results each time they are applied to the same issue”. (Baron, 1998, p. 459) For instance, if we were conducting an observational study of the play behaviours of children during recess, and our findings at the end of one study indicated that the boys were more aggressive than girls, but when we repeated our study at a different school and we found the opposite, that the girls were more aggressive than the boys, then we could not claim that our study was reliable.

The second aspect to the methods issues in research deals with validity. **Validity** is defined as “ the extent to which a research methodology measures what it is supposed to

measure.” (Baron, 1998, p. 460) Continuing with our example of the play behaviours of young children, is the observational approach a valid means of studying the topic? Let’s say that we had chosen to do an interview, and we interviewed the children and asked them questions about what happened at recess time. Would this method be considered valid as a way to gain information from which we could draw a conclusion? Probably not, or not as valid as directly observing them. To ensure that there is as much validity as possible, how the data is gathered also can determine the degree of validity. For example, it would be one thing to observe the behaviours of the children at recess and write down comments or jot notes. On the other hand, it would make the research study far more valid if we videotaped the children at play. Having a videotaped record of the behaviours would allow us to share our findings with other people who could then use exactly the same information to reach their conclusion. If our conclusions matched, then this would add to the validity of the study. Remember this point whenever you conduct research, particularly in observational, interview, or field studies.

The third methods issue is the degree to which events are related. In formal terms, this is called **correlation**. But the issue here is whether events that are related can be said to **cause** each other. For example, a researcher who finds that children whose parents are divorced have more emotional problems and commit more crimes

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than children from intact families can state that there is a correlation. There is a relationship that exists between divorce and emotional problems and crime in the children. However, the researcher cannot conclude that divorce *causes* emotional problems or crime. (Lefton, 2000, p. 11)

How do I make research more valid and reliable? There are several issues and concerns that we need to be aware of to make the research study valid, reliable and credible. Scientific investigation includes the possibility that researchers' procedures and/or biases may compromise the validity of their findings. Researchers can, however, use a number of techniques to increase the validity of their research:

- **Sample size:** To make statements about people in general, scientists study groups of individuals chosen from populations. Each such group, called a sample, must be large enough to ensure that a few extreme cases within the sample do not distort the picture it gives of the population.

- **Representative sample:** Data collected from one group of individuals may not be valid for other people who are different in significant ways, such as in gender or ethnic background. Thus it is important that every sample be a representative sample, that is, consist of people who are typical of the general population the researchers wish to learn about.

- **“Blind experimenters”:** When experimenters have specific expectations about their research findings, those expectations can affect the research results. As much as possible, therefore, the people who actually gather the data should be “blind”, that is, unaware of the purpose of the research.

- **Operational definitions:** When planning a study, researchers must establish operational definitions of whatever phenomena they will be examining. That is, they must define each variable in terms of specific, observable behaviour that can be measured with precision.

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- **Experimental and control groups:** To test a hypothesis accurately in an experiment, researchers must gather data on two samples that are similar in every important way except one. They must compare an experimental group. Which receives some special experimental treatment, and a control group, which does not receive the experimental treatment.

- **Statistical significance:** Whenever researchers find a difference between two groups, they have to consider the possibility that the differences occurred purely by chance. Determining the statistical significance is a mathematical measure of the likelihood that a particular research result occurred by chance. (Berger, 2000)

There are many issues involved in the appropriateness of research. It is beyond the scope of this article to discuss them all, however, we will consider five: confidentiality, informed consent, debriefing, bias, and research using animals.

Confidentiality is the right of privacy for subjects concerning their participation in research. All steps must be taken to assure that subjects' participation is confidential. If any possibility exists that someone other than the researcher may have access to the data, the subject must be informed of this possibility before they provide their informed consent to participate. (Carlson, 1997, p. 39)

Informed consent means that potential subjects understand exactly what is expected of them during the course of the research and that the investigator protects participants from physical and psychological discomfort, harm and danger. (Carlson, 1997, p. 39) For example, if you are interviewing someone, you must ask for their permission to be interviewed, and then share with them all of your jot notes or transcript of the conversation. Of course, there are many situations where you cannot ask for the participant's permission, as in the example of the observational study of children at play during recess. In this case, after the fact, you must

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obtain permission from the parents or guardians of the children.

Debriefing means that research participants be given full information about all aspects of the study after they have participated in it, thus assuring that they leave with a full understanding of its purpose, and receive a full disclosure of the information gathered. (Baron, 1998, p. 31) In other words, it is your responsibility to communicate back to the participants, whenever possible, of what your study found, and concluded.

Bias is an important consideration when conducting research. One powerful source of bias is known as the confirmation bias, the tendency to notice and remember mainly information that confirms what we already believe. (Baron, 1998, p. 16) Researchers must be careful to avoid subtle biases that influence results, such as gender (male or female), ethnicity (people's common traits, background, and allegiances which are often cultural, religious, or language based), and cultural (a person's racial and ethnic background, religious and social values, artistic and musical tastes, and scholarly interests) bias. (Lefton, 2000, p. 16)

Animal research is probably the most contentious issue in psychological research. Is it appropriate to subject helpless rats, pigeons and monkeys to conditions, operations and treatments that could not be performed on humans? (Baron, 1998, p. 32) On the other hand, there are conditions that affect humans that cannot be addressed through any other means. Would it be appropriate to change the diet of children to study allergic reactions? Would it be appropriate to administer behaviour altering drugs to study their effects without knowing what the possible side effects might be? Above all of this, however, still remains the central issue: Do we, as humans, have the right to use other forms of life to suit our purposes?

In summary, when we are conducting research, we must make every effort to ensure that our research methods are reliable, valid, and accurately describe the relatedness between

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issues. In so doing, we must respect the privacy of the participants, ask their permission, inform them of our results, and be aware of any biases that we hold.

Making connections ...

- What affect does violence on television have on people? Design a research study to record the number of violent acts in a television program, and then to observe the reactions of children watching the program.

Book Review: The Sacred Tree

Abstract: For all the people of the earth, the Creator has planted a *Sacred Tree* under which they may gather, and there find healing, power, wisdom and security. The roots of this tree spread deep into the body of Mother Earth. Its branches reach upward like hands praying to Father Sky. The fruits of this tree are the good things the Creator has given to the people: teachings that show the path to love, compassion, generosity, patience, wisdom, justice, courage, respect, humility and many other wonderful gifts.

The Sacred Tree, a publication of the Four Worlds International Institute for Human and Community Development based in Lethbridge, Alberta, describes the meaning of a symbol "around which lives, religions, beliefs and nations have been organized." (p. 20) The Sacred Tree, in the aboriginal culture, represents life, cycles of time, the earth, and the universe. In short, this book provides a simple, yet complete, understanding of the aboriginal world view, Humankind's relationship to Creation.

The teachings of the Sacred Tree are summarized as follows:

- Wholeness: All things are interrelated. Everything in the universe is a part of a single whole. Everything is connected in some way to everything else. It is therefore possible to understand something only if we can understand how it is connected to everything else.
- Change: All of Creation is in a state of constant change. Nothing stays the same except the presence of cycle upon cycle of change. One season falls upon the other. Human beings are born, live their lives, die and enter the spirit world. All things change. There are two kinds of change. The coming together of things (development) and the coming apart of things (disintegration). Both of these kinds of change are necessary and are always connected to each other.
- Changes occur in cycles or patterns. They are not random or accidental. Sometimes it is difficult to see how a particular change is connected to everything else. This usually means that our standpoint is limiting our ability to see.
- The seen and the unseen. The physical world is real. The spiritual world is real. These two are aspects of one reality. Yet, there are separate laws which govern each of them. Violation of spiritual laws can affect the physical world. Violation of physical laws can affect the spiritual world. A balanced life is one that honors the laws of both of these dimensions of reality.
- Human beings are spiritual as well as physical.
- Human beings can always acquire new gifts, but they must struggle to do so. The timid may become courageous, the weak may become bold and strong, the insensitive may learn to care for the feelings of others and the materialistic person can acquire the capacity to look within and to listen to her inner voice. The process human beings use to develop new qualities may be called "true learning".
- There are four dimensions of "true learning". These four aspects of every person's nature are reflected in the four cardinal points of the medicine wheel. These four aspects of our being are developed through the use of our will. It cannot be said that a person has totally learned in a whole and balanced manner unless all four dimensions of Being have been involved in the process.
- The spiritual dimension of human development may be understood in terms of the capacity to accept, listen to, respond to,

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and use the spiritual teachings in the material world.

- Human beings must be active participants in the unfolding of their own potentialities.
- The doorway through which all must pass if they wish to become more or different than they are now is the doorway of the will. A person must *decide* to take the journey. The path has infinite patience. It will always be there for those who decide to travel it.
- Anyone who sets out on a journey of self development will be aided. No test will be given that the traveler does not already have the strength to meet.
- The only source of failure on a journey will be the traveler's own failure to follow the teachings of the Sacred Tree.

In addition to the sacred teachings concerning the nature of things, the teachings of the Sacred Tree include a code of ethics to which all should conform their lives if they wish to find happiness and well-being. This code describes what wisdom means in the relationship between individuals, in family life, and in the life of the community. These are the sparkling gems of experience practiced by Native peoples everywhere.

- Each morning before rising, and each evening before sleeping, give thanks for the life within you and for all life, for the good things the Creator has given you and others and for the opportunity to grow a little more each day. Consider your thoughts and actions of the past day and seek for the courage and strength to be a better person. Seek for the things that will benefit everyone.
- Be truthful at all times, and under all conditions.
- Always treat your guests with honor and consideration. Give of your best food, your best blankets, the best part of your house, and your best service to your guests.
- The hurt of one is the hurt of all, the honor of one is the honor of all.

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- Receive strangers and outsiders with a loving heart and as members of the human family.
- Observe moderation and balance in all things.
- All the races and tribes in the world are like the different coloured flowers of one meadow. All are beautiful. As children of the Creator they must all be respected.
- To serve others, to be of use to family, community, nation or the world is one of the main purposes for which human beings have been created. Do not fill yourself with your own affairs and forget your most important task. True happiness comes only to those who dedicate their lives to the service of others.
- Know those things that lead to your well-being, and those things that lead to your destruction.
- Respect the wisdom of the people in council. Once you give an idea to a council or a meeting it no longer belongs to you. It belongs to the people. Respect demands that you listen intently to the ideas of others in council and that you do not insist that your idea prevail. Indeed you should freely support the ideas of others if they are true or good, even if those ideas are quite different from the ones you have contributed. The clash of ideas brings forth the spark of truth. Once a council has decided something in unity, respect demands that no one speak secretly against what has been decided. If the council has made an error, that error will become apparent to everyone in its own time.
- Respect. Respect means "to feel or show honor or esteem for someone or something; to consider the well-being of, or to treat someone or something with deference or courtesy". Showing respect is a basic law of life.
 - Treat every person, from the tiniest child to the oldest elder with respect at all times

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- Special respect should be given to elders, parents, teachers, and community members.
 - No person should be made to feel "put down" by you; avoid hurting other hearts as you would avoid a deadly poison.
 - Touch nothing that belongs to someone else without permission, or an understanding between you.
 - Respect the privacy of every person. Never intrude on a person's quiet moments or personal space.
 - Never walk between people that are conversing.
 - Never interrupt people that are conversing.
 - Speak in a soft voice, especially when you are in the presence of elders, strangers, or others to whom special respect is due.
 - Do not speak unless invited to do so at gatherings where elders are present.
 - Never speak about others in a negative way, whether they are present or not.
 - Treat the earth and all of her aspects as your mother. Show deep respect for the mineral world, the plant world, and the animal world. Do nothing to pollute the air or the soil. If others would destroy our mother, rise up with wisdom to defend her.
 - Show deep respect for the beliefs and religions of others.
 - Listen with courtesy to what others say, even if you feel that what they are saying is worthless. Listen with your heart.
- Listen to and follow the guidance given to your heart. Expect guidance to come in many forms; in prayer, in dreams, in times of quiet solitude and in the words and deeds of wise elders and friends.

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There is much, much more to this book than the very brief summaries provided. However, the invitation is open to read *The Sacred Tree* for yourself. It will no doubt lead you to a deeper understanding of the Aboriginal people's beliefs, values and attitudes, their worldview, and in turn, lead you to carefully consider yours.

Bopp J., Bopp M., Brown L., Lane P., *The Sacred Tree* (1985). Four Worlds International Institute for Human and Community Development, Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada.

Making connections ...

- What are your basic beliefs and values? In the medium of your choosing, express your world view.
- Can you give examples of how your world view influences your behaviour?
- Research the beliefs and values of another faith system, and then compare them both with your own, and those of the aboriginal peoples as described in *The Sacred Tree*.
- Reflect on how, and when, you learned the difference between "good" and "bad", "right" and "wrong", and the most important influences in your life.
- Interview a senior citizen or an Elder. In what ways have society's values changed since they were your age?
- Reflect on the impact that technology has had, and will have, on our understanding and appreciation of the value systems of other cultures. In what ways might technology help to truly make us a "global village"?

Anthology

The Most Courageous Thing I Know

She's never saved a person's life
Or fought in a battle or war;
She's never put out a raging fire
Or faced a tornado's core;
She's never been in the paper
Or on the six o'clock news;
But she's got more courage and bravery
Than I could ever use.
She's that girl you laughed at yesterday
Because of how she did her hair,
The girl you joked about the day before
Because of what she likes to wear.
She's the bravest person I know
Because she lives through every single day
Knowing there's always something bad
That someone's going to say.
Each day she goes right back
To where people hurt her so.
To go through that pain again and again
Is the most courageous thing I know

Kristina Gutenberg
Kindersley Composite School
Teacher; Mrs. Sandra Dorowicz
Published in Golden Taffy, Volume 35, Number 1, Fall 1999

Why?

A young child cold and alone
No place to go, no place to call home
A young girl working the street
Just to survive, just so she can eat
A family torn apart by an uncaring and devious heart
Why do people just pass them by?
Have you really stopped and wondered why?
Why does no one seem to care?
If others are stripped naked, left trembling bare?
Could it be we choose not to see?
Just content that it's not you or me?
Some one killed because of his skin color,
Will we ever learn to love one another?
Another war of hate to be fought
While the devil laughs at the souls he's caught.
People murdered for what they believe in,
Can you tell me the reason?
Why can't we accept one another
And walk hand in hand with our fellow brother?
I've thought and thought and I'll tell you why
Power, greed and money influence and catch the eye
It's a sad world we're living in
When people can't spare a dime or a fraction of their time.

Adriana Brehm
Leader Composite School
Teacher: Ms Pearman
Published in Golden Taffy, Volume 35, Number 1, Fall 1999

From both perspectives

Topic: Families should be limited to a maximum of 2 children.

Reasons why I agree...	Reasons why I disagree ...