1. Conjoint twins pose an interesting challenge for developmentalists to ponder. They are genetically identical and share the same parents, same environments, and the same peer group throughout development—and if not separated—life. Yet research shows that they are often vastly different in personality, and exhibit different likes and dislikes. Does Developmental science have any way of accounting for this? Describe theory and research and generate an explanation.

Readings

2. How have developmental theorists considered temperament? Describe issues relating to continuity/discontinuity, nature/nurture, psychodynamic, and psychobiological perspectives on the construct as a developmental phenomenon. In your answer be sure to define temperament in terms of its component parts and describe its role in the life course, paying particular attention to early childhood.

Readings


3. Children’s narrative skills are hallmarked as an important school readiness skill. Using seminal and recent work in the field of narrative research, discuss thoroughly the following: (a) the developmental trajectory and context of development of narrative abilities, (b) individual and cultural/linguistic variations in either developmental trajectory or context of development, and (c) the significance of narrative abilities for other developmental domains including: memory, self-concept or literacy (choose one).

Readings


4. With the rise in the number of children from non-English speaking homes in the U.S., there has been an increased interest in the language acquisition process of dual language learners. Discuss at least three similarities and three differences between the language development of children learning two or more languages and those learning one.

Readings

Bhatia, T. J., & W. C. Ritchie (Eds.), *The handbook of bilingualism*. Malden: Blackwell


5. There are many theories of culture in psychology, sociology, and anthropology (e.g., Rogoff, Shweder, Geertz, Mead, Schiefflin, Weber). Drawing from different theories of culture across these disciplines, describe, compare, and assess the strengths and weaknesses of each theory using research to support your assessment. Furthermore, discuss the central debates regarding the meaning and measurement of culture.

Readings


6. Recent scholars have argued that peers are more influential than are parents in the social, emotional, and cognitive development of the child (from middle childhood through adolescence). Drawing from theory and research, make a case for why that may be true

Readings


7. There are multiple aspects of self-regulation including (at a minimum) emotion regulation, effortful control, executive attention, and executive function. Describe the various aspects of self-regulation in early childhood and note similarities and differences among them. How can these similarities and differences be seen not only in operational definition and measurement, but in relation to central theories in developmental psychology?
Readings


8. Adolescence has received considered attention among developmental psychologists. Drawing from theory and research in psychology, discuss the ways in which race, ethnicity, gender, and immigrant status (e.g., being first or second generation) shape the social, emotional, and cognitive development of adolescents. Cite specific theories and research to support each of your points.

Readings


Developmental Competency Exam Reading List 2011


9. John Locke referred to infants as “Tabula Rasas”, and William James referred to infants’ perception of the world as “one great blooming, buzzing confusion”. However, over the past several decades there have been new research methods that have led to deeper insights into infants’ perceptual and cognitive capacities. These research findings have called into question the statements of philosophers such as Locke and James and have caused great debate among scholars who come from more nativistic versus dynamic systems orientations. Discuss these debates, refer to methodological breakthroughs, and discuss contrasting interpretations of findings regarding whether infants come into the world with “core” capacities.

Readings


10. Parenting practices play a vital role in their children’s development. Much research has highlighted aspects of parenting that support positive developmental outcomes in children and adolescents. However, research on parenting is also often criticized for being narrowly focused on White, middle-income US families. This critique has led to debates regarding which aspects of parenting matter, at which developmental periods, and in particular – in which cultural/ethnic communities. In many ways, this research continually highlights the tension between the need to understand “universal” versus “culture-specific” processes in human development. Discuss these points with attention to the balance between universality and cultural relativism.

Readings

