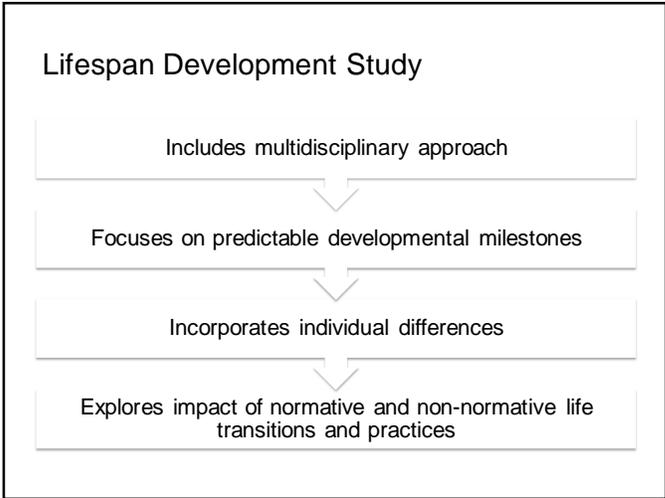


In This Chapter

- Who We Are and What We Study
- Setting the Context
- Theories: Lenses for Looking at the Lifespan
- Research Methods: The Tools of the Trade

Who We Are and What We Study

- **Developmentalists:** Researchers and practitioners who study the human lifespan
- **Lifespan development:** Scientific study of human growth throughout life
 - Gerontology
 - Child development
 - Adult development



LEARN THE TERMS

Take a few minutes to check your understanding of these key terms:

- Developmentalists
- Lifespan development
- Child development
- Gerontology
- Adult development
- Normative transitions
- Non-normative transitions

Setting the Context

Development is influenced by broad general influences.

- Cohort
- Socioeconomic Status (SES)
- Culture and Ethnicity
- Gender

Impact of Cohort

- **Baby boom cohort**
- **Changing conceptions of childhood**

- Pre-17th century: Child mistreatment and abandonment; high child mortality and child labor; poverty
- 17th-18th centuries: Enlightenment philosophers Locke and Rousseau had different visions of human life



Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, National Child Labor Committee Collection

Impact of Cohort

- **Changing conceptions of childhood**

- Late 19th century: Kinder, gentler view of children
 - Childhood protected, dependent life stage
 - Universal education: mandatory primary school
- 20th century: Adolescence: identified by G. Stanley Hall became standard U.S. life stage with mandatory school attendance
- Emerging adulthood: Newest in-between life stage
 - Age 18 to late 20s
 - Time for personal exploration

Changing Conceptions of Later Life

- Life expectancy
 - Lower before 20th century medical advances
 - Today, 20th-century life expectancy revolution
 - Infectious diseases reduced or eliminated
 - Present-day chronic diseases (heart disease, cancer, diabetes)
- New stages
 - Young-old (60s, 70s)
 - Old-old (80s and beyond)



Average Life Expectancy of Men and Women in Some Selected Nations, 2013

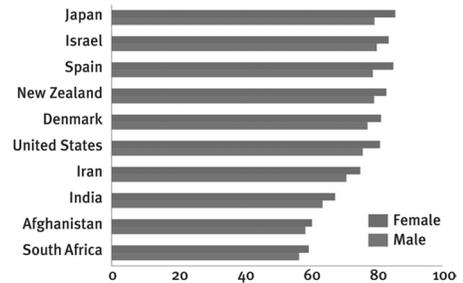


Figure 1.1
Biology: Experiencing The Lifespan, 4e © 2016 Worth Publishers

What do you see?

Two Twenty-first-century Transformations

- **From relating in the real world to residing in cyberspace**
 - On-line relationships: Permanent change in how people relate
- **From living in an expanding economy, to facing financial hardship: The great recession of 2008**
 - Rethinking standard adult markers: Temporary effect of adult economic path

LEARN THE TERMS

Take a few minutes to check your understanding of these key terms:

- Contexts of development
- Cohort
- Baby boom cohort
- Emerging adulthood
- Average life expectancy
- 20th-century life expectancy revolution
- Young-old
- Old-old

Other Impacts

Impact of socioeconomic status on individuals and nations

- Developed-world nations; developing-world nations

Impact of culture

- Collectivist cultures; individualistic cultures

Impact of gender

- Biology drives some gender differences (e.g., life expectancy)
- Development shaped by culture's values

Impact of ethnicity

- Diversity generalization hazardous due to diversity within nations and ethnic groups

The Major Ethnic Groups in the United States, Their Percentages in 2013, and a Few Mid-twenty-first-century Projections

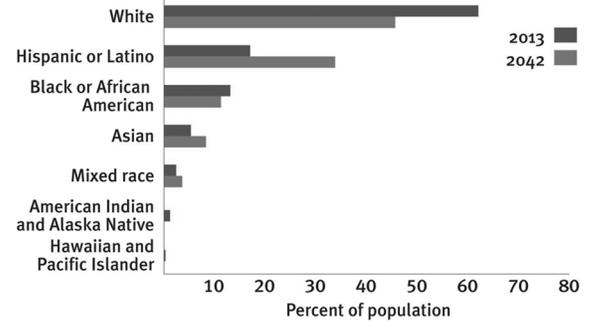


Figure 1.2
Belsky, *Experiencing The Lifespan*, 4e © 2016 Worth Publishers

LEARN THE TERMS

Take a few minutes to check your understanding of these key terms:

- Social networking sites
- Great Recession of 2008
- Income inequality
- Socioeconomic status (SES)
- Developed world
- Developing world
- Collectivist cultures
- Individualistic cultures

Theories: Lenses for Looking at the Lifespan

- **Theory:** Attempts to explain individual behavior
 - Allows behavior prediction
 - Presents ideas for interventions to improve behavior
- **The nature/nurture question**
 - Are people shaped by biological/genetic forces or is the environment more influential?
- Let's look at each theory from this perspective.

Behaviorism: The Original Blockbuster “Nurture” Theory

- **Traditional behaviorism: John Watson and B. F. Skinner**

- Nurture is all important!
- Science of human behavior can be rigorous
- General laws of learning can explain all behavior



B.F. Skinner Foundation

B. F. Skinner: Operant Conditioning

- **Operant conditioning:** Law of learning that determines any voluntary response
 - Variable reinforcement schedules
 - Humans (and pigeons) behave a certain way because they are reinforced (rewarded) for certain behaviors
 - Any behavior that is reinforced is likely to be repeated.
 - Any behavior that is not reinforced is likely to be extinguished.

Taking a Different Perspective: Exploring Cognitions

- **Cognitive behaviorism (social learning theory):** Learn by modeling (imitating) others
 - We model people who are nurturing, or involved with us.
 - We model those whom we perceive as being like us.
 - e.g., At about age 2, gender identification and gender-specific behaviors develop.
 - Perceptions about reinforcers (rewards) determine behavior.

Bandura: Cognitive Behaviorism

- **Self-efficacy:** Belief in personal competence
 - Sense that through own efforts, one can be successful at a given task
 - A strong sense of self-efficacy is an important factor in healthy child development.

LEARN THE TERMS

Take a few minutes to check your understanding of these key terms:

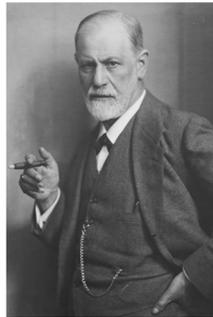
- Theory
- Nature
- Nurture
- Traditional behaviorism
- Operant conditioning
- Reinforcement
- Cognitive behaviorism (social learning theory)
- Modeling
- Self-efficacy

Psychoanalytic Theory: Focus on Early Childhood and Unconscious Motivations

- **Psychoanalytic theory: Sigmund Freud**
 - Analysis of psyche or inner life
 - Deterministic: “Mothering” during first five years determines adult personality and mental health
- Hypothetical structures
 - Id
 - Ego
 - Superego

Freud: Psychoanalytic Theory

- Age-linked stages of sexuality
- Focus on erogenous zones
 - Oral
 - Anal
 - Phallic
 - Latency
- Predecessor to attachment theory perspective



MAISANT Ludovic/O Hemis/Alamy

Attachment Theory: Focus on Nurture, Nature, and Love

- **Attachment theory: John Bowlby**
 - Shared Freud’s psychoanalytic view:
 - Early life experiences with caregivers shape personality.
 - Determines whether people become well-adjusted or emotionally impaired adults
 - Main focus: “attachment response”
 - Bowlby was an early *evolutionary* psychologist.
 - Attachment response genetically programmed into our species to promote survival.
 - Early attachments affect development.

Evolutionary Psychology: Theorizing About the “Nature” of Human Similarities

Evolutionary psychologists: Focus on biological predispositions

- Inborn, species-specific behaviors influence human development.
- Related to genetic roots of human behaviors
- Presents example of survival of the fittest

Evolutionary psychology

- Focuses on need to pay close attention to basic human needs
- Lacks the practical, action-oriented approach of behaviorism

Behavioral Genetics: Scientifically Exploring the “Nature” of Human Differences

- Research strategies devoted to scientifically determining the role that hereditary forces play in individual differences in behavior
 - Twin studies (identical and fraternal)
 - Adoption studies
 - Twin/adoption studies

Heritability

Summarizes extent to which a given behavior is shaped by genetics
Ranges from 1 (totally genetic) to 0 (no genetic contribution)

Dizygotic

LEARN THE TERMS

Take a few minutes to check your understanding of these key terms:

- Attachment theory
- Evolutionary psychology
- Behavioral genetics
- Twin study
- Adoption study
- Twin/adoption study

Nature and Nurture Combine: Where We Are Today

- **Nature interacts with nurture when studying human development.**
- Evocative forces
 - Inborn talents and temperamental tendencies naturally evoke certain responses from others.
 - Bidirectional forces in relationships
- Active forces
 - We actively select our environments based on our genetic tendencies.
- Person environment fit



Image: Kenneth/Thomas/Getty Images

Which forces do you see at work here?

Person Environment Fit

- Extent to which the environment is tailored to biological tendencies and talents
 - Basic goal of developmental science is to foster the correct person environment fit.
 - The most crucial impact of the