

## Course Introduction

Why is knowledge of human development important?

EX: the case of "Jane"

### DEFINING TERMS

For most people, in ordinary sidewalk conversation, "growth & development" are interchangeable terms, but scholars do recognize technical differences between the terms:

- (1) Development: systematic changes in the individual from conception to death
  - development is multi-dimensional, many types of development
  - no type of development occur in a vacuum, totally independent of other types
- (2) Growth: the physical changes that occur in an individual
- (3) Aging: the deterioration that begins at birth and concludes in death
- (4) Maturation: the biological unfolding of the genetic plan; NATURE
- (5) Learning: the experiences that bring changes into our lives; NURTURE

Developmentalists have disagreed for year as to which influence is most powerful; the reality is it is not nature or nurture, but nature and nurture

### HISTORICAL VIEWS OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

As a field of academic study, the lifespan approach is fairly young. Society has not always looked at the stages of the lifespan as we do today

### (1) Childhood

- before 1600, many believe, that children were generally looked upon as little adults (p.6), though some believe that view was exaggerated
- some observers believe that society is moving back to that view of children as "little adults" EX: Elkind - "The Hurried Child"

### (2) Adolescence

- the modern concept of adolescence , as a distinct transitional period of the lifespan between childhood and adulthood only evolved in the late 19th & early 20th centuries
- today, western societies have the longest period of adolescence among world people groups, while some societies don't have much of a recognition of adolescence; the lines are not clearly drawn

EX: When do we become adolescent? Adult? (emerging adults, p.7)

### (3) Adulthood

- adulthood is very different from adulthood of past eras (p.7)

EX: longer lifespan, fewer children, different work habits

## THE SCIENCE OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

How do we study human development? (through scientific research)

How is research carried out?

### (1) The scientific method (p.12)

- the "method" is a systematic process for developing ideas and testing those ideas

(a) begins with hypotheses, generated from theories; "educated guess"

(b) sample selection is next step; what is the difference between a sample and a population? (DISCUSS)

(c) data collection- HOW? (pp.12-13)

(2) Experimental vs. correlational research (pp.14-15)

- what is the diff? (discuss)

(3) Research Designs

- cross-sectional: measures many groups all at one time; good for studying diffs between groups, doesn't answer the "HOW?" question

- longitudinal: measures one group many times, over time

- sequential: combines the first two; has some advantages of both and some disadvantages