

Lifespan Development, Learning, and Memory

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### Abstract

Lifespan development is the process of growth from the time a person is born to the time of death. The process is holistic, comprising of physical, cognitive, and psychosocial growth. Physical growth involves the development of the body, motor skills, and senses. Secondly, cognitive growth includes of the use of speech and thinking capacity. Finally, psychosocial development is the formation of personality, relationships wiith other people, and emotions. Learning and echoic memory also form a crucial part of a person's life. Learning involves acquiring information throughout life. There are several types of the memory which include semantic and episodic memory that describe the various ways a person stores and retrieves information throughout life. This essay also covers different methods and strategies for sharing knowledge through teaching. The plans include the use of PowerPoint presentations, and procedures such as tests, systematic instruction, spreading the attention of students into different topics to aid the retention of information, and strategies of motivating students.

### Lifespan Development, Learning, and Memory

Lifespan development comprises of how people change and grow till the moment of death. Growth is a lifelong process that includes physical, cognitive development, and psychosocial parts of life. Learning involves acquiring new information, and memory is the ability to receive, store, and retrieve data at will from the brain. Lifespan development, learning, and memory determine the quality of life.

#### **Physical Development**

It occurs across different stages of life and involves growth in the body, senses, and motor skills. Physical development in children involves the development of gross and fine motor skills. Gross motor skills include the ability to use large muscles of the body in controlling body movement. Fine motor skills are the ability to use smaller muscles in the arms, fingers, and toes ("Human Lifespan development," 2016). Fine motor skills allow children to write, touch things, dress, and play with toys. Between 0-2 years, children grow up rapidly, and at about one year, they begin walking ("Human Lifespan development," 2016). From 3-8 years, growth is more steady and involves the development of strength and coordination. During adolescence stage, a person experiences sudden growth spurts and puberty. Upon reaching adulthood and up to 45 years, a person attains the peak of their physical development. After this period, the aging process starts with the loss of strength. Women reach menopause at this stage. From the age of 65 years, aging results in decreasing mobility and minimal loss of height.

#### **Cognitive Development**

Cognitive development involves developing the ability to learn, speak, think, reason, and store information in the brain. Infants and young children demonstrate rapid intellectual growth.

From adolescence to the adult phase, a person begins to formulate logical thought and problem-solving skills. The next period of mid-adulthood brings the ability to make sound judgments from life experiences (Silverthorn, 1999). In late adulthood, brain changes cause short-term memory loss and slower thinking processes as well as reaction. According to Silverthorn (1999), Jean Piaget's cognitive theory explains how children grow intellectually. He explained that children observe things, experiment, validate information, add new information, and verify older information.

### **Psychosocial Development**

Psychosocial development involves the development of personality, social relationships, and emotions. It occurs as a person interacts with their social environment. Erik Erikson explained psychosocial growth using his theory. His approach has eight stages that build upon each other (Morala, 2017). A person experiences conflict in each step that forms the basis of success or failure in the next stage. The first stage of infancy involves developing trust. A child trusts caregivers who show care, consistency, and affection, or mistrusts if there is no care. The second stage of early childhood involves developing autonomy by having control over physical skills and the ability to handle themselves, i.e. in the toilet. A failure to do that leads to shame and doubt (Morala, 2017). The third stage of 3-5 years involves developing a sense of initiative. Children desire to explore their environment and exert their influence. Failing at this stage brings guilt. The next phase is school-age, which includes developing a sense of community by being able to meet social, academic demands, and establish personal identity. The inability to succeed leads to low-esteem and a feeling of weakness. Next, the person goes through the ages of 19-40 that represent young adulthood (Morala, 2017). The goal at this stage is to develop intimacy in

relationships. Failing leads to isolation. From 40-65 years, the desire is to create intergenerational succession, to form things that outlast the person. Failure results in feelings of stagnation and failure in life. Past 65 years, a person reflects on the value of their life. Success results in feelings of being wise, and success causes bitterness and despair.

### **Learning**

Learning is the process of acquiring knowledge, modifying existing facts, skills, and values. It occurs through life from infancy up to death. The learning process starts from the period of infancy as the mental capacity of a child increases. The effectiveness of the process depends on the ability of a person to understand, process, and store information in the brain. Memory capacity is crucial in learning.

### **Memory**

Memory is the function of the brain that involves receiving, storing, and retrieving information. Successful retrieval of information depends on how well a person attends to the information at the first encounter (Fingerman, Berg, Smith, & Antonucci, 2011). There are two distinct types of memory, semantic and episodic. Semantic memory is knowledge about the world and a person's environment. Semantic memory develops starting from infancy as the child has an access to information. The quality and quantity of semantic memory rely on the environment, culture, and social status of the family. Semantic memory remains up to adulthood and only begins to decline in an old age. Episodic memory arises from specific instances in a person's life. Its development starts early in infant life and grows systematically until adolescence. Episodic memory begins to decline during midlife until death.

Memory involves encoding, which is perceiving and comprehending new information. Retrieval can require an active effort to highlight a past action or a trigger by another factor in the environment. Other concepts of memory include implicit memory, which is remembering something without the initial desire to recall. Explicit memory involves an active willingness to recall something. Another idea is working memory, which explains the ability to process and maintain information in a state of ready accessibility.

### **Teaching Students**

Teaching students on the topics of lifespan development, learning, and memory would involve sharing information with students on the topic using PowerPoint presentations. The first step in preparation is to develop the learning objectives that define what the students should learn by the end of the lecture. The goals would include an understanding of lifespan development and the physical, cognitive, and psychosocial areas; definition of learning, knowledge of memory and its two types. The PowerPoint slides would have the meaning of lifespan development, explanation on physical, cognitive, and psychosocial development also theories on the growth, the definition of learning, and finally, a detailed description of memory. The final section of the lecture is a short session of questions and answers to address any areas of concern from the students.

### **Learning Myths vs. Learning Facts**

The article explains various myths that have existed concerning learning. The myths include learners showing a preference of personal styles of learning, as they perform differently based on the learning style, and they pick up better if the teacher uses their specific method of learning (Harvard, 2017). However, those claims lack scientific proof. Harvard (2017), suggests

the use of learning strategies instead of following the myths. Procedures such as testing the students with quizzes to aid remembrance, distributing learning material overtime to encourage brain retention, and bring the attention of students to different topics are very important strategies for the learning process (Harvard, 2017). The methods to be utilized in the lecture include using questions during the lecture to recap information and the use of small breaks during the lecture to allow the students to capture the data. The strategies would help the students to remember much of the content from the lecture. Learning strategies are effective in promoting learning.

### **Motivating Students**

Students require to be motivated to keep the pace of studying daily. The release of enormous quantities of information can discourage students and further reduce their chances of success; while a part of the motivation has to be internal in the students. A teacher can practice extrinsic motivation. Extrinsic motivation includes giving frequent and positive feedback to students to support their belief in success. Also, promoting success by providing objectively evaluated tests, encouraging students to find personal meaning in learning materials, cultivating an open and conducive learning environment, and appreciating students contributions (Davis, 2009). The motivation strategies help to encourage students morale and overall effort in learning.

### **Conclusion**

Lifespan development, learning, and memory influence the quality of life. The way a person grows and develops from infancy forms the basis of their progress in adulthood and old age. Physical, cognitive, and psychosocial development occurs cumulatively from stage to stage

in life. Positive development gives the ability to learn new knowledge, skills, and values that enable a person to function effectively. Proper development in life also assures good memory, which is crucial to active learning through acquiring, storing, and retrieving knowledge. Parents and the society should offer the environment and support necessary to foster the proper lifespan development, education, and memory growth of individuals. The success of an individual plays a vital role in promoting societal wellbeing.

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