

What would you like to learn about human development? Which topics and questions interest you the most?

I would like to learn more about how linguistic development continues into adulthood. I have studied early language learning in other courses, but I have not learned a lot about how this development progresses past childhood. I am very interested in development because I am hoping to pursue a career in speech pathology. In this field, the landmarks relating to language learning and acquisition are vital. I also wonder about how language might degrade in old age. Additionally, how do the different treatments of children in different cultures influence language?

What is one issue you care about that you think people do not really understand? What do you think people are not understanding about this topic? Why do you think they do not understand?

One issue I am passionate about is bilingual education. Plenty of states have “English-only” laws that prevent children from becoming bilingual, or at least impede their ability to learn a second language. Many people misunderstand bilingualism in children and worry that they will become “confused” between multiple languages. However, bilingual children have been shown to have better meta-linguistic abilities, which aids them in several areas of education. Many of these issues, in my opinion, are tied to racial biases in our country.

Do you think you would be a good person to do research on this topic? Please explain. What would make you a good fit for this area of study, or not?

As someone who hopes to become a speech therapist, I think in the future that I could be a good person to do research on this topic. If I were to come into contact with bilingual children, which I am sure I would in my field, I would be able to observe how these children perform versus the monolingual children. Of course, my position might not provide me with the widest range of children to research, because the children I would be coming into contact with would likely already have speech problems. On an informal level, I could observe something about bilingual children versus monolingual children.

Addition 3/9

What is one of the topics in our course that has interested you the most so far? How does this topic connect to your learning goals from the beginning of the semester?

So far, I have been most surprised to find out what is innate and what is learned in infants. I did not know how much of temperament and personality could just be due to hereditary or very early life experiences. We discussed the theories of language acquisition, which is a blend of some innate ability, eg. the ability to discriminate between different phonemes in languages other than the one the child is exposed to. Additionally, there is some element of learning, and perhaps operant conditioning. This combines the two elements of learning that we have been discussing so far. Some traits are inborn, or are more likely due to hereditary, while others are learned.

Addition 4/20

What is one of the topics in chapters 7-12 that has interested you the most? How does this topic connect to your learning goals from the beginning of the semester?

One thing that surprised me about this unit was the information on cognitive development. This gave me a lot of insight into what children can and cannot do. I was not aware of the limitations of certain processes in cognitive development and the fact that there are certain concepts that children cannot grasp until they are further along in their development. For example, I was not aware that children in early childhood are unable to decenter their perspective, meaning that they have a hard time considering how things look from others' perspectives and therefore may not understand how their actions affect others. As I am hoping to go into speech pathology, this is a good thing to keep in mind. We should not place expectations on children to understand things that their cognitive abilities do not yet allow them to do. Having patience and being warm, reassuring, and supportive is most important.