Child Development
An Observation Manual

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The exercises included in this manual have been field
tested for four years by the students taking "Introduction to
Child Development" at both The University of North Carolina at
Greensboro, and Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State Univer-
sity. After each semester evaluations were made with consequent
revisions as necessary. The students found the observations to
be extremely helpful in understanding the material. We hope
your students will have a similar experience. We would like to
share with you some ideas and suggestions for use of this work-
book.

1. The workbook is designed for use as a supplement to a pri-
    mary textbook in Child Development, Child Psychology or
    Child Growth and Development. It is not a textbook.

2. The workbook was developed in programs where laboratory
    schools and demonstration nurseries were available, but
    the exercises have been designed so that they can also be
    used in programs where no such laboratory facilities exist.

3. There are far more exercises than any instructor can assign
    in one semester. The number and variety have been included
    so that each instructor will have available exercises that
    will enrich the areas of his or her particular focus. We
    believe these exercises would be useful to instructors
    teaching Child Psychology, for instance, yet the field of
    Child Psychology gives considerably less stress to physical
    growth and development than the field of Child Development.
    The instructor could readily omit the exercises dealing
    with that domain and still find other exercises useful.

    Often there is disagreement between authorities as to
    which theoretical constructs best explain human develop-
    ment. The instructor whose bias is toward social learning
    as a better explanation than the Piagetian view of develop-
    ment might wish to use only one or two of the exercises on
    Cognition to familiarize the student with Piagetian think-
    ing and concentrate more specifically on the exercises
    designed to demonstrate aspects of social learning and
    operant conditioning.

    Number and variety have been provided so that the
    instructor can pick and choose exercises that best fit his
    or her teaching style, available facilities, theoretical
    biases, and the primary textbook being used.

4. Since classes at both the University of North Carolina at
    Greensboro and the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State
    University are large, we found it helpful to assign differ-
    ent exercises under a particular domain to different sub-
    groups. For example: when dealing with the section on
    socialization of preschoolers, we divided the classes into
    six groups. One group did the observation exercise
    entitled "Child Rearing Practices". Another group worked

on the exercise "Birth Order", and so on. Each group met
together to summarize their experiences. A spokesman from
each group presented the pertinent findings to the entire
class. Then discussion ensued tying the information given
in the primary text to the experiences the students had
while doing the observation exercises. Any of the other
general topics could be used in the same way.

5. The summary questions at the end of each unit are included
   because we found them very useful as assessment inventor-
   ies. We gave these questions to our students at the
   beginning of each unit. They graded their own or each
   other's as we reviewed the answers in class. Each student
   became aware of his or her deficits in understanding the
   material in the particular unit and could use this informa-
   as a basis of emphasis on specific areas. When the unit
   was completed we invited our students to use the same test
   again as a preparation for the exam on the unit covered.
   These questions were never meant to rival the instructor's
   own evaluation methods or standardized tests that might be
   used, but instead, just as the exercises themselves were
   designed, to provide one more learning tool for the stu-
   dent.

6. We elected to omit observation exercises on adolescence.
   Many textbooks stop short of this age period, while others
   are written that deal with adolescence as a separate
   course. Subjects are less readily available in this age
   group, and structured situations in which phenomena of
   cognition or socialization can be witnessed are nearly
   impossible to provide.

7. We also elected to omit learning objectives for each unit.
   We believe very strongly that this is the province of each
   individual instructor and should not be decided by us.

It is the hope of the authors that you will find these
observation experiences enriching and helpful as you guide your
students toward an understanding of Child Development, Child
Psychology and/or Childhood Growth and Development.

PREFACE

The study of child development is enhanced when it includes
observation of children as they participate in educational and
naturalistic settings. Students also learn through experiences
such as conducting interviews or discussing issues surrounding
development. The purpose of this laboratory manual is to pro-
vide the student of child development with a variety of observa-
tional and field experiences in order to permit him or her to
become familiar with the multifaceted developmental characteris-
tics of children. The exercises are designed to help students
of child development gain a better perspective on the way child-
ren think, develop socially, learn sex roles, develop cogni-
tively, learn language, develop a system of morals and values,

x

and interact with their families.

This workbook is divided into four units, each representing a specified age period in a child's early life. These include Infancy, Toddlerhood, Preschool or Early Childhood, and Middle Childhood. Infancy is used to mean that period from birth to two years. Toddlerhood is somewhat overlapping, but generally considered in this manual to include the period between eighteen months and three years of age. The Preschool or Early Childhood period is defined as occurring between ages three to six years, and Middle Childhood is used in this work to describe the period from six to twelve years of age. The observational and field experiences included within each age period cover the following areas of development: physical growth; motor skills; age-related states; behaviors and behavior problems; learning and readiness; developmental tasks; language development; personality and psychosocial development; moral development; and the socialization of the child. Under the broad heading of socialization are included: development of attachment; child rearing practices; play; sex-role expectations; birth order; peer influences and interactions; the influence of the media; friendship dyads; and status in the group.

Each topic is indexed to provide easy reference to both age and developmental domain. The age period is labeled on each exercise in the upper right-hand corner. The developmental domain being observed is indicated along the right-hand margin of each exercise. It is therefore possible to study child development in terms of all the areas that are significant during a particular age period such as Toddlerhood, or to trace the development of some aspect of growth such as cognition from infancy to the beginning of adolescence.

At the beginning of each unit, a summary is given of the essential theoretical frameworks upon which the exercises are based. The exercises contain operational definitions where needed to provide the student with sufficient background to understand the concept being demonstrated. Specific and easy-to-follow directions, designed to enable the student to focus attention on the concept under study, are also included. At the end of each unit are objective questions based on observational and other exercises, and general information included in most introductory Child Development, Child Psychology, and Childhood Growth and Development texts.

An appendix is also included. It contains additional exercises to enrich the child development student's knowledge of historical figures in Child Development, Research Methodology, Biological Bases of Development, Prenatal Development, and Ethical Issues.

This workbook is meant to be used adjunctively with any of the above textbooks. It is particularly valuable to those who have laboratory school facilities readily available, but it can also be used in programs where they are not, substituting a variety of community resources for the lab schools.

INTRODUCTION

Throughout the United States, students of child development and child psychology study young children by observing them as they participate in preschool classes or day care programs. The purpose of this workbook is to provide guidelines for these observations. The exercises are designed to structure the observations in such a way that the student may gain insight into specific developmental domains as they occur at specific ages.

One traditional observation method frequently used in introductory courses is the keeping of anecdotal records and writing of case studies about one or more children. While there are many advantages to this open-ended method, it may be ineffective in providing the student with an awareness of the 'ongoing' nature of development. Other methods of observation commonly used include diary descriptions and specimen descriptions. Specimen descriptions involve recording all pertinent information about an ongoing behavior, including the situation in which the behavior occurred. It is a detailed narration of sequential events.

Effective observation of this type requires objectivity which is both a basic and difficult skill to acquire. Since human behavior is very complex, observers cannot accurately assess any particular act in terms of underlying motivation. Therefore, it is better to simply state what the child did, describe the setting, and not guess at the 'why' of his behavior. To make observations as valid as possible, it is necessary to avoid interpretive phrasing. Carol Quanty and Anthony Davis give some good examples of this in their book Observing Children.

> "Bobby threw himself on the floor in a rage," makes an unwarranted assumption about Bobby's feelings and is a statement that cannot be scientifically verified. "Bobby threw himself on the floor screaming and kicking his feet." is better because it describes overt behavior and could be verified by another observer.[1]

Look at the difference between subjective statements and objective statements given below:

Subjective Statements	Objective Statements
Joan was glad to see her mother.	Joan jumped up and down and laughed when her mother came in.

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[1]Carol Quanty and Anthony Davis, Observing Children: A Child Development Manual, Port Washington, New York: Alfred Publishing Co., Inc., 1974) p. 1.

Susan was tired this morning.	Susan yawns and sits at the table without touching the crayons. She rubs her eyes and puts her head down on the table.
Peter didn't want to go.	Peter held on the door knob and whined, "No, I'm not going," when the teacher tried to pick him up.[2]

Careful observation of what is actually happening can also prevent making interpretations that label a child as aggressive, lazy, or uncooperative. For example, by saying something like "John is such an aggressive child," some other important considerations may be overlooked. John may be aggressive today, but may usually be a friendly child. What provoked the aggression has not been noted.[3]

In observing, the student must learn to separate interpretations from facts; to be specific in recording the behaviors and events; and if necessary, break them down into small units. He or she must adjust the style of recording to a level of detail that provides adequate information without becoming excessive.

A mention of the situation in which the behavior occurs, who else was involved, and some description of the way the behavior was performed should also be included.

Anecdotal records, diary descriptions, and specimen descriptions yield much valuable insight into children's growth and behavior and are useful as tools for interpretation. They do not readily yield data that may be quantified or analyzed statistically.

Observational techniques and methods that do yield quantitative data and lend themselves to statistical analysis are: time sampling and event sampling; field unit analysis; and trait rating. When time sampling is used, discreet behavioral events are recorded as they occur within a specific time frame. The observer, for example, may record the play activity of the child during a 60-second interval every 10 minutes for an hour. At the end of the hour, the observer would have collected six samples of play behavior. Event sampling involves noting specific events or behaviors each time they occur during the observation period. The observer may, for instance, record the number of times the child seeks adult assistance during a specified free play period. Field unit analysis is used to analyze behavioral units or situations in a naturalistic setting, and trait rating

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[2]Ibid.

[3]Ibid.

is done by rating the subject or subjects on a continuum follow-
ing a period of observation. A sample of a trait rating task is
included as an observation exercise in the Appendix, and can be
used in connection with teaching Research Methodology.

Even when discreet behaviors or events are observed, the
data cannot be considered reliable unless there is evidence of
observer agreement. Everyone has heard tales of witnesses to
the same event differing in the reporting of the facts of the
situation. Automobile accidents come to mind.

An exercise is included in the Appendix under Research
Methodology that is designed to give practice in the type of
objective observation required to collect reliable data and
to test observer agreement.

Some of the exercises are interviews rather than observa-
tions. Data obtained from these interviews are then evaluated
to look for pertinent developmental situations.

There are also a few exercises that students may do to
enhance understanding of the child without using children,
parents, or teachers as subjects. These call upon the student
to experience situations as small children would and to recall
their own childhood experiences.

Some exercises are given that require the student to
analyze the nature of textbooks and children's stories to deter-
mine the philosophies behind them--do they reflect principles of
Child Development currently stressed?

The exercises given in the Appendix under Issues are
designed to raise provocative questions that students may want
to explore about children and their parents in this society.

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I

Infancy

The unit on Infancy is designed to provide the student with
opportunities to survey current knowledge about childbirth
methods, learn about specific delivery experiences, and observe
and record some basic infant behaviors.

The bulk of the exercises call for direct observation of
infants in naturalistic settings. Only one exercise provides
for direct student-infant interaction. Three exercises are
interviews and one is designed to use a team of three students
in the same setting at the same time.

The exercises titled "Delivery Experience Interview",
"Growth and Development", and "Developing Expectancies About the
World" would also lend themselves to presentation in class if
available subjects for these exercises were limited. If closed
circuit TV is available, tapes could be made of specific situa-
tions described in the observation exercise and made available
to students at other than class time.

The observational methods used in this section include
ecological observation, time-sampling, event sampling, and trait
rating. The self-report method used is the interview. (For
more information about these research methods see page 189
in the Appendix.)

Human development encompasses three basic domains. These
are: (1) physical development; (2) cognitive development; and,
(3) psychosocial development. The exercises presented here
attempt to explore infancy in all three of these areas.

At birth, most infants are equipped with all the systems
necessary for survival. As the infant progresses through child-
hood, adolescence, and into adulthood, bodily systems and parts
must change in size, proportion, and maturity to allow the
organism to adapt to his or her changing needs and to the
environment. The period of most rapid growth is during the
first two years of life.

For human offspring, growth and development progresses in an orderly, positive manner. The rate of growth may vary somewhat among individuals, but the pattern is the same. Growth always proceeds from head to tail (cephalocaudal) and from the central axis of the body outward (proximodistal). The development of control proceeds from simple global responses to more clearly defined and complex responses.

Although there exists wide variation in what is considered to be normal growth and development, behavioral scientists, through studies of thousands of children, have produced growth norms. Growth norms are growth ranges within which most children of a given age fall.

Perhaps the most significant accomplishments of the infancy period are the development of the concepts of object permanence, of the ability to imitate, and of expectancy. Piaget calls these accomplishments "sensorimotor intelligence" because babies think through actions. They use both senses and motor abilities to understand their world better. In the process they become able to adapt their reflexes, respond to experiences, respond to people, and solve simple problems by the end of the first year and a half of life. This area of development is called cognitive development. Both maturation and learning are necessary for cognitive development to occur. Learning involves not only conditioned responses, but also social learning.

Related to the development of cognition is the beginning of language. During infancy, babies communicate with noises and with gestures, and practice babbling. They understand more than they can express. By the end of the infancy period they have a few words in their vocabularies and may begin to use speech as a tool. This demonstrates the arrival of the infant at the level of mental representation. Piaget describes the six substages of Infancy or of the Sensorimotor period and they are discussed in detail in your textbook and defined in one of the exercises presented in this unit.

In order to thrive physically and mentally, the infant must have the affection, support, acceptance and comfort of a loving, sensitive, concerned caregiver. This allows him or her to develop a sense of basic trust. Erik Erikson describes the first stage of psychosocial development as the period of Trust vs. Mistrust. This stage is defined in an operational definition in one of the exercises in this unit.

Psychosocial development begins with attachment between mother and child and interaction between parents and child. It includes emotional development. The development of emotions follows an orderly pattern. Emotional development is affected by maturation, culture, and family, and it is possible that cognitive development affects emotional development. It is also possible that emotional development affects cognitive development.

Freud called the first year of life the oral stage because infants derive pleasure from their mouths. Researchers in child development stress the importance of different things. John Bowlby and Renee Spitz suggest that lack of mothering can result in serious cognitive deficits and emotional stress. Dennis believes adequate stimulation is even more important than mothering. Other important things to bear in mind are these: there are individual differences in children; the father's role in the child's development is important; and gender may influence emotional development.

Students of child development need to be aware of the normal ranges of growth and development so that they will have realistic expectations for the child, recognize deviations, and seek remedial treatment for the child if indicated. As you observe infant behavior, see if you can discern the early roots of later growth and development.

INFANCY
    Childbirth
        Childbirth Knowledge Survey
        Delivery Experience Interview
    Physical Growth and Development
        Physical Characteristics of the Newborn
        Growth and Development
    Development of Motor Skills
        Comparison of Motor Skills by Age
    Age Related States, Behaviors, and Behavioral Problems
        Behavior of the Neonate
        Infant States
        Individual Differences in Infants
    Perception
        Auditory Experiences
        Visual Experiences
    Cognition
        Infant Reflexes
        Developing Schemes for Interacting with Objects
        Developing Expectancies About the World
        Vocal and Gestural Imitation
        Operant Conditioning
    Developmental Tasks
        Comparison of 6 month and 18 month old
    Emotional Development
        Smiling Response
        Observing Emotions
    Personality and Psychosocial Development
        Trust vs Mistrust
    Socialization of the Child
        Attachment Behavior
        Parent-Child Interaction
        Infant Social Interaction
        The Peer Group as a Socialization Agency
        "How-To" "Baby Books"