

# ADOLESCENCE

A DEVELOPMENTAL  
PERSPECTIVE

RHODA CUMMINGS



# **A D O L E S C E N C E**

**A Developmental Perspective**

**RHODA CUMMINGS**

**University of Nevada**

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 To Dan, Carter, and Courtney

B840.2/CP71



# TO THE INSTRUCTOR.....

The title of this text, *Adolescence: A Developmental Perspective*, reflects my own bias as an author, which is to emphasize the importance of structuring the adolescent's home, school, and social environments to accommodate the developmental tasks of adolescence. Throughout this textbook, I have emphasized the effects of adolescents' physical, cognitive, and psychosocial characteristics upon themselves, upon others, and upon the environments through which they move. I have attempted also to describe how adolescents' home, school, and social environments interact to positively and/or negatively influence their development. I believe that adolescents perceive the world differently from adults, and that younger adolescents perceive the world differently from either children or older adolescents. I believe also that by understanding these developmental differences, parents, teachers, psychologists, social workers, juvenile justice professionals, and all other individuals who are personally or professionally involved with adolescents can more appropriately and effectively interact with and meet the needs of young people.

## **Organization of the Text**

The text consists of 14 chapters that are divided into five parts:

- The Study of Adolescence
- Adolescent Intelligence
- Physiological Change and Sexuality
- Personal Growth and Development
- Social Contexts of Adolescence

Part One describes the cultural, historical, and theoretical foundations of the study of adolescence; Parts Two and Three include information about adolescents' intellectual and physical development; and Parts Four and Five are concerned with adolescents' psychosocial development.

Included within each chapter are an introduction, a chapter preview, a chapter summary, questions for discussion, and suggestions for further reading. My goal in each chapter is to base the content on a theoretical foundation; thus, each chapter begins with a discussion of theoretical issues related to the content of the chapter, elaborated through descriptions of relevant studies, applied practices, anecdotes, and illustrations and examples.

## **Major Themes**

Although the emphasis of the text is upon the interaction between adolescents and their environmental contexts, several other important, more specific themes recur throughout the text. First of all, each chapter consistently distinguishes early from late adolescence, reflecting much of the thrust of recent research. As reinforcement for this crucial theme, a summary table at the end of

each chapter provides an overview of early-versus-late distinctions that appear within that chapter, and a summary chart describing the early-versus-late distinctions throughout the book appears in the Epilogue.

Other recurring themes that occur throughout the text include:

- The impact of early experiences on adolescent behavior
- The influence of cognitive development on adolescent behavior
- The effect of gender on adolescent behavior
- Adolescents in a diverse society
- Adolescents across cultures

At the beginning of each chapter, the recurring themes that appear within that chapter are listed, with their corresponding symbols. Those symbols also appear throughout the chapter's margins to cue students as to when these themes are addressed within the text.

### **Perspectives on Adolescence Boxes**

A unique feature of this text is the Perspectives on Adolescence Box in each chapter that features a description of or an interview with an individual whose work has been cited or who is actively involved with issues faced by adolescents. Chapter 2, for example, highlights Robbie Case and describes his integrative theory of cognitive development; Chapter 7 includes an interview with Sandra Bem, who discusses her recently published book, *The Lenses of Gender*, and her views on rearing children to be gender nonconformists; and Chapter 12 highlights Dr. Alice Schlegel, co-author of *Adolescence: An Anthropological Inquiry*. These Perspectives on Adolescence Boxes add a lively and interesting dimension to the contexts of each chapter.

### **Pedagogical Features**

A number of pedagogical features are designed to assist students' enjoyment and comprehension of text material. At the *beginning* of each chapter are included:

- Specific learning objectives
- A statement of recurring themes that appear throughout the chapter, highlighted by marginal symbols
- An introductory vignette that characterizes adolescent behaviors
- A chapter preview

*Within* each chapter are included:

- Boldfaced vocabulary terms, keyed to the Glossary at the end of the textbook
- Summary tables, as well as other tables, figures, and photographs



Finally, at the *end* of each chapter are included:

- A chapter summary
- Thought-provoking questions for discussion
- Suggestions for further reading

### **Ancillary Materials**

The text includes an Instructor's Manual, and a Testbank. The Instructor's Manual provides suggestions for class discussions and activities, term projects, group work, and individual student research projects. It also includes transparency masters for each chapter. The Testbank, which I have developed and written myself includes a variety of multiple choice, true/false, short answer, and essay questions for each chapter. Computerized editions of the Testbank, in IBM and Macintosh versions, are also available.

## **T O T H E S T U D E N T . . . . .**

*Adolescence: A Developmental Perspective* includes a number of features to guide you in your reading of the text, to help you comprehend text material, and to make the content of each chapter come alive. The beginning of each chapter lists several learning objectives, which highlight the main issues covered in the chapter. Also, several recurring themes appear throughout the text. These include:

- the impact of early experiences on adolescent behavior
- the influence of cognitive development on adolescent development
- the effect of gender on adolescent behavior
- adolescents in a diverse society
- adolescents across cultures

These recurring themes that will be included in chapter are listed at the beginning of each chapter and are highlighted by symbols in the margins when they appear in text.

As you begin reading the chapter, you will be introduced to its content by a short vignette or illustration of adolescent feelings and experiences. For example, one chapter begins with an excerpt from a diary of an adolescent girl; another with an interview in which teens of different ages describe issues related to sexuality. These brief adolescent encounters are designed to increase your interest in the chapter's content and to make the content relevant to real issues in

the lives of adolescents. Following this introductory material, the chapter preview summarizes the chapter's content and alerts you to important information that is included in the chapter.

As you read the chapter, you will notice numerous tables, charts, figures, photographs, boxed inserts, and other illustrations and examples of chapter contents. Pay close attention to these because they are meant to increase your comprehension of the textual material and to add to your understanding of difficult concepts. Also included in each chapter are Perspectives on Adolescence Boxes, which include descriptions of or interviews with researchers whose work is discussed in the chapter, or with other individuals who are interested in adolescents. For example, the Perspectives on Adolescence Box for Chapter 11 includes an interview with Verna Thierry, a black, single mother of two adolescents, who describes her joy and frustrations as she works to keep her children in school, out of trouble, and feeling good about themselves. These discussions and interviews are lively, up-to-date, and designed to make the text's theories and research come alive. Also, throughout the chapter, you will find highlighted terms that are included with their definitions in the Glossary at the end of the textbook. Understanding these terms will add to your understanding of concepts and issues that have relevance for adolescent development.

When you come to the end of each chapter, read the Chapter Summary to remind you of the most important concepts and ideas. Next, read the questions for discussion and either think about or write out your responses. Doing so will help you relate the chapter content either to your personal experience or to societal issues that have an impact on today's adolescents. If you are particularly interested in information included in the chapter, read the list of suggested readings. These books have been selected because of their quality, their interesting content, and their relevance to the chapter's content.



# A C K N O W L E D G M E N T S . . . . .

This textbook is the product of over two years of hard work and the exceptional understanding and patience of a number of people. I want to thank Tina Oldham, acquisitions editor, for being persistent with me in the beginning and for having faith in my ability to complete this project. Thanks also to my project editors, Kelly Riche and John Haakenson, for their excellent supervision over the quality and design of the book. I also want to thank the Harcourt team of Florence Fujimoto, Garry Harman, Debra Jenkin, and Tammi Price. I especially want to thank my developmental editor, Karl Yambert, for his kindness, his patience, his amazing ability to be critical without harming my fragile ego, his persistence, his warmth, and his civility. Thank you, Karl. I appreciate and respect you very much.

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Finally, thanks to my good friend, Dan Gardella, and to my children, Carter and Courtney, for their patience with me and for their ability to sustain themselves without me for the past two years.



# SUMMARY CHART

## EARLY AND LATE ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENT

	CHAPTER ONE Cultural and Historical Contexts of Adolescence	CHAPTER TWO Theories and Research Methodology	CHAPTER THREE Information Processing and Intelligence	CHAPTER FOUR Cognitive Development: Piaget and Case	CHAPTER FIVE Physiological Development and Puberty	CHAPTER SIX Sexuality	CHAPTER SEVEN Identity, Self-Concept, and Gender Roles
L A T E A D O L E S C E N C E	High school graduation  Courtship/Marriage  Work	Freud: The Genital Stage  Erikson: Resolution of the identity crisis  Sullivan: Stabilization of sexual drives; individual begins to assume duties and privileges of citizenship  Piaget: Attainment and consolidation of formal operations	Parallel processing of information • Can process several pieces of information at a time  Can mentally manipulate multiple abstract ideas and symbols  Can use specific strategies for remembering information (metamemory)	Piaget: Capable of formal, abstract thought  Understands cause-and-effect relationships  Case: Vectorial operations  Can coordinate two or more factors to solve a problem	End of pubertal changes  Takes on adult physical characteristics	Those who are formal thinkers understand the physical and emotional consequences of sexual intercourse  Understand that emotional intimacy should precede sexual intercourse  Relational stage of sexual intimacy – sexual behaviors become more mature and responsible; sexual behaviors support each partner's sense of self-respect and self-esteem	Sometime between the ages of 18 and 25, most older adolescents have consolidated their various, separate identities into a meaningful whole, or sense of self, with which they can live reasonably well
E A R L Y A D O L E S C E N C E	Puberty/Rites of passage  Peer group formation	Freud: End of the latency stage  Erikson: Emerging identity crisis  Sullivan: Sexual feelings arise; lust dynamism emerges; conflicts result from opposing needs for sexual gratification and intimacy	Serial processing of information Can process only one or two things at a time  Must link abstract information to concrete experience  Use inefficient strategies for remembering information	Piaget: Transition from concrete to formal operations  Cannot predict future consequences of present actions  Case: Transition from dimensional to Vectorial thought  Can focus only on one factor at a time to solve a problem	Puberty begins  • Pubertal growth spurt • Hormonal changes • Development of sexual characteristics  Excessive concern about body image	Because of level of cognitive development, may not understand physical and emotional consequences of sexual intercourse  May engage in sexual behaviors in response to strong peer pressure  Transitional stage of sexual intimacy – egocentric interest in sexuality	Begins the task of consolidating a host of separate childhood identities (sexual, familial, racial, religious, ethnic, peer, etc.)



CHAPTER EIGHT Social and Moral Development	CHAPTER NINE Career Development	CHAPTER TEN The Exceptional Adolescent	CHAPTER ELEVEN Parents and the Family	CHAPTER TWELVE Peers and Popularity	CHAPTER THIRTEEN The Educational System	CHAPTER FOURTEEN Social Pressures
<p>Come to recognize the difference between their personal preoccupations and the interests and concerns of other people; social concerns switch from themselves to others</p> <p>Conventional and post-conventional morality</p>	<p>Career exploration/work experience</p> <p>Describe work in terms of its emotional and psychological impact on the worker</p>	<p>With support from parents, teachers, and other important adults, older adolescents with disabilities will have incorporated their disability into their personal identity and they will have gained the courage and determination to lead a full and productive life</p>	<p>Less susceptible to emotional upheaval that results from changes in family composition because of strong peer support and because family has decreased in importance as the center of psychological support</p>	<p>Because of an increased sense of autonomy and personal identity, the peer group becomes less important</p> <p>Development of intimate relationships with an opposite-sex peer</p> <p>Dating, courtship, and marriage</p>	<p>The high school curriculum should be designed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maximize students' social and emotional development</li> <li>• Decrease student apathy</li> <li>• Encourage at-risk students</li> <li>• Increase student participation in nonacademic activities</li> <li>• Emphasize effective teaching methodology</li> </ul>	<p>Older Adolescents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are less susceptible to peer influences for substance abuse</li> <li>• Can perceive how others react to their negative behaviors and can modify behaviors in a positive direction</li> </ul>
<p>Extreme egocentrism that results in heightened self-consciousness; young adolescents imagine themselves as the focus of attention of everyone who exists in their social world</p> <p>Preconventional morality</p>	<p>Emerging career awareness</p> <p>Describe work and careers in terms of specific job requirements and worker characteristics</p>	<p>For the first time, young adolescents with disabilities recognize that they are different from their peers</p> <p>Must begin the task of incorporating their disability into their personal identity</p>	<p>Particularly emotionally susceptible to changes in family composition that result from parents' divorce and remarriage</p>	<p>Peer group emerges as a buffer to help young adolescents make the transition from dependence on parents to autonomy and independence</p> <p>Membership in popular peer group extremely important</p> <p>Developing interest in opposite-sex peers</p>	<p>The middle school curriculum should be designed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ease students' transition from elementary school</li> <li>• Consider young adolescents' cognitive characteristics</li> <li>• Facilitate the social and emotional adjustment of young adolescents</li> <li>• Increase young adolescents' sense of classroom belonging</li> <li>• Support a high quality of teacher - student interaction</li> </ul>	<p>Young adolescents are highly susceptible to peer pressure for substance abuse</p> <p>Because of cognitive development level, young adolescents do not anticipate consequences of substance abuse</p> <p>Because of cognitive development level, young adolescents do not perceive the impact of antisocial behaviors on other people</p>

PART  
ONE

THE STUDY OF  
ADOLESCENCE

1. The Historical Contexts of Adolescence  
2. Theories and Research Methodology

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