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Adolescence

Laurence Steinberg
Temple University

Fifth Edition

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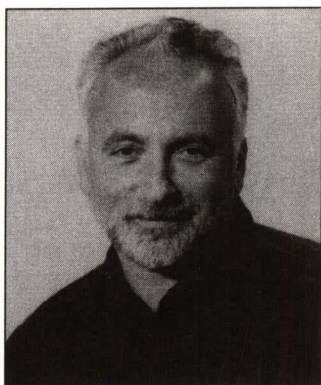
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About the Author



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Preface

In 1976, the first time I was asked to teach a semester-long course in adolescent development, my graduate advisor, John Hill—who at that time had been teaching adolescent development for ten years—took me aside. “Getting them to learn the stuff is easy,” John said, smiling. “Unfortunately, you’ll only have about three weeks to do it. It’ll take you ten weeks just to get them to unlearn all the junk they’re sure is true.”

He was right. I would present study after study documenting that turmoil isn’t the norm for most adolescents, that most teenagers have relatively good relationships with their parents, that adolescence isn’t an inherently stressful period, and so on, and my students would nod diligently. But five minutes later someone would tell the class about his or her cousin Billy, who had either run away from home, attempted to set his parents’ bedroom on fire, or refused to say a word to either his mother or his father for eight years.

As most instructors discover, teaching adolescent development is both exhilarating and exasperating. Every student comes into class an expert; for many of them, adolescence wasn’t very long ago. No good instructor wants to squelch the interest and curiosity most students bring with them when they first come into a class. But no conscientious teacher wants to see students leave with little more than the preconceptions they came in with and an even firmer conviction that social scientists who study human development are out of touch with the “real” world.

One of my other mentors, Urie Bronfenbrenner, once wrote that the science of child development had found itself caught between “a rock and a soft place”—between rigor and relevance. Teachers of adolescent development find themselves in the same boat. How do you present scientific research on adolescent development in ways students find interesting, believable, relevant, and worth remembering when the term is over? I hope this book will help.

ABOUT THE FIFTH EDITION

About the time of the publication of the first edition of *Adolescence* in 1985, the study of development during the second decade of the life cycle suddenly became a hot topic. New journals devoted exclusively to the study of adolescence began publication; established journals in the field of child development became deluged with submissions on adolescence; more and more well-trained scholars specializing in the study of adolescent development appeared on the scene. During the eleven years between the publication of the first and fourth editions of this text, our understanding of adolescent development expanded dramatically, and this expansion has continued at a rapid pace since the last edition was published three years ago.

The fifth edition of this textbook reflects this new and more substantial knowledge base. Although the book’s original organization has been retained, the material in each chapter has been significantly updated and revised. More than 800 new studies have been cited since the fourth edition alone.

In some areas of inquiry, issues that were unresolved at the time of the earlier editions have been settled by newer and more definitive studies. In many cases, conclusions that had been tentatively accepted by the field were abandoned in favor of more contemporary views. For instance, when the first edition went to press, most scholars conceived of various aspects of problem behavior—drug use, unprotected sex, delinquency, for example—as being more or less independent phenomena, and theorists went out of their way to treat these issues under separate headings. In the past decade, however, our theories of adolescent problem behavior have changed substantially, because the weight of the evidence now indicates that many of the various problem behaviors associated with adolescence are indeed highly interrelated. New theories linking these problem areas to one another,

and drawing a distinction among internalizing, externalizing, and substance abuse problems, necessitated discussing them in a different fashion. Accordingly, *Adolescence* was revised to reflect this change in perspective, and Chapter 13, “Psychosocial Problems in Adolescence”—devoted entirely to psychosocial problems—was added to the third edition. This chapter has been retained and substantially updated in the current edition, with expanded coverage of approaches to intervention and prevention.

In yet other areas, our knowledge has expanded so dramatically that several altogether new sections were added to the text. Readers will find expanded sections in this edition about behavior genetics and adolescent development, physical health and adolescent health care, adolescent decision making, neighborhood and community effects on adolescent development, juvenile justice, economic strain and adolescent development, the impact of parental remarriage and postdivorce custodial arrangements, the structure of peer crowds and gangs, adolescents’ use of the mass media, ethnic identity, attachment and internal working models, AIDS, achievement attributions, problem behavior syndrome, violence and aggression, depression, and disordered eating. These additions, corrections, and expansions are natural responses to the development of new knowledge in a dynamic, growing scientific field.

Perhaps the greatest expansion of knowledge during the past decade has been about adolescents growing up in poverty and about adolescents from ethnic minority groups. This has permitted increased coverage of the ways in which the course of development during adolescence is affected both by economics and ethnicity. Instead of presenting this material in boxed inserts, however, I have incorporated this information into the text. More than 100 new references on development within ethnic minority populations have been added to this edition.

This edition of *Adolescence* retains a feature that ran throughout the last several editions. A box entitled “The Sexes” in each chapter considers in detail whether a particular pattern of adolescent development is different for boys and for girls. I emphasize the word *whether* here, for in many instances the scientific evidence suggests that the similarities between the sexes are far more striking than the differences. Some of the topics I examine are whether there are sex differences in the impact of early pubertal maturation, in cognitive abilities, in rates of depression, in relations

with mothers and fathers, in intimacy, and in the nature of the transition into adulthood.

A second set of boxed inserts was added to the fourth edition and is continued here in response to the positive feedback I’ve received from readers. Although most instructors (and virtually all students) who have used this text have enjoyed its “deja-gonized” writing style, some felt that including more information about research design and methods would be useful. Each chapter now contains a boxed feature entitled “The Scientific Study of Adolescence,” which examines in detail one particular study discussed in that chapter and teaches students about an important aspect of research methods, design, or statistics. Among the topics covered in this series are, for example, the meaning of a statistical interaction, how researchers use electronic beepers to study adolescents’ moods, why correlation is not causation, statistical power, the Q-Sort procedure, and the use of meta-analysis in examining a research literature.

ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENT IN CONTEXT

If there is a guiding theme to *Adolescence*, it is this: Adolescent development cannot be understood apart from the context in which young people grow up. Identity crises, generation gaps, and peer pressure may be features of adolescent life in contemporary society, but their prevalence has more to do with the nature of our society than with the nature of adolescence as a period in the life cycle. In order to understand how adolescents develop in contemporary society, students need first to understand the world in which adolescents live and how that world affects their behavior and social relationships. I have therefore devoted a good deal of attention in this book to the contexts in which adolescents live—families, peer groups, schools, and work and leisure settings—to how these contexts are changing, and to how these changes are changing the nature of adolescence.

ORGANIZATION

The overall organization of this book has not changed since the last edition. Specifically, the chapters about psychosocial development during adolescence are

separate from those about the contexts of adolescence. In this way, the psychosocial concerns of adolescence—identity, autonomy, intimacy, sexuality, and achievement—are presented as central developmental concerns that surface across, and are affected by, different settings.

This book contains an introduction and thirteen chapters, which are grouped into three parts: the fundamental biological, cognitive, and social changes of the period (Part One); the contexts of adolescence (Part Two); and psychosocial development during the adolescent years (Part Three). The Introduction presents a model for studying adolescence that was developed by the late John Hill and that serves as the organizational framework for the text. I have found the framework to be extremely helpful in teaching adolescent development, and I highly recommend using it. However, if the model does not fit with your course outline or your own perspective on adolescence, it is possible to use the text without using the framework. Each chapter is self-contained, and so it is not necessary to assign chapters in the sequence in which they are ordered in the text. However, if you choose to use the model presented in the Introduction, it may be helpful to follow the text organization.

THEORY AND METHODS

One of the things you will notice about *Adolescence* when you thumb through the contents is that the ubiquitous chapters about theories of adolescence and research methods are missing. The chapter titles are indeed missing, but the material isn't. After teaching adolescence for many years, I am convinced that students seldom remember a word of the chapters about theory and methods because the information in them is presented out of context. Therefore, although there is plenty of theory in this text, it is presented when it is most relevant, in a way that shows students how research and theory are related. At the beginning of the chapter on intimacy, for example, Sullivan's perspective on intimacy (and on psychosocial development in general) is presented, and then the relevant research is examined. Similarly, the research methods and tools employed in the study of adolescence are discussed in the context of specific studies that illustrate the powers—or pitfalls—of certain strategies. Many of these research issues are spotlighted in "The

Scientific Study of Adolescence" boxes which appear in each chapter. Overall, my approach has been to blend theory, research, and practical applications in a way that shows students how the three depend on each other. For students unfamiliar with theories in developmental psychology, I have included a brief overview of this material in the Introduction.

SUPPLEMENTS

Adolescence, 5/e, is accompanied by a comprehensive teaching-learning package. Available supplements include a thoroughly revised Instructor's Manual/Test Bank, Computerized Test Banks for both IBM and Mac, a Comprehensive Image Bank in both transparency and CD-ROM packages, McGraw-Hill's Developmental Psychology Film Series, and a Web site dedicated to Developmental Psychology with special sections for Adolescence. Also available are supplemental readings in the Annual Editions series on Adolescent Psychology, *Sources* selections in Human Development, and the *Guide to Life Span* for nurses and educators. Some ancillaries may be restricted to adoptions of a certain size. Please consult your local McGraw-Hill sales Rep for policies, prices and availability.

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Revising a textbook at a time when so much new information is available is a challenge that requires much assistance. Over the years my students have suggested many ways in which the text might be improved, and I have learned a great deal from listening to them. I am especially grateful to Shelli Avenevoli, who ably tracked down and organized much of the new research published in the three years between editions; and to several colleagues, including Bonnie Dowdy, Dickinson College; David Englund, California Polytechnic State University—San Luis Obispo; Cynthia A. Erdley, University of Maine; Stephen M. Gavazzi, Ohio State University; Virginia Powers-Lagac, Elms College; Christine Readdick, Florida State University; Alexander W. Siegel, University of Houston; and Rebecca Waldron-Hennessey, University of Connecticut, who carefully reviewed the fourth edition and suggested a variety of ways in which the text might be revised. I also wish to thank my colleagues at

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Finally, my thanks to the many colleagues and students across the country who took the time to write during the past dozen years with comments and suggestions based on their firsthand experiences using *Adolescence* in the classroom. They have improved the text with each edition.

Laurence Steinberg



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