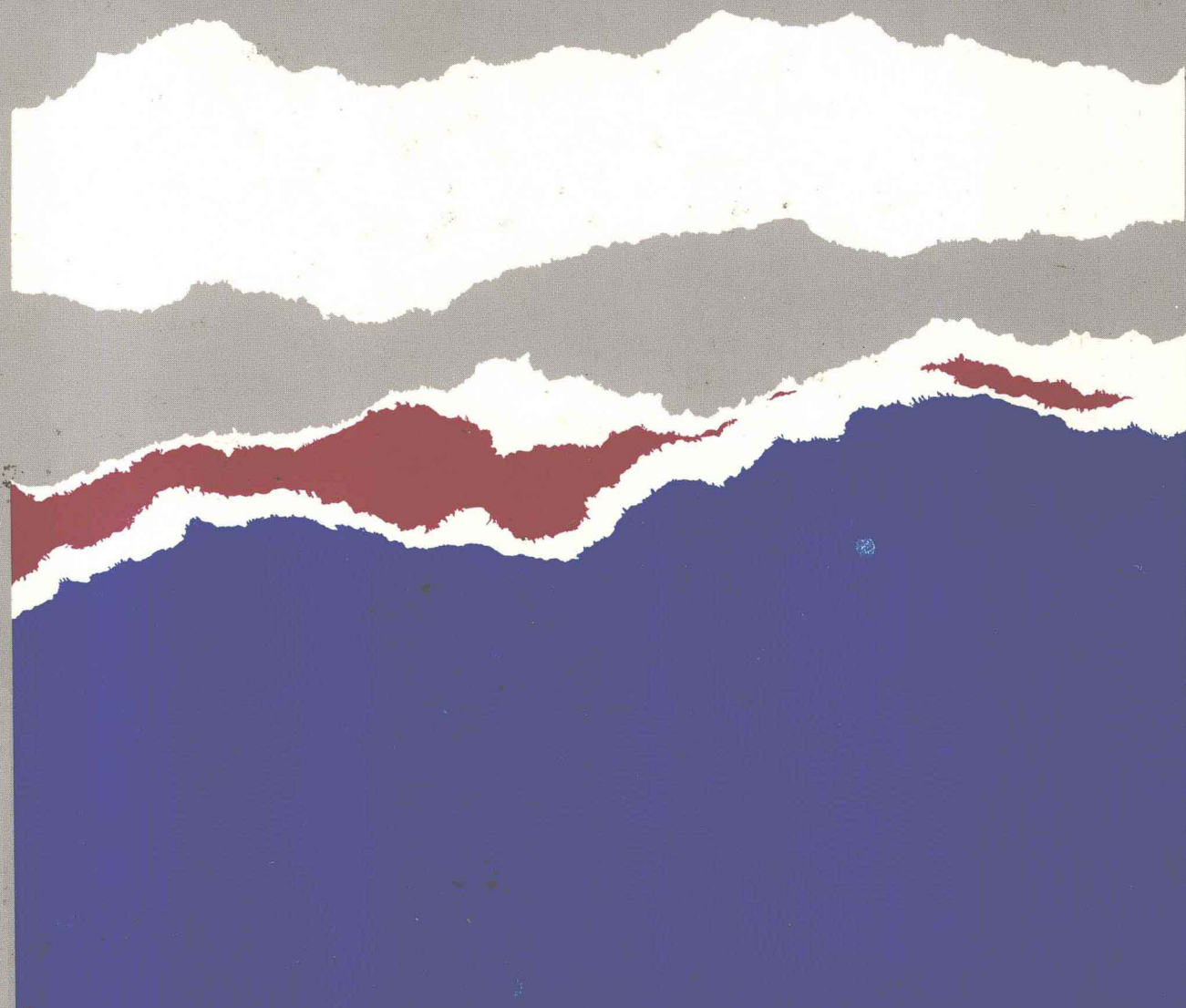
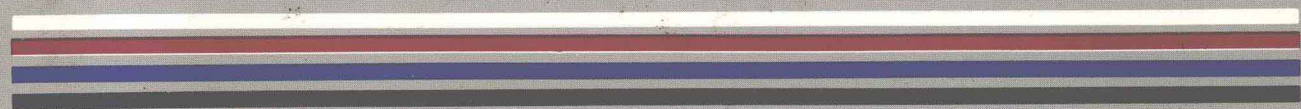


Adolescence, Adolescents

BARBARA SCHNEIDER FUHRMANN



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continued on page 556

Preface

A course in adolescent development should be designed to meet the needs of the students who enroll in it. Because those needs are likely to be diverse, such a course, and the book that provides its foundation, face a considerable challenge. Some students, primarily those who are majoring in the social sciences, will be interested in the actual phenomenon of adolescence, especially as it relates to other life stages, and will be attentive to the theory and research concerning adolescence. Others will be taking the course as part of their curricula in teacher education, social work, family life, nursing, public policy, pediatrics, or criminal justice; they will be interested not so much in the stage of development known as adolescence, but in the individuals we call adolescents. Consequently, the course must emphasize both themes: the scientific study of adolescence and the person-oriented understanding of adolescents.

The title of this text, *Adolescence, Adolescents*, was selected to convey these dual themes: the integration of theory and research concerning *adolescence* as a stage of development on the one hand, and concern for the individuals we know as *adolescents* on the other hand. The book is designed to be theoretical and experiential, academically sound and practical. The reader will find not merely an encyclopedic compendium of research studies, but also a survey of the most useful theories and findings concerning adolescence, tied together with an overriding consideration for the content's meaningfulness to readers who seek to understand both themselves and the young people with whom they are, or will be, interacting.

The premise of this book is that adolescence is not an isolated period, but rather a normal part of lifelong development. Adolescents are seen as individuals experiencing new ways of thinking and being, and dealing with the developmental changes

of adolescence in various ways. Their heredity and their environments have interacted profoundly and dynamically to produce unique individuals who are coping with physiological, cognitive, emotional, and social changes. Our dual goal is to achieve an understanding of the changes of adolescence that apply to all young people in all times and all places, and to develop a concomitant appreciation of the impact that modern American society exerts on the adolescence experienced by today's youth. This text will prepare students to apply both developmental theory and environmental awareness to understanding adolescents and will enable them to reason about the meaning of adolescent behavior in their own experiences.

The first section of the book addresses the contexts of adolescence — those social environments that influence growth and make the experiences of one adolescent different from those of another. Included in Part I are the historical context of adolescence, the societal context, the family context, the peer context, and the school context. The range of topics is broad, and the coverage includes not only theory but also such real-life issues as the impact of stress, the significance of family roles and expectations, the need for peers against whom to measure oneself, the effects of the high school experience, and the role of the computer in the lives of adolescents.

Equipped with an understanding of the critical significance of the contexts in which an adolescent grows, we move on to the developmental aspects of adolescence that are common to all adolescents. Part II addresses normal, healthy aspects of adolescent development — those profound changes that occur as a result of maturation. Included here are physiological, sexual, cognitive, social/emotional, moral, and career development. In this section you will find comprehensive coverage of the most widely accepted and useful theories of development, together with the implications of these theories for understanding and working constructively with adolescents in all settings. Topics include the effects of early *vs.* late maturation, current attitudes toward health and nutrition, adolescent attitudes toward a variety of sexual practices, the reasons adolescents avoid the use of contraceptives, the school's role in sexual stereotyping, cognitive development and creativity, learning styles, the reasons for adolescent egocentrism, the role of religion and morality, and young people's "fear of failure" and "fear of success" attitudes.

Although the emphasis throughout the text is on normal, healthy adolescent development, Part III addresses the issues facing the approximately 20 percent of the adolescent population who experience serious problems. Topics include behavioral disorders (we offer an extensive discussion of anorexia and bulimia), juvenile delinquency, and drug use and abuse. Both the possible reasons for disturbed behavior and current attempts to treat troubled adolescents and their families are explored.

While this book has been divided into three distinct sections detailing different aspects of adolescence, we must emphasize that the sections do not necessarily stand in isolation from one another. The contexts of adolescence (Part I) are seen as vital to understanding differences in development (Part II), and both context and development are crucial to understanding the differences between healthy and unhealthy behavior (Part III). Therefore, the chapters are designed to be read in the sequence

presented. Ample cross-references and a comprehensive index make it easy to locate topics and concepts. Photographs and illustrations provide immediate graphic reinforcement, and each was selected specifically to illustrate an important concept. After studying this book, you should have a thorough and useful understanding of the complexities of adolescent development.

An undertaking of this magnitude is never a completely individual task, even though a single author's name appears on the title page. I am indeed indebted to a number of people whose assistance and support have been most valuable: to Bill Bost and Chuck Ruch, who supported me both emotionally and with the time to devote to the project; to Gary Waynick, who so carefully and creatively designed and produced the illustrations and photographs; to Mylan Jaixen, who challenged me to begin and supported all my endeavors; and to the conscientious and helpful reviewers whose ideas contributed substantially to the quality of the finished product: Stephen A. Anderson, The University of Connecticut; Robert Bornstein, Miami University; Sheldon S. Brown, North Shore Community College; Milton K. Davis, Portland State University; Robert W. Enright, University of Wisconsin-Madison; Harold D. Grotevant, The University of Texas at Austin; and Elizabeth S. Henry, Old Dominion University. And to my many friends and students who read and responded to various portions of the text, thank you all.

Finally, I dedicate this book to David and to the memory of Tutu. They have taught me the meaning of love.

Barbara Fuhrmann

Brief Contents

I. The Context of Adolescence	1
Chapter 1: A Historical Perspective	3
Chapter 2: A Societal Perspective	33
Chapter 3: A Family Perspective	59
Chapter 4: The Peer Context	94
Chapter 5: The School Context	122
II. Individual Development, Healthy Responses, and Normal Issues of Adolescence	157
Chapter 6: Physical and Physiological Development	159
Chapter 7: Sexual Development	194
Chapter 8: Cognitive Development	239
Chapter 9: Personality Development	280
Chapter 10: Moral Development	322
Chapter 11: Career Development	360
III. Problematic Responses to the Pressures of Adolescence	397
Chapter 12: Behavioral Disorders	399
Chapter 13: Juvenile Delinquency and the Courts	431
Chapter 14: Drug Use and Abuse	466
References	495
Name Index	559
Subject Index	567

Contents

PART I. THE CONTEXT OF ADOLESCENCE

Chapter 1. A Historical Perspective

The Myths of Adolescence 3

“Adolescence Is a Transitional Stage” 3

More than a transition | Real needs | Every stage a transition |
Challenges of adolescence

“Adolescence Is Necessarily Tumultuous” 5

Basis of myth | Challenges to myth | Persistence of myth

“There Is an Unavoidable Generation Gap” 7

Conflict between generations | Continuity between generations

“All Adolescents Are Alike” 9

Why the Myths? 10

A Nonmythical, Working Definition of Adolescence 10

A Brief History of Childhood and Adolescence 11

The Development of Childhood 11

Early societies | The birth of childhood | Parental responsibility |
Focus on childhood

The Invention of Adolescence 13

Before adolescence | The invention of adolescence | Child-labor leg-
islation | Compulsory schooling | Juvenile justice

Adolescence: 1900–Now 15

1900–1930 | 1930–1950 | 1950s | 1960s | 1970–now

<i>Theories Emphasizing Discontinuity in Adolescence</i>	17
Biological Theory	17
Hall Gesell Zeller	
Psychological Theory	19
The Freuds Sullivan	
Sociological Theory	19
Lewin	
<i>Theories Emphasizing Continuity in Adolescence</i>	20
Anthropological Theory	20
Mead Benedict	
Psychosocial Theory	21
Bandura Spranger Offer	
Developmental Theory	22
Havighurst Erikson Piaget; Kohlberg	
<i>Today's Adolescents</i>	26
Offer's Findings	27
OSIQ Psychological self Social self Sexual self Familial self Coping self	
Norman's Findings	28
Happiness Positive view of future	
A Cultural Perspective	29
Hypotheses United States, China, and Israel Variations within the United States	
<i>Summary</i>	31
 Chapter 2. A Societal Perspective	
<i>The Influence of Society</i>	34
History	34
Changes in the economy Revolution in communications	
Social Systems	35
Socioeconomic influences The nonwhite and the handicapped	
<i>Postindustrial Society</i>	37
A Description	37
Major societal changes Effects on adolescents	
Benefits and Risks	39
The delicate balance Overload	
The Future for Today's Adolescents	41

<i>The Influence of Television</i>	42
Viewing Habits	43
Amount and type of viewing Potential impact	
Examples of Social Learning from Television	44
The family Morality Driving Sex roles	
<i>The Blurring of the Distinctions between Children and Adults</i>	46
Hurried Children: Disappearing Childhood?	46
Pressure from parents Pressure from schools Pressure from the media	
Emotional and Behavioral Reactions to Stress	52
The Response of the Law	53
More severe treatment Children's rights Treatment without parental consent Trends in the law	
Prolonged Adolescence in the Midst of Hurrying	55
The Special Role of the Computer	55
Computer literacy Potential impact	
<i>Summary</i>	57

Chapter 3. A Family Perspective

<i>The Role of the Family</i>	59
Healthy Family Described	61
Family functions Characteristics	
The Development of Autonomy	62
Executive autonomy Volitional autonomy Family influence	
Variations in Adolescent Autonomy	63
College attendance Sex differences Cultural differences	
<i>The Interaction of Adolescents and Adults</i>	65
Two Changing Systems	65
Physical changes Intellectual changes Emotional changes Social changes Resulting interactions Resocialization	
The Role of Grandparents	68
Interaction Relationship Importance	
Family Communication	70
Communication problems Healthy communication	
Conflict in Families	71
Conflict Rebellion Unbearable conflict — running away	

<i>Parenting Styles</i>	73
Ineffective Styles	73
Authoritarian parenting Permissive parenting	
The Alternative	74
Authoritative parenting	
Socioeconomic Differences	75
Discipline	76
Power assertion Love withdrawal Induction	
<i>Family Structures</i>	77
Family Size	77
Large families Small families	
Birth Order	78
First borns Later borns Sibling relationships Spacing	
Working Mothers	81
Societal change Effects	
Divorce	82
Rising divorce rate Effects of divorce Adolescent reactions	
Marital conflict Blended families	
Corporate Families	88
The Family Today	89
<i>Family Therapy</i>	90
Rationale	90
Systems Theory	91
Advantages	91
<i>Summary</i>	92

Chapter 4. The Peer Context

<i>The Power of the Peer Group</i>	95
The Changing Nature of Peer Interactions	95
The Relative Influence of Parents and Peers	96
Increasing peer interaction Parent and peer values Peer influence	
The Functions of Peers	98
Context for learning Psychological support	
Peer Pressure and the Nature of Conformity	99
Conformity Variations in conformity Types of conformity	
Conformity and family relationships Conformity and sex	

<i>The Development of Peer Groups</i>	101
The Changing Nature of Friendships	102
Early adolescence (ages 11 to 13) Middle adolescence (ages 14 to 16) Late adolescence (ages 17 and over)	
Status and Popularity	103
Criteria Academic success and popularity	
Loners	105
Description Social skill training	
Group Formation in Adolescence	105
Pre-crowd Beginning crowd Transition Fully developed crowd Disintegration	
<i>Is There a Youth Subculture?</i>	109
The Controversy	109
Groups in Schools	110
Normals, jocks, motorheads, and freaks Jocks, rah-rahs, politicos, intellectuals, freaks, greasers, grinds, blacks — and the majority	
Symbols of Adolescent Society	111
Clothing and hair styles Automobiles Speech patterns	
<i>Dating</i>	114
A Brief History of Dating	114
Functions of Modern Dating Practices	114
Adjustment Socialization	
Dating Patterns	115
Age Number of partners Stages Going steady Early marriage	
<i>Using the Power of Peers</i>	117
Socialization Training	117
Peer Tutoring	117
History Effectiveness	
Peer Counseling	119
<i>Summary</i>	120
 Chapter 5. The School Context	
<i>A Brief History of American High Schools</i>	124
The Phenomenal Growth of Secondary Education	124

Functions of Secondary Education	125
Education and socialization Certification Promise and control Current expectations	
The Current Picture	126
<i>The Effects of and on Schooling</i>	127
Socioeconomic Effects	128
Family background Reasons for socioeconomic effect	
Family and Peer Effects	129
Parental aspirations Peer influence	
Gender Effects	130
Male-female differences Title IX Subtle messages Teacher atti- tudes School activities What schools can do	
<i>What Goes on in Schools</i>	132
School Size	133
Large schools <i>vs.</i> small schools Participation Satisfaction Achievement	
Curriculum	134
Tracking Expectations Socialization Thinking skills	
Teaching	136
Personal qualities Environment	
Discipline	138
The problem Discipline styles	
Climate	139
Student involvement Other factors Student perceptions	
<i>Achievement, Underachievement, and Dropping Out</i>	140
Underachievement	140
Definition Causes Locus of control	
Dropouts	142
Profile Locus of control The future for dropouts	
Preventing Underachievement and Dropping Out	144
Reality therapy Positive learning program	
<i>The Middle School Movement</i>	146
Middle Schools	146
Reaction against junior high schools Middle school or junior high?	
The Needs of Young Adolescents	147
Characteristics of Good Middle Schools	148
Active learning Exploration Recognition and acceptance of differ- ences Advisor/advisee system Skill-based learning Emphasis on participation	

Current Calls for Reform	149
Criticisms	149
Achievement Curriculum Teachers	
Reform Suggestions	151
A Nation at Risk	153
Content Standards and expectations Time Teaching	
Summary	155

PART II. INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT, HEALTHY RESPONSES, AND NORMAL ISSUES OF ADOLESCENCE

Chapter 6. Physical and Physiological Development

Bodily Changes	160
Skeletal Age	160
Glands and Hormones	161
Hypothalamus Pituitary gland Gonads Integration of glandular functions	
Pubertal Growth Spurt	163
Timing Relationship to adult height Other changes Sex dimorphism	
Primary and Secondary Sexual Characteristics	165
The Secular Trend	166
Nutrition Stimulation	
Early <i>vs.</i> Late Maturation	167
Early-maturing boys Late-maturing boys Early-maturing girls Late-maturing girls	
Social-Emotional Development	171
Nature <i>vs.</i> Nurture	171
Body Types and Idealized Norms	172
Body types Self-acceptance Idealized norms	
Phenomenology and Self-Perceptions	174
Phenomenology Self-perceptions Sources of self-perceptions Changing self-perceptions	
How Behavior Affects Development	176
Nutrition	176
Nutritional needs Inadequate nutrition Sugar	
Exercise	178
Physical fitness	

Athletics	180
Males Females Interscholastic sports Informal sports	
<i>Problems in Physiological Development</i>	182
The Meaning of a Disorder	182
Disability or handicap Family influence Reactions of others Adolescent complications	
Common Problems	185
Psychosomatic illnesses Acne Menstrual disorders Weight problems	
Chronic Illnesses	188
Extent Psychological aspects	
Disabilities	190
Physical disabilities Visual impairments Speech defects Hearing impairments Acceptance of people with disabilities	
<i>Summary</i>	192

Chapter 7. Sexual Development

<i>Developing Sexuality</i>	196
Gender Identity	196
Genetic contribution Hormonal contribution Social contribution	
Impact of Pubertal Change	198
Reactions to physical changes Menarche	
The Psychology of Sex Differences	201
<i>Sex-Role Development</i>	202
Roles and Stereotypes	202
Roles Stereotypes Sex-role stereotyping	
A Historical Perspective	203
Early matriarchies The agrarian lifestyle The Industrial Revolution Cultural variations	
Influences on Sex-Role Development	205
Early messages Schooling Media	
Traditional Stereotypes	207
The feminine stereotype The male stereotype Androgyny	
<i>Sexual Attitudes</i>	211
A Brief History of Sexual Attitudes	211
Early attitudes The twentieth century	

Development of Sexual Attitudes	213
Family Media	
Current Attitudes	215
Attitude research The double standard Petting Oral sex Intercourse Masturbation Marriage Homosexuality	
<i>Sexual Behavior</i>	220
From Nonsexual to Sexual	220
Earlier sexuality Childhood sexuality Hormonal influence Adolescent tasks Heterosexual experience Sexual decision making	
Current Adolescent Practices	224
Masturbation Petting Oral sex Intercourse Orgasm Homosexuality	
Consequences of Sexual Behavior	228
Contraceptive use Pregnancy Venereal disease	
<i>Sex Education</i>	232
The Controversy	232
Current Status	233
Inadequate attention Guidelines for sex education	
Recollections of a Sex Educator's Experiment	235
<i>Summary</i>	237

Chapter 8. Cognitive Development

<i>The Quantitative Approach</i>	242
Intelligence	242
Definitions History of intelligence testing Components of intelligence	
The I.Q.	243
Definition Heritability	
Uses and Misuses of Intelligence Measures	245
Expectations Norm referencing Guidelines	
Conclusions	246
<i>Piaget's Developmental Approach</i>	246
Jean Piaget	246
Background Contributions	

Intelligence, as Seen by Piaget	247
An activity Mental structures	
Basic Piagetian Concepts	248
Assimilation and accommodation Equilibration	
Stage Development	249
Childhood Stages	250
Sensorimotor stage Preoperational stage Concrete operational stage	
Formal Operations	251
Characteristics An example Attainment Beyond Piaget	
Variations in Development	255
Selective formal operations Education and practice Implications for education	
 <i>Other Qualitative Approaches</i>	 256
Brain Growth	256
Growth Periodization	
Problem Solving	258
 <i>Social-Emotional Effects of Cognitive Development</i>	 259
Egocentrism	259
Definition Relationship to cognitive development Adolescent egocentrism Personal fable Imaginary audience	
Idealism	262
Learning Styles	263
Field Independence and Field Dependence	263
Perceptual differences Information processing Career choice	
The Dunn Model	264
Hemisphericity	265
The dual brain Educational response	
 <i>Exceptionalities</i>	 268
Learning Disabilities	268
Definition and diagnosis Expression in adolescence	
Giftedness	271
Definition Characteristics Related difficulties	
Creativity	274
Definition Relationship to other factors	
 <i>Summary</i>	 277