

INSTRUCTIONS AND OBJECTIVES

MASTERS COMPREHENSIVE EXAM IN DEVELOPMENT

The masters comprehensive exam in Development cover a wide range of developmental topics from infancy through late adolescence. It is intended for students who have taken EDPS 850, Child Psychology, or EDPS 851, Psychology of Adolescence. It will consist of two essays (chosen from four options) worth 25 points each. The questions will assess a basic understanding of a variety of theories, concepts, and research findings in child and adolescent development. The four essay options will assess a higher level of understanding, including the ability to integrate and apply knowledge of psychological development (including neurobiological, cognitive, social, moral, and other aspects of psychological functioning). The questions will be framed relatively broadly, and students should be prepared to discuss major themes in child and adolescent development and support that discussion with current theories, concepts, and research findings.

Most basic texts in child or adolescent development published in the past 5 years should cover the topics assessed on the exam. Texts used in recent Educational Psychology courses that may be helpful in preparing for the exam include:

Berk, L. (2013). *Child Development*, (9th Edition)

Ryan, A. M., Urdan, T. C., & Anderman, E. M. (2016). *Adolescent Development for Educators*, (1st Edition)

Students might also find the following books helpful:

Moshman, D. (2005). *Adolescent Psychological Development* (Second Edition)

Mareschal, D., Butterworth, B., & Tolmie, A. (2013). *Educational Neuroscience*

For each of the primary domains of development, students should: (1) know and understand at least three prominent developmental theories and/or conceptual models, (2) be prepared to describe, accurately and in detail, key theoretical concepts explained by these theories/research, (3) be able to apply these theories/research findings/concepts to a specific process or practical setting within a key context of development, and (4) understand how developmental processes within one domain influence and are influenced by development in other domains. Given that we are in the Department of Educational Psychology, students should focus primarily on development in educational contexts.

Key Domains of Development: cognitive, social, emotional, self-concept, identity development, moral, neurobiological (e.g., genetic, physiological/hormonal, brain processes), language (for childhood only)

Key Educational Contexts/Settings for Development: student-teacher relationships, parent-child relationships, peer relationships, client-therapist relationships, mental health/well-being, classrooms, instruction, STEM, learning, communities, culture

Additional objectives:

1. Using specific theories and research findings to support your argument, students will be able to provide a logical argument for how developmental theories and conceptual models can be practically applied to specific educational contexts (see the “Key Educational Contexts of Development,” above).
2. Students will be able to explain how specific contexts of development influence and are influenced by various domains of psychological development (see the “Key Domains of Development,” above).
3. Students will be able to explain how different domains of psychological development are interrelated (i.e., how changes in one domain of development impacts changes other domains).
4. Based on theories and research findings, students will be able to articulate how specific aspects of psychological development change across multiple developmental periods (e.g., infancy, early childhood, middle childhood, adolescence, emerging adulthood).

The following is a list of key developmental concepts, theories, and theorists that may be used for the exams. This is by no means an exhaustive list. It is not enough to only be able to describe the concept/theory. Students must also, in the essays, integrate this knowledge with an understanding of how it might apply to educational or developmental contexts.

IMPORTANT: Remember that the exam will require knowledge and application for *only three of these content areas/theories* (i.e., choose to study those that you feel most capable of describing/applying – questions allow a focus on those areas).

- *Ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner)*
- *Theory of moral development (Kohlberg; Gilligan)*
- *Socio-cultural theory (Vygotsky); zone of proximal development, scaffolding*
- *Theory of cognitive development (Piaget); assimilation, accommodation*
- *Attachment theory (Bowlby, Ainsworth) – attachment in adolescence (Allen)*
- *Emotional security theory (Cummings & Davies)*
- *Social learning theory (Bandura)*
- *Social information processing theory (Walther; Crick & Dodge)*
- *Interpersonal relationships theory (Sullivan); intimacy, friendship*
- *Identity formation (Marcia, Erickson)*
- *Self-determination theory (Ryan, & Deci); motivation, competence, relatedness, autonomy*
- *Expectancy-Value framework (Wigfield)*
- *Theory of mind; Perspective-taking*
- *Emerging adulthood (Arnett)*
- *Developmental psychopathology (Cicchetti)*
- *Life history theory (Belsky)*
- *Parenting styles (Baumrind)*
- *Theories of race/ethnic identity development (Sellers; Phinney)*
- *Neuropsychology of adolescence (Steinberg)*

- *Other neuropsychological concepts: 5-HTTLPR; testosterone; amygdala; nucleus accumbens; prefrontal cortex; ventral striatum*