



The Importance of Concept of Growth and Development for Educators of All Levels

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Abstract:

Teachers can judge and make appropriate educational choices if they understand the patterns of growth and development. Their role is crucial in the growth and development of students because of its importance in behavioural management. A good teacher guides their students through knowledge acquisition and prevents problems from arising by offering guidance whenever needed. The educators will get a better insight into how the students think, feel, behave, and learn. The better they understand the stages of development, the better they impart education. The knowledge helps teachers identify problems with social, cognitive, and emotional development in their development. It also assists teachers to identify those who don't follow standard developmental patterns and support them in acquiring the educational guidance to help them succeed. Teachers can also assist in the social and emotional well-being of the students.

Key Words: Growth and Development, Behavioural Management, Developmental Patterns, Social and Emotional Well-being

Introduction:

Development is lifelong process in all organisms in which growth is a part of it. As “change is the law of nature”, development is a systematic and orderly change. Life's journey begins with conception in the womb of the mother. Since then, both growth and development go hand in hand till certain age. The human development includes physical, mental, cognitive, social, moral and emotional aspects. It shows progressive acquisition of various skills such as speaking, learning, expression of feelings and relating with other people etc.

In common man's view, there is no difference between growth and development. The terms “growth and development” are used interchangeably. Sometimes both the terms are used as synonyms as they relate to

the measurement of changes occurring in an individual. But psychologically these words are different. Each word has specific meaning and purpose.

- **Growth:**

Growth means physical changes in the organism. It is quantitative and refers to increase in size, height, weight etc. Growth is also seen in internal organs like brain, heart, lungs, intestine, stomach, bones etc. As age increases, the body of every child becomes larger and heavier. Thus, it is increase in the size of the organism as a whole. The results of growth are observable and measurable.

- **Development:**

Development is a qualitative change. The term ‘development’ refers to the functioning or functional efficiency of the organism. Development is the blooming change and functional differentiation in the organism in a beneficial manner.

According to Elizabeth Hurlock “Development means a progressive series of changes that occur in a pattern as a result of maturation and experience.” So, development is related to the overall changes, structural as well as functional, carries a comprehensive meaning and consequently it describes the trends of changes during the life span of an individual.

Development is a continuous phenomena. Development occurs as a result of the influence of environment and is seen in creativity, personality and mental processes. Development is a product of maturation and learning. While the factors like home, school and society are directly influence the development of an individual, many dimensions would result from these factors to attain good development.

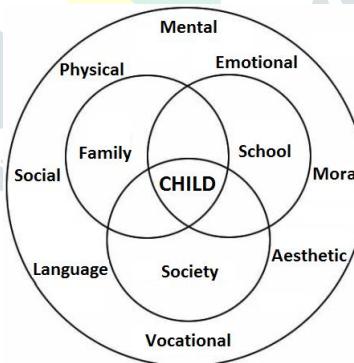


Fig. 1: Factors and dimensions of development in a Child.

- **Maturation :**

Maturation is the ripening of innate abilities of a person with age. The term ‘maturation’ means the growth that takes place from within, i.e., the changes that take place by virtue of the inner biological activities. They are not influenced by outside conditions.

Maturity is the ability to act, cope and reason in an appropriate way for the situation. The way a person deals with a crisis or makes decisions shows his level of maturity. The individual responds to

the environment being aware of the correct time and location. He knows when to act, according to the circumstances and the culture of the society he lives in. Maturity is supposed to develop from common sense. Maturation is the unfolding of inherent potentials in the orderly sequence of biological growth both physically and mentally.

1. Differences between Growth and Development:

The term growth is used purely in a physical sense. It refers to the changes in size or the quantitative aspects of the body. But the term development carries a wider and comprehensive meaning than the term growth. The differences between growth and development are given below.

Table 1.1: Differences between Growth and Development

S.No.	Growth	Development
1.	Growth is related to physical development.	Development is related to physical, mental, social, emotional and motor developments.
2.	Growth can be measured accurately. Hence, quantitative.	Development can be estimated only. Hence, qualitative.
3.	Each species and race has limitations for growth.	Development is influenced by the environment and hence, no limitations.
4.	It is a narrow concept.	It is extensive and comprehensive concept.
5.	It is limited to certain age.	It is a lifelong process.
6.	It is visible change in structure and form.	It is internal and integrated process.
7.	It is stage-wise change.	It is a progressive change.
8.	Its changes are entirely based on heredity.	Its changes are a product of both heredity and environment.

4. Principles of Development:

i) Principle of Direction:

The development proceeds in a certain direction from top to bottom and centre to tips. According to the cephalo-caudal tendency, development proceeds in the direction of the head to foot. That is why, before it becomes able to stand, the child first gains control over his head and arms and then on his legs.

In case of proximo-distal tendency, the development starts from the central part of the body. Then it spreads to other outer or more distant parts of the body. Spinal cord develops first and then other parts of the body. We see that an infant uses his shoulders and elbows first to reach an object and then he uses his wrists and fingers.

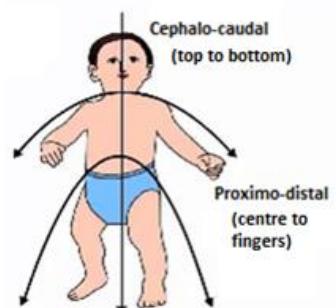


Fig 2: Directions of Development

ii) Principle of Individual Differences:

Each child has his own rate of physical, social, mental, or emotional development. If we observe 10 year old children in a school, we find that there are great differences in their height, weight, sociability, emotional expressions, and learning readiness.

iii) Principle of General to Specific:

The child first exhibits general responses and learns to show specific responses. At the time of birth, the world is like big confusion for the child. Then, after some development, his behavior is refined and become goal directed response.

The child first used to defecate at all places and after toilet training at certain age, he used to go to washrooms for nature calls.

iv) Principle of Inter-relationship:

Different aspects of development are interdependent and interrelated. For example, child's social behavior is interrelated with his physical development. If a child is physically challenged, his emotional development may also be slow with aggressive development in some emotions.

v) Principle of Spiral vs. Linear Advancement:

After the child had developed to a certain level, there is likely to be a period of rest for consolidation of the developmental progress achieved till then. In advancing further, development turns back and then moves forward again in a spiral pattern as shown in the given picture.

This principle helps us to make adequate arrangement for consolidation of the progress achieved during specific developmental stages.

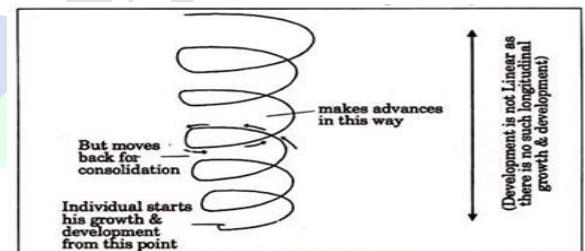


Fig.3: Spiral and linear development

vi) Principle of Predictability:

Growth and development trend can be seen even in the initial stages i.e., prenatal (in the mothers' womb) stage. When it is found that a child has a growth rate that is normal or comparable in that particular species, and racial group, we can predict that he/she will grow to be normal and when not normal we can predict that he/she will not be going to be normal in the future too.

vii) Principle of Uniform Pattern:

The development follows a definite pattern in one or the other dimension. Each child may take his own time to develop in each stage, but the pattern is same in all individuals. The following sequence is observed in one's life and it is uniform for all individuals.

Crawling → sitting → standing → walking → running → jumping.

viii) Principle of Non-uniform Pattern:

Growth is rapid during infancy and childhood. Later it becomes slower. Emotional development is high during adolescence and low in earlier stages. In these two instances of growth and emotions, development is not uniform in all stages of life. Hence, it is non-uniform.

ix) Principle of Continuity and Cumulativity:

Development is a continuous process, which begins from the time of conception in the womb of the mother and continues till death. The changes continue to take place in all dimensions of one's personality throughout one's life.

Development is cumulative as the child first learns the words then he learns the phrases, then sentences, and finally he comes to know how the stories or essays are written.

x) Principle of Heredity and Environment:

The outcome of the behavior or development is the product of heredity and environment (i.e. interaction between nature and nurture). All the aspects like personality, development, creativity, intelligence, attitudes and aptitudes etc. are directly dependent on heredity and environment of the individual. Thus, development is the product of heredity and environment.

$$\text{Development} = \text{Heredity} \times \text{Environment}$$

xi) Principle of Integration:

The development integrates by putting together whole and its parts, as well as the specific and general responses. It also integrates the earlier development with higher level structures resulting in harmonious development.

5. Educational Implications:

A study of the pattern of growth and development exhibited by individuals while passing through different stages of life provides very useful data for parents and teachers to plan the education of children and their fruitful learning. It helps them to guide according to the needs of the children. The knowledge of the environment in which the children developed is essential in counseling them for maladjustments, health problems, educational backwardness etc.

- Development strictly follows direction. Hence, the teaching proceeds from listening → speaking → reading → writing. It helps the students to proceed from simple to complex.
- The curriculum is framed in such a way from simple to complex, concrete to abstract and general to specific. Such a direction yield good results in learning. They enhance the learning levels also.
- The adolescence is the period of high emotions. Though it is difficult to handle them, the knowledge of biology and psychology would help the teacher to effectively guide them.
- Keeping in view the variations in different dimensions of development individual attention can be paid to see that each child progresses to the optimum extent.

6. Conclusion:

A clear understanding of growth and development can be achieved with the help of certain principles that govern development in human beings. The development in any organism is controlled by some general principles that follow certain patterns. These principles can be observed from the time of conception in mother's womb. The knowledge of principles of growth and development is very important and useful for teachers and parents. They are the guiding principles as and how to interact with the developing students. Teachers not only play a crucial role in the socialization of their students but also have a significant influence on how well-developed they are as adults. Teachers should guide the students through different developmental stages so that when students grow up, they'll be healthy individuals.

When a teacher is aware of the human development concept, they can use it while making assessments about the children's behavior in the classroom. The knowledge of human growth and development helps teachers to provide appropriate help for students with developmental problems. Teachers who do not understand the role of human development in classroom behavior often get frustrated with their working lives. It may be due to the incapability of approaching or maintaining a suitable environment in the classroom. As a result, the balance between student and teacher's efforts gets disturbed which creates a messy classroom environment. For that reason, it is essential for teachers to learn the importance of human growth and development.

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