

Psychology 733: Topical Seminar in Developmental Psychology IV
Two Recent Theoretical Approaches to Development
Fall 2005

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Tuesday 1:30-4:30
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Office Hours: Thursday
11:30-2:30
or email at any time

Aims of the Course

1. To develop critical thinking about the nature of development and the role of theory in empirical work.
2. To provide information about two recent styles of theorizing, namely connectionism and dynamic systems theory.

Prerequisites

1. Undergraduate courses in developmental psychology.
2. Reasonably broad knowledge of the field of psychology as a whole.

Course Requirements

1. Class presentations (about 15 minutes each) of book reviews of the two books and of commentaries on the A not B models.
2. Three short papers (about 2000 words each) that reflect on the theories and their uses. You should model the style and nature of papers 1 and 2 on the published book reviews you present, and the style of paper 3 on the published commentary you present.
 - a. Evaluation of the connectionist approach. Due **October 4**.
 - b. Evaluation of the dynamic systems approach. Due **November 1**.
 - c. Evaluation of application of the theories to understanding the A not B error. Due **November 29**.

Books To Purchase

Elman, J.L., Bates, E.A., Johnson, M.H., Karmiloff-Smith, A., Parisi, D. & Plunkett, K. (1996). *Rethinking Innateness: A Connectionist Perspective on Development*. MIT Press.
Thelen, E. & Smith, L.B. (1994). *A Dynamic Systems Approach to the Development of Cognition and Action*. MIT Press.

Class Schedule

August 30 Introduction to the two theories

Rethinking Innateness

September 6 Chapters 1 and 2
September 13 Chapters 3 and 4
September 20 Chapters 5 and 6
Sept. 27 Chapter 7 and Book Reviews

Dynamic Systems Approach

October 4 Part I
Report 1 Due
October 11 Part II
October 18 Part III (except Chapter 11)
October 25 Chapter 11, Epilogue and Book Reviews

Applications to A not B

November 1 Connectionism

Munakata, Y., McClelland, J. L., Johnson, M. H. & Siegler, R. S. (1997). Rethinking infant knowledge: Toward an adaptive process account of successes and failures in object permanence tasks. *Psychological Review*, 104, 686-713.

Report 2 Due

November 8 Dynamic Systems

Smith, L. B., Thelen, E., Titzer, R. & McLin, D. (1999). Knowing in the context of acting: The task dynamics of the A-not-B error. *Psychological Review*, 106, 235-260.

November 15 Other Approaches and Critiques
October 1998 issue of *Developmental Science*

Comparing the Two Approaches

November 29 September 2003 issue of *Developmental Science*

Report 3 Due

December 6 Unfinished Discussion and Class Evaluation