Basic Issues in the Study of Development

1. Issues in the Study of Development
   a. Developmental science— the study of age-related changes in behavior, thinking, emotions, and social relationships
   b. Two Key Questions
      i. Philosophers and scientists have debated the degree to which inborn tendencies and environmental factors influence development
      ii. There are differing opinions as to whether age-related change occurs in stages
      iii. The Nature-Nurture Debate
         1. Hereditary vs. environment
         2. Nativism vs. empiricism
         3. Philosophically, the nature side of the controversy was represented by the idealists and rationalists
            a. Plato and Descartes—some knowledge is inborn
         4. British philosophers called empiricists—John Locke
            a. Insisted that at birth the mind is a blank slate—tabula rasa
         5. Other philosophers thought development involved an interaction between internal and external forces
            a. Jean-Jacques Rousseau claimed that all human beings are naturally good and seek out experiences that help them grow
         6. G. Stanley Hall believed that milestones of childhood were dictated by an inborn developmental plan and were similar to those that had taken place in the evolution of the human species
            a. Thought developmentalists should identify norms—average ages which milestones taken
         7. John Watson coined the term behaviorism—defines development in terms of behavior changes caused by environmental influences
            a. Through the manipulation of the environment, children could be trained to be or do anything
   iv. Stages and Sequences
      1. Continuity-Discontinuity issue
         a. Quantitative change—continuous
            i. 0 friends to having friends
         b. Qualitative change—discontinuous
            i. The difference in friendships from one age to the other
      c. If development consists only of additions, then the concept of stages is not needed to explain it
      d. If development involves reorganization or the emergence of qualities or skills, the concept of stages might be useful
   c. Influences on Development
      i. Maturation
         1. Developmentalist Arnold Gesell used the term maturation to describe genetically programmed sequential patterns of change
         2. Maturational patterns are marked by three qualities
            a. It is universal, appearing in all children
            b. It is sequential, involving some pattern of unfolding skill or characteristics