

Early History

- Aristotle argued that the most important aspect of adolescence is the ability to choose, and that the self-determination is not unlike some contemporary views that see independence, identity, and career choice as the key themes of adolescence.
 - Also recognized adolescents' egocentrism, commenting once that adolescents think they know everything and are quite sure about it.

The 20th and 21st Centuries

- Inventionist view- Adolescence is a sociohistorical creation.
 - Schools, work, and economics are important dimensions of this view
- 1890-1920s known as “Age of Adolescence”
 - Lawmakers enacted a great deal of compulsory legislation aimed at youth

Adolescents in the United States

- Special interest to researchers is how social contexts influence adolescent development
 - Contexts- the setting in which development occurs
 - Historical
 - Social
 - Economic
 - Cultural
- Social policy is the course of action designed by the national government to influence the welfare of its citizens

Theories of Adolescent Development

- 4 theoretical orientations to development:
 - Psychoanalytical
 - Cognitive
 - Behavioral and social cognitive
 - Ecological

Psychoanalytical Theories

- Psychoanalytical theories describe development as primarily unconscious and heavily colored by emotion.
- Psychoanalytical theorist emphasize that behavior is merely a surface characteristic and that a true understanding of development requires analyzing the symbolic meanings of behavior and the deep inner workings of the mind
- Also stress that early experiences with parents

Psychoanalytical Theories

- Freud's Theory

- The id consists of instincts, which are an individual's reservoir of psychic energy
 - It is totally unconscious and has no contact with reality
- The ego deals with the demands of reality
 - Also called the “executive branch” of personality because it makes rational decisions
- The id and the ego have no morality (they do not take into account whether something is right or wrong)

Research in Adolescent Development

- Research Designs

- Experimental research

- An experiment in which one or more factors believed to influence the behavior being studied are manipulated, while other factors are held constant

- Independent variable is the factor that is manipulated

- Dependent variable is the fact that remains the same

Research in Adolescent Development

- Time Span of Research

- Cross-sectional Research

- Involves studying people all at one time
 - Main advantage is that researchers do not have to wait for the individuals to grow older

- Longitudinal Research

- The same individuals are studied over a period of time usually several years or more