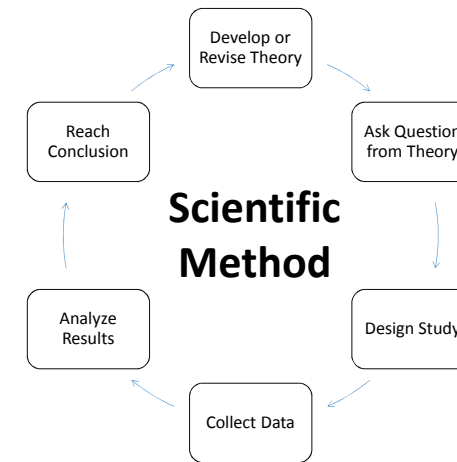


# Research Methods in Development

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## Developmental Research

- **Longitudinal Design:** Observe the same participants over time
  - **Example:** Terman's Study of the Gifted
  - **Advantage:** Observe change over time
  - **Disadvantages:** Much time and resources
    - **Cohort Effect:** Effects may be limited to the selected cohort of participants

## Developmental Research

- **Cross-Sectional Design:** Observe individuals of different ages at the same time
  - **Example:** Starkey (1992) arithmetic skills in children ages 2 to 4
  - **Advantage:** Requires less time and resources
  - **Disadvantages:** May not reflect changes in an individual over time
    - **Cohort effect:** Differences between group may be due to the cohort, not true developmental differences

## Developmental Research

- **Sequential Designs:** Different groups of participants are followed over time
  - Combines advantages of Longitudinal Designs with Cross-Sectional Designs
  - Strongest research design in child developmental research

## Developmental Research

- **Naturalistic Observation:** Observe individuals in their normal environment
  - **Example:** Trawick-Smith (2010) observations of 4-5 year olds' play in Puerto Rico
  - **Advantage:** Valuable information about development in realistic contexts
  - **Disadvantages**
    - Observer bias
    - Time consuming
    - Observations must be repeated in a variety of settings to gain generalizability

## Developmental Research

- **Structured Observation:** Present an identical situation to many individuals and record their behavior
  - **Example:** Strange Situation (Ainsworth, 1969)
  - **Advantages**
    - Enables direct comparison between children
    - Efficient use of time
  - **Disadvantage:** May not reflect development in natural situations

## Developmental Research

- **Experimental Method:** Participants are randomly assigned to treatment and control groups to test whether a hypothesized variable influences development
  - **Example:** Cameron, Rutland, Brown, & Douch (2006) study of children's attitudes towards other cultural/ethnic groups
  - **Advantage:** Test causal hypotheses
  - **Disadvantage:** Difficulty in manipulating many variables of interest to developmental psychologists

## Developmental Research

- **Qualitative Research:** Open-ended observation of children, mostly in natural settings, to provide a “thick description” of children's development
  - **Example:** Parsai (2014) study of prosocial and empathetic behaviors during sociodramatic play
  - **Advantage:** Detailed stories of development
  - **Disadvantage:** Not generalizable to other contexts

## Developmental Research

- **Cross-Cultural Research:** Compare multiple cultures on developmental outcomes.
  - **Example:** Gerber and Dean (1957) examination of newborns in Kampala, Uganda
  - **Advantage:** Identify universality vs. specificity of developmental outcomes
  - **Disadvantage:** Difficult to construct equivalent methods for different cultures

## Research Methods Conclusion

- **Evidence-Based Practice:** Use of strategies in intervention that research studies found to be effective in promoting development

“Multicultural scholars...have raised concerns about traditional research methods, particularly in the study of children of diverse backgrounds. They argue that some researchers have systematically excluded subjects from [minority] groups. Further, when children of [minority] cultural groups are included in studies, they are regularly compared with their white, middle class [American] peers on measures or behavior that reflect the dominant culture’s values....In such comparisons, children of [minority] groups are often portrayed as less competent” (Trawick-Smith, 2014, p. 23).

“Professionals must use care not to assume that conclusions or recommendations of researchers always apply to all individuals or ethnic groups” (Trawick-Smith, 2014, p. 24).