

Looking Forward Through the Lifespan: Developmental Psychology

Candida Peterson

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Do you have an interest in human development? Or want to understand the lifespan of humans? If so, the latest edition of the text *Looking Forward through the Lifespan: Developmental Psychology*, by Candida Peterson, is an indispensable resource for students, psychologists, and educators. Peterson's book is a poignant account of human life and tells of the doings of humankind through the 21st century.

This book is an introduction to the field of developmental psychology and an excellent reference guide for even the most experienced among us. It provides an insightful and thorough coverage of the practical skills required to navigate a developmental framework. The reader is directed through each domain of development, experiencing theory in action with real-life examples, engaging illustrations, and practical case studies. The addition of neurocognition and a stronger focus on the cross-cultural implications and considerations of local Indigenous Australian/New Zealand experiences reflects an appreciation and sensitivity that was missed in previous editions. To enhance the reader's learning experience, the author thoughtfully incorporates 'My Virtual Child' — a personalised learning opportunity to critically think and apply the theory of each chapter; encouraging readers to put content into practice.

The preface poignantly muses, 'the uniqueness of each human lifespan and the personal idiosyncrasies that make the study of lives in progress a fascinating enterprise' (p. i). In this quote Peterson reflects a cheerful optimism and insight into the unique journey of human development across the lifespan, guiding the reader from infancy through to old age in a chronological chapter-by-chapter organisation, with each covering the latest standpoints in all domains of development. The comprehensive and systematic explanations and materials have gone above and beyond previous text editions, with an interrelationship between theory, research and applications through the efficient use of vibrant figures and boxes to highlight key points, all of which are compelling.

The only criticism is a lack of opportunity for self-assessment. Each chapter could include activities and questions that require deeper problem solving and higher-level thinking to assist readers in their comprehension and understanding of the text. This assessment could be provided alongside the supplementary materials for those who may choose to extend their knowledge in this way.

In conclusion, *Looking Forward through the Lifespan: Developmental Psychology*, in its sixth edition, deserves its place on the shelf next to the previous five — a resource of continuity and professionalism; and well crafted by Candida Peterson. It would be apt to leave the final words with the author, who eloquently reflects: 'it is an exciting

time to be writing about human development and lifelong psychological growth' in a period where there have been 'significant scientific breakthroughs that strengthen grounds of optimism'. The reviewer, and I'm sure others in the field of psychology, could not agree more.

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Psychology in Education Critical Theory—Practice

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The synopsis of *Psychology in Education* recommends the text for 'readers who are interested in the innovative development and application of psychological theories and practices in education'. It is an edited text with 12 chapter contributions by scholars from Australia, South Africa, the United Kingdom and the United States. The chapters involve the application of critical theory to discuss the function of education, the work of the psychologist in education, 21st-century competencies, and the articulation of values in psychological practice. Although the text contains a critique of current theory and practice in educational psychology — in particular, its relation to the deficit model suggested to be fundamental in IQ testing — its central purpose is theoretical and philosophical.

The underlying tenet of this book is the notion that educational psychology is plagued by a focus on assessing and labelling children, and that it misses the crucial imperative of educational practice to be transformative by building on the strengths and open-ended possibilities that come from a contextual community perspective. Critical theorists, using the values-based proposition that education should foster social justice, democratic principles and community participation, exhort educational psychologists working in schools to use these objectives to create non-labelling, contextual/systemic interventions.

For readers interested in reviewing the theoretical background to educational and psychological practice, a number of chapters challenge the fundamental assumptions behind the case work/individual measurement model that the text suggests dominates the workplace of the average educational psychologist. Authors invite the practitioner to look closely at the assumptions underlying practice to reveal the ways acceptance of current approaches can perpetuate dominant, positivist and unjust theory. However, the attack on psychological assessment is general and global. Consideration needs to be given to the many practice and policy variations across localities and nations. Practitioners might argue that use of psychological testing does not preclude operating with an inclusive approach, that assessment methods have developed well beyond using IQ scores, that it is a social justice issue to provide appropriate services for those learners who struggle in universal education contexts, that educational psychologists