
Book and Resource Reviews

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Developmental Sport and Exercise Psychology: A Lifespan Perspective

By Maureen R. Weiss (Ed.). Copyright 2004 by Fitness Information Technology, Inc. P.O. Box 4425, University Avenue, Morgantown, WV 26504.

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Most images we have of sport and exercise psychology involve elite level performers. Not surprisingly, sport and exercise psychology textbooks have typically emphasized this group of participants, with only occasional mention of youth or older adult sport participants. In *Developmental Sport and Exercise Psychology: A Lifespan Perspective*, Maureen Weiss (editor) and contributing authors examine concepts from sport and exercise psychology and specific issues affecting participants from youth to older adulthood. In accomplishing this considerable feat, Weiss has assembled a formidable group of contributing authors representing various sport and exercise psychology topics, including Thelma Horn (self-perceptions), Robert Brustad (social influences in sport), and Dan Gould (self-regulation skills). The resulting incorporation of a lifespan approach to a sport and exercise psychology textbook is long overdue and fills a gap in current offerings. This edited book highlights the paucity of research in the youth to older adult populations, and advocates a developmental and lifespan approach to future research in sport and exercise psychology. Therefore this book will, at the very least, “. . . encourage researchers in the field to take a lifespan developmental approach” (Penny McCullagh, back cover). However, it goes well beyond encouraging researchers.

In many ways, this book parallels the “birth to older adult” approach that has been adopted in motor development and growth and maturation texts (although I do not suspect that many sport psychology professionals will carve out a niche working with infants and toddlers just yet!). This comprehensive, though bulky (it comes in at a sizable 596 pages) textbook is appropriate for graduate and upper-level undergraduate courses and seminars focusing on developmental issues. Coaches, teachers, and gerontology and exercise professionals will also benefit from this book, as it pertains to the majority of the population with which they work rather than the elite few. However, the book is less appropriate for an introductory undergraduate or graduate sport and exercise psychology course, as several basic topics including personality, group processes, arousal, and much of the information from exercise psychology are absent.

Throughout the text chapters are organized largely based on author preference. A related issue is the lack of consistently applied definitions for concepts (such as the age groups) presented in the various chapters. An introductory chapter providing definitions, an organizational framework, learner expectations, and context for

the book might enhance the reader's understanding of the subsequent chapters (it should be noted that several of the individual chapter authors utilize this format). Crocker and colleagues (chapter 7) among others offer an excellent chapter format that begins with examples, followed by a review of basic concepts, a more in-depth discussion of the topic, and future research suggestions.

The book is organized into four sections: (a) Fundamental Concepts, (b) Youth and Adolescence, (c) Young, Middle and Older Adulthood, and (d) Lifespan Topics. Most of the information in the sections is academic and research oriented. As such, the reader who is expecting imagery scripts and cognitive restructuring examples involving youth to older adults will be disappointed. However, the applied sport psychology professional will benefit from the developmental information from the book, as it provides a chronological timeline for understanding the pertinent issues across the various age groups. Applied information is also provided in the chapters on self-regulation, which contain brief reviews of goal setting, self-talk, and imagery. The book is also filled with colorful examples and anecdotes that hold the reader's attention and illustrate the concepts from the chapters.

Appropriately enough, the first section presents the theoretical and methodological bases for the subsequent developmental perspective discussed throughout the book. In their review of methodology (Chapter 3), Robert Schutz and Ilhyeok Park present a compelling argument for longitudinal studies and appropriate statistics to analyze them (e.g., latent growth modeling)—particularly salient information given the scarcity of these approaches in our field.

The next two sections offer developmental-specific reviews of self-perceptions, emotional and social issues, and self-regulation. The Youth and Adolescence section tends to emphasize sports rather than exercise or physical activity. It is unclear why more exercise and physical activity related content is not included given the current obesity and physical inactivity epidemics in the U.S. and the inclusion of "exercise" in the title of the book. Another concern with this section is the focus on psychological factors with little acknowledgment of their interaction, particularly in adolescence, with biological and sociocultural factors. Socialization into and out of sport among U.S. adolescents, for instance, is determined largely by the interactions among maturation, gender, and sociocultural factors (see Kontos & Malina, 2003 for a review of this and other youth sport issues). In spite of this shortcoming, the discussion of critical development periods (similar to the motor development literature) for concepts such as self-perception (chapter 6) and emotions such as anxiety (chapter 7) is multidimensional and thorough.

The Young, Middle and Older Adulthood section is similar in content to the previous section and includes an examination of motivational processes for older adults by Martyn Standage and Joan Duda (chapter 13). The chapter (12) by Peter Crocker and colleagues on emotional experience in sport across adulthood is particularly well done. Vibrant examples such as "Jocko," the 60 year-old male masters swimmer who views aging as a competitive opportunity grab the reader's attention and maintain it throughout this entertaining chapter. Their review of Socioemotional Selectivity Theory offers a refreshing alternative to the cognitive-behavioral paradigms that drive most sport and exercise psychology theory. The brevity of this section draws attention to how little is known about the psychology of middle and older adult sport and exercise participants.

The Life Span Topics section offers the most integrated information, examining issues such as moral development (chapter 17, Gloria Solomon), gender