Example of a Well-Designed Course in:

"DEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY"

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1. Specific Context

- **The subject matter: Developmental Psychology**
- **The title of the course: "Child and Adolescent Development"**
- **Typical class size: 35**
- **Level of the course: 3000 level course, undergraduate majors, mid-level**
- **Mode of delivery:**
  - Face-to-face
- **Type of institution:**
  - 4-year university

2. General Description of the Course

People develop every minute of every day. "Child and Adolescent Psychology" is the study of how our physical, socio-emotional, and cognitive abilities change during childhood and adolescence.

Students in this course will learn fundamental information about important figures and their contributions to our understanding of developmental issues. The course will emphasize how the environment and heredity interact to shape developmental trajectories and how basic experimental research applies to everyday questions asked by parents and policymakers. For instance, students will learn from basic research findings that the adolescent brain functions differently than an adult brain, and will discuss what this finding might mean for policy questions such as whether an adolescent should be tried as an adult for criminal behavior.

Students will explore course topics through class discussion, reading material from scholarly and popular press video and print media, interviews with members of the community, and through a variety of demonstrations and active learning techniques.

3. Big Purpose of the Course

As a result of having taken this course, students will be able to explain how research about major topics within the field influences both social policy and individual beliefs about developmental issues. Students will learn to find and use scientific information

to critically evaluate questions that policymakers, scientists, and everyday people ask about developmental issues.

4. Important Situational Factors/Special Pedagogical Challenge

Context

- Approximately 35 students
- Mid-level undergraduate course for majors
- Meets twice week for 75 minutes each time
- Course is delivered through face-to-face interaction in the classroom and use of online resources

Context of Learning Situation

The course is for majors. The department has recently developed an assessment tool with goals for what fundamental knowledge students will have after taking this course. The APA has goals for psychology majors that this course incorporates.

Nature of the subject

Convergent: there is typically only one correct answer to fundamental material such as important contributors, basic research methods, the order and milestones of Piagetian stages, etc.

Divergent: students will have opportunities to discuss "hot" topics in the field that have more than one interpretation. For instance, students will discuss research that debates opinions on breastfeeding, birth plans, contributions of genes and environment to intelligence and gender development, whether adolescence is a man-made stage, and whether moral values have an innate foundation or are completely cultural.

Characteristics of learners

Full-time students, Psychology majors, some interested in graduate school, many students work part-time, several athletes, the course is one of two options for the "developmental psychology" requirement, students will have introductory psych as a prerequisite and statistics and research methods as a pre or co-requisite. Students usually come in thinking that developmental psychology is mostly "common sense". Students typically begin the course feeling uncomfortable with the application and integration of material required of my pedagogical style.

Characteristics of teachers

I am a first year faculty member with a doctoral degree in developmental psychology. My expertise is in social and cognitive development in childhood, so the adolescent component of this course will be less familiar. I value helping students to understand how they might use findings from basic developmental research in their everyday lives. I believe students have truly learned something in my class if they can recognize concepts in novel situations. For instance, when we discuss examples of correlational research and limits of the conclusions we can draw from this type of

design, can students recognize in popular press articles when the reporter makes a causal claim from a finding based on correlational research, and explain why that might be problematic?

Special Pedagogical Challenges

Teacher: With 35 students in this class and 50 in my other class, in addition to being a first year faculty, I worry that I will become overwhelmed with grading and preparing for class if I do too many assessment and learning activities. One response to this challenge is that I could make use of group assessments rather than individual assessments, and limit the number of learning activities to what I think I can adequately prepare for in the first time or two that I teach this course.

Students: I see two possibly major challenges here:

1. Students may not be used to being so interactive, and I worry that it will be challenging to keep up with all the moving parts. I plan to do "weekly reminder" emails to help students plan their time, and a "what's next" slide before class is over each day.
2. Students may think that this course is "common sense", perhaps making it difficult for them to believe research that contradicts their intuitions. By providing students with opportunities to think about and discuss contradictory research findings and current policy debates, my hope is to help students understand that there are many issues that fly in the face of "common sense".

3-Column Table

Use this table below to provide information about these three aspects of your course design.

Learning Goals	Assessment Activities	Learning Activities
1. **Foundational Knowledge:** • Acquire knowledge about the cognitive, socio-emotional, and physical changes taking place from conception to adolescence, and how those changes sometimes depend on culture and developmental context. • Acquire knowledge about important scientists and their contributions, both past and present.	• Create timeline of important studies and developmental milestones using paper and pencil, Prezi, or online tools. • R.A.T • Exams • one minute papers: prompts will range from "what was unclear" to "how can you use this information in your life"	• Timeline: students will regularly fill in their timeline over the course of the semester on their own using information from reading material and class, and will have some time in groups during class to compare notes. • R.A.T is both an assessment and a learning activity. • After each exam, students will have the option to learn from their mistakes and earn partial credit by explaining the questions they got wrong (what led you to choose the incorrect answer, why is it incorrect, and why is the correct answer right?)
2. **Application:** • Apply relevant research to address major questions of the field and questions that policymakers and parents are faced with in everyday life.	• Sweetie Speed Dating (based on the "Sweetie Moment" activity): low stakes assessment, I walk around and listen, debrief at the end. Students will share the two most interesting things they learned in one minute to a partner, making sure to explain how this information relates to course material (repeat until everyone has discussed their Sweetie experience with 4	• "Sweetie Moment": have a conversation with a Sweetie (can be mom, significant other) about a developmental question being discussed in class (e.g., students might discuss their mom's opinion of whether gay couples should be able to adopt children) and one relevant research study about this issue (e.g., children of gay parents are just as well- adjusted as children of heterosexual parents). Students will gather information about why their Sweetie has the opinion they have and what

	different partners). Students will be assessed by their peers on a scale of 1-5 for "application of course content" "articulation", "preparedness" • Toy Activity: Based on what they learned from the toy store, groups will create a new toy or improve upon the toy they researched earlier. They will create a 3 minute VoiceThread or Prezi presentation that will either a) be a sales pitch to an investor, or b) a TV advertisement for their toy.). Students will consider how cultural experiences have shaped the toy they created (e.g., gender and physical expectations) • You Tube activity: students share their videos in a small group, explaining what it exemplifies. The group then chooses the one "best" video to add to a video library. Students will then look through all of the other groups' videos in the video library (about 5 videos that they have not seen) and will try to	information or misconception might be influencing that opinion. • <u>Toy activity</u>: after learning about physical, cognitive, and socio-emotional progress through early childhood (3 to 6 years), students will be put into groups and will visit a toy store (in person or online), choose an item, and explain how the toys influence physical cognitive, and/or socio-emotional development, how they know what age they are appropriate for, and how they might be improved. Students will think about how genetic traits (e.g., temperament) and environmental issues (e.g., cost of toys, distraction in environment) could influence how children interact with the toy. • <u>You Tube activity</u>: students find a video that best exemplifies a concept learned in class (e.g., the 2 word stage of language development; a secondary circular reaction, etc.)

	identify and explain the concept being exemplified.	
3. **Integration:** • Identify environmental (e.g., poverty) and genetic factors, and explain how they interact to shape individual development. • Ultimately, students will integrate concepts from this course with other courses they have taken, in order to make connections to their own lives.	• Congressional Panel Presentation: each group will present to a congressional panel (made up of one student from each of the other groups; panels will change for each presentation) on the topic described in their letter. The panel will judge the presentation based on typical review criteria generally used to determine grant funding. • Interview Paper: Students will integrate information gathered from popular press outlets, scholarly sources, and interviews with course material. A rubric will be provided and used to assess the final draft. Students will first turn in a proposal which will outline the major sticking points in their topic (the selected topics specifically focus on the genetic/environment theme), the popular press and scholarly sources they found, misreporting in popular press articles, limitations of the	• Letter to Congressman: Students will write a paper as a group (roles will be described and students will decide who will fill each role). They should define a research question, explain why it is an important one to study (who will it help, or how will it better society?), what we know about it already (finding at least 2 sources outside of course material), what genetic and environmental factors influence this developmental issue, what kind of data we should collect and how we could collect it. • Interview Project: students will choose from a list of controversial topics provided, gather background information from popular press outlets, peer reviewed journal articles, and will develop a structured interview (10 questions) that they will conduct with two people who will provide unique perspectives (at least one person must be someone they do not know from the community). For instance, students may research the topic of the medicalization of the birthing process. They may then interview a midwife and OBGYN, or a woman who opted for a homebirth or hospital birth.

	research studies, who they plan to interview and why, and the 10 questions they plan to ask during their interviews. Feedback will be provided on the proposals, but will not be graded.	
4. **Human Dimension:** **Learning about ONE-SELF:** • cognitively, socio-emotionally, and physically become aware of how their environment and heredity may have influenced and will continue to influence their development. **Interacting with OTHERS:** • Understand how developmental backgrounds that are different from their own may have both challenges and advantages, and understand others in terms of those backgrounds.	• Self Reflection: after each unit, students will reflect using a one-minute in-class writing assignment, on how the information they have been learning applies to their own developmental pathway (past, present, future). • Self and Other: Sweetie Moment, Congressional Letter/Panel, Interview Project	• Sweetie Moment, Congressional Letter/Panel, Interview Project
5. **Caring:** • Discover that development is exciting, complex and evolving. Enjoy using what you have learned to think	• Letter to Congressman, Sweetie, Interview, Toy Project • Timeline: students can trace how research has changed the way we think about	• Letter to Congressman, Sweetie, Interview, Toy Project • Timeline: students can trace how research has changed the way we think about development over the past 100 years

deeply about relevant everyday issues on a personal, societal, and global scale.	development over the past 100 years • Forward reflection: at the end of the course, students will choose the one thing they think is critical to dedicate research funding to and explain why they think this issue, above all else, is so important to better understand.	• Forward reflection: at the end of the course, students will choose the one thing they think is critical to dedicate research funding to and explain why they think this issue, above all else, is so important to better understand.
6. **How to Continue Learning:** • Be able to identify sources they can turn to for reliable information (e.g., the American Psychological Association vs. CNN) to answer questions that may be important in their own lives. • Be able to read and synthesize important information from research reports.	• Letter to Congressman, Interview Project • Self reflection • Forward Reflection: students will identify the 3 things they learned in the course that they think they would use in their own lives (explain how), and identify at least one way they could learn more information about each beyond the course.	• Letter to Congressman, Interview Project: must find scholarly sources to complete this project, must be able to understand which is a scholarly vs. popular media outlet • Forward and self reflection

Sweetie Moments: I credit Dennis Proffitt from the University of Virginia for this activity. I have expanded it to include the "speed dating" component in order to easily assess students' effort, and to motivate students to do a good job and come prepared to articulate the interesting things they learned. Students have reported that they enjoyed both parts of this activity, with many students reporting that they were surprised at how much fun they had talking to other people who were not taking the class about what they were learning, and how this helped them to crystallize their own understanding of a topic.

Interview Project: I have found that providing students with models for what they might say to people they are asking to interview, guidelines on how to create good interview questions, tips for their final paper (e.g., how to selectively choose quotes from their interviews vs. what may be better paraphrased), guidelines for appropriate conduct when interacting with members of the community, a template for informed consent agreements, and suggestions for places where they may find willing participants has really helped make this project a successful one. Students are initially a bit overwhelmed by the work, but because they have an opportunity to do the proposal and get feedback without being graded, they soon become enthusiastic about their topic, who they are interviewing, and what they are finding in the popular press.

YouTube Activity: Students have done an incredible job each time I have done this activity finding examples of developmental phenomena on YouTube. The clips are usually cute or funny and often add depth to the conversation when they discuss clips showing families of various cultural, socioeconomic, and ethnic backgrounds. I think my next step is to create an ongoing library of these clips and use them for another type of active learning activity in the future.

5. Weekly Schedule

Week	Topic	In class	Out of class
1.	Introduction, study skills, History, Theory	Syllabus R.A.T. T/F Pre-assessment Begin time-line together (demonstrate how to use online tool; will use this throughout course)	Read Syllabus Ch. 1
2.	Research Strategies	Jigsaw (one group for each of the 4 studies in Campos, identify IV, DV, type of design, results limitations)	Ch. 2 Campos journal article
3.	Biological Foundations	Discussion of Interview Project R.A.T. on Ch. 3 Behavior Genetics activity One Minute Paper	Ch. 3
4.	Prenatal Development & Birth	National Geographic "In the Womb" to discuss prenatal development Sweetie Speed Dating Class discussion on birth	Sweetie Moment: Popular Press articles/video on debate about safety of home birth and hospital birth
5.	Infancy	Infant Research Methods activity Groupwork: Timelines Exam 1	Ch. 4 Self Reflection Choose topic for Interview Project
6.	Physical Growth	Discussion of Exam 1, study skills Case Study activity (based off Steinberg): local teen stabbed brother to death. Why? Implications for social policy	Ch. 5 Steinberg review article Exam Corrections (optional)
7.	Cognitive	YouTube activity (examples of real	Ch. 6

	Development	children in each Piagetian stage) Video demo of DeLoache work	DeLoache article You Tube activity
8.	Cognitive Development	Toy activity presentations One Minute Paper	Ch. 7 Toy activity group research
9.	Intelligence	Debate about gene/environment contributions to intelligence take IQ test used for WW1 army recruits (discuss bias)	Ch. 8 Interview Proposal Due
10.	Intelligence	Dweck activity (including R.A.T.) Group work: Timelines Exam 2	Dweck popular press articles Self Reflection
11.	Language Development	Defining language activity(Colopinto) Video activity (name that stage/word-learning strategy)	Ch. 9 Exam 2 corrections (optional) Colopinto (NY times)
12.	Emotional Development	Groups: Create pamphlet for parents: what should they know about emotional change from infancy through adolescence?	Ch. 10 Individually brainstorm ideas for pamphlet
13.	Self and Social Understanding	Mirror Neuron activity ToM/Inhibitory Control demo	Ch 11. Interview Project Due
14.	Moral Development	Reflections on Interview Project One Minute Paper	Ch. 12 Project Implicit/Moral Reasoning online activity
15.	Moral Development	Project Implicit/Moral Reasoning activity Groupwork: Timelines Exam 3	Self Reflection
16.	Wrapping Up	Congressional Panels Forward Reflection Discussion	Exam 3 corrections (optional) Letter to Congressman Forward Reflection

- Using a combination of low-stakes and high stakes assessments provides students with opportunities to practice what they have learned before being assessed in a way that majorly affects their grade. It provides them with frequent and immediate feedback to help them recognize when they do or do not understand important ideas and concepts. Doing the active learning activities in class provides students with a motivation to complete the outside assignments in a meaningful way (e.g., don't just read, but read with a purpose in mind). Finally, encouraging students to apply what they have learned to questions that are important to their own lives makes the value of the course salient.

6. Evidence of Impact (optional)

I have taught this course three times. Each time the course has been slightly different, but I have always done the Interview Project. I consistently receive unsolicited feedback from students about the Interview Project. For example, one student emailed to say,

> "I did find really great articles from PsychInfo about my topic, however I found two amazing ones in the library database that are extremely extensive and very informative that I would LOVE to use. They might not be published in a psychology journal, but they are peer-reviewed, and include many different studies and court cases that uphold their sides. These two articles would make an amazing and very interesting case and I would love love love to use them. Is that OK? I just love the ones I have right now because they all interconnect- the first one I found was by Judge Johnathon Lippman about a new court system for teens he was implementing in New York. The second one was all the reasons that implementation is amazing, and the third one pointed out some of the issues. Not only that, but the third one I found (the one I forgot to attach in the second email I'm sorry) cites Laurence Steinberg- the article we read in class about the neuroscience of the brain. Thank you! p.s. I've never been so pumped over a research paper before (and I've had to write QUITE a few)."

I think this email demonstrates a high level of engagement, information literacy, integration, and application of material from the course.

From course evaluations, I received comments such as, "The instructor's strength included "raising the bar" for required effort associated with the class…Do not change a thing, I loved the challenge," and, "She did a wonderful job getting us involved with different activities to make class more enjoyable and easier to understand."

7. Most Exciting Aspect of the Re-Designed Course for Me (optional)

I've enjoyed thinking of creative activities and demonstrations to both help students learn material and to assess their learning. Using creative techniques keeps students engaged, challenges them in unique ways, and helps highlight the practical value of the course content. Importantly, by providing different types of learning activities –

from the traditional reading and writing, to less traditional YouTube and VoiceThread activities, students from all types of backgrounds have opportunities to excel. This is a concept advocated by my university called Universal Design for Learning – offering choices in the method that students learn and are assessed improves learning for all students.

8. My Contact Information

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