

Table 1.3. Examples of Theories and their Underlying Assumptions.

	THEORY: THEORIST				
	ETHOLOGICAL THEORY: BOWLBY'S THEORY OF ATTACHMENT	ERIKSON'S PSYCHOSOCIAL THEORY	LEARNING THEORY: SKINNER'S BEHAVIORAL THEORY	COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENTAL THEORY: PIAGET'S CONSTRUCTIVISM	BRONFENBRENNER'S ECOLOGICAL SYSTEMS PERSPECTIVE
MESSAGE	Development is the product of biologically-based species-general programs shaped by human genetic and evolutionary history.	Humans progress through eight psychosocial conflicts, from trust vs. mistrust to integrity vs. despair.	Development is the product of learning from the consequences of one's behavior through operant conditioning.	Development proceeds through four stages of cognitive development, from sensorimotor to formal operations.	Development is the result of reciprocal social interactions between an active person and their social partners from in a series of nested contexts.
HUMAN NATURE- BLANK, GOOD, OR BAD	In our physiology as shaped by evolution	Good (capable of growth)	Blank (neither good nor bad)	Good (active, curious)	Good, bad, & blank (biological predispositions toward both)
NATURE-NURTURE	Nature	Nature and nurture equally	Nurture	More nature (maturational constraints) but also nurture (experience is also important)	Nature and nurture equally, although more focus on nurture
ACTIVE-PASSIVE	Passive (humans are influenced by biological forces beyond their control)	Active	Passive (humans are shaped by environment)	Active (constructing own understanding)	Active and passive (Reciprocally initiate and receive)
CONTINUITY- DISCONTINUITY	Tends to be continuous, but may have sensitive periods	Discontinuous (stagelike)	Continuous (habits gradually increase or decrease in strength)	Discontinuous (stagelike)	Both continuous and discontinuous
UNIVERSAL- CONTEXT SPECIFIC	Universal	Universal (although stages may be expressed differently in different cultures)	Context specific (direction of development depends on experiences)	Universal	Context-specific and universal, but more focus on context
META-THEORY	Maturational	Organismic	Mechanistic	Organismic	Contextual

