

The bioecological theory of Urie Bronfenbrenner and its applications in research

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Readings in this class will be in both English (10 readings) and Portuguese (8 readings). Discussion will be in Portuguese (except where I need help with words!) and all your writing will be in Portuguese.

The major goal of this class is to provide you with a good sense of Bronfenbrenner's bioecological theory and how to apply it in research. The more specific aims are for you:

- To think about positivist and contextualist paradigms, and the methods that are appropriate in each;
- To read different chapters by Bronfenbrenner, to see the way in which his theory developed between 1988 and 2001;
- To compare the original readings of Bronfenbrenner with the ways in which he has been interpreted by two sets of Brazilian scholars;
- To evaluate the ways in which Bronfenbrenner's theory has been applied in research, primarily in Brazil;
- To think about how to apply his theory in your own research.

Requirements

*Paragraph and Question about Each Text*

- Each week, except where noted below, you will be expected to read each of the texts (one or two per week) and, for each text, write one paragraph about one of the major ideas presented in the text and one question about the text that you think will be helpful for the class to discuss.
- The paragraph(s) and question(s) need to be in my mail box in the Institute by no later than 10.00 on Monday morning. Paragraphs and questions that are late will have points removed.

Each of the paragraphs and questions will be graded, using the following rubric:

	Excellent	Good	Weak	Nonexistent
Major idea	You chose one of the most important aspects of this reading and wrote about it accurately. (Score 4-5)	What you chose to write about was not particularly important, but you wrote about it accurately. (Score 2-3)	You either chose an unimportant issue to write about, or chose one that was important but did not write about it accurately. (Score 1)	Unimportant, not understood correctly, or nonexistent. (Score 0)
Question	Very likely to lead to an interesting discussion in class. (score 3)	Might lead to an interesting discussion in class. (Score 2)	Unlikely to lead to an interesting discussion in class. (Score 1)	Irrelevant or nonexistent. (Score 0)

Grades for each of the paragraphs and questions will be: A = 6-8; B = 4-5; C = 2-3; D 0-1.

Only your best 14 scores will be counted towards the final grade (your worst 4 scores will be dropped). Your total grade will be calculated as follows: A 84-112; B 56-83; C 28-55; D 0-27.

### *Final Paper*

In this paper you will briefly summarize the main aspects of Bronfenbrenner's theory and show how you might apply the theory in your own field of research. The paper should be no more than 12 pages, and less than half should be devoted to summarizing the theory; the most important part of the paper is to show how you would apply the theory appropriately. I'm not expecting that you will actually do the research, but I do want you to be able to show what you would need to do if you wanted to apply the theory appropriately.

The deadline for the paper is 17 November, at 5 pm, with papers turned into my mailbox. Late papers will lose one grade if the paper is turned in before the start of class on Wednesday 22 November (that is, a paper that would have been graded A will receive a B) or will lose two grades if the paper is turned in by Wednesday 29 November.

The rubric for grading the papers is as follows:

	Excellent	Good	Weak	Unmentionable
Summary of the theory (no more than half the paper).	A good, clear, and accurate summary of the major components of the theory. (Score 4)	Many, but not all of the major components of the theory, described accurately, or all of the components, with some inaccuracy. (Score 3)	Not all of the major components and those that are described do not seem to be well understood. (Score 1-2)	Not worth considering, or plagiarized. (Score 0)
Application in research	You have shown nicely what would need to be done in order to study this issue in a way that Bronfenbrenner would have approved. (Score 5-6)	This could be a good piece of research, but there is at least one major way in which it would not satisfy the theory's requirements. (Score 3-4)	This could be a good piece of research, but no-one would confuse it for a study based on Bronfenbrenner's theory. (Score 1-2)	Neither research nor anything that could be said to be based on the theory. (Score 0)

Grades for your paper will be: 8-10 A; 6-7 B; 4-5 C; D 0-3

The total score for the paragraphs and questions will be worth 49% of your final grade and the final paper is worth 51%. In other words, if you have a B for your paragraphs/questions and an A for the final paper you will end up with an A; getting an A for the paragraphs/questions and a B for the final paper will result in a B.

Remember that I am British (as in "tempo británico"). In other words, class starts on time, at 9. One late arrival will be allowed (things happen!), but after that late-comers will be credited with half attendance for that class.

9 August: Introductions  
No readings

### **Different paradigms**

16 August:

Tudge, J. (2006). *The everyday lives of young children: Culture, class, and child-rearing in diverse societies*. Manuscript in preparation. Part of Chapter 3: Theory

23 August:

Goldhaber, D.E. (2000). *Theories of human development: Integrative perspectives*. Mountain View, CA: Mayfield Publishing. Chapter 1

30 August:

Silva, R. C. (1998). A falsa dicotomia qualitativo-quantitativo: Paradigmas que informam nossas práticas de pesquisa. In Romanelli, G. & Biasoli-Alves, Z. M. M. (Eds.), *Diálogos metodológicos sobre prática de pesquisa* (pp. 31-50). Ribeirão Preto: Editora Legis Summa

Guba, E. G., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1994). Competing paradigms in qualitative research. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 105-117). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

### **Bronfenbrenner on Bronfenbrenner**

6 September:

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1988). Interacting systems in human development. Research paradigms: Present and future. In N. Bolger, A. Caspi, G. Downey, & M. Moorehouse (Eds.), *Persons in context: Developmental processes* (pp. 25-49). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

13 September:

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1995). Developmental ecology through space and time: A future perspective. In P. Moen, G. H. Elder, Jr., & K. Lüscher (Eds.), *Examining lives in context: Perspectives on the ecology of human development* (pp. 619-647). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

20 September: **holiday**

27 September:

Bronfenbrenner, U., & Evans, G. W. (2000). Developmental science in the 21<sup>st</sup> century: Emerging questions, theoretical models, research designs and empirical findings. *Social Development*, 9(1), 115-125.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (2005). The bioecological theory of human development. In U. Bronfenbrenner (Ed.), *Making human beings human: Bioecological perspectives on human development* (pp. 3-15). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. (First published in 2001.)

### **Brasilians on Bronfenbrenner**

4 October:

Polonia, A. C., Dessen, M. A., & Silva, N. L. P. (2005). O modelo bioecológico de Bronfenbrenner: Contribuições para o desenvolvimento humano. In M. A. Dessen e A. L. Costa, Jr. (Eds.), *A ciência do desenvolvimento humano: Tendências atuais e perspectivas futuras* (pp. 71-89). Porto Alegre: Artmed.

Narvaz, M. G., & Koller, S. H. (2004). O modelo bioecológico do desenvolvimento humano. In S. H. Koller (Ed.), *Ecologia do desenvolvimento humano: Pesquisa e intervenção no Brasil* (pp. 51-65). São Paulo: Casa do Psicólogo.

## **Applying Bronfenbrenner**

11 October:

Tudge, J. R. H., Doucet, F., & Hayes, S. (2001). Teoria, método e análise: As interconexões no estudo das crianças e das famílias. *Contrapontos: Revista de Educação*, 1(3), 11-22.

Tudge, J. R. H. (2006). *The everyday lives of young children: Culture, class, and child-rearing in diverse societies*. Manuscript in preparation. Chapter 4: Methods.

18 October:

Alves, P. B. (2004). O estudo sobre crianças em situação de rua na perspectiva da teoria dos sistemas ecológicos: Contribuições teóricas e metodológicas. In S. Koller (Ed.), *Ecologia do desenvolvimento humano: Pesquisa e intervenção no Brasil* (pp. 121-141). São Paulo: Casa do Psicólogo.

Cecconello, A. M., & Koller, S. H. (2004). Inserção ecológica na comunidade: Uma proposta metodológica para o estudo de famílias em situação de risco. In S. Koller (Ed.), *Ecologia do desenvolvimento humano: Pesquisa e intervenção no Brasil* (pp. 121-141). São Paulo: Casa do Psicólogo.

25 October:

Silva, N. L. P., & Dessen, M. A. (2005). A família e suas inter-relações com o desenvolvimento humano. In M. A. Dessen e A. L. Costa, Jr. (Eds), *A ciência do desenvolvimento humano: Tendências atuais e perspectivas futuras* (pp. 151-167). Porto Alegre: Artmed.

De Antoni, C., & Koller, S. H. (2004). A pesquisa ecológica sobre violência no microsistema familiar. In S. Koller (Ed.), *Ecologia do desenvolvimento humano: Pesquisa e intervenção no Brasil* (pp. 311-335). São Paulo: Casa do Psicólogo

1 November:

Lisboa, C., & Koller, S. H. (2004). O microsistema escolar e os processos proximais: Exemplos de investigações científicas e intervenções práticas. In S. Koller (Ed.), *Ecologia do desenvolvimento humano: Pesquisa e intervenção no Brasil* (pp. 337-353). São Paulo: Casa do Psicólogo.

Tudge, J., Otero, D., Hogan, D., & Etz, K. (2003). Relations between the everyday activities of preschoolers and their teachers' perceptions of their competence in the first years of school. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 18, 42-64.

8 November: **Writing day**

15 November: **holiday**

**17 November: deadline for papers**

22-29 November: **Days for presentations**