

UNIVERSALLY RECOGNIZED CONTENT IN DEVELOPMENTAL THERAPY-DEVELOPMENTAL TEACHING (DTT)

Developmental domains and behavioral milestones from research and theory provide the content foundation for DTT.

The essential question for teachers and parents is, ***What are the students learning with DTT?*** To answer this question, consider DTT content: how it was selected and how it is organized into four universally recognized developmental domains with sequences of key milestones needed by all children as they mature.

How was DTT content selected?

To identify essential content for students with EBD, the Developmental Therapy Institute through the University of Georgia, the Georgia Department of Education, and the U.S. Department of Education began an extensive review of existing research and theory.

The goal was to identify and operationalize a broad knowledge base about personality development to build sequentially ordered content for teaching social, emotional, and behavioral competence. The assumption was that there are universal characteristics in child personality development that are benchmarks for emotional and behavioral maturation. Such milestones then guide programs for students of all age groups and grades in sequential steps toward increasingly mature competencies essential for success at school, home, and community between infancy and young adulthood.

The first step in defining such classroom-based content was to identify widely accepted constructs about personality development, behavior, and the ages when key indicators first emerge for typically developing children. This took us back to an extensive review of 164 theorists and researchers to identify widely recognized constructs of cognitive, social, emotional, and behavioral development that shape learning. (For those who seek an in depth study, we recommend the entire publication field of Developmental Psychology.)

In this limited space, here are a few of the first foundation contributors to what became the DTT content:

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| A. Bandura (<i>Social Learning Theory</i>) | J. Lovenger (<i>Foundations of Ego Development</i>) |
| R. Coles (<i>Moral Intelligence</i>) | M. Mahler & associates (<i>Attachment & Individuation</i>) |
| E. Erikson (<i>Identity and the Life Cycle</i>) | A. Maslow (<i>Hierarchy of Needs & Motivation</i>) |
| A. Freud (<i>Developmental Lines</i>) | J. Piaget (<i>Development of Thought</i>) |
| D. Hebb (<i>Organization of Behavior</i>) | R. Selman (<i>Interpersonal Understanding</i>) |
| J. Kagan & associates (<i>Mental Structures</i>) | E. Turiel (<i>Social Knowledge</i>) |
| L. Kohlberg (<i>Moral Development</i>) | |
| M. Lewis (<i>Emotional Development</i>) | |
| T. Lickona (<i>Character Development</i>) | |

Our findings from these experts centered around four broad categories: **(a) personality development, (b) cognitive and emotional learning, (c) moral and motivational development, and (d) the impact of social conditions on thinking and learning.**

As we completed our extensive review, four major developmental domains emerged: *Behavior* (DOING), *Communication* (SAYING), *Socialization* (RELATING), and *Cognition* (THINKING). Within these highly interdependent domains, a large pool of indicators of healthy personality development was formed. These descriptors were then organized into sequential developmental strands for specific ages and stages within each domain from birth through age 16. Competencies were defined further in observable (functional) behaviors of increasing complexity, each building on previous skills. Finally, to verify that every selected competency had content validity, each item was referenced directly to the original domain analyses.

What do these domains specifically include? Each domain contains life-processes in personality development that occur sequentially with increasing complexity from birth through 16 years. These domains are interdependent, each contributing essential elements to the total person. Within these domains, there also are key developmental milestones that can be identified in specific school-related behaviors.

The attached chart illustrates the relationships between domains, strands of typical development within the domains, and key milestone competencies for assessment, IEP planning, and teaching. Notice that there are five rows across each domain. These correspond to five stages of human development from birth to about age 16. These stages develop sequentially, build on each other, and are essentially culture free because they reflect universal qualities all people acquire as they mature.

Summary. Seminal research and theories about personality development shape the way parents, teachers, researchers, and neuroscientists view children and teens today. From this foundation, DTT content and instructional practices emerged. Today, this knowledge guides day-to-day instruction for students' healthy social-emotional development, success in school, personal responsibility, and maturity at every stage of their development.

Attachment: *DTT Domains and Key Sequential Milestones*

DTT Domains and Key Sequential Milestones

<p>"DOING"</p> <p>Domain: BEHAVIOR</p> <p>The Sensorimotor-Behavioral System</p>	
Major Developmental Strands	DTT MILESTONES
Sensory-Motor	Aware & Attend Respond with Motor Movements
Experiential Activity	Play Participate in Structured Activities
Group Conformity	Follow Rules and Expectations Participate as Group Member
Personal Responsibility	Regulate Own Behavior Accept Responsibility for Behavior
Social Responsibility	Seek New Skills Participate in Group Governance

<p>"SAYING"</p> <p>Domain: COMMUNICATION</p> <p>The Social-Communication System</p>	
Major Developmental Strands	DTT MILESTONES
Preverbal Speech	Produce Sounds

	Attend & Responding Produce Verbal Approximations
Spontaneous Language	Produce Words & Sentences Understand Word Meanings Share Basic Information
Socialized Language	Describe Self & Others Participate in Discussions
Self-Expression in Social Exchange	Express Feelings Communicate for Relationships
Abstract Idea-Oriented Language	Use Abstract & Figurative Speech Recognize Views of Others Communicate Social Understanding Express Ideas & Values

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<p>"RELATING"</p> <p>Domain: SOCIALIZATION</p> <p><i>The Social-Affective System</i></p>	
Major Developmental Strands	DTT MILESTONES
Attachment	Aware of Others Interactions With Adults
Autonomy & Mastery	Interactions With Peers Play & Friendship Self Esteem
Social Uniformity	Conform to Others Use Values in Social Interactions
Social Self	Assert Self in Group Recognize Social Meaning

	Reciprocate Relationships (Empathy & Understanding)
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<p>"THINKING"</p> <p>Domain: COGNITION</p> <p>The Cognitive System</p>	
Major Developmental Strands	DTT MILESTONES
Sensory-Motor & Memory	Attend & Recognize Respond & Imitate Visual Discrimination (Match & Sort)
Body Coordination	Fine and Large Muscle Skills Games & Dexterity
Pre schematic Concept Formation	Label Use of Objects Count Understand Opposites & Differences Categorize & Sequence
Formal Operations	Read, Write & Spell Number, Time, & Mathematics Logical Reasoning Human Behavior Personal Problem Solving & Daily Living