

# Principles of psychology



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Nature vs. Nurture Is our development and abilities the result of inherently deterministic genetic factors or are we the result of the environment molding us to the way we are? This is the main question that many psychologists ask when they are trying to assess certain cognitive abilities and the development of a person. One side of psychology believes that we are all originally programmed from the DNA and this is what determines how and the way in which we develop. The other side of psychology deals with that a person is the sum of their experiences, always learning and being shaped by different factors in the environment. On one side, there are a majority of biological factors, which influence our development. The first comes from our genetic programming. Our genes, which are passed from parent to offspring, lay the template for the development of the biological components in psychology. If there are any abnormalities in the proteins, this can cause problems with the development of tissues and organs. As a result, this can affect behavior. For example, there has long been an association with the development of schizophrenia with a genetic component. As a result, this genetic abnormality causes the psychological disorder. In the case of this and many other physiological abnormalities, these are inherent to the person and can rarely be changed. The conditions can be fulfilled using custodial medications, which are meant to control and relieve the symptoms; however there are very few treatments available that can modify the physiological abnormalities. The other side consists of molding and experiences that are taken from the environment, which shape a person's cognitive abilities. Aspects such as intelligence and cognitive processing are said to be a result of a child's learning as they progress through life. This is shown through Piaget's stages of cognitive development, which describe the different

patterns of thinking which occur as a person progresses through development. In addition, Erickson came up with stages of psychosocial development that show that a person goes through innate individually and socially defining stages that will help determine the development of the self and personality. As a result, all of these characteristics are influenced by the environmental and external factors, rather than the internal biological characteristics. In order to figure out the effects of both, most psychologists study within the parameters of epigenetics, in that behavior and development are caused by a combination of biological, psychological, and social factors. In this way, it can be extrapolated that some of the ways we behave might be the result of the genetic component, whereas other components can be attributed to the effect of the environment on a person. Some of these factors can be controlled, such as the nurture component with the environmental interaction. Aspects such as learning and the development of cognitive abilities come as a result of proper instruction and discipline. Some biological factors can be controlled for, but it is difficult since a majority of the problems can be the result of a couple physiological abnormalities. Thus, the field of epigenetics is the best at explaining how both biology and environment play a role in a person's overall development.

References  
Pinker, S. (2002). *The blank slate: the modern denial of human nature*. New York, NY: Penguin Books.