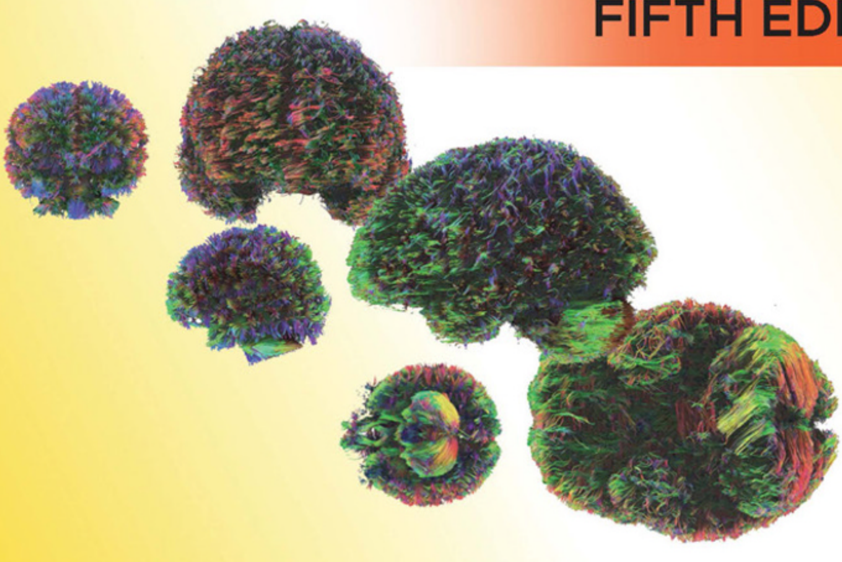
Developmental Cognitive Neuroscience

An Introduction

Michelle de Haan
Iroise Dumontheil
Mark H. Johnson

FIFTH EDITION



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This edition first published 2023

Edition History
Blackwell Publishers Ltd (1e, 1997); Blackwell Publishing Ltd (2e, 2005); John Wiley & Sons, Ltd (3e, 2011); John Wiley & Sons, Ltd (4e, 2015)

Registered Offices
John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 111 River Street, Hoboken, NJ 07030, USA
John Wiley & Sons Ltd, The Atrium, Southern Gate, Chichester, West Sussex, PO19 8SQ, UK

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Names: de Haan, Michelle, 1969– author. | Dumontheil, Iroise, author. | Johnson, Mark H. (Mark Henry), 1960– author.
Title: Developmental cognitive neuroscience : an introduction / Michelle de Haan, Iroise Dumontheil, and Mark H. Johnson.
Description: Fifth edition. | Hoboken, NJ, USA : John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2023. | Revised edition of: Developmental cognitive neuroscience / Mark H. Johnson and Michelle de Haan. Fourth edition. 2015. | Includes bibliographical references and index.
Identifiers: LCCN 2022056812 (print) | LCCN 2022056813 (ebook) | ISBN 9781119904694 (Paperback) | ISBN 9781119904700 (ePDF) | ISBN 9781119904717 (epub)
Subjects: LCSH: Cognitive neuroscience. | Developmental psychology.
Classification: LCC QP360.5 .J64 2023 (print) | LCC QP360.5 (ebook) | DDC 612.8/233–dc23/eng/20221222
LC record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2022056812
LC ebook record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2022056813

Cover Design: Wiley
Cover Image: Courtesy of Danyal Akarca, Alexa Mousley, Alicja Monaghan, Sofia Carozza and Duncan Astle

Set in 9.5/12.5pt STIXTwoText by Straive, Pondicherry, India

To our parents, who provided both our nature and our nuture.

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List of Tables

Abbreviations

ASL	American Sign Language
ADHD	attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder
BOLD	blood oxygen level dependent
CA1	cornu ammonis 1 area of the hippocampus
CA3	cornu ammonis 3 area of the hippocampus
CANTAB	Cambridge Neuropsychological Testing Automated Battery
COMT	catechol-O-methyltransferase gene
DAT1	dopamine active transporter 1 gene
DCD	developmental coordination disorder
DLPFC	dorsolateral prefrontal cortex
DNA	deoxyribonucleic acid
DTI	diffusion tensor imaging
EEG	electroencephalography
ERO	event-related oscillations
ERP	event-related potential
FEF	frontal eye fields
FFA	fusiform face area
FG	fusiform gyrus
fMRI	functional magnetic resonance imaging
FMR1	fragile X mental retardation 1 gene
fNIRS	functional near-infrared spectroscopy
FOXP2	forkhead box protein P2 gene
GABA	gamma-aminobutyric acid
GWAS	genome-wide association studies
HD	high density
HD-ERP	high-density event-related potential
HM	initials of a patient with amnesia
IPS	intraparietal suclus
IS	interactive specialization
ISI	inter-stimulus interval
IQ	intelligence quotient
KBCC	knowledge-based cascade correlation

KE	Family with an inherited disordered involved the FOXP2 gene that affects motor speech
LGN	lateral geniculate nucleus
LTC	lateral temporal complex
MDRs	marginalization-related diminished returns
MEG	magnetoencephalography
MRI	magnetic resonance imaging
MGN	medial geniculate nucleus
MNS	mirror neuron system
MPFC	medial prefrontal cortex
ms	milliseconds
MT	middle temporal area
MTL	medial temporal lobes
NIRS	near-infrared spectroscopy
PET	positron emission tomography
PFC	prefrontal cortex
RNA	ribonucleic acid
SES	socioeconomic status
SIPN	social information processing network
SLI	specific language impairment
SNP	single-nucleotide polymorphism
SOA	stimulus onset asynchrony
SP	spike potential
STS	superior temporal sulcus
TPH2	tryptophan hydroxylase gene 2
TPJ	temporo-parietal junction
TV	television
V1	primary visual cortex
VWFA	visual word form area
WEIRD	western, rich, industrialized, rich and democratic
WM	working memory
WS	Williams syndrome

Preface to the First Edition

In the first chapter of this book I describe some of the factors responsible for the recent emergence of a subdiscipline at the interface between developmental psychology and cognitive neuroscience. I have chosen to refer to this new field as "developmental cognitive neuroscience," though it has been known under a number of other terms such as "developmental neurocognition" (de Boysson-Bardies et al., 1993). Though a series of edited volumes on the topic has recently appeared, like most newly emerging disciplines there is a time lag before the first books suitable for teaching appear. This book and the Reader which I edited in 1993 (Johnson, 1993) are initial attempts to fill the gap. While some may believe these efforts to be premature, my own view is that the lifeblood of any new discipline is in the students and postdocs recruited to the cause. And the sooner they are recruited, the better.

Is developmental cognitive neuroscience really significantly different from other fields that have a more extended history, such as developmental neuropsychology or cognitive development? Clearly, it would be unwise to rigidly demarcate developmental cognitive neuroscience from related, and mutually informative, fields. However, it is my belief that the emerging field has a number of characteristics that make it distinctive. First, while there is some disagreement about exact definitions, the fields of developmental neuropsychology and developmental psychopathology focus on atypical development, while commonly comparing them to normal developmental trajectories. In contrast, cognitive neuroscience (including the developmental variant outlined in this book) focuses on normal cognitive functioning, but uses information from deviant functioning and development as "nature's experiments" which can shed light on the neural basis of normal cognition. This book is therefore not intended as an introduction to the neuropsychology of developmental disorders. For such information the reader is referred to the excellent introductions by Cicchetti and Cohen (1995) and Spreen et al. (1995).

Second, unlike many in cognitive development, this book adopts the premise that information from brain development is more than just a useful additional source of evidence for supporting particular cognitive theories. Rather, information about brain development is viewed as both changing and originating theories at the cognitive level. Third, developmental cognitive neuroscience restricts itself to issues at the neural, cognitive, and immediate environmental levels. In my view, it is a hazard of some interdisciplinary fields that the focus of interest is diffused across many different levels of explanation. This is not to deny the importance of these other levels, but a mechanistic interdisciplinary science needs to restrict both the domains (in this case aspects of cognitive processing) and levels of explanation with which it is concerned. Finally, developmental cognitive neuroscience is specifically concerned with understanding the relation between neural and cognitive phenomena. For this reason, I have not discussed evidence from the related field of developmental behavior genetics. In general, developmental behavior genetics tends to be concerned with correlations between the molecular level (genetics) and gross behavioral measures such as IQ. With some notable exceptions, little effort is made to specifically relate these two levels of explanation via the intermediate neural and cognitive levels. Having pointed out the different focus of developmental cognitive neuroscience, my hope is that this book is written to be both accessible and informative to those in related and overlapping disciplines.

The above comments go some way to explaining the choice of material that I have presented in the book. However, I have no doubt that there is a substantive amount of excellent experimentation and theorizing that could have been included but was not. Since this is intended as a brief introduction to the field, I have chosen to focus on a few particular issues in some detail. Of course, the choice of material also reflects my own biases and knowledge since the book is intended as an introductory survey of the field as viewed from my own perspective. I apologize in advance for the inevitable omissions and errors.

The book is aimed at the advanced-level student and assumes some introductory knowledge of both neuroscience and cognitive development. Students without this background will probably need to refer to more introductory textbooks in the appropriate areas. I also hope that the book will attract developmentalists with an interest in learning more about the brain, and cognitive neuroscientists curious as to how developmental data can help constrain their theories about adult functioning. But most of all I hope that the book inspires readers to find out more about the field, and to consider a developmental cognitive neuroscience approach to their own topic.

Preface to Fifth Edition

It is now several decades since the first edition of this book was published, and the field continues to grow rapidly, inspiring us to prepare this fifth edition of *Developmental Cognitive Neuroscience: An Introduction*. The expansion of the field has been driven by a number of factors, including development of new technologies and analysis techniques and increasing linking of developmental cognitive neuroscience with other fields such as clinical sciences and social and educational policy making.

The continuing growth in the field is exciting, and we hope that this introduction to it will motivate further work in this area. In order to better cover these rapid developments, particularly in the areas of mid-childhood and adolescent development, social cognition, and neuroimaging, we have been delighted to recruit a third author—Iroise Dumontheil. The abundance of studies published means that we will not be exhaustively reviewing the entire area; this book does inevitably reflect to some extent our biases—but always with the aim of best illustrating developmental cognitive neuroscience approaches and theory.

One area that has grown considerably since the publication of the last edition is applying developmental cognitive neuroscience in global and cross-cultural settings. Thus, in this fifth edition we have included a new chapter addressing this area. Building from the fourth edition we have continued to include clinical and educational issues as well, reflecting the continued research and applied interest around these topics.

There will always be topics that we cannot completely cover within this volume—as in previous volumes, we give pointers to further reading which can guide the way on broader issues. We also continue to include topics for further thought and discussion at the end of each chapter. The website with teachers' resources is also still available in an updated form—here there are multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions available to facilitate formulation of assessments in courses on developmental cognitive neuroscience.

We would like to thank our colleagues and collaborators for educating and informing us on so many topics. Likewise, we owe thanks to our publishers for their continued support and commitment to this book throughout the years.

About the Companion Website

This book is accompanied by a companion website:

www.wiley.com/go/johnson/devneuro5e

The website includes:

- Multiple choice questions, short answer questions and an answer guide

1

The Biology of Change

In this introductory chapter we discuss a number of background issues for developmental cognitive neuroscience, beginning with historical approaches to the nature–nurture debate. Constructivism, in which biological forms are an emergent product of complex dynamic interactions between genes and environment, is presented as an approach to development that is superior to accounts that seek to identify pre-existing information exclusively in either genes or the external environment. However, if we are to abandon existing ways of analyzing development into "innate" and "acquired" components, this raises the question of how we should best understand developmental processes. One scheme is proposed for taking account of the various levels of interaction between genes and environment. Following this, a number of factors are discussed that demonstrate the importance of the cognitive neuroscience approach to development, including the increasing availability of brain imaging and molecular approaches around the globe. Conversely, the importance of taking a developmental approach to analyzing the relation between brain structure and cognition is reviewed. In examining the ways in which development and cognitive neuroscience can be combined, three different perspectives on human functional brain development are discussed: a maturational view, a skill learning view, and an "interactive specialization" framework. We expand on the latter framework, which will be used to structure evidence discussed in later chapters, and revisited in the closing chapter. Finally, the contents of the rest of the book are outlined.

Viewpoints on Development

As many people know, the changes we can observe during the growth of children from birth to adolescence are truly amazing. Perhaps the most remarkable aspects of this growth involve the brain and mind. Accompanying the fourfold increase in the volume of the brain during this time are numerous, and sometimes surprising, changes in behavior, thought, and emotion. An understanding of how the developments in brain and mind relate to each other could potentially revolutionize our thinking about education, social policy, and disorders of mental development. It is no surprise, therefore, that there has been increasing

Developmental Cognitive Neuroscience: An Introduction, Fifth Edition. Michelle de Haan, Iroise Dumontheil, and Mark H. Johnson.

Companion website: www.wiley.com/go/johnson/devneuro5e

interest in this new branch of science, including from grant funding agencies, medical charities, and international governmental summits. Since the publication of the first edition of this book in 1997, this field has become known as *developmental cognitive neuroscience*.

Developmental cognitive neuroscience has emerged at the interface between two of the most fundamental questions that challenge humankind. The first of these questions concerns the relation between mind and body, and specifically between the physical substance of the brain and the mental processes it supports. This issue is fundamental to the scientific discipline of *cognitive neuroscience*. The second question concerns the origin of organized biological structures, such as the highly complex structure of the adult human brain. This issue is fundamental to the study of *development*. In this book we will show that light can be shed on these two fundamental questions by tackling them both simultaneously, and specifically by focusing on the relation between the postnatal development of the human brain and the emerging cognitive processes it supports.

The second of the two questions above, that of the origins of organized biological structure, can be posed in terms of *phylogeny* or *ontogeny*. The phylogenetic (evolutionary) version of this question concerns the origin of species, and has been addressed by Charles Darwin and many others since. The ontogenetic version of this question concerns individual development within a life span. The ontogenetic question has been somewhat neglected relative to phylogeny, since some influential scientists have held the view that once a particular set of genes have been selected by evolution, ontogeny is simply a process of executing the "instructions" coded for by those genes. By this view, the ontogenetic question essentially reduces to phylogeny (e.g., so-called "evolutionary psychology"). In contrast to this view, in this book we argue that ontogenetic development is an active process through which biological structure is constructed afresh in each individual by means of complex and variable interactions between genes and their respective environments. The information is not in the genes, but emerges from the constructive interaction between genes and their environment. However, since both ontogeny and phylogeny concern the emergence of biological structures, some of the same mechanisms of change have been invoked in the two cases.

Further Reading Oyama (2000).

The debate about the extent to which the ontogenetic question (individual development) is subsidiary to the phylogenetic question (evolution) is otherwise known as the nature–nurture issue, and has been central in developmental psychology, philosophy, and neuroscience. Broadly speaking, at one extreme the belief is that most of the information necessary to build a human brain, and the mind it supports, is latent within the genes of the individual. While most of this information is common to the species, each individual has some specific information that will make them differ from others. By this view, development is a process of unfolding or triggering the expression of information already contained within the genes.

At the opposing extreme, others believe that most of the information that shapes the human mind comes from the structure of the external world. Some facets of the environment, such as gravity, patterned light, and so on, will be common throughout the species, while other aspects of the environment will be specific to that individual. It will become clear in this book that both of these extreme views are ill conceived, since they assume that the information for the structure of an organism exists (either in the genes or in the external world) prior to its construction. In contrast to this, it appears that biological structure emerges anew within each individual's development from constrained dynamic interactions between genes and various levels of environment, and is not easily reducible to simple genetic and experiential components (Scarr, 1992).

It is more commonly accepted these days that the mental abilities of adults are the result of complex interactions between genes and environment. However, the nature of this interaction remains controversial and poorly understood, although, as we shall see, light may be shed on it by simultaneously considering brain and psychological development. Before going further, however, it is useful briefly to review some historical perspectives on the nature–nurture debate. This journey into history may help us avoid slipping back into ways of thinking that are deeply embedded in the Western intellectual tradition.

Throughout the 17th century there was an ongoing debate in biology between the so-called "vitalists," on the one hand, and the "preformationists," on the other. The vitalists believed that ontogenetic change was driven by "vital" life forces. Belief in this somewhat mystical and ill-defined force was widespread and actively encouraged by some members of the clergy. Following the invention of the microscope, however, some of those who viewed themselves as being of a more rigorous scientific mind championed the preformationist viewpoint. This view argued that a complete human being was contained in either the male sperm ("spermists") or the female egg ("ovists"). In order to support their claim, spermists produced drawings of a tiny, but perfect, human form enclosed within the head of sperm (see Figure 1.1). They argued that there was a simple and direct mapping between the seed of the organism and its end state: simultaneous growth of all the body parts. Indeed, preformationists of a religious conviction argued that God, on the sixth day of his work, placed about 200,000 million fully formed human miniatures into the ovaries of Eve or sperm of Adam (Gottlieb, 1992)!

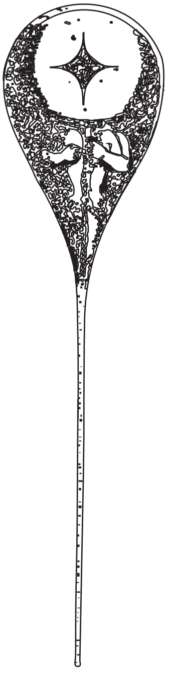

Figure 1.1 Drawings such as this influenced a 17th-century school of thought, the "spermists," who believed that there was a complete preformed person in each male sperm and that development merely consisted of increasing size.

Of course, we now know that such drawings were the result of overactive imagination, and that no such perfectly formed miniature human forms exist in the sperm or ovaries. However, as we shall see, the general idea behind preformationism, that there is a pre-existing blueprint or plan of the final state, has remained a pervasive one for many decades in biological and psychological development. In fact, Oyama (2000) suggests that the same notion of a "plan" or "blueprint" that exists prior to the development process has persisted to the present day, with genes replacing the little man inside the sperm. As it became clear that genes do not contain a simple "code" for body parts, in more recent years, "regulator" and "switching" genes have been invoked to orchestrate the expression of the other genes. Common to all of these versions of the nativist viewpoint is the belief that there is a fixed mapping between a pre-existing set of coded instructions and the final form. We will see in Chapter 3 that we are discovering that the relationship between the genotype and its resulting phenotype is much more dynamic and flexible than traditionally supposed.

On the other side of the nature–nurture dichotomy, those who believe in the structuring role of experience also view the information as existing prior to the end state, only the source of that information is different. This argument has been applied to psychological development, since it is obviously less plausible for physical growth. An example of this approach came from some of the more extreme members of the behaviorist school of psychology who believed that a child's psychological abilities could be entirely shaped by its early environment. Since that time, some developmental psychologists who work with computer models of the brain have suggested that the infant's mind is shaped largely by the statistical regularities latent in the external environment. Such efforts can reveal hitherto unrecognized contributions from the environment, and it will become evident in this book that these computer models can also be an excellent method for exploring types of interaction between intrinsic and extrinsic structure.

Further Reading Mareschal (2010); Munakata et al. (2008).

The viewpoints discussed above share the common assumption that the information necessary for constructing the final state (in this case, the adult mind) is present prior to the developmental process itself. While vitalists' beliefs were sometimes more dynamic in character than preformationists', the forces that guided development were still assumed to originate with an external creator. Preformationism in historical or modern guises involves the execution of plans or codes (from genes) or the incorporation of information from the structure of the environment. Oyama (2000) argues that these views on ontogenetic development resemble pre-Darwinian theories of evolution in which a creator was deemed to have planned all the species in existence. In both the ontogenetic and phylogenetic theories of this kind a plan for the final form of the species or individual exists prior to its emergence.

Following on from this, there have been steps forward in thinking about ontogenetic development, called constructivism. Constructivism differs from preformationist views in that biological structures are viewed as an emergent property of complex interactions between genes and environment. Perhaps the most famous proponent of such a view with regard to cognitive development was the Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget. The essence of constructivism is that the relationship between the initial state and the final product can only be understood by considering the progressive construction of information. This construction is a dynamic and emergent process to which multiple factors contribute. There is no simple sense in which information either exclusively in the genes or in the environment can specify the end product. Rather, these two factors combine in a constructive manner such that each developmental step will be greater than the sum of the factors that contributed to it. The upshot of this viewpoint is not that we can never understand the mapping between genetic (or environmental) information and the final product, but rather that this mapping can only be understood once we have unraveled some of the key interactions that