
TEACHING TIPS: *Selective review of some recent (and not so recent) Adulthood and Aging Texts.*

F. Richard Ferraro, Ph.D.

Dept. Psychology

University of North Dakota

If you are like me you may often cringe when you know that publisher's book reps are in your building hawking their latest editions of various textbooks. To be fair, I only cringe some of the time and there are actually some extremely competent book reps out there who have aided me greatly over the years. While I am pretty settled in what text I use for *PSY 355 – Adulthood and Aging* (and most of my other classes), I now frequently either get desk copies of new editions of texts and/or review chapters and/or entire books for several publishers. Over the past few months, I have noticed that an ever-increasing pile on my office floor that consists of new and not-so-new Adulthood and Aging texts. Tripping over this pile recently (and stubbing my toe in the process) motivated me to a) move the pile and b) examine some of these texts more critically. What follows is a selective review of some recent (and not so recent) texts that would be appropriate for an Adulthood and Aging class. I emphasize the word **selective**, but 5 texts seem like a lot to me (my toe still hurts) and a good starting point for review. Any one of these would be an excellent text for a standard undergraduate course in adulthood and aging. Although I use 2 of these 5 in my classes, there are parts of the remaining 3 that have come in handy in many of my classes, including developmental, cognitive and neuropsychology.

1. Cavanaugh, J. C., & Blanchard-Fields, F. (2006). *Adult development and aging* (5th Ed.), Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning (ISBN# 0-495-00812-5). This engaging text, now in its 5th edition, contains 14 chapters across 509 pages, and includes a reference section and name index. This edition also contains many new features including Multimedia Manager (with PowerPoint slides), Exam View, WebTutor Toolbox and *Scientific American* selections on aging on aging for students. The 12 chapters include studying adult development and aging, physical changes, longevity, health and functioning, clinical assessment, mental health, and mental disorders, person-environment interactions (read: human factors) and optimal aging, attention and perceptual processing, intelligence, social cognition, personality, relationships, work, leisure and retirement, dying and bereavement and a final looking ahead chapter.
2. Erber, J. T. (2005). *Aging & older adulthood*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning (ISBN# 0-534-35636-2). A new coming on the block, this text contains 12 chapters over 520 pages and includes a reference section, name index, and subject index. New(er) textbooks, these days, seem to come with all the additional technology add-ons and this text has some of these, including something called InfoTrac College Edition. This allows students a fully searchable online library of current periodicals. Additionally, the publisher has included the Wadsworth Psychology Resource Center. The 12 chapters include an introduction to aging and older adulthood, theory and method for studying aging, biological aging and health, sensation, perception and attention, memory, intellectual functioning, cognition and problem-solving, personality and coping, social interaction and social ties, employment, retirement and living arrangements, mental health services, psychopathology, and therapy and facing the end and looking to the future.
3. Foos, P. W., & Clark, M. C. (2003). *Human aging*. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon (ISBN# 0-205-28626-7). I have used this text for 3 years in my PSY 355 Adulthood and Aging class (summer as well as fall semesters) and the student reviews are always positive. It contains 14 chapters over 485 pages and includes references, and a name and subject index. These chapters are broken down into 5 sections, which include Aging and Our Bodies, Aging and Our Minds, Aging and Our Selves, Aging and Our Survival, and Aging and You. Each section contains 1-3 chapters, which is a good way to structure the course over a 14-15 week semester or even a 6 week summer session. Each chapter contains study questions, recommended readings and internet resources. Chapters include an introduction to aging, physical aspects of aging, theories of senescence, health and longevity, sensation, perception, and slowing, memory and cognition, intelligence, creativity, and wisdom, personality, relationships, work and retirement, psychopathology, healthy/helpful environments (which includes an enlightening human factors focus), death and bereavement and a final chapter on the future of aging.

Continued on page 22

Continued from page 21

4. Lemme, B. H. (2006). *Development in adulthood* (4th Ed.). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon (ISBN# 0-205-43964-0). There are 12 chapters across 562 pages, including a glossary, reference section, name index, and subject index. This is a new book for me, and I had not been aware of it. The coverage is typical of these sorts of books and includes chapters on the study of development in adulthood, theories of psychosocial development, the self (which includes gender, culture, and ethnicity), cognitive processes, social development, friendship, mate selection, friendship, family ties, work, retirement, physical development, health, longevity, prevention, coping and mental health, and death, dying, and bereavement.
5. Hoyer, W. J., & Roodin, P. A. (2003). *Adult development and aging* (5th Ed.). Boston, MA: McGraw Hill (ISBN# 0-697-36202-7). I have used this text in my on-line PSY 355 class, starting with the 4th edition (which included John Rybash as a co-author). I use the 5th edition because the student feedback was always excellent. The 5th edition is dedicated to John, among others. This is one of the few books out there that have an entire chapter devoted to Cultural and Ethnic Diversity, and we are all aware of the increased importance this topic holds for aging world-wide. This text also contains a very handy Appendix devoted to Developmental Research Methods, which I have used from time to time in other classes I teach. There are 13 chapters (plus the appendix) and these cover the typical areas including physiological, sensory processes, mental health interventions, coping and adaptation, physical health, memory, attention, learning, intelligence, creativity, cognition, wisdom, expertise, personality, relationships, work, leisure, retirement, and death.

Summary

While each text offers standard coverage of relevant topics in adulthood and aging, many also offer information on emerging areas (i.e., human factors and the future of aging) that will become important topics in the years to come, especially with the ever-increasing aging population. I encourage you to examine these to see how they fit your specific needs. If you are like me, you will realize they each have something unique to offer those of us who teach adulthood and aging. For more information on other books on aging check out APA's Division 20 website, which lists several such books broken down by specific category (<http://www.apadiv20.php.ufl.edu/txtbk.doc>).

Continued from page 13

Baton Rouge residents as they too are adapting to this life-changing situation. Although not part of our official study sample, we also have observed the stress and strain placed on members of the formal community service network, many of whom are dealing personally with the aftermath of Katrina and have had very little disaster training.

Based on the data collected during this one-year project, we will develop a *Research Brief* for distribution to community leaders, service providers, and policymakers to further their understanding of the issues and challenges facing aging families under non-normative duress, which has implications for culturally competent practices. Our goal is for communities to be able to use this information to augment or construct effective disaster prevention and intervention programs for aging families.