Chapter 4

The Moving Child

# Summary

In this chapter, we focus on the learner—specifically, the process of motor learning (based on schema theory), the learner’s perceptual–motor development, the phases and stages of motor development, and the levels of learning motor skills. We then use this information to propose instructional strategies that consider the learner’s developmental characteristics.

# Key Objectives

* Describing how children’s movement abilities are influenced by visual and kinesthetic perceptual development, motor-skill development stages, and motor-skill learning levels
* Explaining the differences in movement goals and teacher roles for children at different levels of movement skill learning
* Describing the connection between children’s stages of motor development and their levels of movement skill learning

# Big Ideas

* When physical educators are knowledgeable about the process of perceptual–motor development—especially the visual and kinesthetic sensory modalities—they can provide affordances that enable children to more successfully perform motor skills while they are still developing their perceptual–motor capacities.
* Between the ages of two and seven, children progress sequentially through the initial, emerging-elementary, and mature stages of the fundamental movement phase of motor development to become more biomechanically efficient movers. The increased complexity of their motor performance depends in part on changes brought about by growth and maturation but also in large part on high-quality instruction, access to movement environments with appropriately scaled equipment and conditions, and opportunities for practice with encouragement.
* The specialized movement phase of motor development typically begins around age 7 and lasts through adolescence. As children in grades 3 through 5 progress through the transition and application stages, their fundamental skills are transformed into culturally appropriate movement activities. Their development through these stages depends largely on the quality of the movement and practice experiences in which they participate.
* Both children and adults progress through the levels of learning motor skills when acquiring new skills. Unlike the stages of motor skill development, which are age related, the levels of motor skill learning are based on practice and experience. The beginner level of learning a new motor skill is concurrent with the latter parts of the emerging-elementary stage and the mature stage of fundamental motor development, as well as the early part of the transition stage of the specialized phase of motor development. The intermediate level of learning a new motor skill is concurrent with all three stages of the specialized phase of motor development, as learners progress from combining skills to applying them in cultural activities, some of which may become lifelong pursuits in noncompetitive and recreational settings. Those who pursue movement activities at higher levels of competition and performance for spectators or an audience reach the advanced level of learning a new motor skill.

# Part 1: Perceptual–Motor Development Terminology

**Directions:** Match each term from the word bank with the appropriate scenario.

**Word Bank**

* Figure–ground perception
* Motion perception
* Body awareness
* Laterality
* Directionality

## Scenario 1

A teacher plans a throwing-and-catching lesson to be taught outdoors on the grass. She uses playground balls colored red, blue, and yellow but not green. Which aspect of visual perception is the teacher accommodating?

## Scenario 2

In designing lessons for catching, a teacher plans to use a horizontal trajectory for throws to be caught by five-year-olds but a variety of horizontal, vertical, and arced throws for eight-year-olds to catch. Which aspect of visual perception is the teacher accommodating?

## Scenario 3

A teacher leads a group of three-year-olds in touching various parts of the body in time with the music and lyrics of the song titled “Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes.” Which aspect of kinesthetic perception is the teacher accommodating?

## Scenario 4

When leading a group of five-year-olds, a teacher says, “Turn to your right to face the wall with the red dot.” Which aspect of kinesthetic perception is the teacher accommodating?

## Scenario 5

When leading a group of nine-year-olds in a dance sequence, a teacher faces the group and moves to his right while cuing students to move to their left. Which aspect of kinesthetic perception is the teacher accommodating?

# Part 2: Motor Development Phases and Stages

Under each photo, identify which stage of motor development is depicted by the child’s movements and indicate a key characteristic that helps you determine the stage.

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# Review Questions

1. Describe the visual and kinesthetic affordances for perceptual development that teachers can provide to enable children to perform more successfully while they are still developing their perceptual–motor capacities.
2. Describe the three stages of motor development during the fundamental movement phase; include the characteristics of learners during each stage.
3. Describe the three stages of motor development during the specialized movement phase; include the characteristics of learners during each stage.
4. Describe the three levels of learning a new movement skill; include the characteristics of learners at each level.
5. Describe the movement goal and the teacher’s role for each level of learning a movement skill.
6. Describe the connections between stages of motor development and the levels of learning new movement skills.