

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation was part of a broader research project “The Interplay of Sensorimotor and Cognitive Functioning” (principle investigators: Dr. Ralf Th. Krampe and Prof. Paul B. Baltes) at the Center for Lifespan Psychology of the Max Planck Institute for Human Development. In the course of my work on this thesis, I was a fellow of the graduate program for doctoral training in psychological and psychiatric gerontology “Psychology and Psychiatry of Aging”, which is located at the Free University of Berlin. I was financially supported by a predoctoral stipend from the German Research Council (DFG).

I would like to express my special gratitude to my mentor Prof. Paul B. Baltes for providing a stimulating research context, for giving me the opportunity to carry out this work, for his support, and supervision. My acknowledgements go to my advisor Dr. Ralf Th. Krampe for giving me the benefit of his extensive knowledge of experimental research. Throughout the years, his challenging suggestions have provided excellent opportunities for learning. I am grateful to the Steering Committee and fellows of the graduate program for their feedback and interpersonal support. Dr. Jacqui Smith, there is no one like you! I deeply appreciate your enthusiasm, insightful comments, and helpful advice all along the way.

Special thanks go to Annette Rentz-Lühning for supporting and encouraging me at the beginning of this dissertational project and during data collection. Her kindnesses are too numerous to recount. I am thankful also to Anna Gronostay, Michael Zeschky, Stefanie Dabrowski, and Nina Smolarz for their assistance in testing participants. Thanks also to Berndt Wischnewski, Markus Bauer, and Werner Scholtysik for programming and technical support. The empathetic concern of Gabi Faust and Sabine Schäfer helped me a lot during the last months of my work on this thesis.

Natalie Ebner and Susanne Ehrhorn not only shared the working space with me, their emotional support and willingness to listen made these three years so much more enjoyable. Uli Knappek is the kind of colleague every person dreams about: attentive, good-tempered, and always helpful. To Uli, thank you for everything.

I feel enormously grateful to Dr. Alexandra M. Freund for careful reading and commenting on an almost final version of the manuscript. I am also indebted to Dr. Julia Delius who, beyond her incredible professionalism, has shared with me her warmth and understanding.

Many warm thanks to those who have provided more help and support than I had any right to expect. Thank you for giving me that greatest of gifts: constancy and understanding. I owe you a greater debt than I can express.