

AS

PSYCHOLOGY

Student Course Materials

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AS/A level Psychology – AQA

CODES

AS Psychology

1181

AS COURSE STRUCTURE (AQA BOARD)

Unit 1: Introducing Psychology.

**Cognitive Psychology, Developmental Psychology,
and Research Methods**

Assessed by 1 hour 30 minutes examination (open book)

Candidates must answer 3 compulsory questions

Unit 2:

**Social Psychology, Biological Psychology,
And Individual Differences**

Assessed by 1 hour 30 minutes examination (open book)

Candidates must answer 3 questions

Deadlines for Psychology AS level

Exam - May/June

Methods of learning:

Students will receive hourly timetabled lessons with their online teacher.

The teacher will set four hours of work to complete each week. This completed study must be sent to the teacher via e-mail for marking and will be returned the same way, unless otherwise stipulated.

Each student will receive a comprehensive study pack to follow which will either be sent each term or for the whole year.

Each student will receive a login to the Student Room where they will find extra material for their study and teachers may upload homework, suggested video clips, interviews or articles for your benefit.

The class will receive a visit from their teacher twice a year or more.

Industry guest speakers are arranged every term and teachers will provide a virtual tour around a topic being studied.

The aim is to make the most of this social platform of learning so that students can engage with their classes in an adult and exciting manner.

Course Structure

Contents Pages

COURSE STRUCTURE - Contents Pages

Year 1

Week 1: Cognitive Psychology..... 00

Week 2: Memory..... 00

Week 5: Developmental Psychology 00

Contact Details:

Name of Tutor:
Please email set work to:

NB Please make sure your e-mail address identifies you and that your name is on your work.

If you wish to book a 10-minute slot to speak to your tutor outside of the lesson, please request a time via e-mail (this can be any time between 8.00am and 7.30pm, including weekends).

This will require you to have a g-mail account, so if you do not have one please set one up for the purpose of one-to-one video communication.

How to Access Your Student Room:

Go to: www.net-teach.co.uk

Click on Student Room at the top of the page

Your log-in is:

In this room, you will find extra homework and examples of work that your teacher will have placed there. Please follow the instructions and make sure that you e-mail or place your finished work in the answer box provided, whichever is required of you.

TERM 2

Term 2 - Individual Differences

Week 1: Anxiety disorders

Phobias and OCD: definitions and symptoms

Explanations for phobias and OCD

Treatments and treatment evaluation

Week 2: Autism

Autism: definitions and symptoms

Studying and explanations for autism

Treatments and treatment evaluation

Week 3: Anxiety disorders and autism – assessment focus

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Week 4:

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Week 5:

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Week 6:

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Introduction

Learning opportunities of term 2

This information pack is for use during your studies leading to the AQA AS level in Psychology. During term 1 of this course, you will be offered the opportunity to engage in learning activities designed to help you develop understanding and practice in the subject areas listed below.

Skills

- Reflect on the works of different psychologists
- Assess different treatments of anxiety disorders or autism
- Compare the different approaches to these individual differences
- Develop critical awareness of explanations for anxiety disorders or autism

Concepts and content

- Explanations and symptoms and anxiety disorders such as phobias and OCD
- Different approaches to treating the disorders
- Definitions of autism
- Experiments conducted to explain autism
- Evaluation of different programmes to treat autism

This information pack is designed to be systematically completed as presented on a week-by-week basis, and it may be referred to and used during lessons. However, you may move more quickly or more slowly through the pack if this suits your needs, and you can always ask your teacher for extra work to complete.

In addition, please do not hesitate to contact your teacher whenever you feel the need of extra support or guidance.

Anxiety Disorders

Phobias: definitions and symptoms

Obsessive Compulsive Disorder: definitions and symptoms

Explanations of phobias

Explanations of OCD

Treatments for phobias

Treatments for OCD

Evaluation of treatments for anxiety disorders

What is Psychology?

The science of mind and behaviour

Psychology is a scientific discipline investigating the mind by attempting to observe and analyse human

The word psychology comes from the two Greek words. *Psyche* means 'mind, soul or spirit' (Gross, 1996, p.3), and *logos* means the study of

Cognitive Psychology means how we know things...incognito means unknown.

Memory allows past experiences to be recalled. Without memory humans could not learn. Gross (1996) argues that for learning to be permanent it depends on memory and that memory would lack content if learning was missing. During this module we will explore two *models of memory*. *Multi-store memory* which involves concepts of encoding, capacity and duration, and *working memory*. With both memory models their strengths and limitations will be analysed. We will consider long and short term memory.

Developmental Psychology is the study of how people develop over their lifetime, we are particularly interested in infancy, childhood, and adolescent. It involves the study of how changes in 'biological, intellectual, social and emotional development are effected over time. This looks at how we develop, involving Specifically, this module looks at the psychology of *early social and emotional development*. We will examine *learning theory* and Bowlby's theory of *attachment*. *Learning theory* encompasses a range of theories from classical conditioning (Pavlov's dogs), operant conditioning, social and superstitious learning theories. With *attachment*, Bowlby considered infants to be totally dependent on their parents to provide them with 'the necessities of life (Cash, 2002, p.155) particularly loving emotional care. This module will discuss the types of attachment associated with Bowlby's theories, including secure, insecure-avoidant and insecure-resistant attachments. Ainsworth *et al* (1978) devised a sequence of 8 episodes to study attachments called '*Strange Situation*' and we will explore how this is used. We will also look at how *cultural variations* affect

attachment and how disruption or failure and institutional care also affect the formation of attachments. The final section for this module will look at the *attachment in everyday life*, with the impact different forms of day care have on children's social development especially through aggression and peer pressure, and how research has influenced the provision of child care practises.

Cognitive Psychology

By the 1960s, psychologists were associating the way they thought about the brain and human behaviour to the way the computers worked (Stangor, 2011). The perceived similarities between the brain and computers, though not perfect, helped in the development of 'a new school of psychology called cognitive psychology' (Stangor, 2011, p.35).

Cognitive psychology is a field of psychology that studies mental processes, including perception, thinking, memory, and judgment. These actions correspond well to the processes that computers perform. (Stangor, 2011, p.35)

Though the development of cognitive psychology became more important in the 1960s, cognitive orientations had influenced earlier psychologists. In Germany, Hermann Ebbinghaus (1850 – 1909) studied the way people could remember lists of words used in different situations. English psychologist Sir Frederic Bartlett (1886 – 1969) examined cognitive and social processes were remembered (Stangor, 2011, p.36). Bartlett generated stories that consisted of elements that were logical but also had events that were unusual and unexpected. When people were asked to recall the stories they struggled to retell them exactly because the stories did not fit into their expectations. This led Bartlett to surmise that our memories are influenced by our experiences. (Stangor, 2011). This concept led to further developments by Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget (1896 – 1980).

The human being is immersed right from birth in a social environment which affects him just as much as his physical environment. Society, even more, in a sense, than the physical environment, changes the very structure of the individual, because it not only compels him to recognize facts, but also provides him with a ready-made system of signs, which modify his thoughts. (Piaget, 2001, p.171)

Piaget (2001) suggests that from when we are born through to adulthood, in spite of varied social circumstances, we go through a particular order of stage-like development. These four stages are followed universally in the same order. The environment merely provides material for this development.

Behaviourist psychology took the perspective that objectivity could not be achieved through studying the mind and that only behaviour could be observable for empirical purposes, in other words measurable and the data collected recorded. Cognitivists argue that by ignoring the mind, the perceived physical behaviour resulting from a given stimulus is in itself an interpretation by the person experiencing the event, therefore subjective. (Stangor, 2011)

Stangor (2011) provides an example of a boy saying to a girl on a date, “You are so beautiful”. He suggests that behaviourists would interpret this as 'a reinforcing (positive) stimulus' (p.37), whereas the girl might think the boy was trying to influence her by what he was saying and might be suspicious of his intentions. Cognitivists argue that through considering the way 'stimuli are evaluated and interpreted' (Stangor, 2011, p.37) behaviour can be understood more deeply.

The early 1960s saw a flow of revolutionary ideas in 'psychobiology, linguistics, anthropology, and artificial intelligence' (Sternberg, 2006, p.10), coincidence with a backlash against behaviourist psychology. Just monitoring a person's behaviour was deemed inadequate because there was no consideration for how a person thought.

Ulric Neisser (1967) made cognitive psychology, particularly the study of memory, more prominent through his book *Cognitive Psychology* defining 'how people learn, structure, store, and use knowledge' (Sternberg, 2006, p.10).

To better understand the specific methods used by cognitive psychologists, one must first grasp the goals of research in cognitive psychology, some which are highlighted here. Briefly, those goals include data gathering, data analysis, theory development, hypothesis formation, hypothesis testing, and perhaps even application to setting outside the research environment. (Sternberg, 2006, p.11)

(Cognitive) Psychology is a scientific enterprise requiring empirical data gathering, which then has to be interpreted using a range of theories, converging the evidence to generate hypotheses (Sternberg, 2006). A theory is formed through organising principles that explain phenomenon, which helps to create hypotheses. Hypotheses are potential explanations of outcomes of the theory based on minimal evidence to help provide a starting point to further an investigation. The hypotheses are then tested through experiments, and regardless of the findings the results are subjected to find out their statistical significance and, potentially further experimentations (Sternberg, 2006).

Methods used in cognitive psychology include controlled experiments in laboratories or in the field, research into psychobiology, self-reports, case-studies, observations, computer simulations and using artificial intelligence (Sternberg, 2006).

Summary

- Cognitive psychology came to prominence during the 1960s as a reaction to behaviourist psychology focused too much on how people behaved and not enough on how people think about and interpret stimulus that is influencing them.
- Cognitive psychology acquainted the process of the human brain to that of how a computer worked.
- Earlier proponents of cognitive psychology determined that memories are influenced by our experiences.
- Cognitive psychology is a scientific enterprise that gathers data to help form theories to generate hypotheses, which in turn are tested through experimentation and the results are subjected to find their statistical significance.
- Methods used in cognitive psychology include controlled experiments, self-reports, case studies, observations, computer simulations and artificial intelligence.

Phobias: definitions and symptoms

Many different phobias plague our population, scaling from the bearable (such as animal phobias where the animal can simply be avoided), to life changing phobias (such as agoraphobia in which the person cannot tolerate uncontrollable social situations). As you read about these different phobias, you will see just how irrational yet terrifying some prove to be.



Reflections:

Tip: As you are reading about phobias and their definitions, it is helpful to make connections to your own life experiences. If you suffer from a phobia yourself, you will be able to work from your own direct experiences (although you should consider carefully how much of your personal experience you wish to share with the class). If you do not have direct experience of phobia you may compare less intense experiences that have made you feel uncomfortable.

Recognising symptoms: While learning different symptoms that are paired with the various phobias, try to make sense of the symptoms by considering your own experience, or by imagining yourself in the situation of someone experiencing them. How do you imagine you might act if you had a social phobia? List these symptoms and compare them to what you find in your reading.

Fun research: Look up as many phobias as you can; you will be surprised at how many there are! Remember: In order to make sense of this new information, it helps to have an example in your personal life to make links.

ACTIVITY ONE

1. Write down a definition for each of the following:

- a. agoraphobia
- b. social phobias
- c. specific phobias

2. Under each definition make a list of the symptoms in such a way that you can compare the symptoms to the other phobias. Then consider the following questions:

- *What are the common similarities in the symptoms?*

Do you notice reoccurring symptoms among the phobias?

If so why do you think this may be?

- *How did these phobias first start?*

It is helpful to search the web for personal blogs about phobia. These will help you to understand the events and experiences people identify as the cause of their phobias. Blogs will also give you an insight into the personal impact of a phobia, and help you understand why the severity of the phobia experience can drive people to commit suicide.

- *What did you find difficult to grasp about these phobias?*

Perhaps it was the effects of such phobias and their devastating nature, or the scale of the disturbing thoughts paired with the phobia.

3. Compare your logic to that of someone with a life-changing phobia. What is it that makes you less likely to be subject to this phobia?

Keeping track of your thoughts:

Having explored these different phobias, take a moment to see what you remember about each one without looking at your notes. It can be helpful to discuss the phobias with a friend, to see if you are able to explain the concept in your own words.

Things to check:

Reflection: Do you fully understand what each phobia entails and which symptoms arise?

Tip: As it may be a lot of information to grasp in one go, you can make flash cards of the different phobias and their symptoms in order to study them any time and place.

Reflection: Can you imagine what it would be like to live with such a phobia?

Tip: Try to connect imagery to the phobia. If you can imagine what such a situation would look like it could make it easier to imagine the symptoms one would have while experiencing the phobia.



Obsessive-compulsive disorder: definitions and symptoms



ACTIVITY TWO

Take a moment to reflect on how these two factors (**obsession** and **compulsion**) are different yet intertwined. Make a list of examples for each word. Take a moment to reflect on how OCD affects the lives of people.

Reflection: As you have read, people with OCD are entirely aware that their thoughts and actions are irrational, how do you think this affects their daily lives?

Relationships? Work? (If you have OCD yourself, consider your own experiences in light of the definition.)

Reflection: Do you believe our society has understanding and compassion for this condition? How would you react to someone exhibiting the symptoms of obsessive-compulsive disorder? How have you experienced reactions to OCD symptoms?

Watch the following video clip: <http://www.upworthy.com/the-most-honest-and-heartbreaking-reason-to-leave-your-front-door-unlocked-ive-ever-heard-10>



Keeping track of your thoughts:

Having watched the video, take a moment to consider the following questions:

Reflection: What was your reaction to this Neil Hilborn's emotions?

Reflection: Is it possible that OCD is a misjudged condition?

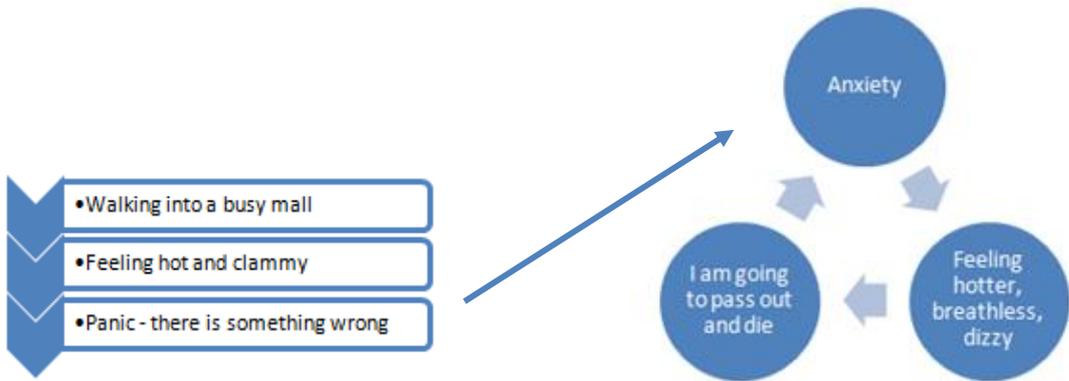
Reflection: Neil Hilborn suggests that his OCD minimized as a result of his heart-ache; consider this as you continue to read about therapies that are used to treat OCD.

Explanations of phobias



ACTIVITY THREE

1. Research the difference between the **behavioural**, and **psychodynamic** explanations for phobias. *Illustrated in the diagram below is an example of the behavioural explanation for agoraphobia. Try to create similar diagrams for other phobias.*
2. What part (if any) do you think 'perceived control' plays in levels of anxiety?
3. Consider how the **behavioural** approach differs from the **psychoanalytic** approach, which considers repressed childhood conflicts the key factor in phobia



Things to check:

Reflection: Using a personal example if possible, think about which explanation is most compatible in relation to your example.

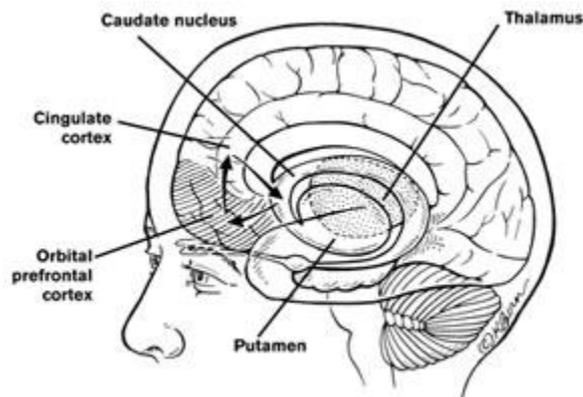
Tip: There are numerous websites and blogs that have real-life stories about phobias and the perceived basis for the fear.

Explanations of OCD



ACTIVITY FOUR

Which regions of the brain are hyperactive?



(http://neurowiki2012.wikispaces.com/file/view/Brain_regions_OCD.jpg/316605812/278x255/Brain_regions_OCD.jpg)

1. Research 'twin studies'. What have they shown and do they support the biological approach?
2. Research the cognitive approaches of OCD. Reflect on how OCD is a learned process that is positively reinforced when the compulsions lower the feeling of anxiety briefly.

Keeping track of your thoughts

Having explored these different approaches, take a moment to make connections to your previous learning about OCD.

Things to check:

Reflection: Do you fully understand the difference between the biological approach and the cognitive approach?

Tip: If you can explain each approach using an example, you are more likely to retain the information.



Treatments for phobias

Systematic desensitisation

Write notes as you reflect on the following:

1. Who founded the systematic desensitisation treatment for phobia, and what three steps did he specify?
2. This theory works on the assumption that anxiety arises through classical conditioning; how does it decrease anxiety symptoms?
3. Watch this short film explaining more about how it works:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LcojyGx8q9U>

Psychodynamic therapy

How is psychodynamic therapy different to systematic desensitisation?

Things to check:

Reflection: Which treatment would you prefer to use if you had a phobia?

Reflection: What are the similarities in these two treatments, if any?

Psychodynamic therapy

1. The psychodynamic approach refers to the id, ego and super ego to explain anxiety and how it can take over a personality. For which anxiety disorder do you think this therapy works best (if any)? Please take notes in your notebook for further discussion.

Biological approach:

2. The biological approach focuses on the neurobiological factors within these anxiety disorders. For which anxiety disorder do you think this therapy works best (if any)? Please take notes in your notebook for further discussion with your teacher.

Cognitive therapy:

3. The cognitive behavioural approach defines the phobia as a result of classical and operant conditioning. Cognitive therapy challenges a person's beliefs about what they think will happen and eventually includes exposure. For which anxiety disorder do you think this therapy works best (if any)? Please take notes in your notebook for further discussion with your teacher.

Combining medications with psychological treatment:

What are your thoughts about combining medications with psychological treatment? Please take notes for further discussion with your teacher.

Things to think about:

Reflection: What is your view about prescribing medicine for anxiety disorders?

Reflection: Are there any approaches that you don't understand, or don't agree with?

Autism

Autism: definition and symptoms

Autism as a syndrome: the triad of impairments

Biological explanations

Cognitive explanations

Studying autism: experiments

Therapeutic programmes for autism

Evaluation of therapeutic programmes

Autism: definition and symptoms

Autism is a neuro-developmental disorder. Autism (literally meaning 'selfism') is called this because the autistic person is held to be engaged by their own thoughts rather than the outside world. Autism is characterized by a triad of impairments, described in more detail below.

Reflections:

Reading Tip: As you are reading about autism, it is helpful to write down the differences you see in the development of autistic children, compared to that of children without autism.

Recognising symptoms: While learning the different symptoms that are paired with the autism, try to make sense of the symptoms by using real-life examples. Perhaps you know someone with autism, or have been diagnosed as autistic yourself; otherwise, there are many videos and blogs on the internet that may help you grasp what is meant by certain symptoms.



ACTIVITY ONE

Go to your Student Room to read about autism and its symptoms. Write down the definitions and descriptions for the most dominant symptoms. Then answer the following questions:

- What are the most common symptoms of autism?
- At what age can autism be noticed and how?
- What did you find difficult to understand about autism?
- Research to discover the meaning of the term 'joint attention'.

- Why do children with autism often have a hard time engaging in activities demanding joint attention?



Keeping track of your thoughts

Having explored the definition of autism and the symptoms that accompany it, take a moment to see what you remember without looking at your notes. It can be helpful to discuss it with a friend, to see if you are able to explain the differences in your own words.

Things to check:

Reflection: Do you fully understand how autism is defined, and the kind of symptoms that characterize it?

Tip: As it may be a lot of information to grasp in one go, you can make flash cards of the different areas of difficulties and their symptoms in order to study them any time and place.

Reflection: If you have autism yourself, consider how closely the academic presentation of the condition represents your own experience. If you do not, try to imagine what it would be like to live with autism yourself or have a child with autism?

Tip: Try to connect imagery to autism. If you can imagine what it would look like and what kind of situations would be difficult for a child with autism it could make it easier to imagine the symptoms one would have.



ACTIVITY TWO

The TV series ‘The Big Bang Theory’ is often discussed as offering an example of autistic spectrum traits in popular media through the lead character, Sheldon Cooper.

1. Having reviewed the definition of autism, and its symptoms, watch an episode of ‘The Big Bang Theory’, and evaluate the presentation of Sheldon Cooper. Is he a reliable representation of autism? Write a paragraph explaining your assessment of this character, and relating your thoughts to the theories discussed.
2. Research to discover reactions to Sheldon Cooper from the autistic community. What feelings and responses does this character create? Do you feel the same yourself or differently? Summarise your findings in a paragraph.

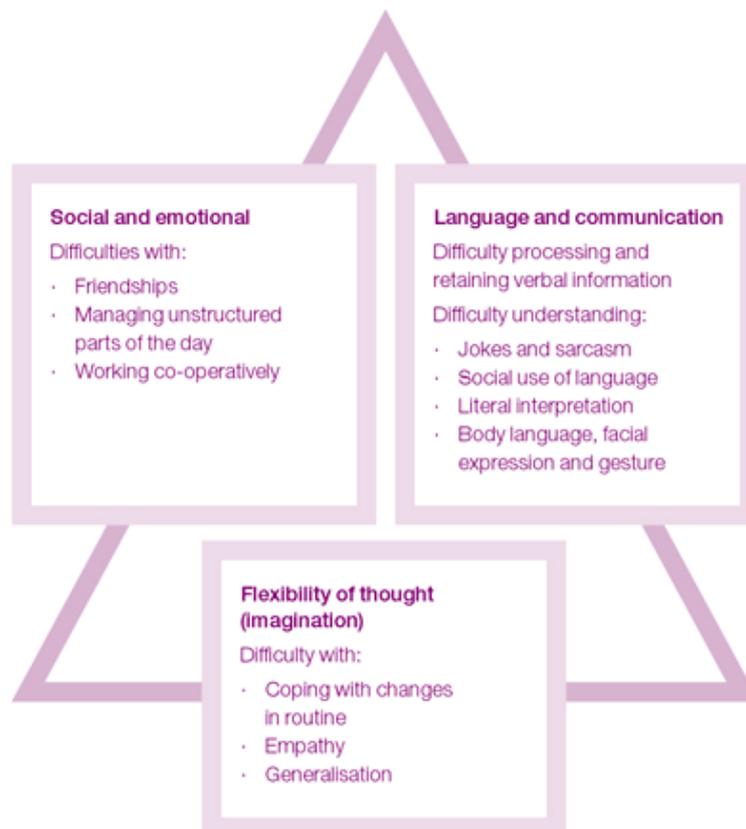


Autism as a syndrome: the triad of impairments



ACTIVITY THREE

Autistic spectrum disorders (ASDs) include Autism and Asperger syndrome. These can cause many symptoms that are often categorised in three areas.



(<http://www.autism.org.uk/working-with/education/educational-professionals-in-schools/breaking-down-barriers-to-learning/asperger-syndrome-the-triad-of-impairments.aspx>)

This diagram of the triad of impairments, first described by Lorna Wing, shows the three areas of impairments that people with autism experience.

Copy this diagram and add any other symptoms you have come across to the boxes. Then watch the video to be found at the link below.

Things to check before watching the video:

Reflection: As you have read, people with autism are more or less trapped in their bodies while their senses are at times, overloaded. If a child with autism had a way to explain how they are feeling, what would they say?

Reflection: Do you think society has understanding for this condition? How would you react to someone exhibiting autistic traits? What reactions have you experienced?

Carly Fleischmann speaks: <http://carlyvoice.com/>

Things to check after watching the video:

Reflection: How did you feel when you heard Carly Fleischmann express her feelings and thoughts?

Reflection: Is it possible that autism is a misjudged syndrome?

Reflection: Carly Fleishmann suggests that everyone with autism should keep working at finding their voice; consider this as you continue to read about the therapy that is used to help with the development of children with autism.



Biological explanations



ACTIVITY FOUR

Work your way through the questions below, using your Student Room, the library and the internet to explore the biological explanations for autism.

1. Describe the genetics of autism. Has a specific gene been identified?
2. How has genetics been tested? Consider Ritvo's 'twin' study to support genetics.
3. Describe the 'neurological correlates' for autism.
4. Consider the theory that autism is correlated with increased cerebellum size, head circumference and increased brain function.
5. Are children born with bigger brains or do they become significantly larger during childhood? How might these biological factors affect a child?

Things to check:

Reflection: Referring to a personal example or a case chosen from the media, consider the usefulness of the biological explanation.



Cognitive explanations



ACTIVITY FIVE

Use the information in your Student Room to explore the '**theory of mind**' as it relates to children.

1. Which symptoms of autism does the **theory of mind** explain most effectively?
2. Research and explain '**central coherence deficit**' and write down a few examples.
3. Which symptoms of autism does the central coherence deficit explain most effectively?
4. Evaluate the failure of **executive functioning** among autistic children.
5. What kind of tasks are made difficult as a result of executive functioning failure?
6. Which symptoms of autism does failure of executive functioning explain most effectively?

Keeping track of your thoughts

Having explored these cognitive explanations of autism and the symptoms that accompany them, take a moment to see what you remember without looking at your notes. It can be helpful to discuss it with a friend, to see if you are able to explain the differences in your own words.

Things to check:

Reflection: Do you fully understand the cognitive explanations and which symptoms arise?

Tip: Create your own examples for each explanation.



Studying autism: experiments

Take a look at the following experiments:

The Sally-Anne experiment

- Which theory of explanation does it support?
- How was that theory tested?
- What did the results show?

The 'Smartie tube' test

- Which theory of explanation does it support?
- How was that theory tested?
- What did the results show?

The comic strip stories

- How was that theory tested?
- How was that theory tested?
- How many types of stories were there?
- What did the results show?

Things to think about:

Reflection: Do you think the results would differ in other cultures?

Reflection: As these experiments support cognitive explanations rather than biological explanations, has this changed your view about the different explanations?

Therapeutic programmes for autism

Drug therapy

Research the drug therapy available for autism, then answer the following questions:

- Are medicines available for autism alone, for the behavioural aspects that accompany it, or both?
- Can drug therapy cure autism? If not, consider why.
- Consider the side effects of drug therapy.

Behaviour modification

Consider behavioural modification techniques, such as mentioned in video clip about autism.

- What is applied behavioural analysis (ABA)?
- How can it be used?

Lovaas technique

Lovaas Technique is a type of ABA. Find out how this technique worked and whether or not it had positive effects on children with autism.

Reflection: The Lovaas technique was later criticised by its developers, Lovaas and Koegel themselves. Why do you think this may have been?

Parental involvement

Is parental involvement in its own a 'treatment' or in combination with other techniques?

Things to check:

Reflection: As you compare all three therapeutic programmes, do you think they work individually or hand in hand?

Reflection: As seen in the short video clip, these programmes can be very time consuming as well as utilising 'tough love', what are your views about this?

Evaluation of these programmes

It may seem difficult to evaluate these different programmes as autism often comes in hand in hand with other forms of developmental issues. This is a subject worth discussing with your teacher. Before you do so, consider the following questions:

1. What are the limitations to the therapeutic techniques explored?
2. Reflect on the lack of valid means of measuring the effectiveness of the different treatments.
3. List a few of the moral and ethical arguments that might arise in combination with these programmes.

Reflect: Try to imagine some of the principles for evaluating autism treatments; for example, treatments having different outcomes per patient with autism

Reflect: Which programmes if not all, do you find to be most efficient?



Week 1: Child development – cognitive development

Piaget and cognitive development

Vygotsky and cognitive development

Nativist explanations and the information processing approach

Week 6: Child development – moral development

Piaget and Kohlberg

Eisenberg and Gilligan

Damon’s approach, and psychodynamic explanations

Week 9: Cognitive and moral development – assessment focus

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Week 4:

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Week 5:

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Week 6:

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Introduction

Learning opportunities

During term 3 of this course, you will be offered the opportunity to engage in learning activities designed to help you develop understanding and practice in the subject areas listed below.

Skills

- Reflect on the findings of different psychologists within child developmental psychology
- Assess different treatments of cognitive development and moral development
- Compare the different approaches to these developmental processes
- Develop an appreciation of how science works in developmental psychology
- Enable an appreciation of practical applications of theories and research

Concepts and content

- Cognitive development in children as explained by Piaget, Vygotsky and alternative approaches
- Moral development in children as explained by Piaget and Kohlberg as well as alternative models.

This information pack is designed to be systematically completed as presented on a week-by-week basis, and it may be referred to and used during lessons. However, you may move more quickly or more slowly through the workbook if this suits your needs, and you can always ask your tutor for extra work to complete.

In addition, please do not hesitate to contact your tutor whenever you feel the need of extra support or guidance.

Child Development : Cognitive Development

Piaget's theory of cognitive development

Piaget's stages of cognitive development

Vygotsky and cognitive development

Vygotsky and guided participation

Nativist explanations

The information processing approach

Piaget's theory of cognitive development

Cognitive development is an amazing thing to see during a child's development. As well as the obvious physical changes, children make leaps in their way of thinking. The following activities will help you to label these changes and make sense of the order in which they occur.



Things to check:

Reflection: Are you attempting to memorise information just as you see it, or do you try to change it into a form that is easier for you to absorb?

Tip: As you begin reading about the different stages of cognitive development, remember to create your own examples, as you are more likely to remember these.

Reflection: Do you make notes of diagrams and flow charts?

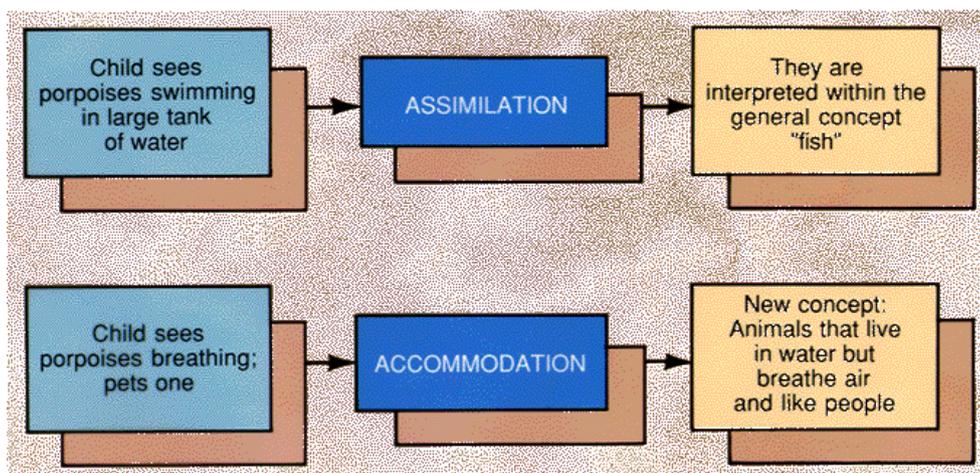
Tip: It can be effective to recreate the diagrams and flow charts in your own words.

ACTIVITY ONE

Schemas: adaptation, assimilation and accommodation

Schemas are mental concepts or frameworks that help us organise and interpret information.

- Research the two types of adaptation: accommodation and assimilation.
- Make your own examples of each, keeping in mind that assimilation is a gradual gathering of new information that is similar to the existing schema. Accommodation is a more radical shift, perhaps requiring you to accept a whole new meaning to a concept in your existing schema which calls for a complete adjustment of what you initially believed to be true.
- Reflect on the flowchart below:



<http://www.abacon.com/slavin/images/t7.gif>

Things to think about:

Tips: Try word games to remember the meanings of these words.

Reflect: How far do you agree with Piaget's understanding of the processes of assimilation and adaptation? Does this adequately explain the cognitive process?

Assimilation is the incorporation of new information into existing information.

Assimilate - similar information to what you already know.

Accommodation is the adjustment of a schema to new information; when one **accommodates** one adjusts oneself.

You make what you know **accommodate** the new

Piaget's stages of cognitive development



ACTIVITY TWO

Explore the first three stages of Piaget's **cognitive development theory** that relate to the cognitive development of the child. Then answer the following questions:

- What ages are associated to which stages?
- How does the infant make sense of the world in the sensorimotor stage?
- How does the child represent the world in the preoperational stage?
- How does the child reason in the concrete operational stage?
- How does the child reason in the formal operational stage?

Piaget at the University of Michigan, 1968



ACTIVITY THREE

Take a look at this short video experimenting with object permanence, then answer the following question:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PuP53BbIYoA>

- What is object permanence and in which of the above stages does it begin to occur and how do infants develop object permanence according to Piaget?

Watch this short video in which the understanding of conservation is not yet recognised by a young child and then answer the following question:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gnArvcWaH6I>



Things to check:

Reflect: Were you surprised at the ages related to the understanding of these concepts? Do you think Piaget was wrong to imagine that physical age was concretely related to cognitive development?

Consider this description of the progress of Sissy Jupe, probably aged about 9, in the school of Mr. M'Choakumchild. How might Piaget's theory of cognitive development be utilized to explain Sissy's failure to progress? Write a paragraph presenting your analysis.

“The wretched ignorance with which Jupe clung to this consolation, rejecting the superior comfort of knowing, on a sound arithmetical basis, that her father was an unnatural vagabond, filled Mr. Gradgrind with pity. Yet, what was to be done? M'Choakumchild reported that she had a very dense head for figures; that, once possessed with a general idea of the globe, she took the smallest conceivable interest in its exact measurements; that she was extremely slow in the acquisition of dates, unless some pitiful incident happened to be connected therewith; that she would burst into tears on being required (by the mental process) immediately to name the cost of two hundred and forty-seven muslin caps at fourteen-pence halfpenny; that she was as low down, in the school, as low could be; that after eight weeks of induction into the elements of Political Economy, she had only yesterday been set right by a prattler three feet high, for returning to the question, ‘What is the first principle of this science?’ the absurd answer, ‘To do unto others as I would that they should do unto me.’”

Chapter 9, “Sissy’s progress” from Charles Dickens’ novel, *Hard Times*, published 1854.

Vygotsky and cognitive development

Cognitive development within a social and cultural context.

Although both recognized the importance of activity and practical application to cognitive development, Vygotsky's sociocultural cognitive theory emphasised the importance of the social interaction and culture far more than Piaget's theory. Piaget did not appear to recognize the impact of cultural situation on cognitive development at all, whereas for Vygotsky, all higher-level cognition begins in social interaction, and learning is socially constructed.



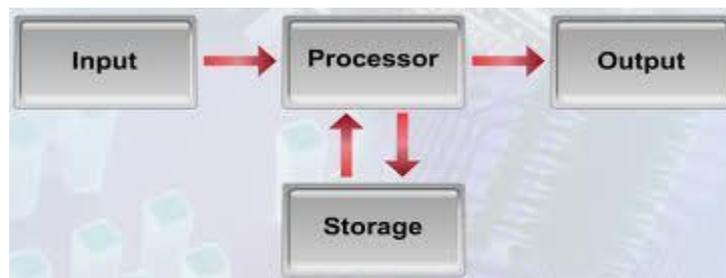
ACTIVITY FOUR

Watch the short video, which can be found at the link below, and read the material on the associated web page; then complete the grid summarizing the differences between Piaget's model of cognitive development and Vygotsky's.



The information processing approach

The **information processing** approach states that as a computer would receive input, process it, and produce output, we as humans process in a similar form as we react to external stimuli, process the information by using problem solving and decide on an action or output. Robert Siegler is one of the chief proponents of this approach to cognitive development. Read about the information processing approach in your Student Room, and then continue on the Internet and in the library. Then use the questions below to develop your understanding.



<http://panitiaictsmktp.blogspot.nl/2012/04/system-concept-information-processing.html>

1. Research what Siegler added to this approach.
2. Describe the '**Fulcrum task**' and how this separated the thinking of particular age groups. Assess Siegler's '**overlapping waves**' theory of problem solving.
3. Evaluate this Siegler's research into problem solving strategies.

Reflect: Does the Fulcrum task support the information processing approach?

Reflect: Why do you think some strategies of problem solving carry on through the cognitive development of the child and some are no longer used?

Other influences towards cognitive psychology came from the developments in the 1940s and 1950s computer sciences and communications engineering.(Payne, Wender, 1998)

Cognitive psychologists began to compare humans with computers in the way that both 'take information from the outside world' (Payne, Wender, 1998, p. 17), stored it, and then recall the information later to respond or generate outputs.

In 1950, Alan Turing, inventor of the machine that cracked the German Enigma Code during World War Two, published a paper called 'Computing Machine and Intelligence'. Turing devised a test in which a computer responded to being questioned by a human, who had to determine whether they were talking to a person or a machine.

<http://www.simplypsychology.org/vygotsky.html>

	Piaget	Vygotsky
What initiates cognitive development?		
How important is it to have a teacher or other social role model?		
Do children and adults learn differently?		
Can cognitive development be accelerated?		
Does language develop cognition, or does cognition develop language?		
Is the process of cognitive development universal (i.e. the same for all humans regardless of culture)?		

