

Teacher Resource Bank

GCE Psychology (Specification A)

Activity Bank:

- Developing Research Skills
- Developing Critical Thinking Skills
- Summary of Approaches
- Approaches in Psychopathology



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ACTIVITIES FOR DEVELOPING RESEARCH SKILLS

1 Appreciating the strengths and limitations of different research methods

- As a class, decide on an aspect of (eg celebrity worship, relationships) that all members of the class will investigate.
- Divide into groups. Each group has to design 2 studies that use a different research method to investigate the aspect of (eg celebrity worship, relationships) identified. Your designs will need to provide details of:
 - the aim
 - hypothesis
 - design
 - task or materials
 - sampling
 - brief outline of procedure
 - likely issues and how they would be addressed, eg extraneous variables, clarity of questions in a questionnaire.
- Each group should then identify and discuss the strengths, limitations and implications of the methods used for investigating that particular aspect of(eg celebrity worship, relationships).
- Each group should then provide a brief but justified review to the class as a whole on the effectiveness of the methods for investigating the particular aspect of(eg celebrity worship, relationships).
- Class discussion about the relative merits of the different methods
- As a class, suggest guidelines for selecting appropriate methods, possibly in the form of a decision chart.

Teacher Notes

You could provide a list of methods or start the session with a 'thought-shower' to get the students to list methods. It is useful to make a distinction between methods, such as experiment, survey, case study and techniques such as questionnaire, observation, interview, that might be used to collect data in any of these methods. You may prefer to alter the brief to focus on the data collection technique rather than the research methods.

To achieve the aim of the exercise, it is really important that there is sufficient time at the end for the plenary session, as this is the forum for developing understanding of the strengths and limitations and helping students to see that strengths and limitations are relative and dependent on the focus/topic of the research.

2 Practical Data Collection

The most effective way of learning about the characteristics and relative merits of different data collection tools/techniques is by reflecting on the experience of using them. This series of activities is designed to provide structured opportunities to use and reflect on different tools/techniques.

(a) Open versus closed questions in a questionnaire

- Construct **two** short questionnaires, one consisting of open questions and the other of closed questions. The aim of both is to investigate gender differences in what males and females seek in a long-term relationship. You may wish to refer to your textbook to devise the closed questions.
- Collect data using the questionnaires. Select a sample of 10 students (five males and five females) and give them the closed questions questionnaire. Select a sample of 10 students (five males and five females) and give them the open questions questionnaire.
- Summarise the data from the open questions. Undertake a content analysis.
- Compare what the two methods have revealed about the differences in what males and females seek in a long-term relationship.
- Prepare a short review of the two techniques. This should include reference to:
 - preparation
 - ease of use/administration
 - quality of the data: did you get the level of detail you required?
 - validity of the data: were the responses honest, do people know what they are looking for?
 - ease and reliability of the analysis of data
 - whether the two different methods produced different findings
 - limitations of each/biases.

(b) Structured versus unstructured interview

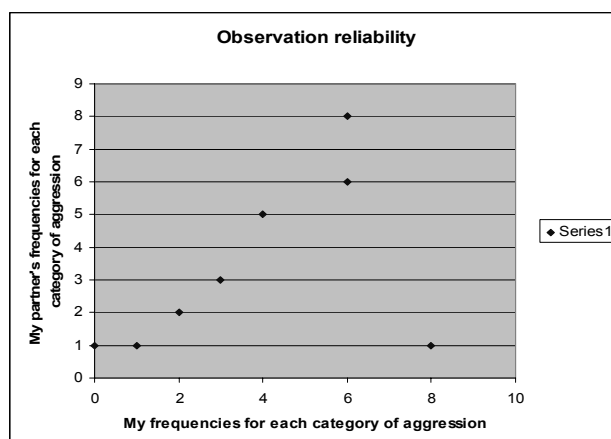
- Construct a structured interview schedule to investigate gender differences in what males and females seek in a long-term relationship.
- Plan how you will manage an unstructured interview to investigate gender differences in what males and females seek in a long-term relationship. These first two sentences seem to be repetitious. You will need to decide how you will record the data.
- Collect data using the interviews. Select a sample of 10 students (five males and five females) and interview them using the structured schedule. Select a sample of 10 students (five males and five females) and interview them using the unstructured planning notes.

- Summarise the data from the structured interviews. Undertake a content analysis or thematic analysis.
- Compare what the two methods have revealed about the differences in what males and females seek in a long-term relationship.
- Prepare a short review of the two techniques. This should include reference to:
 - preparation
 - ease of use/administration
 - quality of the data: did you get the level of detail you required?
 - validity of the data: were the responses honest, do people know what they are looking for?
 - ease and reliability of the analysis of data
 - whether the two different methods produced different findings
 - limitations of each/biases.

(c) Structured observation assessment of reliability

- Construct a structured observation schedule to investigate portrayal of gender differences in aggression in popular television soaps. Identify appropriate behaviour categories, define the categories and draw up a chart on which to record the frequencies of different types of aggression for males and for females.
- Record an episode of a soap (eg EastEnders)
- Collect the data. Use a structured observation chart to record the frequency of gender differences in aggression. Depending on the episode, 10 minutes will probably be sufficient, broken down into two-minute slots.
- Work in pairs to check the reliability of your observations. Summarise the data collected for males in a table and construct a scattergram (you can do this by hand or by computer). There is an example below of how to do this.

Behavioural categories	My frequencies	My partner's frequencies
verbal aggression	4	5
hitting	6	8
shouting	8	1
hitting out at objects	1	1
kicking	0	1
slapping	3	3
pulling hair	6	6
verbal abuse	2	2



Repeat this, plotting the frequencies for each of the categories of aggression for your observations of females.

- Study the two scattergrams and consider:
 - how reliable your observations are. (You could calculate the strength of relationship by doing a Spearman's Rho analysis.)
 - whether there are behaviour categories that cause problems for reliability. Discuss why this might be.
 - why some categories have good reliability
 - whether your observations for males and females are equally reliable. If they are different, why might this be?
- Suggest how the observations could be made more reliable. (If you have time, try implementing your improvements, observe the sequence again and see if the results are more reliable.)
- Select an appropriate method of graphical representation to display the patterns of aggression for males and females. Pool the results of all observers for this. Summarise what this seems to show about gender differences.

Now, as a class, consider how much confidence you have in this conclusion. Think about how reliable the observations were.

Teacher notes

If you have limited time for these exercises, you could provide students with the tools (questionnaires, observation charts, etc). If you do this, it is best if there are some significant flaws in them, as these help students to appreciate the limitations of the techniques.

For the observation activity, you will need to select, or guide students to select, relevant material to record. Make sure there are a number of male and female characters to be observed and that there is sufficient and appropriate material to generate reasonable frequencies for observation and categorisation.

If you generate the behavioural categorisation chart, don't make it too good. You want students to experience some problems and understand how problems could be addressed. You could build in ambiguity in one or two categories and make others really clearly defined.

The following reference provides some examples of behaviour categorisation and a review of advantages and limitations of observational research:

http://old.gold.ac.uk/tmr/reports/aim2_calabria1.html

3 Qualitative data collection and analysis

Data collection

Evolutionary theory suggests males and females look for different things in a partner. To investigate this, ask a sample of male and female year 13 students to write a paragraph describing what they would look for in a partner.

Provide the paper with the task clearly set out and three or four lines for the person's response. Also provide a consent form for participant to sign (keep this separate from the description in order to maintain anonymity).

Work in groups of four: each member of the group should collect descriptions from two males and two females.

Analysis of the data

- Read each response in turn and identify preliminary themes/ideas or patterns
- Use different colour highlighter pens to code themes. Remember a sentence may include more than one theme.
- Gather together all the points being made about each theme. Record the actual words/phrases used. Record these on two separate sheets, one for males and one for females.
- Draw up a mind map to depict the links between the themes for males and a separate mind map to depict the links between the themes for females. Make sure that the map is driven by the data, not your expectations.
- You could draw up a grid to record how often each theme is mentioned, ie a quantitative content analysis. This could then be analysed statistically.
- Finally, you need to turn these themes and links into a narrative. What does each theme say about what males or females would look for in a partner? Explain and interpret the data. You will need to ensure that your interpretation is grounded in the data/what the participant actually said.
- Relate the findings and interpretation of data to previous work. Use actual quotes to illustrate the points you make.
- Reflect on whether the links between the themes depicted by a male investigator and a female investigator would, or do, differ.

An example of content analysis of fathers' and mothers' descriptions of their children:

<http://www.analytictech.com/borgatti/ryantext.htm>

Material for teaching about qualitative methods:

<http://www.uniview.co.uk/pdf/1037%20Exploring%20Qualitative%20Methods%20Use%20Guide.pdf>

ACTIVITIES FOR DEVELOPING CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS

In examination questions, students are frequently asked to 'evaluate'. This is a requirement to make a reasoned and justified judgement about the value of something.

For many students, the starting point in developing these critical thinking skills is having a set of criteria that can be used to make judgements and evaluate a theory or study.

These resources and student activities are intended help students to:

- focus on relevant evaluation points/criteria
- consolidate understanding of the criteria
- become more analytic and confident to make judgement
- develop clear, concise lines of argument
- use issues and debates as tools of evaluation.

The activities will require modification to tailor them to the options you have selected to study.

Working on the activities in pairs/small groups provides an opportunity for students to use appropriate terminology and practise explaining more abstract ideas.

You may find some of the OU materials useful:

<http://www.open.ac.uk/skillsforstudy/ways-to-develop-critical-thinking.php>

1 Criteria for evaluating theories

Criterion	Explanation
Assumptions	What assumptions underpin the theory? How logical/coherent are the assumptions?
Effectiveness	Does the theory provide a coherent explanation of a psychological phenomenon? Are there important things it does not/cannot explain?
Hypotheses	Does the theory generate testable hypotheses?
Evidence	Does research evidence support or challenge the theory? How sound is the evidence for and against? A theory is only as sound as the evidence on which it is based. So, in evaluating a theory, it is appropriate to apply those criteria for evaluating studies that focus on the reliability and validity of the data (but not criteria such as ethics and social sensitivity). In considering evidence for and against the theory, you should consider whether the evidence comes from a range of research methods/techniques or whether it is an artefact of the methodology.
Comparison with other theories	Does the theory provide a better (more logical, coherent, parsimonious) explanation of the phenomenon or research evidence than other theories?
Contribution to psychology	Has the theory stimulated research? Has the theory been developed/refined in the light of research findings?
Value and application	Does the theory have applications that benefit us? Does it address real and significant problems?
Issues and debates	Where does the theory stand in relation to nature/nurture, reductionism, determinism, and what are the implications of its assumptions? (For example, if it is nature and strongly deterministic, then it may also be socially sensitive and have implications for social policy/practices. Are there inherent biases in the theory (gender, cultural)? Is the theory reductionist? What are the implications of this?

2 Criteria for evaluation of studies with student activities

Criterion	Explanation	Student activities
Research method used	Inherent in the different methods are certain strengths and limitations. For example, an experiment, if well designed, should make it possible to draw causal inferences. But a study in which the IV has not been manipulated would not allow this.	Make sure that you are familiar with the strengths and limitations of different research methods.
Techniques of data collection	Different techniques (such as questionnaire, structured observations using a checklist) each have particular strengths and limitations.	Make sure that you are familiar with the strengths and limitations of different data collection techniques.
Design of the study	How good is the design? Was the design choice (independent, repeated, matched) appropriate? Were extraneous variables associated with the design controlled?	Take some examples of studies and consider whether extraneous variables were effectively controlled or randomised.
Reliability and validity	How reliable and how valid is the data? The data is only valid if IV and DV have been operationalised appropriately (internal validity) and the DV has been measured reliably. Data is only valid if it has not been subject to demand characteristics, investigator bias or response sets such as socially desirable response set.	Take some examples of studies and consider whether the IVs and DVs have been operationalised effectively. For example, if a study is investigating behaviour, a questionnaire will only tell you what people say they do, not what they actually do. Consider whether the validity of the investigation has been compromised.
Sampling	The representativeness of the sample determines how far the findings of the study can be generalised (external population validity).	Consider whether it is justifiable to generalise from a white male sample to black females. (You might consider alpha and beta bias and ethnocentrism, etic and emic analyses.)
Setting	The setting of a study dictates the control the investigator has over variables. It also determines whether the results of a study can be generalised to other settings (ecological validity, mundane realism and experimental realism).	Examine 2 or 3 studies and consider how far the setting restricts generalisation.
Ethics	Did the study raise ethical issues/costs that outweighed the benefits?	Select one study where you think the costs outweighed the benefits and one where the benefits outweighed the costs, and explain why.

Criterion	Explanation	Student activities
Social sensitivity	Do the findings suggest that a particular group are in some way inferior? Might such findings fuel discrimination?	Identify 3 studies which you regard as socially sensitive and explain why.
Theory and application	The value of the study ultimately rests on whether it provides significant evidence for or against a theory and whether the findings can be applied to benefit us.	Identify one study that you feel has challenged a theory and one that has supported the same theory. Identify the study that you feel has the most significant application (but not Milgram!!) and explain why.

3 Developing elaboration and effective commentary skills

Lists of evaluative points such as those on the left-hand side of the following table can only gain limited marks in examination answers. To gain more marks, the points need to be elaborated by, for example:

- explaining how and why the point/issue/debate is relevant
- explaining the consequences and implications
- considering negative and positive consequences and implications where appropriate
- making sure that the material is made relevant to the requirements of the question.

Below are some points made in student answers to the following essay title.

Essay title

.....

For each of the evaluative points below, provide a more effective elaborated version of the point.

Evaluative point	Elaborated version
<p>Example for students studying depression</p> <p><u>Psychoanalytic</u> therapy only works with some clients</p>	<p>Basic elaboration <i>It is argued that psychoanalytic therapy is only of benefit to an articulate, intelligent, affluent minority.</i></p> <p>More thorough elaboration explicitly linked to depression <i>Because psychoanalytic therapy involves talking and gaining insight, and is costly and time-consuming, it is argued that it is only of benefit to an articulate, intelligent, affluent minority. Evidence suggests psychoanalytic therapy works best if the client is motivated and has a positive attitude. A depressed client's apathy, flat emotional state and lack of motivation limit the appropriateness of psychoanalytic therapy for depression. Furthermore, the levels of dependency of depressed clients mean that transference is more likely to develop.</i></p>
<p>Example for students studying depression</p> <p><u>Kohlberg's</u> theory of moral development is biased</p>	<p>Basic elaboration, identification of relevant issues <i>Kohlberg's theory of moral development is biased: it is</i></p>

	<p><i>both androcentric (beta biased) and ethnocentric.</i></p> <p>More thorough elaboration of the issues in relation to the theory</p> <p><i>Evidence from Snarey's research showed that post-conventional reasoning was not apparent in a number of non-industrialised societies. If we accept Kohlberg's theory, this would mean that these people are in essence morally inferior to people in western democratic cultures. His theory is therefore ethnocentric. As Gilligan points out, his theory is also beta biased, in that the findings from studies of male reasoning have been generalised to women, ignoring differences in their reasoning and pointing to deficiency in women's moral reasoning. This theory is thus not only biased but is also socially sensitive. Whilst it did stimulate Gilligan's development of the theory, it also provided evidence for those arguing for male superiority and the superiority of western moral reasoning. It is often the case that a seemingly scientific explanation can be used to justify socially divisive policies and practices and even prejudice and discrimination.</i></p>
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Teacher notes

To use this activity, you need to:

- identify an essay title
- fill in the blanks in the table below with relevant names/studies/theories that you have selected to study in relation to the essay title you set for students
- as this is in an electronic format, you can delete irrelevant points and also add 'unelaborated points' from your own students' essays.

After students complete their next essay, get each student to:

- read another student's essay
- make a table of unelaborated points from the essay
- individually, or as a group, elaborate them.

The next step might be to find an excellent essay where points are elaborated and get students to pick out examples of effective elaboration.

Evaluative point	Elaborated version
.....'s study lacked ecological validity.	
.....'s research was unethical.	
The sample used in was very small.	
The theory is reductionist.	
..... is a good theory.	
..... study was carried out on white males.	
..... theory is unscientific because you cannot prove it.	
Experiments carried out by are scientific but are artificial so are not valid.	
Biological explanations of are deterministic.	
..... theory is ethnocentric.	
Research into is socially sensitive.	
Most of the evidence supporting comes from animal studies.	
The main weakness of theory is that it is biased.	

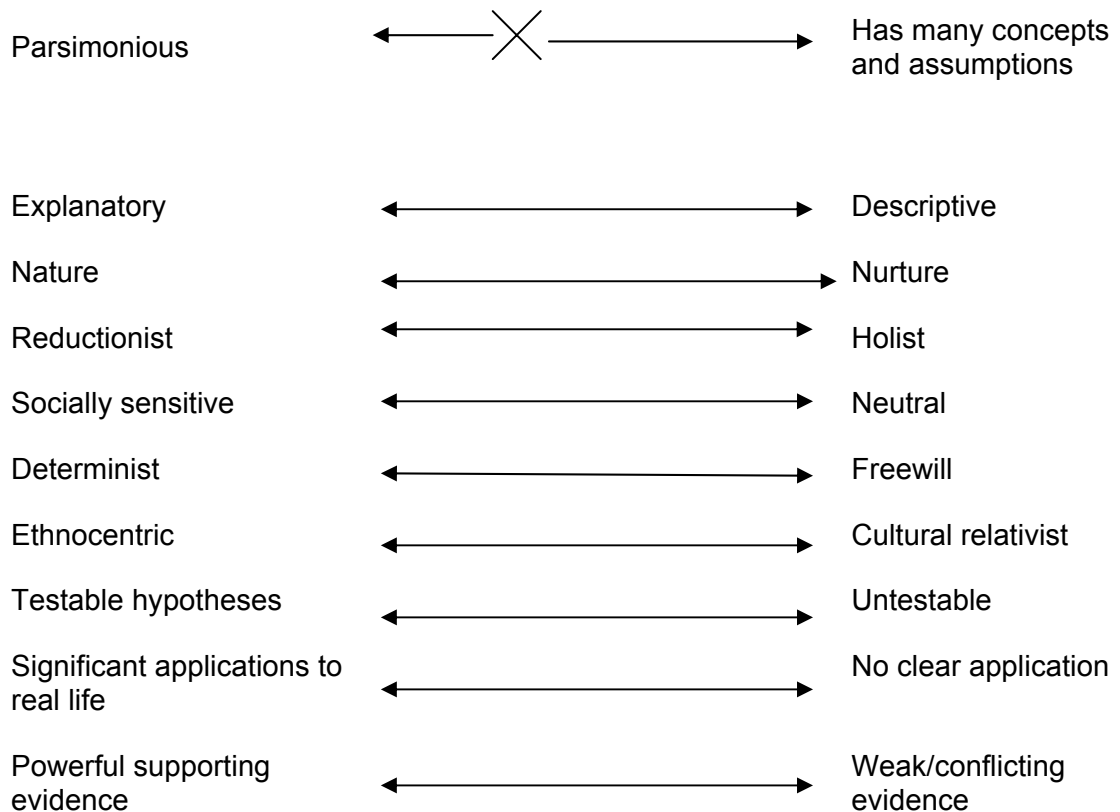
4 Using profiling to develop analytic and evaluative skills

Profiles can be used to analyse studies, research methods, theories/explanations. They encourage students to make comparisons and increase students' confidence to make judgements.

Working in pairs or small groups:

- use the following semantic differential, to profile explanation/theory of
- repeat the exercise for the explanation/theory of

For example:



- Compare your profiles for the two theories/explanations of and identify ways in which the theories are similar and the ways in which they differ. You might distinguish between subtle and more substantial differences.
- For each difference, explain the implications of the difference.

For example, theory is more reductionist than theory. It explains behaviour in terms of the action of hormones and neurotransmitters. This may meet the requirement for parsimony and allow for rigorous scientific testing: however, reducing such a complex behaviour as to a physiological level does fail to reflect the complexity of and the importance of the cultural context. Moreover, if the physiological explanation was sufficient, we would not have cases that cannot be explained in terms of physiology.

Teacher notes

For each of the topics in PSYA3, you will have selected to focus on particular issues and debates, so you will need to modify the profile dimensions to make sure they are relevant to the topic and your teaching. You will need to specify the theories you want students to profile (fill in the blanks).

You can use the same technique to profile research studies. To do this you will need to adapt the dimensions to fit the focus of the profile.

Lab setting	←————→	Natural setting
Control	←————→	Variables not controlled
Effective operationalising of variables	←————→	Operationalising of variable poor
Qualitative data	←————→	Quantitative data
Valid	←————→	Not valid
Reliable	←————→	Measurement unreliable
Hypothesis supported	←————→	Hypothesis not supported
Representative sample	←————→	Unrepresentative sample
Significant applications	←————→	No clear application
Ethical	←————→	Unethical
Socially sensitive	←————→	Neutral

ACTIVITIES FOR SUMMARY OF APPROACHES

1 To develop knowledge of the approaches

- Provide the content of each cell on cards and get students to sort the information into the approaches.
- For revision or reviews of approaches, provide a blank version of the table below and get students to complete it.

If students are not able to get started, work through one approach as a class then get the students to work in groups, each completing a particular approach.

Approach	Key assumptions about behaviour	Main research techniques	Strengths	Limitations
Biological	All behaviour has a biological basis. Focus on the nervous system and physiological and biochemical determinants, and on the evolutionary basis of behaviour and the role of genetics.	Experiments, physiological measures, eg scans: PET, CAT, MRI Genetic studies	Scientific Strong evidence base Objective measurements Strong on applications	Neglect of nurture/social and cultural influences Problems with measuring physiology Inability to explain negative cases (eg why drugs only work for some clients)
Psycho-dynamic	Early childhood experiences determine behaviour Focus on unconscious processes and the resolution of conflict between elements of the personality	Case studies, analysis of unconscious motives	Challenges existing ways of conceptualising human behaviour Strong focus on explanation of behaviour. Can explain irrational behaviour. Based on detailed qualitative data	Based on hypothetical constructs/unfalsifiable Non-scientific: pitfalls of generalising from case studies/limited sample Over-emphasis of unconscious Application limited

Behaviourist	All behaviour learnt through conditioning – past experience and environment Focus on actual behaviour and the role of associations and reinforcement	Experiments, some using animals	Strongly scientific experimental evidence Strong applications across a wide range of behaviours, policy and practices (behaviour can be changed)	Assumption that you can generalise from animals to humans Lab experiments artificial Neglect of nature Addresses behaviour, not the cause
Social learning	Behaviour is learned through observation and imitation, modelling. Cognitive processes involved in observational learning	Experiments	Enhances behaviourist approach by addressing cognitive processes Scientific evidence Explains acquisition of complex social behaviours	Identifies but does not explain cognitive processes Lab experiments artificial Not good at explaining learning of abstract ideas Less deterministic and reductionist
Cognitive	Human beings seen as information processors Focus on ways of thinking and how we make sense of the world Cognitive processes that underpin behaviour	Experiments, computer modelling, questioning techniques	Builds on behaviourist explanations Rigorous experimental methods Moderate position re nature/nurture and determinism Wide range of applications	Over-emphasis on computer analogy Cognitive processes inferred from observable behaviour and physiological measures

<p>**Humanistic</p>	<p>Individuals free to choose how they behave</p> <p>Focus on subjective experience, conscious awareness and personal growth</p>	<p>Q-sorts and unstructured interviews</p>	<p>Emphasises autonomy</p> <p>Addresses the person as a whole</p> <p>Self concept, motivation, client-centred therapy</p>	<p>Non-scientific methods</p> <p>Assumes individuals intrinsically good</p> <p>Cultural bias in the assumption that we all have free will</p> <p>Some behaviour determined by forces outside our conscious awareness, eg release of hormones</p>
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. Teacher notes

** Humanistic approach is not required but can be useful in relation to some topics. Delete ** if you do not wish to include this approach.

2 To develop knowledge of the approaches and their position in relation to issues and debates

- Provide the content of each cell on cards and get students to sort the information into the approaches.
- For revision or reviews of approaches, provide a blank version of the table below and get students to complete it.

If students are not able to get started, work through one approach as a class then get the students to work in groups, each completing a particular approach.

Approach	Key assumptions about behaviour	Main research techniques	Issues and debates	Strengths	Limitations
Biological	All behaviour has a biological basis Focus on the nervous system and physiological and biochemical determinants, and on the evolutionary basis of behaviour and the role of genetics	Experiments, physiological measures, eg scans: PET, CAT, MRI Genetic studies	Deterministic Reductionist Nature Use of animals	Scientific Strong evidence base Objective measurements Strong on applications	Neglect of nurture/social and cultural influences Problems with measuring physiology Inability to explain negative cases (eg why drugs only work for some clients)
Psycho-dynamic	Early childhood experiences determine behaviour Focus on unconscious processes and the resolution of conflict between elements of the personality	Case studies, analysis of unconscious motives	Middle position on nature/nurture Deterministic Gender bias	Challenges existing ways of conceptualising human behaviour Strong focus on explanation of behaviour. Can explain irrational behaviour Based on detailed qualitative data	Based on hypothetical constructs/unfalsifiable Non-scientific: pitfalls of generalising from case studies/limited sample Over-emphasis of unconscious Application limited

<p>Behaviourist</p>	<p>All behaviour learnt through conditioning – past experience and environment Focus on actual behaviour and the role of associations and reinforcement</p>	<p>Experiments, some using animals</p>	<p>Deterministic Reductionist Nurture Use of animals</p>	<p>Strongly scientific experimental evidence Strong applications across a wide range of behaviours, policy and practices (behaviour can be changed)</p>	<p>Assumption that you can generalise from animals to humans Lab experiments artificial Neglect of nature Addresses behaviour not the cause</p>
<p>Social learning</p>	<p>Behaviour is learned through observation, and imitation, modelling Cognitive processes involved in observational learning</p>	<p>Experiments</p>	<p>Less deterministic and reductionist than behaviourist approach Stresses nurture</p>	<p>Enhances behaviourist approach by addressing cognitive processes Scientific evidence Explains acquisition of complex social behaviours</p>	<p>Identifies but does not explain cognitive processes Lab experiments artificial Not good at explaining learning of abstract ideas Less deterministic and reductionist</p>
<p>Cognitive</p>	<p>Human beings seen as information processors Focus on ways of thinking and how we make sense of the world Cognitive processes that underpin behaviour</p>	<p>Experiments, computer modelling, questioning techniques</p>	<p>Soft determinist Reductionist and mechanistic Middle position on nature/nurture</p>	<p>Builds on behaviourist explanations Rigorous experimental methods Moderate position re nature/nurture and determinism Wide range of applications</p>	<p>Over-emphasis on computer analogy Cognitive processes inferred from observable behaviour and physiological measures</p>

<p>**Humanistic</p>	<p>Individuals free to choose how they behave</p> <p>Focus on subjective experience, conscious awareness and personal growth</p>	<p>Q-sorts and unstructured interviews</p>	<p>Nurture</p> <p>Holist</p> <p>Free will</p>	<p>Emphasises autonomy</p> <p>Addresses the person as a whole</p> <p>Self concept, motivation, client-centred therapy</p>	<p>Non-scientific methods</p> <p>Assumes individuals intrinsically good</p> <p>Cultural bias in the assumption that we all have free will</p> <p>Some behaviour determined by forces outside our conscious awareness, eg release of hormones</p>
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Teacher notes

** Humanistic approach is not required but can be useful in relation to some topics. Delete ** if you do not wish to include this approach.

ACTIVITIES FOR APPROACHES IN PSYCHOPATHOLOGY

1 To develop knowledge of the approaches in psychopathology

- Provide students with the blank version of the table at the end of these activities. Students use their class notes or textbook to complete the table. If students are not able to get started, work through one approach as a class then get the students to work in groups, each group completing a particular approach. Each group shares information to check accuracy and to generate a completed table.

Re-use the activity without textbook or notes as a knowledge and understanding test.

- Alternatively, provide the content of each cell of the table on cards and get students to work in pairs or small groups to sort the information into the approaches.

2 To develop concise writing skills and a strong line of argument

- Students can then use the information in the table to construct a description of the main features of an approach. In writing the description, students should consider the order of the information and how they can link the information in each cell in a column to create a succinct and clear description of the approach.
- Students should then highlight the words and phrases they have used to *link* the material in the different cells and consider which link phrases/words are most effective.
- Students can then use the information in the table to construct a paragraph that compares how two different approaches explain the disorder they are studying or how the two different approaches treat the disorder they are studying.
- Students should then highlight the words and phrases they have used to *compare* the material in the different cells and consider which words are most effective in drawing attention to similarities and differences.

Note

If students are struggling to develop effective linking phrases, provide an evaluative extract from a text or article and instead of focusing on the psychology, get them to highlight how ideas are linked. Make a list of the link words/phrases. Then try the task again using the list of link phrases.

3 To develop analytic skills and an appreciation of approaches in real life

Once students are fairly confident with their base knowledge of the approaches in relation to the disorder they are studying:

- provide written or video case study material describing explanations and therapies/treatments for the disorder being studied. Students should try to match the explanations and therapies described in the case study with the features of the approaches in the cells of the table.
- working in pairs, students then decide on which approach(es) are being used in the case study and write a brief justification of their decision.

- plenary class discussion about:
 - the effectiveness of the explanation(s) of the disorder
 - the effectiveness and appropriateness of the therapy for the disorder
 - the relationship between theory and practice and eclecticism.

Note

It is unlikely that what is described will be a perfect fit to one approach. It is likely to illustrate an eclectic approach to therapy/treatment.

4 To develop evaluative skills and encourage understanding of strengths and limitations of different approaches

Evaluating explanations

Add into the table rows for strengths and limitations of the explanations. Provide students with a list of evaluative points. The points in the list should be applicable to the explanation of the disorder being studied.

- Students work in pairs or small groups to sort/allocate strengths and limitations to the various approaches. These need to be completed in relation to the disorder they are studying.
- For each strength and each limitation, students should write a short paragraph explaining why it is a strength or limitation and the implications of limitations. (For ideas on this, see Activity Bank: Critical Thinking Skills activity 3.)

Evaluating therapies/treatments

Add into the table rows for appropriateness and effectiveness of the treatments/therapies. Provide students with a list of evaluative points. The points in the list should be applicable to the disorder being studied.

- Students work in pairs or small groups to sort/allocate points about effectiveness and points about appropriateness to the various approaches. These need to be completed in relation to the disorder studied.
- For each point, students should write a short elaboration explaining and/or justifying the point. (For ideas on this, see Activity Bank: Critical Thinking Skills activity 3.)

You can vary the task by initially providing points that are more clearly relevant to particular explanations and particular therapies. For stretch and challenge, provide lists in which there are more subtle differences.

You might wish to include some more general evaluative points in relation to therapies, such as:

- Does the research compare like with like (ie same diagnostic criteria used)?
- Does the investigator have an effect or a bias?
- Does the therapist being used in the investigation have a particular skill?
- Are improvements the long-term result of another previous therapy?
- How should we measure effectiveness?

You should remind students that a point might be appropriate to more than one approach and some points may apply to all therapies.

APPROACHES IN PSYCHOPATHOLOGY

Approach	Biological	Psychodynamic	Behavioural	Cognitive
Key concepts in explaining behaviour				
Research methods and techniques				
Explanation of abnormal behaviour				
Strengths of the approach				
Limitations of the approach				
Aims of the therapy				
Therapies				
Appropriateness of the therapy				
Effectiveness of the therapy				

Approach	Biological	Psychodynamic	Behavioural	Cognitive
Key concepts in explaining behaviour	Focus on the nervous system and the role of genetics, physiological and biochemical determinants	Focus on conflict, unconscious processes and the childhood origins of these	Focus on actual behaviour and the role of learning through conditioning and imitation (SLT)	Focus on ways of thinking about self and their role in determining behaviour
Research methods and techniques	Experiments, scans PET, CAT, MRI Post-mortem	Case studies, projective tests, free association	Experiments, some using animals	Experimental
Explanation of abnormal behaviour	Physiological malfunction, viral infection, brain injury, chemical imbalance/ deficiencies or genetic disorder	Anxiety and emotional disturbance arising from unresolved unconscious conflicts	Failure to learn appropriate behaviour or learning maladaptive responses. Inappropriate reinforcement	Inappropriate negative irrational thoughts about self
Strengths of the approach				
Limitations of the approach				
Aims of the therapy	To eliminate symptoms and eliminate the cause	To uncover repressed unconscious conflicts and bring about balance between id ego and superego	Change behaviour Replace maladaptive behaviour by changing reinforcement	Challenge and change faulty, irrational and dysfunctional thinking
Therapies	Drug therapies/ chemotherapies, ECT, psychosurgery	Psychotherapy Analysis and interpretation of dreams, free association and transference	Systematic desensitisation, flooding, aversion therapy, behaviour shaping, token economies and modelling	Cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT), rational emotive therapy (RET)
Appropriateness of the therapy				
Effectiveness of the therapy				