Study Questions for Chapter 2: Theories of Human Development


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**This module contains 74 questions. Make sure you have printed the entire module.**

**Learning Objectives**

- Define the concepts of nature and nurture.
- Be able to recognize examples of biological (nature) and environmental (nurture) influences on development.
- Define the concepts of continuity and discontinuity.
- Be able to recognize examples of continuous (quantitative) and discontinuous (qualitative) changes in development.
- Focus on the following five theorists and their theories: Freud, Erikson, Skinner, Bandura, and Piaget. For each theory...
  - be able to identify position on nature vs. nurture controversy.
  - be able to identify position on continuity vs. discontinuity dimension.
  - be able to identify major concepts.
  - be able to recognize new applications.
  - be able to describe similarities and differences between the theorists.

**2.1 Developmental Theories and the Issues They Raise**

1. A theory is:

2. List criteria of a good theory:
Nature and Nurture

3. ____________________ is the controversy over whether development is primarily determined by biological or environmental forces. __________ refers to biological forces and __________ refers to environmental forces.

4. _______________ refers to an emphasis on the influence of heredity, maturational processes guided by genes, and biologically based predispositions as explanations for development, while _______________ refers to an emphasis on learning experiences, child-rearing methods, and culture as explanations for development.

**HINT**: For nurture, think of what it means to nurture young children -- caring for them and shaping their experiences (environmental influences). For nature, think of the great outdoors or nature shows that focus on biology (genetic influences).

5. Identify the following examples as taking a stronger nature view or a stronger nurture view.

a. _______________ Day care centers with educational toys and activities help to prepare children for first grade.

b. _______________ Students should be tracked (placed in separate groups) according to their ability levels in reading.

c. _______________ Boys' higher levels of testosterone make them naturally more aggressive than girls.

d. _______________ Adults' expectations encourage boys to be more aggressive than girls.

e. _______________ Children tend to reach each of Piaget's stages of cognitive development at about the same age.

f. _______________ Children in societies with formal education tend to achieve Piaget's stages of cognitive development much earlier than children in societies with no system of formal education.

Continuity and Discontinuity

6. ____________________ is the controversy over whether development proceeds along a smooth and gradual path or whether it jumps along in abrupt and discrete stages. _______________ refers to development proceeding along a smooth and gradual path, which _______________ refers to development proceeding in abrupt and discrete stages.

7. _______________ theorists view development as occurring in small steps without sudden changes, whereas _______________ theorists view development as sudden changes which elevate the individual to more advanced level.
8. Quantitative changes in development are changes in _______________, and they reflect a _______________ view.

9. Qualitative changes in development are changes in _______________, and they reflect a _______________ view.

**HINT:** For continuity, think of the quantitative change in size from the little frog to the bigger frog in Figure 2.1; for discontinuity, think of the qualitative change from the tadpole to the frog in Figure 2.1.

10. Discontinuity theorists often propose that people progress through developmental ________________.

11. If a theorist has stages (e.g., Freud and Piaget) s/he is a _______________ theorist. If the theorist has no stages (e.g., Bandura, Skinner), s/he is a _______________ theorist.

12. Developmental stages refer to:

**HINT:** For continuity, think of development as a continuous or straight line, like walking up a ramp and getting gradually higher and higher. For discontinuity, think of a discontinuous or broken line. Development proceeds in stages like walking up a staircase with abrupt differences in height with each step.

13. Identify the following examples as reflecting continuity or discontinuity of development:

_______________ a. stages of development

_______________ b. A 14-month-old child knows 10 vocabulary words and a 16-month-old knows 25 vocabulary words.

_______________ c. growth spurt during adolescence

_______________ d. An elementary school child can reason logically when they have concrete examples; a high school student can reason logically about abstract issues.

_______________ e. A three-year-old plays with Legos for 5 or 10 minutes, her older sister plays with Legos for an hour at a time.

_______________ f. A two-year-old child can remember 2 or 3 words from a list in her short-term memory; an adult can remember 7 or 8 words from the list.

_______________ g. A five-year-old and an eight-year-old view a set of sticks which are colored red, green, orange, blue, yellow, white and black. The sticks are arranged in order from
shortest to tallest. Then the sticks are scattered randomly and each child is asked to put them back in their original order. The five-year-old tries to arrange them by remembering which color went first, second, etc. The eight-year-old puts the shortest one first and then the next shortest, etc.

2.2 Freud: Psychoanalytic Theory

_Pronunciation guide: His name is pronounced Froyd (rhymes with Floyd), not Fraud and not Frude._

We have added several notes to this section because we wanted to clarify some of the misconceptions that people often have regarding Freud's theory. It is important to recognize Freud's contributions to psychology, and also to place his theory in historical context. Freud's influence on 20th century thought about human behavior is profound. Although his theory does not drive much of the research in developmental psychology today, Freud was a pioneer in understanding human behavior and development. Because Freud's theory is complex, people often misconstrue his ideas, particularly his influential ideas about attachment and moral development. More than anything, Freud convinced us that how we raise children has a profound effect in shaping their adult personality and behavior.

Be sure to read the notes because they are often followed by questions that are not answered in the textbook. This material will also help you with the quiz questions.

**Instincts and Unconscious Motives**

14. _______________ _______________ refers to biological instincts and other inner forces that we are not aware of but which have the power to influence our behavior.

15. His emphasis on biological instincts places Freud on the _______________ side of the nature/nurture debate. Because his theory has stages, Freud is on the _______________ side of the continuity/discontinuity issue.

**Id, Ego, and Superego**

16. __________, __________, and __________ are the three basic components of personality.

17. Identify and define each of the three components of personality.
   a)

   b)

   c)
NOTE: According to Freud, the purpose of the id is to ensure survival of the species. (This illustrates some of Darwin's influence on Freud's theory.) The id contains instinctual drives that motivate us toward those things the species needs for survival, such as food, water, and sex. What the id lacks is the ability to tolerate frustration, to overcome obstacles in its path, or to plan logically how to get what it wants. Thus, it is somewhat like a helpless infant.

18. Since these drives are instinctual, the id is part of the personality that is ______________ or present at birth.

Psychosexual Development

19. Freud's stages are called __________________ stages because as a child matures biologically, the sex instinct's psychic energy (called ________________) shifts from one part of the body to another and seeks to gratify different biological needs in different parts of the body.

NOTE: People often misunderstand Freud's use of the term psychosexual and believe that Freud was too "hung up" on sex. In fact, Freud used the term "sexuality" to mean not only sexual intercourse, but also emotional intimacy between family members (e.g., romantic love, marriage, conception, childbirth, and the love and nurturance that parents give to their children). Put in this light, most of us would probably agree that these are extremely important aspects of our lives.

20. List Freud's Psychosexual stages of development and their characteristics (see Table 2.2):

NOTE: While you do not have to memorize each stage, it's hard to follow what Freud's theory is all about without at least being familiar with the oral stage and the phallic stage. Here is an account of the important events of the oral stage:

At birth, infants have an id but no ego or superego. The ego develops during the oral stage. In the oral stage, the energy of the id becomes invested in oral gratification (nursing, thumbsucking, sucking on a bottle, etc.) and the person who provides that gratification (typically the mother). The infant becomes so invested in the mother that s/he perceives that they are the same person—the mother is merely an extension of the infant who provides all basic needs. This total identification starts to break down when the mother begins to impose limitations on the infant, such as weaning, setting limits on behavior, saying "no", etc. Now the infant realizes that s/he and the mother are two separate individuals with their own separate wills. Out of this experience, the infant's ego is formed.
21. How and when does the ego develop?

**NOTE** on the Phallic Stage: Many people find Freud's description of the phallic stage objectionable. They find the Oedipus conflict to be somewhat shocking or unbelievable. Freud probably did not mean that four-year-old boys literally want to become sexually involved with their mothers. (Most 4- to 6-year-olds would have only a vague notion of what that means.) However, parents are the most important people in children's lives. At this age, children may sense some intimacy between the parents that they are not part of, and may feel jealous about this. These feelings may be manifested by children trying to crawl into bed with their parents. Some friends of Dr. Ironsmith used to wait for their daughter to fall asleep in their bed each night and then put her back in her own bed, but she always woke up and returned to her parents' bed. One night, they got exasperated and locked their bedroom door. They found her the next morning camped out with her blanket and pillow right outside the door! The Oedipus or Electra conflicts may simply reflect children's desire to be the most important person in the opposite-sex parent's life and the accompanying feelings of jealousy toward the same-sex parent. Sensing that this desire is not acceptable to parents, children fear punishment or rejection by the parents. To reduce the anxiety, children identify with the same-sex parent and incorporate that parent's moral values into their own ego thereby gaining a superego or moral conscience. Now the child has an id, an ego and a superego, so the personality is complete. According to Freud, little happens beyond this point to change one's personality.

22. How and when does the superego develop?

23. What was Freud's stand on the nature-nurture controversy? In what ways does he believe that nature influences development? In what ways does nurture influence development? Which of the two does Freud emphasize?
24. For Freud, development through his stages is driven by conflict between the id's impulses and _______________________. This conflict may be intensified if parents are harsh and too demanding. To help control the anxiety produced by this conflict, the ________________ uses unconscious coping devices called ___________________________________.

**NOTE:** On page 35, Sigelman and Rider imply that overly harsh parenting can result in fixation in the oral or anal or phallic stages. However, Freud also attributed fixations to overly permissive parents (those who were late in weaning or toilet training their children). Freud was not an advocate of permissive parenting, although many people attribute this to him. He believed that parents should find the right time and the right method to socialize their children, although this differs for each child so don't look to him for any useful guidelines, Moms and Dads.

*Strengths and Weaknesses*

25. List the major criticisms of Freud's theory.

26. List three major contributions that Freud made to our understanding of human development.

1) 
2) 
3) 

**2.3 Erikson: Neo-Freudian Psychoanalytic Theory**

27. Erikson's point of view differs from Freud's in several ways listed below. Complete each item so that it is correct.

a. ____________ placed more emphasis on biological and sexual urges as the basis of development, whereas ________________ placed more emphasis on social influences such as peers, teachers, and broader culture.

b. ______________ placed more emphasis on the rational ego and its adaptive powers, whereas ________________ placed more emphasis on the irrational id.
c. _______________ held the more positive view of human nature and saw us as active in our own development and able to overcome negative early experiences. _______________ focused more on psychological problems, such as fixation and regression.

d. _______________ viewed development as completed early in childhood and his stages end with adolescence, whereas _______________ viewed development as continuing throughout adulthood.

e. Erikson refers to the _______________ stages of development, whereas Freud describes the _______________ stages.

**Psychosocial Stages**

**NOTE:** Although you do not need to know all of Erikson's stages at this point (we will cover them in detail later in the semester), you should be able to recognize descriptions of conflicts or crises as being examples of Erikson's stages. Note that Erikson's stages are Psychosocial rather than Psychosexual stages, as he emphasizes a broader range of social motivations on developments.

28. Each of Erikson's psychosocial stages is characterized by a particular conflict (also known as a developmental crisis—remember this term because it will be important later). At each stage, the individual is pushed by both changes in _______________ (what the individual is able to do) and _______________ (external expectations of parents and others).

29. In the first stage, trust vs. mistrust, the conflict focuses on:

30. One of Erikson’s most critical stages is adolescence, and this stage is called __________ vs __________.

31. Erikson defines “identity” as:

32. What are some examples of behaviors that characterize this crisis?
33. What was Erikson's stand on the nature-nurture controversy? Where does he stand relative to Freud? (NOTE: This is not spelled out literally for you in the text. The time you spend thinking about it now will save you much grief later!)

34. What was Erikson's stand on the continuity/discontinuity issue? (Again, this requires a little thought. Look back to the earlier section on this.)

2.4 Learning Theories

35. Where do learning theories stand on the nature-nurture controversy?

Watson: Classical Conditioning

36. Although your textbook refers only to Watson’s view as behaviorism, Skinner (next section) is also considered to be a behaviorist. Why do you think this theoretical perspective is called behaviorism?

NOTE: Both Skinner and Watson were concerned that psychology be considered a science. They felt that references to internal emotions or thoughts which could not be observed by others (what they called "mentalism") was unscientific. They believed that psychologists could only study what they could observe, in other words behavior. Thus, their theory came to be known as ________________.

37. John Watson believed that development proceeded by learning associations between ________________ and ________________.

38. Watson and Raynor studied how children could learn fears by using a type of learning known as ________________ ________________.

NOTE: At this point, do not worry about the terminology of classical conditioning. All you need is the general idea. The details will be covered much more thoroughly in Module 2A.

39. Classical conditioning best explains how we acquire a range of ________________

40. What stand does the learning theory perspective take regarding the continuity or discontinuity of development.
**Skinner: Operant Conditioning**

41. Skinner studied a type of learning called _______________ _________________.

42. In this type of learning, a behavior is influenced by:

43. ________________ occurs when a consequence strengthens a response (external consequences that increases the probability of a response happening again), while ________________ occurs when a consequence weakens a response (external consequences that decrease the probability of a response happening again).

**NOTE**: For now, you only need to know the difference between reinforcement and punishment. We'll cover the positive vs. negative reinforcement and positive vs. negative punishment in the next module (2A).

44. How do reinforcement and punishment differ?

45. Identify the following examples as either reinforcement or punishment:

_____________ a. Parents praise their child for sharing toys with a friend and she shares more after that.

_____________ b. Parents scold their child for hitting another child and he stops hitting.

_____________ c. Students lose a letter grade when they are late and miss a deadline and they are not late again.

_____________ d. Students get a sticker every time they pass a module quiz and they pass future modules quickly.

46. Both Watson and Skinner believed that the course of human development depends on our ________________ experiences.

**Bandura: Social Cognitive Theory (Social Learning Theory)**

*Pronunciation guide: We think you can figure out how to pronounce this name, but be sure to learn it—don't come in to take a quiz referring to him as the B-guy!*
47. What does Bandura add to traditional behaviorism in an attempt to address a primary criticism of Skinner's theory?

48. In what important way is Bandura's theory similar to Skinner's, and in what ways do these two theories differ?
SIMILAR:

DIFFERENT:

49. Bandura agrees with Skinner that operant conditioning is an important type of learning, but humans also engage in various COGNITIVE activities such as (a) _____________ about connections between behavior and consequences, and (b) _____________ future consequences.

50. A major concept in Bandura's theory is _____________ _____________, which he defines as:

51. Observational learning is regarded as a more _____________ form of learning than operant or classical conditioning. The reason, Bandura argues, is that:

NOTE: Again, the details of social cognitive theory will be covered more thoroughly in Module 2A. We just hit the highlights here.

52. Define reciprocal determinism.

53. Where does social cognitive theory stand on the nature-nurture controversy?
54. Where does social cognitive theory stand with regard to the continuity or discontinuity of development?

55. What are some of the fundamental differences between Psychoanalytic theories (Freud, Erikson) and Learning Theories (Watson, Skinner, Bandura)?

56. What are the major strengths of the Learning Theories?

57. What are the major limitations?

2.5 Piaget: Cognitive Developmental Theory

58. When Piaget worked in Alfred Binet's laboratory administering IQ tests to children, he was most interested in their _______________ (correct or incorrect) answers. Why was this important to the development of Piaget's theory?

*Constructivism*

*Pronunciation guide: It's pronounced Pea-ah-ZHAY.*

59. Piaget's view that children actively create new ways of understanding the world based on their experiences is called _______________. Piaget believed that as children mature, they build increasingly complex cognitive structures called **SCHEMES**. This is also why his theory is called cognitive-structural (a more precise label than the one given in your text).
60. What was Piaget's stand on the nature-nurture controversy? What particular aspects of nature and/or nurture did Piaget emphasize?

*Stages of Cognitive Development*

61. Where does Piaget stand on the continuity or discontinuity of development?

**NOTE:** Although you do not need to know all the details of Piaget's stages at this point (we will cover them in detail later in the semester), you should be able to recognize descriptions of actions and thought processes as being examples of Piaget's stages.

62. Overview of Piaget’s stages:
   (1) As children progress through Piaget's stages, they move from the ____________________ stage in which infants rely on their ________________ and ________________ to understand the world.
   (2) As preschoolers, they enter the ____________________ stage in which they use ____________________
   (3) Elementary school children in the ____________________ stage are more ________________ than preschoolers, but they use a ____________________ approach to solving problems.
   (4) Finally, their thinking becomes ________________ and ________________ as they reach adolescence and enter the ____________________ stage.

63. Which of Piaget's basic beliefs have stood the test of time?

64. In what two ways has Piaget's theory influenced education?
65. What are some of the weaknesses of Piaget's theory?

Other Perspectives on Cognitive Development

66. List the names of two approaches to cognitive development that have challenged Piaget’s theory.
   (1)

   (2)

   **NOTE:** We will learn much more about these two theories in later chapters. Just get a basic overview for now, particularly how they compare to Piaget’s theory.

67. Vygotsky's sociocultural perspective suggests that children's cognitive development is the result of:

   *Note that Vygotsky is pronounced vi-GOT-ski—don't call him the V-guy*

68. How does Vygotsky's sociocultural view differ from Piaget's theory?

69. Briefly describe the information processing approach to cognition, and discuss how it differs from Piaget’s theory.
Review Questions

70. Match the following list of terms with the corresponding theorists.
(S) Skinner          (F) Freud          (P) Piaget          (B) Bandura          (E) Erikson

_____ a. behaviorism
_____ b. cognitive-structural theory
_____ c. focuses more on the id
_____ d. psychosocial theory
_____ e. observational learning
_____ f. trust vs. mistrust
_____ g. psychosexual theory
_____ h. preoperational
_____ i. developmental crisis
_____ j. positive reinforcement
_____ k. defense mechanisms
_____ l. focuses more on the ego
_____ m. regression
_____ n. sensorimotor period
_____ o. generativity vs. stagnation
_____ p. operant conditioning
_____ q. Oedipus complex
_____ r. concrete operations
_____ s. reciprocal determinism
_____ t. identity vs. role confusion
_____ u. social cognitive theory
_____ v. schemes
_____ w. fixation
_____ x. formal operations
_____ y. industry vs. inferiority
_____ z. vicarious reinforcement

71. Which theories have stages, and which ones do not have stages?

STAGES =

NO STAGES =

72. Which theories view development as being discontinuous, and which ones view development as being continuous?

DISCONTINUITY =

CONTINUITY =
Practice Applying What You Have Learned

73. Teenage Pregnancy Example.
Chapter 2 began with the example of 15-year-old Sherry and 16-year-old Robert. Quickly review this paragraph on page 30. Now, match each point of view below with the appropriate theorist. Try to do this without checking back over your notes. After you have written down all of your matches, use the "Explorations" boxes in the text to check your answers.

(F) Freud (E) Erikson (B) Bandura (P) Piaget (S) Skinner

_____ a. Sherry's mother was an unresponsive caregiver during infancy, so Sherry has a hard time trusting other people. She fears being abandoned and uses sex to prevent this from happening.

_____ b. Since Sherry and Robert are not doing particularly well in school, perhaps they are a little delayed in their intellectual development and their thinking is still very concrete.

_____ c. Robert and Sherry engage in sexual activity because it is reinforcing, and they failed to use contraception because it is not reinforcing.

_____ d. Sherry and Robert have weak superegos that are unable to keep their selfish ids under control. They pursued immediate gratification of their sexual urges with no consideration of the future consequences of their actions.

_____ e. Sherry and Robert have learned from television and their peers that teenagers are likely to be sexually involved. The media rarely portrays negative consequences for unprotected sexual activity, so they too ignore the possible consequence of pregnancy.

_____ f. Sherry was experiencing intense conflict during the genital stage of development, so she distanced herself from her parents.

_____ g. Robert and Sherry are exploring different roles as they work on establishing their individual identities.

_____ h. Robert and Sherry may be early in the stage of being able to think through all of the possible alternatives and consequences of their actions. They may not yet be very good at planning solutions to problems in advance.

_____ i. Sherry and Robert are trying to find an easy resolution to their role confusion through each other by becoming another person's partner. This is a problem, because you have to really know yourself and your own identity before you can find true intimacy.

_____ j. Robert was experiencing residual feelings of conflict related to the Oedipal complex of the phallic stage, and sex with Sherry was how he gratified his unconscious desire for his mother.
k. Robert believes that using condoms will decrease his sexual pleasure, and Sherry believes that Robert will resent her if she asks him to use a condom. These expectations are more important in shaping their behavior than the actual consequences.

74. At this time, you are not required to know every one of the stages. We will work on learning the specific stages later when we cover each theory in more detail. For now, you just need to work on understanding the major concepts. Below is a chart of the various theories that you will need to know. Print out the chart (or create your own version with more space) and fill it in as you read this chapter. Where does each theory stand on the nature-nurture issue? Where do they stand with regard to continuity-discontinuity? What are the major concepts that comprise each theory? Finally, what are some of the strengths and weaknesses of each theory?
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