East Carolina University  
PSYC 3206 – Developmental Psychology  
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Study Questions for Chapter 11  
Self and Personality  


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**Learning Objectives**

- Define the concepts personality, self-concept, self-esteem, and identity.  
- Identify ways in which Erikson’s theory of personality development differs from Freud’s theory.  
- Explain what is meant by Erikson’s use of the term crisis.  
- Identify the “big five” personality dimensions. Compare and contrast this psychometric approach with psychoanalytic theory.  
- Describe how social learning theory’s explanation for personality development differs from psychoanalytic theory and the psychometric approach.  
- Describe how researchers measure self-recognition in infancy and know when self-recognition develops.  
- Define Thomas and Chess’ three categories of temperament.  
- Describe gene and environmental influences on behavioral inhibition.  
- Know the significance of the concept “goodness of fit”.  
- Describe developmental changes in children’s self descriptions, and relate these changes to Piaget’s stages of cognitive development.  
- Identify Harter’s five components of self-esteem. Describe how developmental changes in self-esteem relate to Piaget’s stages of cognitive development. Identify family factors that are related to high self-esteem.  
- Define the four categories of identity status proposed by Marcia, and be able to identify new examples of each one.  
- Identify four factors that influence adolescents’ progress toward the development of a stable identity.  
- Describe the patterns of stability and change in personality development across the lifespan.  
- Explain how cohort effects are problematic in research on personality development.  
- Describe how the concepts of gene-environment correlation and goodness-of-fit help us to
understand stability and change in personality development.

- Name each of Erikson’s eight stages of personality development, identify the age group associated with each stage, and be able to recognize new examples of each stage.
- Identify the strengths and weaknesses of Erikson’s theory (which aspects have been supported by research?).

**Conceptualizing the Self**

1. Identify the following terms. (personality, self-concept, self-esteem, identity)
   a. your perceptions of your personal attributes and traits
   b. your overall evaluation of your worth as a person
   c. an overall sense of who you are, where you are heading, and where you fit in society
   d. the organized combination of attributes, motives, values, and behaviors that is unique to each individual

**Three Theories of Personality Development**

2. **REVIEW.** These theories give different perspectives on when personality develops and how it changes throughout our lives. Before reading this section, let’s do a quick review. The two theorists who are associated with psychoanalytic theory are ________ (who holds more of a psycho________ view) and ________ (who holds more of a psycho________ view). The theorist who is associated with social learning theory is ________.

**Theories of Personality Development – Psychoanalytic**

3. 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. He saw us as active in our own development and able to overcome negative early experiences.

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

**POINT OF CLARIFICATION.**

Erikson proposed a series of eight stages of psychosocial development. Each stage reflects a crisis that occurs at a particular point in development. Your text does not define crisis, but it is important to understand what Erikson meant by this term. It is not the typical meaning involving
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a catastrophe, but rather it is a developmental turning point. It is a time when the individual is mature enough to face new social requirements or opportunities. A crisis is an encounter between the individual’s maturing ego and the demands of the social world (different demands at different stages of life, e.g., establish identity during adolescence).

We face new challenges with every stage, and if we don’t resolve a particular crisis, then we can keep working on it during later stages. For Erikson, resolution of a crisis means striking a balance between the two characteristics of each stage. For example, resolution of the crisis in the first stage (trust vs mistrust) does not mean trusting everyone. It means learning that you can trust some people, even though you cannot trust all people. A little distrust is actually healthy. If an infant does not develop a sense of trust during the first year, he or she may still be able to learn to trust others in later years. Note that issues of trust will be important in later stages, for example in the crisis of stage 6 (intimacy vs isolation).

4. What did Erikson mean by crisis?

5. For Piaget’s theory, you learned that both maturational forces and cognitive conflict (disequilibrium) drive one’s development through Piaget’s four stages. For Erikson’s theory, __________________________ and __________________________ drive development.

6. Optimal development (resolution of each crisis) depends on __________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________.

**Theories of Personality Development – Trait (Psychometric) Theory**

7. How is this approach similar to the development of intelligence tests?

8. List one way that the psychometric approach is similar to psychoanalytic theory and one way that it is different.

9. What are the “big five” personality dimensions? (List them and give key characteristics of each one.)
Theories of Personality Development – Social Learning Theory

10. Critical Thinking Question. Before reading this section, think about what you have already learned regarding social learning theory. Write your own version of how you think this theory would explain personality development. Then, check how well your description matched the text.

11. How does social learning theory’s explanation of personality development differ from psychoanalytic theory?

12. How does social learning theory’s explanation of personality development differ from the psychometric approach?

13. According to Social Learning Theory, what causes personality to change?

14. How does Social Learning Theory define personality?

15. According to Social Learning Theory, what causes personality to remain stable over time?

Reviewing What You Have Learned (Critical Thinking) – Matching

16. In the first blank, indicate whether each of the theories describes personality as stable over time (S) or changeable (C). In the second blank, indicate whether each of the theories describe personality development as a universal sequence (U) or as different for every individual (D).

   _____ _____ Freud – Psychoanalytic (Psychosexual)
   _____ _____ Erikson – Psychoanalytic (Psychosocial)
   _____ _____ Psychometric
   _____ _____ Bandura – Social Learning Theory
Match the theories below with each of the statements about personality development. Note that sometimes more than one theory can fit the statement.

- psychoanalytic--Freud
- psychoanalytic--Erikson
- psychometric approach
- social learning theory

17. _______ stable across the lifespan
18. _______ strongly influenced by the environment
19. _______ universal, age-related changes
20. _______ can change at any time in life
21. _______ depends on situational influences
22. _______ different for every individual
23. _______ similar process for different people at the same age

The Emerging Self

24. What method did Lewis and Brooks-Gunn use to test infants’ self-recognition?

25. What behavior indicates that infants recognize themselves (have a mental image of their own faces)?

26. At what ages do most infants show self-recognition in the mirror task?

Temperament

Which of the following phrases fit with the definition of temperament? (Is each one true or false?)

27. _____ begins early in infancy
28. _____ genetically based
29. _____ determined more by nurture than by nature
30. _____ characteristic way of responding
31. _____ being shaped by your experiences
32. _____ influences the kinds of interactions child has with his or her environment

Matching. Read the descriptions of the three categories of temperament developed by Thomas and Chess. Try to complete the matching below without referring back to your text. Then, check your answers.

- easy
- difficult
- slow-to-warm-up

33. _____ even tempered and usually happy
34. _____ reacts intensely and negatively to changes in routine
35. _____ least active
36. _____ likely to have tantrums when frustrated
37. _____ quite regular in eating and sleeping patterns
38. _____ largest category (largest proportion of infants fall into this group)
39. _____ slow to adapt to new experiences and changes in routine
40. _____ able to tolerate frustration and discomfort
41. _____ irritable and cries frequently
42. _____ moderately regular in their feeding and sleeping patterns
43. _____ adapts easily to new experiences and changes in routine
44. _____ very irregular and unpredictable in their eating and sleeping patterns
45. _____ reacts mildly to changes in routine

46. Define behavioral inhibition and then answer the questions that follow.

a. Describe the evidence suggesting that behavioral inhibition has a strong biological basis.

b. Behavior inhibition is a risk factor for anxiety disorders. Describe how gene and environment interact to determine this outcome.

47. Define the concept of goodness of fit.

a. Why is this an important concept? (Hint: Give an example of how a difficult temperament can be adaptive.)

b. How does goodness of fit relate to the idea of continuity in personality development? How does it relate to the idea of discontinuity in personality development?


**Elaborating on a Sense of Self**

48. How do changes in the use of language around age 2 illustrate emerging self-concept?

49. Briefly describe the developmental changes in children’s self descriptions:

   a. preschoolers (ages 2 to about 8)

   b. elementary school aged (age 8 or so until adolescence)

50. **Critical Thinking Question.** Describe how the descriptions in the previous question reflect Piaget’s stages of cognitive development. (**Hint:** How do the examples in part A illustrate preoperational thought, and how do the examples in part B illustrate concrete operational thought?)

51. What five components of self-esteem were identified and studied by Susan Harter (present by mid-elementary school years and later)? List and briefly describe each component of self-esteem.

52. Children between the ages of _____ and _____ are more likely to report their desired level of competence (i.e., wishful thinking) in these areas, but by the age of _____ children’s self-evaluations become more realistic and accurate.

53. **Critical Thinking Question.** How does this change (the one described in the previous question) relate to cognitive development? (**Hint:** Match the ages to Piaget’s stages.)

54. Identify 2 family factors that are related to high self-esteem.
55. Explain Damon’s claim that self-esteem means nothing unless it grows out of one’s real achievements.

56. Read the three self-descriptions given on page 319, and be sure to note the ages and how each description differs from the previous ones. Relate these changes to Piaget’s stages of cognitive development.

57. Describe the general changes in self-conceptions during adolescence.

Forging A Sense of Identity

58. Erikson emphasized the importance of his fifth stage (psychosocial conflict of identity vs role confusion) as a critical point in development. Briefly define what Erikson meant by the concept of identity.

59. Erikson is responsible for coining the phrase “identity crisis”. How do physical and cognitive changes during adolescence, along with new social demands, relate to identity formation?
60. Marcia expanded Erikson’s stage of identity vs role confusion. He proposed four different identity statuses that each reflect level of progress in forming an identity. The two critical dimensions are _______ and _______. Identify each of the four identity statuses below.

a. Define what is meant by crisis.

b. Define what is meant by commitment.

Now, match the four identity statuses to the descriptions given below.

c. no crisis, no commitment = ______________
d. no crisis, yes commitment = ______________
e. yes crisis, no commitment = ______________
f. yes crisis, yes commitment = ______________

g. ______ has taken on an identity prematurely, without much thought
h. ______ has examined own goals, beliefs, and values, and now is ready to make a commitment
i. ______ has not yet thought much about who they are or what they believe
j. ______ is in the process of examining who they are and what they believe
k. ______ has tried out various identities and has chosen the one that best fits
l. ______ has become what parents expected without ever questioning this choice

61. What five factors influence adolescents’ progress toward achieving a stable identity? Briefly describe how each factor influences identity formation.

1) __________

2) __________

3) __________

4) __________

5) __________
Self-Conceptions

62. Briefly describe three ways in which elderly people manage to maintain positive self-images even as they experience some of the losses that come with aging.

1) 

2) 

3) 

63. Critical Thinking Question. What overall conclusions can we take from longitudinal studies of personality (i.e., is personality stable over the lifespan or does it change)? [Hint: review section on continuity and discontinuity in personality]

64. Remember back to chapter 1 (review). How do longitudinal and cross-sectional studies differ? What is a cohort effect? Why are cohort effects problematic for cross-sectional studies?

65. Describe one example of a cohort effect in personality development. [Hint: review section on mean personality scores]

66. Explain how cohort effects (as in the example above) might mislead our interpretations of results from cross-sectional studies. How do longitudinal studies help us to avoid this problem?

67. In terms of personality change, how does the period from adolescence to middle adulthood differ from the period between middle and later adulthood?
68. **Remember back to chapter 3 (review).** What are the three kinds of gene-environment correlation?

69. How does the concept of gene-environment correlation help us to understand stability in personality development?

70. What three major factors might cause significant changes in adult personality?

(1)

(2)

(3)

**Erikson’s Stages of Psychosocial Development**

71. **Matching.** Use table 11.4 to study the crisis at each stage and the question that is asked by the individual. Match each age group below with the corresponding stage.

a. infancy (birth to 1)  
   b. toddlers (1-3)  
   c. preschoolers (3-6)  
   d. elementary school age (6-12)  
   e. adolescence (12-20)  
   f. young adulthood (20-40)  
   g. middle adulthood (40-65)  
   h. late adulthood (65 and older)

1) ___ generativity vs stagnation  
2) ___ autonomy vs shame and doubt  
3) ___ identity vs role confusion  
4) ___ trust vs mistrust  
5) ___ intimacy vs isolation  
6) ___ initiative vs guilt  
7) ___ integrity vs despair  
8) ___ industry vs inferiority

**IMPORTANT**: YOU NEED TO KNOW THE NAMES OF ALL 8 STAGES AND THE AGES FOR EACH STAGE!
Matching. Now, read the descriptions of Erikson’s stages in your text. Then, try to complete the matching below without referring back to your text. Finally, check your answers with the text descriptions.

A. intimacy vs isolation  D. integrity vs despair  G. trust vs mistrust
B. industry vs inferiority  E. autonomy vs shame  H. identity vs role confusion
C. initiative vs guilt  F. generativity vs stagnation

72. _____ begin questioning “who am I”
73. _____ focus on producing something that will outlast you
74. _____ the key to successful resolution of this crisis is responsive caregiving
75. _____ evaluate themselves by comparing own competencies to those of their peers
76. _____ unsuccessful resolution of earlier crises may lead to fear of commitment or overdependence on a romantic partner during this stage
77. _____ engage in a life review which involves reflecting on unresolved conflicts of the past and then evaluating and integrating various aspects of one’s life
78. _____ developing a sense of purpose by devising bold plans
79. _____ favorite word is “no” (want to do everything by themselves)
80. _____ focus on mastering new cognitive and social skills
81. _____ a major concern is caring for future generations (being a committed parent, successful mentor, or productive worker are all examples)
82. _____ developing a sense of self and asserting a will of their own
83. _____ work on integrating various roles into a coherent sense of self
84. _____ successful resolution of this crisis involves feeling satisfied with the way that you have lived your life
85. _____ want to participate in adult activities (imitating adults) and take great pride in their accomplishments
86. _____ having an inconsistent caregiver can lead to problems with this stage
87. _____ ready to commit to a shared identity with another person

88. Critical Thinking Question. Think about the behavior that we typically refer to as the “terrible twos” – frequent temper tantrums when children don’t get what they want, constantly saying “no” and “mine”, etc. We have a tendency to perceive children who are behaving in this way as selfish, spoiled brats who are deliberately trying to take control and defy our authority. How does Erikson’s stage 2 (autonomy vs shame and doubt) explain this behavior? How does Erikson’s perspective differ from the way that parents typically view this behavior? What recommendations do you think Erikson would give for handling “terrible twos” behavior?
89. How do gender roles influence the transition from Erikson’s stage 5 (identity vs role confusion) to stage 6 (intimacy vs isolation)? Is this process different for women and men?

90. What is the purpose of the “life review”?

91. What aspects of Erikson’s theory are well supported by research? What aspects have not been tested? Be sure to note which stages have been studied more than others.

**Applying What You Have Learned (Part I)**
Below are several examples of the four identity statuses proposed by Marcia. Match each of the examples with one of the identity statuses.

A. foreclosure  B. moratorium  C. achievement  D. diffusion

92. _____ Marjorie has taken a battery of interest inventories and is exploring different majors at the university, thinking about possibilities for her future career.

93. _____ Fred plans to be a doctor because his father is a pediatrician, his mother is a surgeon, and his brother is a very good emergency room physician.

94. _____ Jessica does not really know what she wants to be when she “grows up” and could not care less about exploring the options.

95. _____ Roger is uncertain about his future plans. He will graduate from college soon, and he plans to join the peace corps for a few years while trying to figure things out.

96. _____ David has been labeled a delinquent by his parents, teachers, and peers. Although he feels that he can be a better person, the odds against him seem too great, so he gives up on the idea and accepts the label.

97. _____ Erica’s parents have always wanted her to be a lawyer. Erica preferred to pursue an interest in acting and dance. While in college, she discovered that she really liked debating important social issues and developing arguments to support her case. She changed her major to political science, and is now planning to go to law school when she graduates.
Applying What You Have Learned  (Part II)

Below are several examples that illustrate Erikson’s eight stages of personality development. Match each of the examples with one of the Erikson’s stages.

A. integrity vs. despair  
B. autonomy vs. shame  
C. generativity vs. stagnation  
D. trust vs. mistrust  
E. industry vs. inferiority  
F. initiative vs. guilt  
G. identity vs. role confusion  
H. intimacy vs. isolation

98. _____ Hannah’s favorite Christmas present is her Easy Bake Oven. She spends hours baking cookies and small cakes and serving them to everyone in the family.
99. _____ Jeff is working as a volunteer at the local crisis center and is taking various psychology courses to see if counseling is the right career for him.
100. _____ When Crystal’s family moved from North Carolina to Vermont, all the students in her new school seemed so smart. Crystal felt terrible when she failed a spelling test, particularly since this had been her best subject at her old school.
101. _____ Although he has never had children of his own, Joel enjoys writing adventure stories that spark the imagination of young children.
102. _____ Susie wants to help her father mow the lawn. Dad buys Susie a toy mower so that she can follow along.
103. _____ Norman does not realize how dissatisfied he is with his life and his relationship with his grown daughter. He constantly criticizes others. Norman worries about every ache and pain, thinking that it is a sign of a heart attack, stroke, or cancer.
104. _____ Elizabeth is fascinated with a book about Mae Jemison, the first African-American woman in space who did science experiments aboard the space shuttle Endeavour in 1992. After reading this book, Elizabeth dreams of being an astronaut and traveling to distant planets.
105. _____ Anthony feels bad because he is not doing very well in math class and he is usually the last person picked for a team at recess.
106. _____ Eleanor spends a lot of time thinking about whether or not her life has been meaningful. She also talks a lot about wills and funerals and what happens to us after we die.
107. _____ Sally loves her job at the law firm, but she has a hard time trusting her friends enough to share her deepest feelings. Her relationships tend to be somewhat shallow and superficial, and Sally feels lonely.
108. _____ Beth is an air force officer who takes pride in her role as mentor to younger officers.
109. _____ Justin’s mother is trying to get him dressed for bed. Justin grabs his clothes and runs out of the bathroom shouting, “No, No, No, No!” He wants to dress himself.

Applying What You Have Learned  (Part III)

Below is a description of Erikson’s life. As you read the description, notice places where Erikson’s own life fits his stages of psychosocial development. Your task is to identify an example from Erikson’s life that illustrates each of his psychosocial crises. Briefly explain how your example fits each stage.
Erikson’s parents were Danish, but he grew up in Frankfurt, Germany. His mother and father separated a few months before he was born, so his mother went to Frankfurt to be near friends when she delivered her baby. Erikson was born in 1902, and his mother raised him on her own until he was 3 years old. She then married a local pediatrician, Dr. Homburger. Erikson’s mother and step-father were both Jewish, but Erikson looked more like his tall, blond, blue-eyed Danish father. This led to teasing from the other Jewish boys. They nicknamed him “the goy,” which is a derogatory term for non-Jew.

Young Erikson was not a particularly good student. He did excel in certain subjects, namely ancient history and art, but he disliked the formal atmosphere of school. When he graduated from high school, he felt lost and uncertain about his future place in life. Instead of going to college, he wandered around Europe for a year. Then he returned home to study art for a while, but he soon set out on his own again to do more traveling. This was not seen as problematic or at all odd by his family and friends. They saw him as a wandering artist who was trying to “find himself”.

Erikson finally began to find his calling around age 25 when he accepted an invitation to teach children in a new school in Vienna founded by Anna Freud. When Erikson wasn’t teaching, he studied child psychoanalysis with Anna Freud. He was also analyzed by her. Erikson finally settled down to get married and start a family at the age of 27.

Erikson’s life was disrupted during his early 30’s when Hitler rose to power. His family was forced to flee to the United States. They settled in Boston, where Erikson became the city’s first child analyst. The urge to travel stayed with Erikson throughout most of his life. After three years in Boston, he took a position at Yale University. Two years later he went to the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota where he lived among and learned about the Sioux Indians. Then he moved to San Francisco where he stayed busy with his clinical practice and longitudinal research. He also studied another Native American tribe during this time.

Erikson was focused on understanding the lives of normal children and of children growing up in different contexts. He had personally witnessed tremendous historical changes -- severe economic depressions in Europe and America, the rise of Hitler and persecution of Jewish people, and World War II. These events all profoundly impacted Erikson, and convinced him that any theory of development had to take into account the role of society. Social and historical events clearly impact an individual’s development.

In 1949, during the McCarthy era, Erikson had a conflict with his employer, the University of California. The university demanded that all employees sign an oath declaring loyalty to the US. Erikson and many of his colleagues refused to sign. When some of his colleagues were dismissed, Erikson resigned in protest. He took a new job in Massachusetts, where he worked as a clinician until 1960. At that time he was given a professorship at Harvard, even though he had never earned a formal college degree! He stayed at Harvard until his death in 1994 (age 92).

110. trust vs mistrust
111. autonomy vs shame and doubt
112. initiative vs guilt

113. industry vs inferiority

114. identity vs role confusion (also discuss identity statuses)

115. intimacy vs isolation

116. generativity vs stagnation

117. integrity vs despair