

Teacher Resource Bank

GCE Psychology B

Specimen Questions and Answers:

- PSYB3: Child Development and Applied Options



PSYB3 SUPPORT MATERIALS

Specimen Questions and Answers

Note to teachers: Examination questions are usually in three main parts, which together total 20 marks. For each of the child development questions, a small number of the marks are for the AO3 skill (how science works). Sometimes this will appear as a separate question/s, at other times these three marks may be integrated into a longer question. It is recommended that you advise students to answer the question set and not to worry too much about the allocation of marks in relation to AO1, AO2 and AO3 skills. They only really need to be aware of the emphasis on evaluation and analysis (AO1 = 4, AO2 = 8) in the 12-mark questions and to understand that questions asking 'Briefly discuss' or 'Briefly evaluate' require AO2 content.

Specimen Question 1 - Social Development

- (a) Outline and briefly evaluate **one** way in which psychologists have studied popularity. (5 marks)
- (b) (i) What is the name given to the type of procedure Ainsworth used to study attachment types? (1 mark)
- (b) (ii) Explain **one** limitation of Ainsworth's findings. (2 marks)
- (c) Discuss psychological findings in relation to the function of attachment. Refer to evidence in your answer. (12 marks)

Specimen Answer

- (a) One way used to study popularity is naturalistic playground observation as used by Dodge (1983) where researchers watch children in their own environment and record the behaviours shown between them eg watching another child, approaching another child etc. A problem with this type of research is that there may be demand characteristics if the children know they are being observed. The observer effect may occur where the children behave differently than they normally would because they know that they are being watched. However, this is less likely where the observation takes place in natural surroundings as in the Dodge study. Also in this study, the children were only 5 years old and therefore would probably be less likely to show an observer effect than older more self-conscious children.
- (b) (i) The Strange Situation
- (ii) Ainsworth's work was carried out in western culture and therefore the same findings might not be true of other cultures where children may be raised very differently. For example, in the West it is usual for children to be raised in a family with two (or one) parent. In other cultures the norms may be different. Takahashi explained how separation from mother is rare for Japanese children and so they would behave differently in the Strange Situation.
- (c) Psychologists have studied attachment and its consequences for many years. In general, it has been found that one main purpose of attachment is survival. Bowlby, who studied many aspects of attachment, was interested in animal research which seemed to show that some species are instinctively pre-programmed to follow the first large moving object that they see.
- This special following behaviour, known as imprinting, was observed by Lorenz when he studied geese which imprinted on him because he was the first large object that they saw. Bowlby used these and similar findings as support for his view that human attachment is driven by an innate desire for proximity which acts to ensure the survival of the infant. In that sense then, a major function of attachment lies in its evolutionary value. However, it is difficult to extrapolate findings from research with species such as geese since they are mobile from birth whereas human infants are not. Clearly where an animal is mobile from birth this following behaviour is essential but human infants cannot follow. However, it has been noted that the greatest distress at separation has been found at the age at which infants become mobile, so perhaps there is a link with the behaviour of other species.

It has also been suggested that attachment is necessary for the development of satisfactory future relationships. This argument is supported if we consider the fate of those who do not have close attachments we can see that future relationships with others are often impaired or even impossible. In Harlow's research with infant monkeys deprived of attachment opportunities, the baby monkeys raised with artificial cloth and wire mothers were unable to form attachments when introduced to other monkeys later. Indeed, they often attacked the other monkeys and were very resistant to mating. Harlow's work thus seems to provide support for the view that the earliest relationships act as a template for all future relationships. Bowlby (1969) referred to this as an 'internal working model' for future relationships. Critics might argue that Bowlby allowed his ideas to be too heavily influenced by animal research. Also one could argue that the extreme privation experienced by Harlow's monkeys is not at all similar to the experience of most children. Even children who do not have the most rewarding attachment experiences have some experience of some kind of attachment, not necessarily to parents, but perhaps to grandparents or carers. Others have criticised the idea of an internal working model as fairly deterministic in that it suggests that a child who does not have satisfactory early attachments will struggle to have successful later relationships.

In a more general sense attachment to others may be seen as important for the positive reinforcement it affords through satisfying personal experiences, this would agree with the behaviourist view that behaviours that have pleasant consequences are more likely to be repeated. However, this assumes that all attachments are rewarding, which, in the case of insecure types of attachment as identified by Ainsworth, they may not be.

Marks and comments

Part (a) gets the full 5 marks. Two marks are awarded for identifying and briefly describing a relevant method. Another suitable answer would have been sociometry. The evaluation is worth three marks as there are a number of points. Note how there is clear application here as the evaluation focuses on this observational method in the context of the study of popularity.

Part (b)(i) is awarded one mark for identification of the Strange Situation. In part (b)(ii) cultural specificity is identified, explained and elaborated sufficiently for the full 2 marks. Other relevant limitations, such as reliability, validity of proximity seeking as a measure of attachment, limitations of the category system etc would also have been creditworthy.

Part (c) is awarded the full 12 marks. There is a range of material with fairly extensive coverage of two issues, evolutionary value and the internal working model, and a briefer concluding discussion in the context of more general approaches in psychology. The candidate makes reference to specific studies and uses the evidence to support the discussion.

Total marks awarded: 20

Specimen Question 2 - Cognitive Development

- (a) Describe **one** quantitative method that could be used to study object permanence in young children. In your answer you should refer briefly to the design of the study, the task that would be used and the way in which the data would be recorded. (3 marks)
- (b) (i) State what Piaget meant by *adaptation*. (1 mark)
- (ii) Name the **two** processes by which adaptation can occur. Give a real-life example of how each process might occur in a young child. Use a different example for each process. (4 marks)
- (c) Compare Piaget's and Vygotsky's theories of cognitive development. (12 marks)

Specimen Answer

- (a) One method that would be useful would be to show the young child a toy and then see whether or not the child searches for the toy when it gets covered up by a cloth. If the child does search then this is object permanence which is the ability to understand that things continue to exist even when they are out of sight. You could use different aged children for this. Those under 8 months would not search, according to Piaget, and those over 8 months, probably would do. This would be an experimental independent design study with different children in each age category.
- (b) (i) Adaptation means the way in which knowledge, understanding or behaviour changes in the light of experiences.
- (ii) Adaptation occurs through processes of accommodation and assimilation. An example of accommodation is when an existing schema changes because new information conflicts with what the child knows already. An example of assimilation is using an existing schema in a new situation eg using the same stroking action with a rabbit and a guinea pig even though they are different animals.
- (c) Piaget and Vygotsky are the most famous cognitive researchers and have almost totally separate views about cognitive development. I shall describe each of them first and then look at similarities and differences for comparison.
- Piaget believed that children developed in four stages with different ways of thinking at each stage. In the sensorimotor stage (0-2 years) knowledge is action/sensation based and children are totally egocentric.
- In the pre-operational stage (2-7 years) children are still egocentric, they cannot conserve and they cannot do class inclusions. In the concrete operational stage (7-12 years) children become no longer egocentric, they can conserve and can perform class inclusions. In the final stage of formal operations children are able to think hypothetically and can solve problems systematically. So for Piaget, a big change in thinking happens at around 7 years when the child moves into the concrete operational stage.

Vygotsky focuses less on age-related changes. Vygotsky believed in the zone of proximal development which is the difference between what a child can do alone and what he or she can do with help. He thought that culture was a significant factor in cognitive development, which is unlike Piaget who did not think culture was that important except in as much as it would provide the child with new experiences from which to learn. Piaget thought that child learned like a scientist through active exploration and hypothesis testing. For that the child did not need any other person. In opposition to this Vygotsky thought that other people had a huge role to play in guiding and providing scaffolding or support for the child as they learned. He likened the child to an apprentice.

Because he emphasised culture Vygotsky also thought that language was important for cognitive development, unlike Piaget who thought that language was simply a by-product.

Both Piaget and Vygotsky have heavily influenced education but in different ways. Piaget's findings have led teachers to act as mere facilitators who should provide opportunities and materials for learning but let the children explore and find out for themselves. Vygotsky's work suggests that teachers (and more knowledgeable peers) should take more of an active role in guiding and encouraging as the children meet new tasks. Vygotsky's views on education are supported in the Wood and Middleton study where children are given help and guidance to assemble wooden blocks, with decreasing levels of guidance as children become more capable. So we see that Vygotsky would advocate peer tutoring and pairing of children of different abilities whereas Piaget would not.

This leads us to another key difference in their attitude to the timing of cognitive development. Piaget's approach is very much based on the notion of readiness ie that new things should be learnt only when the child is ready so the child would dictate the speed of cognitive development. According to Vygotsky, however, progress can be accelerated through instruction and guidance, with the adult or peer being able to speed up the rate of development.

A study by Gelman seems to support Piaget's views about readiness and suggests that scaffolding cannot always increase the rate of cognitive development.

Marks and comments

Part (a) is awarded 2 marks. There is reference to the task and also to the design but there is no reference to quantitative data collection. The candidate should have stated explicitly that the researcher would record the number of children in each age group who did search for the toy.

Part (b)(i) gets 1 mark for a correct definition of adaptation. Part (b)(ii) is awarded the 3 marks. The two processes are correctly identified but there is no example of accommodation. It looks as if the candidate has given definitions instead of examples and only given the real-life example of assimilation as an afterthought. This confusion between definitions and examples is quite a common mistake.

Part (c) at first appears to be a rather unpromising answer. It starts in a fairly mundane way with a redundant first paragraph and a fairly ordinary descriptive paragraph on Piaget's four stages. However, the candidate then settles down and starts to focus on comparing the two theorists. The descriptive material on Vygotsky is largely embedded into the paragraphs on comparison but there is still ample knowledge of both theorists. A number of comparison points are presented (focus on age-related change, role of culture, importance of language, influences on education, readiness versus acceleration) and some are dealt with in considerable detail. Notice how this candidate does not fall into the trap of straight evaluation of each theorist and maintains the focus on comparison throughout. Perhaps the paragraph of language could have been expanded a little and the relevance of the Gelman evidence could have been explored more thoroughly. Nevertheless, this is a top band answer, worthy of 10 marks.

Total marks awarded: 16

Specimen Question 3 - Moral Development

- (a) Briefly discuss **one** similarity between Kohlberg's and Eisenberg's theories of moral development. (4 marks)
- (b) (i) In a study of moral understanding, Gilligan interviewed women who were thinking about whether or not to have an abortion. On the basis of her findings, she concluded that women show a particular type of moral reasoning. Name the type of reasoning Gilligan identified in women. (1 mark)
- (ii) Evaluate the method used by Gilligan. (3 marks)
- (c) Describe and evaluate Piaget's work on moral development. (12 marks)

Specimen Answer

- (a) One similarity is that they both use dilemmas as a basis for their theories of moral understanding. In Kohlberg's case the dilemma is about a man who has stolen a drug to help his dying wife. The dilemma used by Eisenberg is about whether or not to help someone when you are on the way to a party. This makes Eisenberg's study much more realistic as it is a situation that children can relate to whereas in Kohlberg's dilemma children cannot relate to it as they have not been in that situation.
- (b) (i) 'Ethic of care' is the term Gilligan used to describe women's reasoning.
- (ii) Interviews like this are high in ecological validity as they were real women making a real decision. Although maybe their deliberations and reflections were somehow changed because they knew that the researchers was listening to what they had to say. Still, in comparison to other methods which use hypothetical scenarios this is much more likely to give valid data. It does mean though that replication would be impossible or at least difficult as there are so many uncontrollable variables eg culture, context, background etc.
- (c) Piaget's theory of moral development reflects his general views about changes in children's understanding in that he focuses on age-related changes. The key change that occurs in moral thinking happens at around the age of 7/9 years when the child starts to make moral judgements on the basis of intention rather than on outward consequences. According to Piaget the child moves from moral realism to moral relativism. Other features of moral realism are heteronomous morality, meaning that the child's moral ideas are largely dependent on external views such as the attitudes of parents.

This is perhaps because at this age the child's relationship with parents and other authority figures is one of unilateral respect. In other words the child has respect for the parents and goes along with whatever they say. Later on in the relativism stage the child-parent relationship is more on an equal footing and this is when moral judgements become more autonomous, which is another feature of the moral relativism stage. The child's attitudes towards punishment also goes through a change at the same time, moving from a belief in expiatory punishment (severe retribution) to an understanding that the punishment should fit the crime and take account of intent (reciprocal punishment)

One problem with Piaget's work is that he focuses simply on moral understanding and not on behaviour or the emotions related to morality such as guilt at wrong-doing. However, this is similarly a feature of the work of other researchers in the area such as Kohlberg and Eisenberg so not exclusively a problem for Piaget.

Where Piaget and Kohlberg differ is in their views about the time frame for moral development. According to Piaget's view a child's moral understanding is more or less fully formed by the age of around 9 years when they have completed the transition from the realism to the relativism stage. However, according to other researchers, moral understanding may continue to develop beyond this age and even well into adulthood. For example, Kohlberg identified advances in the sophistication of moral reasoning in teenage and young adult participants, studying people up to the age of 30 years. Thus it is a significant limitation of Piaget's work that he failed to identify or describe any change that occurred beyond the age of around 9 years.

Another problem for Piaget's work is that his moral comparison studies manipulate two variables at the same time so it is not clear whether children's judgements are based on consequence or intention. In later work by Nelson (1980) where the two variables are manipulated separately, it was found that children could make intention based judgements younger than Piaget had stated. This suggests that Piaget may have underestimated young children's ability to make moral judgements.

However, despite these limitations, Piaget's work set the scene for other researchers and provided a starting point for other investigations.

Marks and comments

Part (a) is only worth 1 mark and this is only awarded because the candidate has just managed to phrase the answer to make it relevant, 'as a basis for their theories'. This is a fairly typical error in the moral development section where candidates mistakenly focus on method of investigation when a question asks about theory or vice versa. A better answer would have focused on the way in which each theory reflects a general shift from instrumental gain and self-oriented reasoning to internalised morality and focus on empathy.

Part (b) (i) gets 1 mark. 'Care-based reasoning' would also have been creditworthy. The full three marks are awarded for part (b)(ii) as it covers a number of points and presents a nice balance of positive and negative.

Part (c) is awarded a total of 10 marks. The descriptions are sufficiently accurate and detailed for 4 description marks. The evaluation marks are awarded for analysis of the reason for the shift from moral realism to moral relativism given in the first paragraph, and for the subsequent paragraphs which explore problems with both the theory and research. Note that the question asks about Piaget's 'work' which could mean his theory and/or his research. Here the candidate presents a discussion that covers both aspects, with the focus slightly more on theory. There are other issues that might have been covered such as Piaget's work on games and rules and telling lies and other discussion points might have been included eg the relevance of Piaget's work in relation to differences between moral and social domains. Nevertheless this is a good answer, worthy of a top band mark.

Total marks awarded: 15

Specimen Question 4 - Cognition and Law

- (a) (i) What is meant by *repression*? (1 mark)
- (ii) Using an example, explain the relationship between repression and the false memory debate. (3 marks)
- (b) Outline what is meant by the cognitive interview and explain why the cognitive interview may lead to better recall in comparison to a more traditional interview. (4 marks)
- (c) Describe and evaluate **at least one** explanation for face recognition. (12 marks)

Specimen Answer

- (a) (i) Repression is a Freudian defence mechanism whereby a person pushes unpleasant memories into their unconscious.
- (ii) The false memory debate centres on whether or not it is possible to believe that something did happen when in fact it never did, or alternatively, whether people sometimes have memories of which they are not consciously aware that later emerge into their consciousness. Repression relates to this debate since, for the latter to be the case it must be possible to have memories which are not conscious but can somehow be accessed and brought to the fore. Some people believe that repression does not really exist since it cannot be proved to do so. An example of repression in relation to false memory would be a memory of a childhood accident which is so horrific that it is repressed into the unconscious to protect the ego. This memory may later be accessed, possibly through some form of therapy, but perhaps the event never happened.
- (b) One feature of the cognitive interview is recalling from another perspective. This would lead to better recall because it encourages a more holistic view of the event and is likely to put the event more firmly into context. Another point about the cognitive interview is that there are no leading questions. Leading questions are known to increase the number of incorrect items and so should be avoided.
- (c) One explanation for face recognition is the holistic theory, according to which faces are recognised as a whole with consideration of not just the facial features (eyes, nose, mouth etc) but also of the configuration of the features, facial expression and general background.

The holistic theory is essentially a top-down cognitive theory which means that it assumes that processing is driven by previously stored information and not simply dependent on current incoming information. This type of theory contrasts with a bottom-up or data driven explanation which assumes that incoming information (stimulus data) is the most important for processing.

Bruce and Young (1986) described a holistic model of face processing according to which there are sequential stages from structural analysis, to activation of templates or face recognition units (FRUs), to activation of personal identity information (PINs) and finally to retrieval of the person's name.

This sequence of stages has been supported by studies which show that, in diary records of recognition events, there are very few instances where names are recalled before personal information can be accessed and many examples of times where people knew someone was familiar but could not access other information about them (Young 1985). These findings reflect the sequence of stages proposed by Bruce and Young.

The theory is further supported by findings from studies where the overall configuration of the face is altered (eg increasing distance between the eyes), thus altering the whole whilst the individual features may remain the same. This has been found to increase recognition time significantly, thus showing that recognition depends on the whole rather than the features. This suggests that individual features are only useful in context ie the whole is most important. However, it must be noted that other studies have shown that features are important, certainly for recall of faces as opposed to recognition (Ellis).

Whilst many studies seem to confirm that features alone are insufficient for recognition and that a more holistic approach is appropriate, the sequence proposed by Bruce and Young might be questioned if we consider findings from studies of patients with a rare condition known as prosopagnosia. Such patients are unable to recognise even familiar faces at a conscious level, even looking at the face of a parent they may say that they do not know them. However, at an unconscious level they do show some recognition as measured by physiological recordings of their emotional reaction. In such cases, it seems that PIN information is available but at an unconscious level. Clearly the process is more complex in such cases.

In summary, whilst there is much evidence in favour of holistic theory, rather than engage in the debate about whether processing is holistic or feature based it would be most sensible to accept a compromise position, that face recognition involves simultaneous use of both top down and bottom up information and that the balance in emphasis will depend on the specific circumstances such as how much top-down information is available and whether the viewing conditions (clarity and exposure time available) are favourable or unfavourable. Indeed it has been suggested that different processes are at work when we recognise very familiar people than when we recognise less familiar people (Malone 82).

Marks and comments

Part (a)(i) is awarded 1 mark for a correct definition. Part (a)(ii) gets the full 3 marks. The candidate shows sound knowledge of the two sides of the false memory debate and how the debate relates to the existence of repression. The example is valid and worthy of the third mark. Here the candidate provides an answer that probably goes beyond the scope of the question, offering rather more discussion than necessary for this short question.

Part (b) is awarded 2 marks for identification of one key feature of the cognitive interview and an explanation of why this should improve recall. The second issue presented here 'not asking leading questions' gets no marks because it does not really answer the question. This candidate is telling us what the cognitive interview is not, rather than what it is.

Part (c) is awarded 11 marks. There is sufficient knowledge of the holistic theory and of relevant research to award full marks for description. The candidate uses the evidence well and explains how these studies support the theory. Notice how the candidate refers briefly to evidence rather than giving lengthy descriptions which would not really contribute to this discussion and can even detract from the quality of the answer as a whole. There is also quite a lot of analysis in terms of general information processing theory, which is useful synoptic discussion and one useful indicator of a of a top band answer at A2.

Total mark awarded: 17

Specimen Question 5 - Schizophrenia and Mood Disorders

- (a) Schizophrenia literally means 'split mind'. With reference to symptoms of schizophrenia explain why this name might be considered to be appropriate. (4 marks)
- (b) Doctors have told Emily that she has schizophrenia. Her family have also been informed of the diagnosis. With reference to labelling, explain the possible consequences of Emily's diagnosis. (4 marks)
- (c) Discuss **at least one** treatment for mood disorders. Refer to evidence in your answer. (12 marks)

Specimen Answer

- (a) The reference to 'split mind' is appropriate to describe the symptoms that are typical of the disorder. The split is really the gap between the person's perceptions and beliefs and the external reality. A typical symptom is delusional thinking, for example a patient may falsely believe he is being persecuted by family. There is also a split between the person's thinking and their emotion, they often show flat affect or absence of emotion, or inappropriate emotion, laughing or losing their temper for no reason.
- (b) Labelling means that once a person has been said to have a disorder then they will be treated differently and therefore will come to act differently. In the case of Emily, if she has been told that she has a serious mental disorder she may start to act in a more disordered way than she had before (this is an example of self-fulfilling prophecy). In the case of her family, their attitude and behaviour towards her may change and they may be more attentive, concerned showing greater 'expressed emotion' which means excessive fussing. It has been found that if parents of people with schizophrenia show high expressed emotion (Brown), the child is more likely to relapse. Labelling also affected the behaviour of medical professional towards pseudo-patients in the Rosenhan study. They perceived even normal behaviour as symptomatic of the disorder.
- (c) There are many treatments for mood disorders. I am going to discuss biological treatments which can be used for all types of mood disorder. Most drugs for unipolar depression act to somehow increase serotonin, either by increasing the amount of serotonin available at the synapse or by making serotonergic neurons more active. This seems sensible since there are several lines of evidence to suggest that the symptoms of depression are due to a lack of serotonin.

Another neurotransmitter that is implicated is noradrenalin and some drugs act on levels of this neurotransmitter too.

Tricyclics were first introduced in the 1950s and have been found to have beneficial effects in about 60% of cases although they have severe undesirable side effects including dry mouth, blurring of vision and sexual problems. They increase noradrenalin levels but are extremely toxic and the stated dose should not be exceeded. Because of all the problems with tricyclics they are now less often prescribed in favour of more recent medication such as prozac. Prozac acts to raise levels of serotonin at the synapse by preventing the normal process of re-uptake whereby the serotonin is reabsorbed into the parent cell ready for reconstitution.

As it is not reabsorbed it can remain active at the synapse of longer and in this way serotonergic activity is increased. Prozac was hailed as a wonder drug in the 1990s; it works relatively quickly and has fewer side effects. Another medication for depression is MAOIs which stop the workings of an enzyme that breaks down neurotransmitters. MAOIs have the most undesirable side effects of all the anti-depressants and react dangerously with certain foods. Patients need to have a carefully monitored diet which makes the treatment much less attractive. Nowadays MAOIs are not often prescribed.

For bipolar mood disorders the most usual drug treatment is lithium which affects the electrical activity of the neuron. Lithium is effective in controlling the manic phase of the disorder but many patients do not like taking it because of the unpleasant side effects such as blurred vision and possibly kidney failure. In fact, many patients with bipolar disorder do not take their medication regularly.

Undoubtedly drug treatments have transformed the lives of many mood disorder patients however there are still questions about the use of medication. Some argue that the causes of depression are often external or exogenous, for example the death of a loved one. In this case it would surely be a normal part of the grieving process to feel sad and therefore should not be expected that we should be happy. In this case it might be inappropriate to use drugs to manipulate a person's mood.

In terms of effectiveness, Thase & Kupfer have shown that drug therapy is more effective than placebo. In a study by Hollon it was found that antidepressants and cognitive therapy showed similar relapse rates and that both types of therapy were better than placebos. Since other types of therapy require much greater time and commitment for the patient perhaps it is understandable that many patients are happy to put up with the side effects of medication rather than look for other forms of treatment.

Marks and comments

Part (a) is awarded full marks. The candidate tackles this unusual question well, identifying two ways in which there is a 'split', and linking each of these quite cleverly to a symptom of the disorder. In fact, there was no need to refer to two different types of split here, there could have been an elaborated answer on just one, but this answer works very well.

Part (b) shows a sound understanding of the implications and consequences of labelling for both patient and family. The candidate has used psychological terms and has also referred to evidence. The candidate does not fall into the trap of talking about labelling as an initial explanation for schizophrenia (Szasz). Four marks awarded.

Part (c) includes description of several types of anti-depressant medication and shows knowledge of the mode of action in each case. This gains the full 4 marks for description. The discussion is sound although it seems quite repetitive with repeated reference to side effects. In terms of evaluation it would have probably been a better answer if the candidate had made more of the comparison with alternatives such as cognitive therapy. This answer just gets into the top band and is awarded 10 marks.

Total mark awarded: 18

Specimen Question 6 - Stress and Illness

Mike is having problems in his relationship with his girlfriend. They argue a lot and cannot agree on what they should do in the future. Mike goes to a life coach who measures his stress using a questionnaire and then suggests various strategies and techniques he might use to manage his stress.

- (a) Outline **two** ways in which Mike's autonomic nervous system and/or endocrine system might be affected by his stressful situation. (4 marks)
- (b) Briefly discuss **one or more** problems of using questionnaires to measure stress. (4 marks)
- (c) Outline and evaluate **two** ways of managing stress. Refer to Mike's stressful situation in your answer. (12 marks)

Specimen Answer

- (a) The ANS connects the NS to the smooth muscled organs and controls involuntary mechanisms in the body such as heart rate. In stressful times it prepares the body for fight or flight. Mike's ANS gets his heart rate increasing and then he can argue more vigorously. An effect on his endocrine system would be to cause the hypothalamus to trigger the release of corticosteroids which help the body to fight inflammation and provide energy to deal with stressful situations. The endocrine system is also responsible for another hormone known as cortisol which counteracts the effects of corticosteroids.
- (b) One problem of using a questionnaire is that people often do not give correct answers. They often like to be more socially acceptable and so doctor the truth a little. This means the answer may not have validity in that it is not measuring the truthful and correct data, although why one should do this if one is seeking help from a life coach no one knows. There is also the issue of reliability with all questionnaires. If they are not reliable then they cannot be used successfully because they may not be accurate.
- (c) One way of managing stress would be to use an emotion-focused strategy. One suitable emotion-focused strategy here would be to joke about the problem and have a laugh about it. This might be useful if Mike were to use it with his friends as he would get some temporary relief and have some light-hearted fun, although he would not be able to do it with his girlfriend as it might make matters worse.

Looking at his situation it appears he is going instead for the problem-focused approach as he has already been to a life coach for stress counselling. According to Lazarus who noted the difference between problem and emotion focused ways, it is clear that a person might use several of these strategies at the same time.

Another way of coping with stress might be to use systematic desensitisation which is a behavioural treatment devised by Wolpe in the 1960s. The person has a draw up a list of things related to the stress according to how stressful they are. In Mike's case this might be factors surrounding the stress of his relationship and interactions with his girlfriend.

These stress inducing factors are then arranged in a hierarchy according to how much stress they invoke with the least stressful first and the most stressful next etc. Following relaxation treatment, the person is then encouraged to either really experience or mentally imagine each step in the hierarchy. So long as the person remains calm they can then move on to the next step in the hierarchy. This treatment works on the principle that relaxation and stress cannot exist at the same time and so if the person stays relaxed then the stress will become extinct.

Systematic desensitisation has been shown to be successful in treatments for people who are stressed because they have to undergo a variety of medical treatments. For example, Gatchel studied its use with dental patients and found it reduced their fear over six sessions and Morrow found that it could effectively reduce the stress of cancer patients undergoing chemotherapy sessions when compared with a control group whose symptoms were much worse. This shows that the technique can be applied for a variety of conditions and circumstances.

In relation to Mike's case he could use the systematic desensitisation technique to prepare for possible confrontations with his girlfriend, perhaps training himself to remain calm instead of losing his temper. The problem with the technique is that it requires effort from the client and can take some time. It is also more useful for reducing fears than for dealing with stress as it is a purely behavioural therapy and does not tackle the cognitive thoughts involved in stressful situations. In this case it might be much better for Mike to use a cognitive strategy such as rational emotive therapy or stress inoculation training. These would help him address the cognitive aspect of his stress and not just the stress response. In general any cognitive therapy might be better because they have usually been found to be all round life enhancing leading to greater personal effectiveness in all aspects of relationships and work etc.

Marks and comments

Part (a) gains 4 marks for two useful points which are sufficiently well explained. It is pleasing to see how the candidate refers both to ANS and endocrine action and there is a nice link to Mike.

Part (b) gets 2 marks out of four. Marks are awarded for the point about validity which is fully developed. The information about reliability gets no marks because the concept is neither explained nor linked to the example of stress.

Part (c) is awarded 3 out of 4 marks for knowledge as the description of emotion-focused strategies is quite limited. There is some application for each of the two ways and the evaluation of systematic desensitisation is fairly thorough with use of evidence and consideration of alternatives. The fairly obvious imbalance in favour of one way means that this answer cannot access the top band and gets 9 marks.

Total mark awarded: 15

Specimen Question 7 - Substance Abuse

- (a) In relation to substance abuse, describe the effects of **one** substance on the user of that substance. Refer to **either** nicotine, alcohol, solvent, stimulant **or** depressant abuse in your answer. (4 marks)
- (b) Briefly evaluate the hereditary explanation for substance abuse. (4 marks)
- (c) Outline and evaluate **two** treatments for substance abuse. Refer to evidence in your answer. (12 marks)

Specimen Answer

- (a) I am going to use alcohol abuse as the basis for this answer. Alcohol acts as a depressant which means that it reduces the activity of the nervous system. In moderate amounts it can be relaxing however, if taken excessively it can cause liver damage and can become addictive. This means that a person's body becomes accustomed to the alcohol and therefore the person needs to drink more for the same effect. This is what is known as a tolerance to alcohol. Another consequence of severe alcoholism is a condition known as Korsakoff's syndrome which is a form of alcohol-related dementia.
- (b) One explanation for substance abuse is the hereditary theory. A problem with this theory is that it largely ignores the social factors that contribute towards substance abuse such as peer influences and conformity. Some evidence shows that young people are more influenced by peers than parents when it comes to substance abusing behaviour so it could be that they abuse because of social factors and not their genes. However in favour of hereditary theory, there is a lot of evidence to show that we have at least a predisposition to abuse which may be heritable. Adoption studies (Cloninger) and twin studies (Kaij) tend to show a substantial element of genetic influence in alcoholism.
- (c) One treatment for substance abuse is aversion therapy. This involves pairing the abused substance with an undesirable stimulus such as a drug to cause vomiting. Such a drug is called an emetic. Aversion therapy basically causes avoidance through inducing a phobia of the abused substance using a classical conditioning procedure. Through repeated association, the undesired substance/behaviour eg drinking becomes a conditioned stimulus. Thus the person becomes conditioned to fear and avoid the substance. This has been done successfully with a variety of substances mainly alcohol and nicotine. In a study by Frawley, 65% of people treated with aversion therapy were able to avoid alcohol for 12 months following treatment.

Similarly, in a study by Wiens and Menustik 60% gave up alcohol for 12 months and half of these continued to stay off alcohol for 2 years. These studies suggest that aversion therapy can be successful even for the long term.

Critics of aversion therapy point to its limited use and limited practicality. As it is based on simple classical conditioning principles it tends to neglect cognitive processes involved in substance abuse and it must be remembered that abusing is partly psychological in that dependence can be both physical and psychological.

It is perhaps oversimplistic to assume that complex human behaviours can be so easily conditioned to avoid substances in the same way that Pavlov's original behaviourism experiments showed that dogs would produce saliva to the sound of a bell. In fact aversion therapy is rarely used for treatment of substance abuse, perhaps because it requires an extended hospital stay as the treatment needs to be carefully regulated and used over a period of several days or even weeks.

Another treatment that could be used is self-management which is usually carried out with the direction of a health advisor or counsellor. The substance abuser manages their own problem in a structured way, possibly alongside other people who have a similar problem. A famous example of such a programme is Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) where people who have a drink problem manage their own behaviour through self regulation and group support. Groups like this have been criticised for their emphasis on shaming the individual and tend to work less well where people do not have religious beliefs.

There are three steps in self-management. The first step is to monitor where and when the substance is being used. A regular drinker may recognise they always have a drink the minute they get home from work or even first thing in the morning. People are then encouraged to think about why they drink – perhaps there are reasons why they are unhappy or stressed and these need to be resolved. The person is then encouraged to recognise the consequences of their abusing eg destruction of relationships, loss of job etc. Self-management can be an effective way of stopping substance abuse but because of the anonymous nature of self-help groups, data is not readily available about success rates. It may be that people can avoid abusing when they have regular support but perhaps relapse if they return to their former circle of friends and come across peers who are also using the substance.

Marks and comments

Part (a) is a fairly broad question and there are endless possible answers here. In this case there is clear focus on one type of substance as required and the candidate explains a number of effects, including the short-term action on the body, long-term effects of abuse and the effects of tolerance to alcohol. This is a good answer worth 4 marks.

Part (b) has a sensible balance of positive and negative although it would be equally possible to offer all negative or all positive evaluation and still get a good mark. Here each point is well developed and so the answer gets 4 marks.

Part (c) shows a good understanding of each treatment with sufficient descriptive detail for 4 marks. The evaluation is slightly unbalanced as there is more on aversion therapy but there is some limited reference to evidence. It's a shame there is no reference to a study for self-management but the requirement to cite evidence has been met. This answer gets 10 marks, making it into the top band, despite the slight imbalance.

Total mark awarded: 18

Specimen Question 8 - Forensic Psychology

- (a) Identify **one** role of custodial sentencing and briefly discuss how well it fulfils this role. (3 marks)
- (b) (i) Describe how behaviour modification has been used with offenders. (3 marks)
- (ii) Give **one** strength and **one** limitation of behaviour modification to treat offending behaviour. (2 marks)
- (c) Discuss problems in defining and measuring crime. (12 marks)

Specimen Answer

- (a) One role of custodial sentencing is deterrence - to put people off offending. However, we know that prison does not act to deter people from re-offending as recidivism rates are exceptionally high, usually around 70 per cent within two years. Theoretically speaking custodial sentencing should act in a vicarious way to deter others, if they see the negative consequences for others of offending it should put them off. However, this may not be the case. We cannot say how many people are deterred from ever offending by seeing what the consequences would be, we just know that once a person has offended, prison is not necessarily going to deter them in the future.
- (b) (i) Behaviour in prisons can be modified by following a strict regime of reward for good behaviour. This would usually happen in the form of a token economy system which is based on the behaviourist principle of positive reinforcement for good behaviours such as cleaning, complying with rules etc.
- (ii) One strength is that the system of reward is very clear and therefore people involved in the programme all know how it works and what can gain credit. A limitation is that once the prisoner leaves the prison environment the tokens are no longer there and so there is no incentive to continue to behave well.
- (c) Crime is extremely difficult to define because it is essentially a social construction. This means that what is considered to be a crime will depend on the historical and social context in which the action takes place.

This is nicely illustrated if we consider the example of homosexuality which was until the late 1960s a crime in this country.

However, since then, social attitudes have changed and as a result there have been changes in the law and homosexuality is no longer a crime. In this example we can see how crime being dependent on legal definitions will always be prone to change over time as laws change to reflect socially acceptable behaviour and the expectations of the given society. This brings us to another problem – that of cultural relativity.

Since different societies have different histories and traditions they therefore have different ideas about what is acceptable and so their laws will differ. This means that a particular act may be a crime in one society but not in another. A good example of this is how abortion is not a crime in some societies but is forbidden in other cultures.

Some criminologists like Blackburn suggest that it is better to define crime in terms of deviance from acceptable norms rather than say strictly what is a crime and what is not. Just as a judge would not look harshly on a person who commits an illegal act with good intention, so we should perhaps say that what constitutes a crime depends entirely on the context. Certainly the law takes a very different view of the same act when it is committed with bad intent and pre-meditation than when it is committed by default, accident or out of necessity.

Bearing in mind the problems defining crime it then follows that measuring crime will be equally difficult. If we cannot easily decide what is a crime then how can we be expected to measure crime accurately. Generally speaking there are three ways of measuring crime. The first is by use of official statistics which is all reported and recorded crime as noted by the authorities (police and customs). It is commonly believed that this figure is less than accurate because much crime goes unreported and unrecorded. People may not report a crime for fear of retribution or because they think it is too trivial. Police may not record a crime because there have been many others that are very similar or because they are currently more interested in other types of crimes. Farrington and Dowds (1985) found that the number of recorded crimes in neighbouring police authorities can differ significantly due to the local recording rules that the police use, showing that official stats may not be an accurate measure of the level of crime. In general official figures have been found to under-represent the real rate of crime and hide the dark figure of crime, all that which goes unreported and unrecorded.

To find out about true levels of crime criminologists have turned to other methods such as victim surveys like the British Crime Survey which every two years asks a large sample of around 50000 people whether they or someone in their household has been a victim of crime in the last 12 months. BCS methodology is impressive.

The large sample is randomly selected and the interview procedures are clearly structured to ensure reliability of data collection.

Latest BCS data shows that there is an increase in violent crime whereas the official figures suggest a decrease. The discrepancy between the two sets of data suggests that either one or both of these figures is unreliable.

Another method of measuring crime is to ask convicted offenders and those likely at risk of being offenders how many crimes they have committed. Interestingly results from offender surveys tend to show that although many crimes are committed, they are committed by a relatively small number of people. One example is a longitudinal survey of 5000 young people which looks at drug use, petty crime and antisocial behaviour. A problem with offender surveys is targeting the right groups in the first place and then checking the reliability of the findings. It is possible that offenders may exaggerate or minimise their reported offending for their own purposes, either bravado or to perhaps mediate their punishment. However, such surveys would always be carried out confidentially to encourage truthful reporting.

In summary crime is difficult to define and extremely difficult to measure accurately since any methods that rely on self-report (either victims or offenders) depend on honesty and reliable recall, neither of which can be ensured.

Marks and comments

Part (a) get full marks for a very detailed and thoughtful discussion based on deterrence.

Part (b)(i) gains two marks. The candidate does not get the third mark as a key element is missing; there is no mention of how the tokens are secondary reinforcers which can be exchanged for primary reinforcers. Part (b)(ii) gets two marks for a valid strength and a valid limitation.

Part (c) This is a very full answer, showing detailed knowledge of the problems of both defining and measuring crime. The candidate covers a number of discussion points in relation to each aspect of the question and, although there are few references, the arguments are clear and well illustrated with examples. This is undoubtedly an example of a top band answer and gets the full 12 marks.

Total mark awarded: 19

Notes on answering the 12-mark questions

Whatever the injunction, the breakdown for marks is 4 AO1 and 8 AO2

Effectively this means that you have to put more emphasis on evaluation than in an AS level answer.

Common commands are: 'Describe and evaluate...' 'Discuss...' 'Compare...'

In all the 12-mark questions you can gain at least one AO1 mark by outlining relevant evidence, so mentioning evidence even when it is not specifically required is worth the effort - as long as it is relevant.

What counts as AO2?

- **Negative** evaluation points eg biological explanations are perhaps oversimplified in that they are reductionist, explaining a very complex disorder in terms of basic elements such as chemicals and cells.....
- **Positive** evaluation points eg Behaviourist treatments for offending, such as behaviour modification, are useful because they offer a clear structure and an effective means of controlling behaviour in an institution.....
- **Citing evidence** and explaining **how** it supports theory (or doesn't support it) **because it shows** that....
- **Analysis** eg comparison with other theories/treatments would get credit as long as you don't lose sight of the question and start discussing the alternative instead. Analysis of the implications of a theory is also useful.
- **Application** - stem questions with a scenario often require reference to the scenario in the answer. If you link the theory under discussion to the content of the stem effectively then you can get AO2 marks for applying your knowledge of psychology to a novel situation.
- Specific evaluation points re any studies that have been used in the answer are also creditworthy.

If the question asks 'Refer to evidence in your answer' you must refer to the findings of a study or you will gain a maximum of 8 marks. No need to describe the study in detail.

If the question asks for '**two** explanations/**two** treatments' etc. then you will be limited to a maximum of 7 marks if you only cover one.

If the question is preceded by a scenario (stem) and you are asked to make reference to it in your answer, you will not be able to access the top mark band if you do not make appropriate reference to it.