Chapter 2 WHYL Answers

1. How can a theory be practical?

Theories help us frame and organize all of the facts (observations and observable behaviors) of the world around us.

2. What is the relationship between norms and facts?

Norms reflect facts and can be calculated.

3. How do theories differ from facts?

Theories raise questions and lead to the development of hypotheses that can be tested. The data gathered to research a hypothesis are the facts.

Grand Theories

4. What is the basic idea of psychoanalytic theory?

The basic premise behind psychoanalytic theory is that inner drives, unconscious motives, and unresolved needs from childhood govern our development.

5. What is Freud's theory of infantile sexuality?

Freud identified a body part from which a child might derive sexual pleasure for each of his developmental (psychosexual) stages. In infancy, the body part is the mouth.

6. What body parts are connected to the oral, anal, and phallic stages?

The oral stage is the mouth, the anal stage is the anus, and the phallic stage is the penis, or lack thereof, in which case, a girl would develop penis envy.

7. In what two ways does Erikson's theory differ from Freud's?

Erikson's theory focused on psychosocial stages of development that included the environment in which a child is raised and not so much emphasis on sexual development. His theory was also the first to cover the entire life span.

8. What is the basic idea of behaviorism?

Behaviorists believe that if psychology is to be studied as a true science, then it must be studied scientifically. Therefore, all behavior is learned and if it has been learned, it can be unlearned. It sees human behavior as very reactionary. Behavior is shaped by the environment.

9. In what way is behaviorism considered “in opposition” to psychoanalytic theory?
Psychoanalytic theory is based on unconscious motives and behaviors largely outside the realm of the “known.” Behaviorism stresses observable behavior and sees the present as more important than the past that helped form it. In fact, behaviorism is very much a “here and now” theory. The unconscious, and its role, in behavior is minimized.

10. How do classical and operant conditioning differ?

Classical conditioning is largely unconscious learning of new habits or “reflexes” to change behavior. Operant conditioning relies on a system of rewards and punishments to impact behavior.

11. What reinforcers are emphasized by social learning theory?

Personal learning or observational learning are emphasized in social learning theory.

12. What is the basic idea of cognitive theory?

Cognitive theory holds that personal thoughts and attitudes impact who we become—our thoughts, beliefs, attitudes, and assumptions.

13. How are Piaget’s stages similar to, and different from, Freud’s stages?

Piaget, like Freud, defines development in terms of age related stages, only his are related to cognitive development as opposed to sexual development and/or unconscious motives. There are cognitive tasks to complete at each stage, the success of which will enable the changes and therefore the adjustments at the next stage.

14. In what ways are assimilation and accommodation similar?

They are similar in that both are used to ease the cognitive disequilibrium that new experiences create.

15. Why is information processing not a stage theory?

Information processing explores the processes of thought, that is, how minds work before responding at all stages of development. The underlying theoretical basis of information processing is that the details of process shed light on the specifics of outcome.

Newer Theories

16. What are the underlying differences between the newer theories and the grand theories?

The newer theories are multicultural and multi-disciplinary, thus making them more in line with current views of human development.

17. How is “apprenticeship in thinking” an example of sociocultural theory?
Vygotsky’s work focuses on the relationship between education and culture. His “apprenticeship in thinking” refers to the idea that children and adults develop with the help or apprenticeship of more skilled members of society after whom they can model themselves.

18. What do mentors do when mentees are in their zone of proximal development?

Through sensitive assessment of the learner, the mentor engages the mentee; together, in a “process of joint construction,” new knowledge is attained (Valsiner, 2006). The mentor must avoid two opposite dangers: boredom and failure. Some frustration is permitted, but the learner must be actively engaged, never passive, and never overwhelmed (see Figure 2.4).

19. How is the religious background of both Rogers and Maslow related to humanism?

Humanism stresses free will and self determination. It stresses the good in people as in “hate the sin, love the sinner.”

20. How does Maslow’s hierarchy of needs differ from Erikson’s stages?

Maslow’s hierarchy is not age specific and doesn’t involve any specific task to achieve. It simply states basic human needs required for all ages and postulates that having unmet needs prevents a person from progressing any further, thus limiting their capabilities and/or contributions.

21. How does evolutionary psychology explain human instincts?

Human instincts are based on evolutionary theory, specifically, selective adaptation, and proposes that humans today react in ways that helped survival and reproduction long ago.

22. Why are aspects of evolutionary theory of human emotions controversial?

This evolutionary explanation of emotions is rejected by many women, who contend that patriarchy and sexism, not genes, lead to mating patterns. Placing the responsibility at the genetic level removes the choices of humans and would seem to give tacit approval to socially unacceptable behavior.

23. What does the idea of selective adaptation imply about the nature–nurture controversy?

It would imply that nature is more important than nurture.

What Theories Contribute

24. What is the key criticism and key contribution of psychoanalytic theory?
Psychoanalytic theories have made us aware of the impact of early-childhood experiences, remembered or not, on subsequent development. The main criticism is that psychoanalytic theory is subjective and beyond the scope of scientific investigation.

25. What is the key criticism and key contribution of behaviorism?

Behaviorism has shown the effect that immediate responses, associations, and examples have on learning, moment by moment and over time. Behaviorism is deterministic and mechanistic.

26. What is the key criticism and key contribution of cognitive theory?

Cognitive theories have brought an understanding of intellectual processes and how our thoughts and beliefs affect every aspect of our development. The criticism of cognitive theory is that it tends to ignore emotion.

27. What is the key criticism and key contribution of sociocultural theory?

Sociocultural theories have reminded us that development is embedded in a rich and multifaceted cultural context, evident in every social interaction. Sociocultural theory ignores the voice and self-direction of the individual.

28. What is the key criticism and key contribution of universal theories?

Universal theories stress that human differences are less significant than those characteristics that are shared by all humans. Universal theory ignores cultural, economic, and gender differences.

29. What are the advantages and disadvantages of an eclectic perspective?

Eclectic theories pull the best of each of the theories and put them in one place for selective use of each. This allows for critical thinking; however, the eclectic perspective may be limiting since one could easily ignore or overlook aspects not agreeable to the topic at hand.