

4.1 Developmental psychology: evidence and transfer

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____ Total: 8 marks

KEY WORDS cohort • attrition

Objective

Compare developmental theories and lifespan changes; Analyse cognitive, language and social development; Distinguish longitudinal and cross-sectional evidence. Original practice and authored marking guidance.

1 Key knowledge and worked examples

cohort : People sharing a birth period or historical experience. **attrition** : Loss of participants during a study.

Development can change knowledge, strategy and social support at different rates. Piaget’s account emphasizes changes in reasoning; Vygotsky’s account emphasizes learning supported by social interaction. Attachment concerns a relationship and patterns of security, not a permanent label inferred from one separation. Age averages do not establish a deadline for each child. Compare repeated observations, task demands and cultural context before deciding what changed. See DV.1 for theories and methods.

Piaget's proposed sequence: examples

1 Sensorimotor Roughly birth to 2 years Action and perception Object permanence	2 Preoperational Roughly 2 to 7 years Symbols and pretend play Focus on one feature
3 Concrete operations Roughly 7 to 11/12 years Conservation Reversibility	4 Formal operations From about 11/12 years Hypotheses Controlled comparisons

Approximate ages; one task does not establish a complete profile.

Worked case. Children solve a sorting task with an adult’s hints but not alone. How could a sociocultural explanation account for the difference?

The hints provide scaffolding within a range where supported performance exceeds independent performance. They may direct attention or model a useful strategy. Record the actual hint and later test without it; success with help does not yet establish independent mastery or identify a universal stage.

2 Practice

2.1 Following the same children for ten years is: [1]

A. longitudinal B. cross-sectional C. a single case only

2.2 Different childhood schooling across age groups is a possible: [1]

A. cohort effect B. placebo only C. randomisation guarantee

2.3 Revisit the worked case. State one conclusion its evidence supports and one stronger conclusion it does not support. Explain the difference. [2]

3 Exam-style questions

3.1 A study compares adolescents and adults once, then calls the difference a developmental change. Give the design, a competing explanation and a complementary design with its limitation. Give the interpretation, supporting reasoning, a relevant alternative or limitation, and an appropriate check. [4]

Solutions

2.1 Answer: A. The same participants are measured across time. The other options do not satisfy the stated defining conditions.

2.2 Answer: A. Historical exposure differs with generation. Compare the exact process, design or evidence, rather than an associated keyword.

2.3 Use the worked case evidence to support a bounded claim and explain why a causal, universal or stronger claim needs additional evidence. The claim must fit the specific design and observed process.

3.1 This is cross-sectional. Cohort, schooling or selection differences can accompany age. A longitudinal study follows the same participants and estimates within-person change, but selective attrition and practice effects remain. A sequential design can combine cohorts and repeated measurement; no label alone removes bias. Award B1 each (authored) for the interpretation, its reasoning, a relevant limitation/alternative and an appropriate check, up to four points. Accept a different justified answer satisfying these demands.