

Personality, clinical and abnormal psychology

GRE Subject Test · GRE Psychology

Scope and prerequisites

GRE Psychology topic 5 (V). Read CL.1, CL.2 and EP.1 for classification and outcome evidence. The practice tasks below are original, not official ETS questions.

Concepts and method

trait : A relatively stable dimension of individual differences. **differential diagnosis** : Comparing possible explanations for a clinical presentation.

Trait theories describe relatively stable dimensions; other personality theories emphasise learning, cognition or internal dynamics.

Clinical classification uses patterns, impairment, context and differential explanations. A symptom alone is insufficient.

Therapies differ in proposed mechanisms. Cognitive approaches examine thoughts; behavioural approaches change learning contingencies.

Treatment studies need suitable comparison groups and defined outcomes. These lessons teach academic concepts, not self-diagnosis or treatment advice.

Trait descriptions summarize relatively stable patterns; behavioural accounts examine learned contingencies; cognitive accounts examine interpretations; psychodynamic accounts emphasize unconscious processes; humanistic accounts emphasize experience and growth. Compare the mechanism and evidence, rather than treating these as interchangeable names. Clinical categories summarize patterns under a specified diagnostic framework. Their boundaries do not establish causes. CL.1, CL.2 and EP.1 provide educational classification and outcome interpretation.

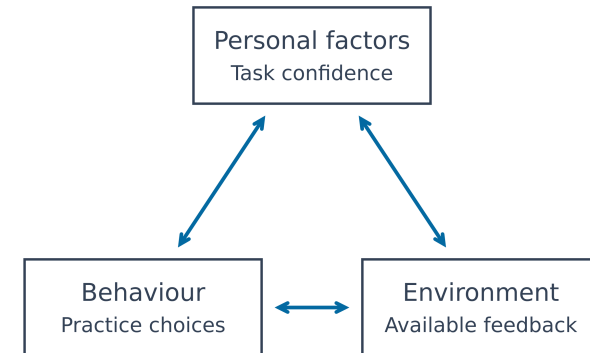
Worked reasoning

A therapy group improves after six weeks. Without a comparison, the change may reflect therapy, spontaneous improvement, expectancy or regression toward the mean. Random allocation and an appropriate comparison can improve causal evidence.

A pupil's self-report scores are stable across weeks but change when a teacher is present. What does this suggest about assessment?

Stable scores can show repeatability under similar conditions. The teacher's presence may change social desirability or perceived consequences, so interpretation also depends on setting. Use appropriate multiple methods and contexts; consistency alone neither validates a trait interpretation nor supplies a diagnosis.

Reciprocal influences



Conceptual arrows; no effect sizes or causal estimates supplied.

Bandura's reciprocal determinism: person, behaviour and environment influence one another

Independent transfer

An uncontrolled support programme reports large improvement among people selected for unusually high initial scores. Give two alternatives to a treatment effect and one useful comparison.

Attempt independently, then use the matching skill sheet solution.

Review and source limits

Avoid this error: Do not diagnose yourself or classmates from a multiple-choice description. Actual assessment belongs to qualified clinicians.