

Exercise walk-through

14.1

Developmental theories and milestones: evidence and transfer

GRE · GRE Subject Test · GRE Psychology

Concepts 1 (1)

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Piaget's stages are defined by what a child can do. Sensorimotor (birth to about 2): object permanence. Preoperational (about 2 to 7): symbolic play but egocentrism and failure of conservation. Concrete operational (about 7 to 11): conservation and reversible operations on concrete material. Formal operational (about 11 up): hypothetico-deductive reasoning, as in the pendulum task, where the solver holds one factor constant while varying another. Ages are approximate; the reasoning profile defines the stage.

Concepts 1 (2)

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Kohlberg ordered moral reasoning into preconventional (consequences to self), conventional (approval and rules) and postconventional (principles) levels. Erikson framed eight lifespan psychosocial crises, from trust versus mistrust in infancy to integrity versus despair in late adulthood; identity versus role confusion belongs to adolescence. Stage theories describe common sequences, not fixed timetables.

Check the transfer argument

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Ask whether the amount changed and why, then ask what would happen if the water were poured back. Keep the initial amount and transfer visible and avoid evaluative feedback. Reversibility or attention to both height and width would support conservation reasoning; one incorrect answer may also reflect language or task demands.

Accept a different explanation when its evidence and limits are justified.

Exercises 2.1·2.2

2.1 A participant solves the pendulum problem by holding factor X constant while varying factor Y, then reversing. According to Piaget, this is: [1]

A. sensorimotor B. preoperational C. concrete operational D. formal operational E. conventional

2.2 In the strange situation, an infant who clings to the caregiver yet is not comforted at reunion shows which pattern? [1]

A. secure B. avoidant C. resistant (ambivalent) D. disorganised E. detached

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2.1 A participant solves the pendulum problem by holding factor X constant while varying factor Y, then reversing. According to Piaget, this is: [1]

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2.1 Answer: D. Systematic hypothesis testing with controlled variables is formal-operational reasoning. The other options do not satisfy the stated defining conditions.

2.2 In the strange situation, an infant who clings to the caregiver yet is not comforted at reunion shows which pattern? [1]

A. secure B. avoidant C. resistant (ambivalent) D. disorganised E. detached

2.2 Answer: C. Clinging without comfort defines the resistant (ambivalent) pattern; avoidant infants keep distance. Compare the exact process, design or evidence, rather than an associated keyword.

Exercises 2.3-3.1

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

3.1 A child predicts that a taller narrow cup has more water after a transfer. Design a question that tests reasoning rather than giving away the answer. Give the interpretation, supporting reasoning, a relevant alternative or limitation, and an appropriate check. [4]

Exercises 2.3-3.1

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

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 A child predicts that a taller narrow cup has more water after a transfer. Design a question that tests reasoning rather than giving away the answer. Give the interpretation, supporting reasoning, a relevant alternative or limitation, and an appropriate check. [4]

3.1 Ask whether the amount changed and why, then ask what would happen if the water were poured back. Keep the initial amount and transfer visible and avoid evaluative feedback. Reversibility or attention to both height and width would support conservation reasoning; one incorrect answer may also reflect language or task demands. 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.