

Unit I Practice FRQ

Essay

1. Your friend Dave says: “How can you stand to study the history of psychology? Every single one of those theories is basically the same: the brain controls our behavior.” Given the history of psychology, evaluate Dave's claim using the following terms in their appropriate context:
 - Introspection
 - Psychodynamic theory
 - Behaviorism
 - Humanistic psychology
 - Cognitive revolution
 - Social-cultural perspective
2. One of the unique aspects of the science of psychology is that psychologists often use different approaches to explain an example of thinking or behavior. These different explanations can compliment each other, providing a more complete answer, rather than being contradictory. Use the following psychological approaches to explain why a child might cry when frightened.
 - Behavioral
 - Biological
 - Cognitive
 - Social-cultural

Unit I Practice FRQ Answer Section

ESSAY

1. ANS:

Point 1: Introspection: Students should demonstrate an understanding of the technique of introspection (training participants to carefully report elements of specific sensory experiences) and relate this technique to Dave's claim. Students could argue that it supports Dave's claim because it focuses on the relationship between our behaviors and our inner experiences, or that it contradicts Dave's claim because it focuses on something other than the brain's "control" of our behavior.

Point 2: Psychoanalytic theory: Students should demonstrate an understanding of psychoanalytic theory (the idea that unconscious anxieties and desires control our behavior) and relate this theory to Dave's claim. The explanation of this relationship should include the idea that psychoanalytic theory refutes Dave's claim that all psychological theories are the same, because psychoanalytic theory is unique in the way it explains and deals with unconscious aspects of the mind.

Point 3: Behaviorism: Students should demonstrate an understanding of the concept of behaviorism (our behaviors are controlled by past conditioning). When relating behaviorism to Dave's claim, students should discuss how behaviorism refutes the claim that our thoughts control our behaviors by noting that behaviorists contend that past learning, not cognition, explains and predicts behavior.

Point 4: Humanistic psychology: Students should demonstrate an understanding of this perspective and how humanists view the relationship between our motivations and behaviors. Student responses should include the idea that humanistic psychologists believe that humans strive to overcome obstacles in their path and that negative behaviors will improve given proper environmental conditions and the supportive reactions of those around them.

Point 5: Cognitive revolution: Students should demonstrate an understanding of the nature of the cognitive revolution (which emphasized that how we remember and process information influences our behaviors). Students might explain the ways in which this supports Dave's claim, noting that cognitive psychologists agree that our brain is a primary influence on behavior or emphasizing how the cognitive revolution was a change in the history of psychology, refuting Dave's claim.

Point 6: Social-cultural perspective: Students should discuss how the social-cultural perspective contradicts Dave's claim. Social-cultural researchers focus on the powerful ways in which culture influences and predicts our behaviors, including the study of how psychological principles either affect all humans universally regardless of culture or how the principles affect people differently in different cultures. This research focus does not involve how the brain influences behavior.

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2. ANS:

Point 1: A behaviorist would examine the kinds of associations, reinforcements, and/or punishments the child experienced in the past that might explain the current crying behavior. For example, if in the past the child cried and the scary stimulus was removed, the child is more likely to cry in a frightening situation (negative reinforcement).

Point 2: A biological psychologist would focus on the influences of brain chemistry or genetic influences on this behavior. In a frightening situation, the child's brain might activate the fight or flight response, through the hypothalamus. One of the responses caused by the fight or flight response might be yelling and crying, which alerts adults to the situation who might remove the child from the frightening situation.

Point 3: A cognitive psychologist would try to explain the crying by examining how the child interprets information. The child is interpreting the current situation as frightening because she or he experienced a similar situation in the past and developed a scheme that this kind of situation is scary.

Point 4: A social-cultural psychologist would look at the norms and cultural rules about fear dominant in the culture of the child. This might involve investigating what kinds of situations are typically considered frightening to people in that culture and how those norms and expectations are communicated to young people in that culture.

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