

Exam preparation workshop

Psychology level 3

Steve Draper, Paddy O'Donnell

22 April 2009

1

A reminder from Lynda Young

In the exam halls:

- Use a separate answer booklet for EVERY question answered
- On EACH booklet:
 - Write your Matriculation (student) number clearly
 - Write the number of the question answered clearly

2

Micro Critical Thinking exercise Instructions

In this task, you will be asked to write for just 5 minutes on a particular topic, like a mini critical review. By this, I mean I would like you to give in miniature a *balanced critical argument* on the topic:

- Giving reasons or evidence, not only assertions
- Discussing more than one view
- Mentioning reasons against, not only for your view
- Coming to a conclusion, not sitting on the fence

You will be allowed five minutes to complete each passage. Significant effort is required, despite the fact you are only allocated a short amount of time. Pilot studies showed that on average, participants managed to hand-write 14 lines of text. When it is indicated that the five minutes are up, you will be told to stop writing.

Micro-CR exercise1

You have 5 minutes to complete this. Pilot studies showed that on average, participants managed to hand-write 14 lines of text.

Give a *balanced critical argument* on:

Children nowadays are wrapped in cotton wool – discuss.

4

Micro-CR scoring

Swap papers with your neighbour.
Use your alternative coloured pen.
Given them a score out of 4 with 1 mark for each of:

1. Did they include more than one view?
2. Did they give reasons or evidence for the views mentioned?
3. Did they include reasons on **both** sides of the topic?
4. Did they include a statement showing their clear support for **one view in preference to** the others on the topic?

Micro-CR exercise 2

You have 5 minutes to complete this. Pilot studies showed that on average, participants managed to hand-write 14 lines of text.

Give a *balanced critical argument* on:

Travel abroad broadens the mind.

6

Micro-CR scoring

Swap papers with your neighbour.
Use your alternative coloured pen.
Given them a score out of 4 with 1 mark for each of:

1. Did they include more than one view?
2. Did they give reasons or evidence for the views mentioned?
3. Did they include reasons on **both** sides of the topic?
4. Did they include a statement showing their clear support for **one view in preference to** the others on the topic?

Time management sketch for each qu.

- 60 mins total per exam answer
- 2 mins lost (e.g. drop your pen, have to fill in the exam attendance sheet, etc.)
- 2? 4? mins to read the 4 questions and select one
- 2 mins recall brain dump
- 1 min. select the subset of points actually relevant for this question: I.e. Deciding what to leave out.
- 2 mins to write an essay plan
- 49-51 mins to write the text of your answer

8

Task 3: Brain dump

Take a sheet of paper, and write down all the points that might help in writing an answer to the question. Focus on not leaving anything useful out.

Exam qu: [Individual Differences]

“Discuss relevant evidential support for Freudian theory”

9

Task 4: Relevance selection

Set aside the sheet of paper you wrote your “brain dump” on, and pick up the green handout sheet with the new task, and follow its instructions.

Exam qu: [Individual Differences]

“Discuss relevant evidential support for Freudian theory”

10

Scoring (instructions)

I’m going to put up the list of points in the relevance exercise, divided into relevant, and not relevant to include in an answer.

Using it, first take your marked handout, pick up a different coloured pen, and tot up your score at the bottom:

- How many items you wrongly left in
- How many items you wrongly crossed out

Then go back to your “brain dump” sheet of paper.

- Use your differently coloured pen
- How many items on the “include” list are NOT in your brain dump list: that is your “penalty” score for that exercise.

11

Paddy’s proposed answers

Include:

- Experiments on unconscious perception e.g. subliminal presentations
- Personality studies on the anal oral and phallic personalities
- Outcome studies of psychoanalytic therapy and its derivative versions
- Criticisms of the the quality of this evidence

Exclude:

- Big five personality factors
- Jungian personality theory
- Biography of Freud
- Everything else

12

Comments

Including irrelevant material, while not fatal, gives the impression that you have “learned” the course, but that you don’t understand the material or you would know it isn’t relevant to the question.

It is hard retrieving everything you need in a hurry. It seems to be more effective to jot down anything that comes to mind (with one thing sometimes prompting other retrievals) and then later deleting what isn’t strictly relevant.

If (like most people) you can’t recall everything “cold”, mnemonics can help you recall the basics reliably. Then these will probably remind you of more associated things. (Perhaps 75% of the use of slides in lectures is to overcome unreliable recall by lecturers: but with those prompts they easily recall loads of further detail.)

13

Task 5: Brain dump

Take a sheet of paper, and write down all the points that might help in writing an answer to the question. Focus on not leaving anything useful out.

Exam qu: [Social Psychology]

“Is Fiedler’s contingency theory of leadership supported by empirical studies?”

14

Task 6: Relevance selection

Set aside the sheet of paper you wrote your “brain dump” on, and pick up the pink handout sheet with the new task, and follow its instructions.

Exam qu: [Social Psychology]

“Is Fiedler’s contingency theory of leadership supported by empirical studies?”

15

Scoring (instructions)

I’m going to put up the list of points in the relevance exercise, divided into relevant, and not relevant to include in an answer.

Using it, first take your marked handout, pick up a different coloured pen, and tot up your score at the bottom:

- How many items you wrongly left in
- How many items you wrongly crossed out

Then go back to your “brain dump” sheet of paper.

- Use your differently coloured pen
- How many items on the “include” list are NOT in your brain dump list: that is your “penalty” score for that exercise.

16

Paddy’s proposed answers

Include:

A description of Fiedler’s theory
The three dimensions of leader climate favourability viz.
 leader member relations
 task structure
 institutional power/ authority
Empirical evaluations of the theory
Criticisms of the concepts in the theory
Brief account of some other theories and what extra they contribute

Exclude:

- Too much detail on Bass
- Transformational leadership
- Leader member exchange
- History of task v socio-emotional leadership
- Lippitt and White studies

17