

## **ANSWERS TO TEST YOURSELF QUESTIONS: CHAPTER 7**

1. What are the differences between a longitudinal and a cross-sectional design? What are the advantages and disadvantages of each?

*A longitudinal study is a research design in which a group of individuals are studied over a period of time, whereas a cross-sectional study is a research design based on selecting representative groups who vary on a particular characteristic. One advantage of a longitudinal study is that a researcher can find descriptive data about how a behaviour unfolds over time without having to worry about finding matching samples at different age levels. Another advantage is that a great deal of information about individuals can be gathered in this way. A major disadvantage of longitudinal studies is the high commitment of time, for both researchers and the people being studied. If too many participants are lost over time, the representativeness of the results is compromised. Cross-sectional studies avoid this disadvantage (an advantage for cross-sectional designs), but has the disadvantage of being limited in ability to determine causation.*

2. Explain the issue of continuity vs. discontinuity in the study of development.

*The issue of continuity vs. discontinuity involves beliefs about the changes observed in behaviour and the processes which underlie development. Continuity is the view that changes in development occur through a continuous, gradual process, while discontinuity is the view that changes in development take place more like a series of discrete stages.*

3. How does the behaviourist approach explain personality development?

*Behaviourists say that the behavioural patterns which we call 'personality' are simply*

*the result of the cumulative effects of reinforcement for certain behaviours. The consistency of so-called personality over time is attributed to the individual's reinforcement history and the consistency of his/her environment in administering reinforcement.*

4. How does the cognitive approach explain gender role development?

*The cognitive approach interprets development in terms of cognitive social learning theory, which emphasizes the role of imitation in learning and the importance of cognitive schemata in structuring behaviour. Individuals have a mental schema which tells them what is appropriate behaviour for their sex. Children develop these schemata by observing the behaviour of others, particularly adults, and imitating them (social learning). Mental schemata interact with the effects of social experience (reinforcement and imitation) in directing gender role behaviour: in general, little girls imitate women and are reinforced for this, while little boys imitate men and are reinforced for this.*