8.6 The Nature-Nurture Debate and the Interactionist Approach: Test Pack

AQA 7182 · about 20 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer ALL questions.

1 Define the nature-nurture debate and give meanings of 'nature' and 'nurture'.

(Total for Question 1 is 2 marks)

2 Distinguish between niche-picking and evocative gene-environment interaction, giving one feature that differs between them.

(Total for Question 2 is 3 marks)

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3 Outline how a prevention programme based on the interactionist approach might reduce the incidence of a stress-related disorder in a high-risk community. Give two specific components of the programme and explain how each follows from interactionist principles.

(Total for Question 3 is 6 marks)

4 Outline two ways the interactionist approach is more useful than an extreme nativist (purely nature) account for explaining mental disorders.

(Total for Question 4 is 4 marks)

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Mark scheme · 8.6 The Nature-Nurture Debate and the Interactionist Approach: Test Pack

Question 1

definition: the debate about the relative contributions of heredity (genetic/biological factors) and environment (experiences, upbringing, social context) to behaviour and mental processes oe **B1**

nature: inherited genetic characteristics/biological factors; nurture: environmental influences including learning and socialisation oe **B1**

Answer: The nature-nurture debate concerns whether behaviour is mainly shaped by genetic inheritance (nature) or by environmental influences such as upbringing and experience (nurture).

Question 2

identifies niche-picking: individuals actively select environments that suit their genetic tendencies oe **M1**

identifies evocative interaction: an individual's genetically influenced traits elicit responses from others in the environment oe **M1**

states a distinguishing feature, e.g. niche-picking is active selection by the person, evocative interaction involves others reacting to the person's traits oe **A1**

Answer: Niche-picking is when people choose environments that match their inherited tendencies, whereas evocative interaction is when a person's genetically influenced traits cause others to respond in ways that shape their development; the key difference is active choice versus environmental reaction.

Question 3

first component identified, e.g. stress-reduction training or resilience-building for individuals at genetic risk oe **M1**

explains link to interactionist approach: reducing environmental triggers lowers chance diathesis is activated oe **A1**

second component identified, e.g. community-level interventions to reduce exposure to stressors, such as improving housing or employment support oe **M1**

explains link: changing environment reduces prevalence of triggers across the population, consistent with interactionist focus on environment as modifiable factor oe **A1**

adds consequence or evaluation, e.g. combining both components addresses both vulnerability and trigger, improving effectiveness and fairness oe **M1**

explains why this matters, e.g. targeting both levels prevents disorder in those at risk and reduces overall incidence in the community oe **A1**

Answer: A programme could include resilience and stress-management training for individuals at higher genetic risk, which reduces the impact of stressors and makes diathesis activation less likely; and community measures to reduce chronic stressors, such as better housing or employment support, which lower environmental triggers. Combining individual and environmental components follows the interactionist principle of addressing both vulnerability and trigger and should reduce incidence more effectively.

Question 4

identifies a first way, e.g. it acknowledges both genetic vulnerability and environmental triggers, offering a more complete causal account oe **M1**

explains why this is useful, e.g. allows for prevention and treatment targeting environment as well as biology oe **A1**

identifies a second way, e.g. it explains individual differences in outcomes despite shared genes, by including differing life experiences and protective factors oe **M1**

explains consequence, e.g. avoids deterministic conclusions and supports personalised interventions oe **A1**

Answer: The interactionist approach recognises both genetic vulnerability and environmental triggers, giving a fuller causal explanation and suggesting environmental interventions for prevention and treatment; it also explains why people with similar genes can have different outcomes by including differing experiences and protective factors, avoiding biological determinism.

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