

-SQA- SCOTTISH QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY

**Hanover House
24 Douglas Street
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NATIONAL CERTIFICATE MODULE DESCRIPTOR

-Module Number- 7177021 **-Session-1991-92**
-Superclass- PK

-Title- **COGNITIVE PSYCHOLOGY: THE INDIVIDUAL AND THINKING**

-DESCRIPTION-

Purpose A student completing this module will have been introduced to the study of Psychology and will be in a position to undertake further modules in this area and progress to undertake a practical investigation.

This module has been designed as part of a series of modules at different levels of demand which accredit competence in Psychology. The series was designed to facilitate entry to Higher Education. However, the modules in the series may be used in their own right with senior school pupils, adult returners and those whose employment requires them to develop a psychological perspective.

Preferred Entry Level No formal recommendations for entry but students may benefit from 7177011: Introduction to Psychology which may be offered concurrently with this module.

Outcomes The student should:

1. explain how psychology can be used to contribute to the understanding of mental processes in individuals;
2. describe the main methods of research used by cognitive psychologists;
3. identify applications of cognitive psychology in everyday life.

Assessment Procedures Acceptable performance in the module will be satisfactory achievement of all the Performance Criteria specified for each Outcome.

The following abbreviations are used below:

PC Performance Criteria
IA Instrument of Assessment

Note: The Outcomes and PCs are mandatory and cannot be altered. The IA may be altered by arrangement with SQA. (Where a range of performance is indicated, this should be regarded as an extension of the PCs and is therefore mandatory).

OUTCOME 1 EXPLAIN HOW PSYCHOLOGY CAN BE USED TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE UNDERSTANDING OF MENTAL PROCESSES IN INDIVIDUALS

- PCs
- (a) The selection of concepts from cognitive psychology which can be applied to mental processes in individuals is relevant.
 - (b) The application of selected concepts from cognitive psychology is appropriate.

IA Restricted Response

The student will be asked to prepare a report of 300 to 500 words on a demonstration which contributes to an understanding of at least one area of mental processing. The report should contain a description of how the demonstration was carried out, what the results of the demonstration were and what conclusions can be drawn from it.

Satisfactory performance will be that the student achieves all the Performance Criteria correctly.

OUTCOME 2 DESCRIBE THE MAIN METHODS OF RESEARCH USED BY COGNITIVE PSYCHOLOGISTS

- PCs
- (a) Identification is made of the experimental method of research in cognitive psychology in contrast to other methods.
 - (b) The description of the experimental method of research used in cognitive psychology is accurate.
 - (c) The use of the terms 'probability' and 'significance' is correct.

IA Multiple Choice Questions and Restricted Response

Performance Criterion (a) will be assessed by the student being presented with 8 multiple choice items in which all 4 methods of research are represented. The student will be required to distinguish those which use experimental methods from the other types of research methods.

Performance Criteria (b) and (c) will be assessed by the student describing the experimental method of research in approximately 150 words.

Satisfactory performance will be that the student achieves all the Performance Criteria correctly.

OUTCOME 3 IDENTIFY APPLICATIONS OF COGNITIVE PSYCHOLOGY IN EVERYDAY LIFE

PCs

- (a) The identification of appropriate areas of cognitive psychology which could assist in understanding a given problem, is accurate.
- (b) The application of concepts in cognitive psychology to produce a solution to a given problem is consistent with recognised psychological usage.

IA Extended Response

The student will be presented with a choice of case studies which illustrate problems where cognitive psychology methods and concepts can be applied. The student will provide an accurate analysis of the chosen problem, using ideas from cognitive psychology and suggest strategies for solving the problem.

Satisfactory performance will be that the student achieves all the Performance Criteria correctly.

**The following sections of the descriptor are offered as guidance.
They are not mandatory.**

CONTENT/CONTEXT

Corresponding to Outcomes 1-3:

1. Suggested content areas, without implying exclusivity are:

Perception - sensation and attention
Memory and Learning
Language and Thought

It is suggested that these may be taught using a series of small demonstrations of, for example:

convergent/divergent thinking
taste/touch experiments
colour of food
short term memory experiments.

The methodology which should be emphasised in this module is:

- (i) Surveys/Questionnaires/Interviews
 - (ii) Experimentation-field/laboratory
 - (iii) Observation - participant/non-participant
 - (iv) Case study
 2. Explanation of what is meant by experimental method. The experimental method should be taught as the main method used in cognitive psychology. The main focus should be on the laboratory experimental method. Key features to be highlighted are intervention, control and measurement of variables.

Tutors may consider the setting up of a poorly designed experiment in order to demonstrate the need for controls, etc.
 3. A choice of case studies should be presented to students to illustrate problems where cognitive psychology methods and concepts can be applied, eg. eye witness testimony; learning a foreign language; memory (eg. length of telephone numbers); focus of attention; principles of skill learning; practice makes automatic (not perfect).
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SUGGESTED LEARNING AND TEACHING APPROACHES

Videos, demonstrations/experiments. Teacher exposition. Case study, text books and other written resources. Fact sheets and question and answer sessions should be used to test students' understanding. Visiting speakers; visits to exhibitions, demonstrations (Art Galleries, Libraries, Exhibition Centres offer appropriate programmes from time to time). Visits to schools, hospitals or other environments in which cognitive psychological concepts are used, may also be included.

Tutors may consider the setting up of a poorly designed experiment and reviewing it with the class in order to demonstrate the need for controls, etc.

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