Unit 7: Testing & Individual Differences Unit Summary

Our next unit is “Testing and Individual Differences.” Notice I did not say “Intelligence.” That term has connotations that I, and the AP folks, want us to get past. Typically when we hear the word “intelligent” we think of being cognitively “smart.” In fact, Coon defines intelligence as “an overall capacity to think rationally, act purposefully, and deal effectively with the environment”, so a focus of this unit will be on that cognitive piece and how this is quantified. However, we will also explore other concepts of intelligence, like Gardner’s Theory of Multiple Intelligences and artificial intelligence.

Unit Objectives

The following is a description of learning objectives for the major content areas covered in the AP Psychology Exam during this unit, as well as the approximate percentages of the multiple-choice section devoted to each area. This listing is not intended to be an exhaustive list of topics. All of these topics are likely to appear on the AP exam in some way, shape, or form. Other material we talk about and/or in your reading could also find its way on the unit assessment.

Testing and Individual Differences (5-7% of AP exam)

An understanding of intelligence and assessment of individual differences is highlighted in this portion of the course. Students must understand issues related to test construction and fair us.

AP students in psychology should be able to do the following:

- Define intelligence and list characteristics of how psychologists measure intelligence:
  - Abstract vs. verbal measures
  - Speed of processing
- Discuss how culture influences the definition of intelligence
- Compare and contrast historic and contemporary theories of intelligence (e.g. Charles Spearman, Howard Gardner, Robert Sternberg)
- Explain how psychologist design tests, including standardization strategies and other techniques to establish reliability and validity
- Interpret the meaning of scores in terms of the normal curve
- Describe relevant labels related to intelligence testing (e.g. gifted, cognitively “disabled”).
- Debate the appropriate testing practices, particularly in relation to culture-fair test uses
- Identify key contributors in intelligence research and testing (e.g. Alfred Binet, Francis Galton, Howard Gardner, Charles Spearman, Robert Sternberg, Louis Terman, David Wechsler)

Key Terms

You should eventually be able to properly and accurately use the terms at the beginning of Chapter 11 of Barron’s, as well as the terms in bold interspersed throughout the pages assigned in Coon, in written and verbal communication.

Text Readings

- Coon p. 304-318 (last part of Chapter 9)
- Barron’s Chapter 11

Planned Assignments & Assessments (subject to change)

- Testing and Individual Differences Quiz (the only one!)
- Testing and Individual Differences Unit Test
- Testing and Individual Differences Independent Investigation
- Testing and Individual Differences Extra Credit Essay (optional)

Current Timetable (subject to change)

- Last day of unit planned for Thursday January 15/Friday January 16.