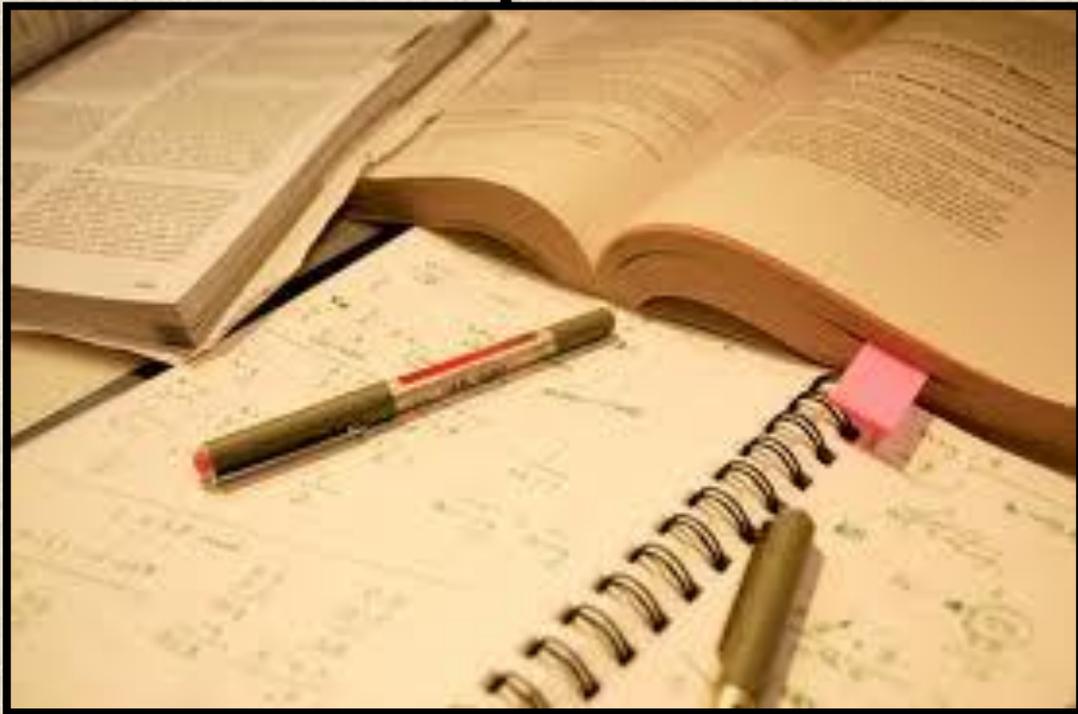


# Synopticity & PSYA4 Schizophrenia



PJ Waller

Psychologist

Curriculum Leader for Psychology & Criminology

# 1: Classification & Diagnosis

## Issue

- **State** – Much of the research into the reliability and validity of the classification systems has been using **ethnocentric** samples.
- **Explain** – Much of the research carried out on the DSM- IV and the ICD-10 has investigated people diagnosed in **Western countries**.
- **Apply** – By only using Western samples you cannot get a clear picture of the reliability and validity of the classification systems. The reliability of DSM IV and ICD 10 may be much worse than has been found, which would undermine the use of a classification system at all.
- **Stretch and Challenge** – Psychologists should aim to investigate the reliability of DSM IV (originally formulated in the USA) in other non-Western countries to test the usefulness of a classification system.

# 2: Biological Explanations

## Issue

- **State** – Much of the research into genetic explanations of schizophrenia use twin & adoption studies that may have **ethical issues**.
- **Explain** – Some children were adopted away from schizophrenia mothers/fathers, can we realistically say that those who agreed to their newborns being adopted were giving their **informed consent**?
- **Apply** – It could be argued that if a schizophrenic cannot give informed consent, who could give consent by proxy? And should psychologists study these particular families?
- **Stretch and Challenge** – Researchers should investigate the offspring of schizophrenics that were adopted within the same family. This could avoid the ethical issue of consent, as if the schizophrenic parent recovers there is still an option for reconciliation.

# 3: Biological Treatments

## Debate

- **State** – Some biological treatments (namely drugs) imply that schizophrenia is only caused by neurochemical imbalances. This is **physiologically deterministic**.
- **Explain** – The main drug treatment for schizophrenia (L-Dopa) works by reducing the amount of dopamine absorbed by the brain. This implies that only dopamine sensitivity is the cause of psychosis.
- **Apply** – It has been found that drug treatment only appears to be beneficial for patients with positive symptoms (hallucinations & delusions). This therefore suggests that there are perhaps different biological bases for different types of schizophrenia.
- **Stretch and Challenge** – Research into drug treatment for the negative symptoms of schizophrenia may yield more biological (or indeed psychological) bases for the negative symptoms of schizophrenia.

# 4: Psychological Explanations

## Debate

- **State** – All of the psychological explanations (apart from the diathesis-stress model) focus on environment (or nurture) only.
- **Explain** – Psychological explanations assume that life events, thoughts or childhood conflict are the cause of schizophrenic behaviour. They ignore any biological factors.
- **Apply** – Psychological explanations attempt to research causes of schizophrenia that are not simple to operationalise and therefore, they are difficult to measure objectively.
- **Stretch and Challenge-** The diathesis-stress model aims to overcome this problem by suggesting that people are born with a predisposition to developing schizophrenia, however certain stresses (or life events) will cause onset.

# 5: Psychological Treatments

## Approaches

- **State** – Psychological treatments tend to use techniques that emphasis behaviour and thought changes.
- **Explain** – The cognitive approach suggests that schizophrenics need to address their impaired thought processes. The family approach argues that it is due to high expressed emotion.
- **Apply** – Thought patterns are not observable & measurable, therefore how can you measure the effectiveness of a treatment? Expressed emotion is also a difficult concept to objectively measure.
- **Stretch and Challenge** – The psychological treatments are used after drug treatment to alleviate psychotic symptoms, so it can be difficult to know if any improvement are due to psychological therapy.

# Easy way to Synopticity!

- If a theory is reductionist – usually deterministic as well.
- If from the behavioural approach – bring in extreme nurture argument.
- If from the biological approach – bring in the extreme nature argument.

# Easy way to Synopticity!

- If something is against *ethical issues* – there may be issues with *social sensitivity*.
- If talking about *idiographic approach* – talk about this *not being scientific*.
- Remember *culture bias* – talk about extending this into non-Western societies for stretch and challenge.