Class Activities

# Chapter 13: Cognitive Development Through Adolescence

## 1. Battle of the Sexes

Pictionary, Taboo, and Catch Phrase are excellent games to play “boys versus girls” style. These games rely upon skills that tend to be female-dominant or male-dominant. For example, Catch Phrase is a game in which a person must describe a word or phrase with the goal being for the team to guess what the word is in a certain amount of time. Since this game relies upon verbal skills, and if women have better verbal skills than men, then women should perform better in a Battle of Sexes challenge. To make this exercise even more applicable to Cognitive Psychology, you may choose to make your own game and select phrases from this chapter or previous chapters for the teams to describe.

## 2. Discovering Individual Differences in Cognition

The purpose of this class activity is to demonstrate how people differ in their cognitive skills, and that while some may excel on one task, they may not necessarily excel on another. To accomplish this, you will need to make copies of handouts 13-1 and 13-2 for each student. Distribute handout 13-1 to students first, and when completed, distribute handout 13-2. After students complete both tests, score them as a class. Ask students to form small groups to discuss their performance. Were there students who performed well at both tasks? One task over the other?

Handout 13-1

Verbal Reasoning Test

1. Evening is to morning, as dinner is to: (breakfast)

2. Left is to right, as horizontal is to: (vertical)

3. All is to many, as few is to: (none)

4. Hip is to ankle, as shoulder is to (wrist)

5. Butcher is to knife, as hairdresser is to: (scissors)

6. Warm is to hot, as old is to: (antique)

7. Europe is to Spain, as North America is to: (Canada)

8. Earth is to ball, as pancake is to: (disc)

9. Bow is to arrow, as \_\_\_\_ is to bullet (gun)

10. Prose is to poetry, as conversation is to: (song)

11. Bridge is to river, as tunnel is to: (mountain)

(<https://www.123test.com/verbal-reasoning-test-analogies/>)

Handout 13-2

Spatial Ability Test

To access the Spatial Ability Test, go to the website below and scroll down to the “Spatial Ability” test. It will then guide you through a free download.

<http://psychometric-success.com/downloads/download-practice-tests.htm>

## 2. Piaget’s Developmental Stages

This activity is designed to demonstrate Piaget’s stages of development in class. You will need to plan ahead for this activity and find parents willing to allow you to use their children in a class demonstration. For each demo, the younger child is within the age range for the stage and the older child should be at the stage above, developmentally.

Sensorimotor Stage Demo—Object Permanence

You will need two children, one around 12 months and another around 24 months. You’ll also need a small toy, and a blanket. With the younger child seated on their parent’s lap, put the toy on the table for the baby to see and play with. Then, place a blanket over the toy. Repeat this three times. Then, do the same with the older child. You should find that the older child has developed object permanence and pulls the blanket off of the toy when it is covered, whereas the younger child does not.

Preoperational Stage Demo—Conservation Task

You will need two children, one around 5 years old and another around 9. Begin with the first child seated at the table with two parallel lines of five quarters.

Then, ask the child “Does this line have more quarters? (point to top line) Does this line have more quarters? (point to bottom line) Or are they the same?”

Now, take the top line of quarters and space them out so the line is longer. You’ll still have five quarters in each row. Then, ask the child the same questions above. Repeat this task with the older child.

You should find that the younger child believes that by stretching the top line, it now has more quarters whereas the older child knows the two lines are still the same.