

**Lesson Plan Example for Secondary School Children 11-18 yrs.** Please note this is a very general plan designed to highlight the principles that should be adapted to curriculum relevant subject matters and levels of student.

**Title:** Approaches to Psychology

Part of a project run by the department of  
Psychology and Behavioural Sciences

**Time:** 1 hour



**Materials:** Computer, projector, colour pens, and paper.

**Objectives:** To introduce students to some of the schools of thought, or approaches, to the study of Psychology and explanations for human thought, feeling and behaviour.

**Procedure:**

*0-10 mins.* In groups (3-7 pupils), invite students to draw and define four columns labelled 'Actions', 'Thoughts', 'Emotions' and 'Explanations'. Play short video clips of a range of human actions in a variety of contexts (e.g., at work, leisure, school etc. - include around 3-5 clips according to length). The video clips can be matched to student interests and class topics. Invite the students to make notes under each of the headings. Here are some examples of clips demonstrating:

- 1) Perfection of learnt behaviour leading to collective celebration and joy... [Click here](#)
- 2) Fear response leading to irrational thought and extreme excitement... [Click here](#)
- 3) Deceptive magic to confuse and amaze audiences... [Click here](#)

*10-20 mins.* The groups are then invited to collectively list their observations and interpretations. Follow the progress of each group and its individuals. Provide individual encouragement focusing on striving for self-improvement to maintain confidence and effort. Support and instructional comment should also be presented to the whole class every 3-4 minutes (approx.) to direct attention to self-improvement, provide instruction on the task, and sustain collective confidence.

*20-40 mins.* Discuss group findings highlighting examples of the variety of observed acts and explanations. Encourage and invite a variety of contributors, emphasising the value of each contribution. Present eminent approaches to studying human behaviour, i.e., the Biological, Social-Cognitive, Behaviourist, and Humanistic approaches (for summaries [Click here](#)). Also prompt discussion on contemporary interdisciplinary approaches. Ask the groups to revisit their listed explanations and align them with the different approaches.

*40-60 mins.* Replay the video clips after reinforcing students' deeper understanding of explaining human behaviour, thoughts and feelings. Invite the students to add to their previous lists using a different colour pen to distinguish from previous responses. Focus each group on how many more responses they recorded than in their first attempt. Draw attention to students' further understanding of human functioning. Time permitting, initiate an open class discussion on how the various approaches to psychology differ and compare how scientists who adopt each approach may use a range of means and measures to provide the empirical evidence to support their perspectives and inform practice. If further challenges are requested and required by some groups they could be introduced to other psychological approaches (i.e., evolutionary, psychodynamic)

**Evaluation and assessment:** Emphasise group and individual improvement on greater awareness of psychological approaches. Timely feedback and encouragement can direct attention to the skills of the task, maintain effort, promote self-reflection, provide confidence and enjoyment.

**Risks:** Attention lapses, lack of understanding, avoidance strategies, no improvement, discussion dominated by instructor or one or two students, discipline, provision of genuine feedback, too much/little feedback, intergroup rivalry.

**Reflection on Session:** Encourage students to reflect on their further awareness of psychological approaches leading to explanations of human functioning and informed practice.

**Optional Homework:** Ask the students to research 3 to 5 eminent psychologists identifying their key contributions, methods, and main approaches / schools of thought.

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