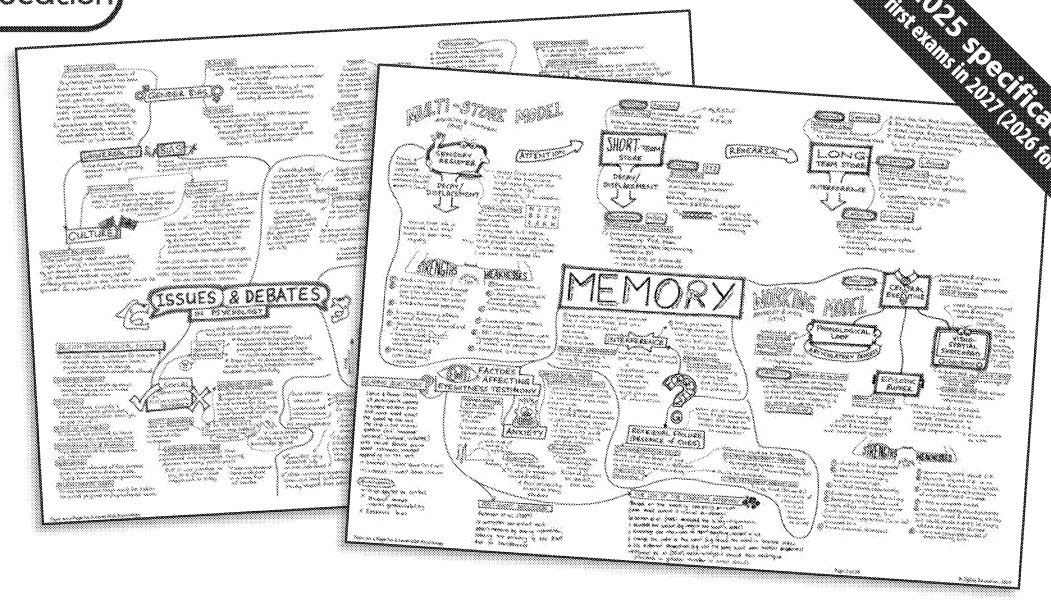
Zig Zag Education

Psychology

AS and A Level | AQA | 7181

2025 specification
first exams in 2027 (2026 for AS)



'Topic on a Page'

for AS and A Level AQA Psychology: Topics 1-8

Update v1.2, December 2025

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Teacher's Introduction

This resource has been created as a revision tool for students studying A Level Psychology (A Level Year 2). It now covers all eight compulsory topics in the A Level course.

The idea behind the mind maps is not to cover every single word of the course, but rather to summarise each topic into a manageable single sheet of A3 paper, allowing students to see the bigger picture of each topic. Thus, the resource is ideal for students at the lower end of the ability range, although staff in my department have tested it with the full range of abilities and the feedback has been very positive.

Each mind map contains all the major vocabulary, theories, research and criticisms for the topic, mirroring the AQA specification as closely as possible. The advantage of these mind maps is the inclusion of useful facts and figures, diagrams and cartoons, so that students can use them as a key element in their revision for the exam.

Students in the past have found these mind maps invaluable, and I have used them in the following ways:

- They are used primarily as **revision tools at the end of topics** and in the run-up to exams. However, they are equally useful during the study of topics, allowing students to keep track of their learning so far.
- Due to the nature of the mind maps, **students can work with them independently**. Therefore, they are useful for students who need to catch up on missed work, and have been sent home for those students who have long-term absences due to sickness or suspension. They are also useful for inclusion units where non-specialist teachers are supervising students as they provide answers.
- The mind maps can be **colour-coded** to separate the different sections of each topic. This activity alone is enough to get students examining each mind map closely.
- For more-able students, the mind maps can be **cut up and expanded**, adding additional information or further criticism on the studies. This allows students to personalise and structure their revision in their own way.
- In the lead-up to exams, I always recommend to students that they **display the mind maps somewhere very visible** where they will see them regularly. Many students like to stick them on their bedroom walls at home. This allows them to subconsciously revise them as they go about their daily routine.
- As the mind maps are a low-tech resource, **multiple copies** can be given to students and there is no real problem if they lose them. I have found this particularly useful with my lower-ability sets who all have several copies of each mind map, usually including one buried at the bottom of their school bag!
- The resource also includes partially filled-in versions. Students should be encouraged to complete these using the subheadings as a guide and to complete each topic at the end of teaching as a revision exercise. They could then compare their own to the completed pages and assess the differences between them. More-able students could, additionally, be asked to think of more examples to illustrate the points, or weaker-ability students could provide more illustrations or colour-code the mind maps to aid memory of the key topics.

December 2025

Update v1.2, December 2025 ***(to match specification changes for first teaching September 2025)***

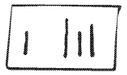
Social influence:	• Removed 'Identification' as a type of conformity, 'Conformity to social roles as investigated by Zimbardo' and 'Role of social influence processes in social change' • Added a further evaluation point for 'Social support' and for 'Locus of control'
Memory:	• Removed 'Types of LTM (episodic, semantic, procedural)' and references to 'misleading information' and 'improving the accuracy of EWT' • Added factors affecting EWT, including 'post-event discussion', 'leading questions' and 'the use of the cognitive interview'
Attachment:	• Removed 'Caregiver interactions in humans: reciprocity and interactional synchrony', 'Stages of attachment identified by Schaffer' and 'Multiple attachments and the role of the father' • Reworded 'Romanian orphan studies' to 'English and Romanian Adoptees project' • Added additional research on the fourth type of attachment and additional evaluation point for 'explanations of attachment (learning theory)'
Psychopathology (Now Clinical Psychology and Mental Health):	• Reworded topic title from 'Psychopathology' to 'Clinical Psychology and Mental Health' • Reworded subtopic titles from 'Definitions of abnormality' to 'Definitions in the field of mental health' and 'Deviation from social norms' to 'Deviation from social/cultural norms' • Moved 'Deviation from ideal mental health' to the first definition
Approaches in psychology:	• Removed 'Origins of psychology', 'Modelling', 'Influence of genes' from biological approach and 'Focus on the self' and 'The influence of counselling' from humanistic approach • Reworded 'Theoretical and computer models' to 'The use of models' • Moved 'Cognitive neuroscience' from cognitive approach to biological approach • Added a further weaknesses of the 'Humanistic approach'
Biopsychology:	• Removed all content under 'Biological rhythms' • Added additional research on plasticity
Research methods:	• Removed 'Confounding variables' • Reworded 'Content analysis' to 'Coding in content analysis' and 'Assessing reliability' to 'Measuring reliability' • Added 'Control groups' to control section
Issues and debates:	• Reworded 'Ethics' to 'Social sensitivity in psychological research' • Added further research on 'individualist vs collectivist cultures'

CONFORMITY

SOCIAL INFLUENCE

ASCH (1951) – CONFORMITY

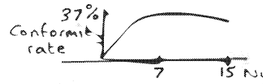
METHOD
* Groups of 7 people asked to judge the length of lines in comparison to a standard line.
* only 1 was a real participant → the rest were stooges.
* stooges gave same wrong answer on 12/18 trials (critical trials).



RESULTS
* overall 37% followed the majority and gave wrong answer.
* 25% never gave wrong answer.
* Co… → people conform to the majority within a group.

CRITICISMS
✓ Lab study so highly controlled
✓ Influential and well-replicated study
✗ Poor Population Validity – only male US college students.
✗ Poor Ecological Validity – unrealistic task.
✗ Poor Historical Validity → done at a time of very conformist views.

VARIABILITIES



SIZE OF GROUP
→ 3-… se… st… en… …m
… many … suspicion
…MITY → as soon as you break the unanimous group with one dissenter, conformity drops → even if dissenter gives a different wrong answer.

TASK DIFFICULTY
→ more likely to conform in a more difficult task, eg when lines were closer in length.

MILGRAM – OBEDIENCE TO …

METHOD
* 40 particip… range of p… asked to take part … & memory experim…
* Drew lots to choose t… (real participant al…
* "Learner" wired up to e… generator → "Teacher" gi… to show it was real (ON… IN THE EXPERIMENT!).
* Learner & Teacher put … rooms and teacher asks … choice questions to le…
* Any mistake punished … → voltage increased by … up to 450V (labelled X…
* If teacher stopped, ask… by experimenter in la…

TYPES of CONFORMITY

COMPLIANCE
* outward agreement with others, but private views stay the same, eg supporting a certain team when surrounded by their fans.

INTERNALISATION
* full and permanent change both publicly and privately, eg joining a church and converting to a new religion.

EXPLANATIONS for CONFORMITY

NORMATIVE SOCIAL INFLUENCE
* based on the desire to be LIKED.
* we conform to fit in eg Asch → people didn't want to "rock the boat".

INFORMATIONAL SOCIAL INFLUENCE
* based on the desire to be RIGHT.
* we conform because we think others are correct.
* eg Asch → people didn't trust their own perception.

RESISTANCE TO SOCIAL INFLUENCE

LOCUS OF CONTROL
… ief over how much control they have over their lives
INTERNAL → personal control
EXTERNAL → controlled by outside influences, eg luck, other people.

SOCIAL SUPPORT → when others disob… conform, it becomes … to follow, eg variatio… both Milgram & Asch … diss…

Av… …s (1998) meta-analysis found a correlation of +0.37 between external locus of control and conformity

ALWAYS
① LINK BACK to Asch or Milgram/Moscovici
② LINK FORWARD to social change (the history bit!)

CONC…
* In realit… most likel… successful … (shows CON… with some … consider o…

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MULTI-STORE MODEL

ATKINSON & SCHIFFRIN (1968)

Many separate registers:
→ ICONIC (visual)
→ ECHOIC (sound)
→ HAPTIC (touch)

ATTENTION

Senses (and corresponding bits of the brain) have huge capacity, but the majority is lost immediately if no attention is paid to it.

DECAY/DISPLACEMENT

SPERLING (1960)
→ showed participants letter cards [illegible] milliseconds. [illegible] to respond to a tone played immediately after, recall 75% of whichever tone asked for

shows that info is received, but that most is lost very rapidly.

SHORT-TERM STORE

CODING: Acoustic
CONRAD (1964) → letters that sound similar were more tricky (made mistakes) as we rehearse them acoustically in our heads.
eg B, V, D, C vs E, F, K, Z

REHEARSAL

CAPACITY: 7±2
→ participant had to recall [illegible] increasing number of strings
SERIAL DIGIT SPAN is between 5 & 9 for most people
→ if we try to add something we must lose something.

DECAY/DISPLACEMENT

DURATION: ~30s
PETERSON & PETERSON (1959)
→ participants shown consonant trigrams, eg. TVX, then INTERFERENCE TASK (eg counting backwards in 3s)
→ recall 50% at 6 seconds
→ recall 10% at 18 seconds

STRENGTHS

(P) - STM & LTM separate
(E) - Clive Wearing (brain damage) lost STM but retains LTM. Also brain scans (PET scans).
(E) - STM & LTM stored separately
(P) - Primary & Recency effects on Serial Position Curve
(E) - People remember start & end of word lists → Recency (end) can be removed by interference
(E) STM (Recency) & LTM (Primary) separate

WEAKNESSES

(P) One-way system is incorrect
(E) - Football enthusiasts better at recalling fictional football scores
(E) - LTM can help STM.
(P) - Mere rehearsal doesn't ensure transfer
(E) - BBC radio frequencies were changing → announced 100s of times and people unaware
(E) - Rehearsal isn't enough.

EVALUATION

MEMORY

"Mum, I've lost my keys. Where did you last have them?"
"Don't know!"
"Have you looked in your pocket?"
"Found them!"

① Imagine your teacher gets married. She is now Mrs Jones, but you keep calling her by her old name, Miss Smith. This is called:
PROACTIVE INTERFERENCE → where other memories get in the way of recall.
as an old memory is coming forward to confuse a new one.
↓
important when people are expected to remember multiple [illegible] of information

INTERFERENCE

② Sadly your teacher's marriage doesn't last. She is now Miss Smith again, but you keep calling her Mrs Jones. This is called:
RETROACTIVE INTERFERENCE
as the new memory is going back and confusing an old memory.

FORGETTING

When you go to your room to get something, forget, and have to return to the kitchen to remember!

FACTORS AFFECTING EYEWITNESS TESTIMONY

LEADING QUESTIONS

Loftus & Palmer (1974)
45 participants watched 7 traffic accident films and were asked about the speed of the cars. The verb in the critical question ('hit', 'smashed' 'collided', 'bumped', 'contacted') was varied. Results found speed estimates changed depending on the verb.
→ 'smashed' = highest speed (40.5 mp
→ 'contacted' = lowest speed (31.8 mph

Evaluation
✓ High degree of control
X Student sample - lacks generalisability
X Response bias

DEFFENBACHER ET AL (2004)

→ meta-analysis of 21 other studies.
↳ came up with Yerkes-Dodson Law

Anxiety

Evaluation
✓ Large sample
X Tricky to establish cause & effect
X Poor reliability across so many studies

LOFTUS ET AL (1987)

WEAPON-FOCUS EFFECT
↳ participants in waiting room hear raised voices in next room, then man enters with:
a) a pen & grease
b) a knife
→ [illegible] pen
→ 3 [illegible] with knife
[illegible] people's focus is on the weapon

Evaluation
✓ High ecological validity (real anxiety)
X Use of photos to identify the man.

RETRIEVAL FAILURE (ABSENCE of CUES)

TULVING & THOMPSON (1973)
found we often forget if the context of retrieval is different to the context at encoding.
SPECIFICITY PRINCIPLE

Difference could
CONTEXT-DEP
eg language
vs retrieval
Could be INTER
STATE-DEPEN

POST-EVENT DISCUSSION

Paterson et al. (2009)
Co-witnesses can distort each other's memories by sharing information, reducing the accuracy of the EWT due to transference.

THE USE OF THE COGNITIVE INTERVIEW

Based on the encoding-specificity principle (idea that context is crucial for memory),
Geiselman et al. (1985) developed the 4 key components
1. Reinstate the context (eg. imagine the event in detail)
2. Encourage the interviewee to report everything, relevant or
3. Change the order of the event (e.g. recall the event
4. Use different perspectives (e.g. visit the same event
→ Memon et al (2010) meta-analysis found th
provided a greater number of correct details

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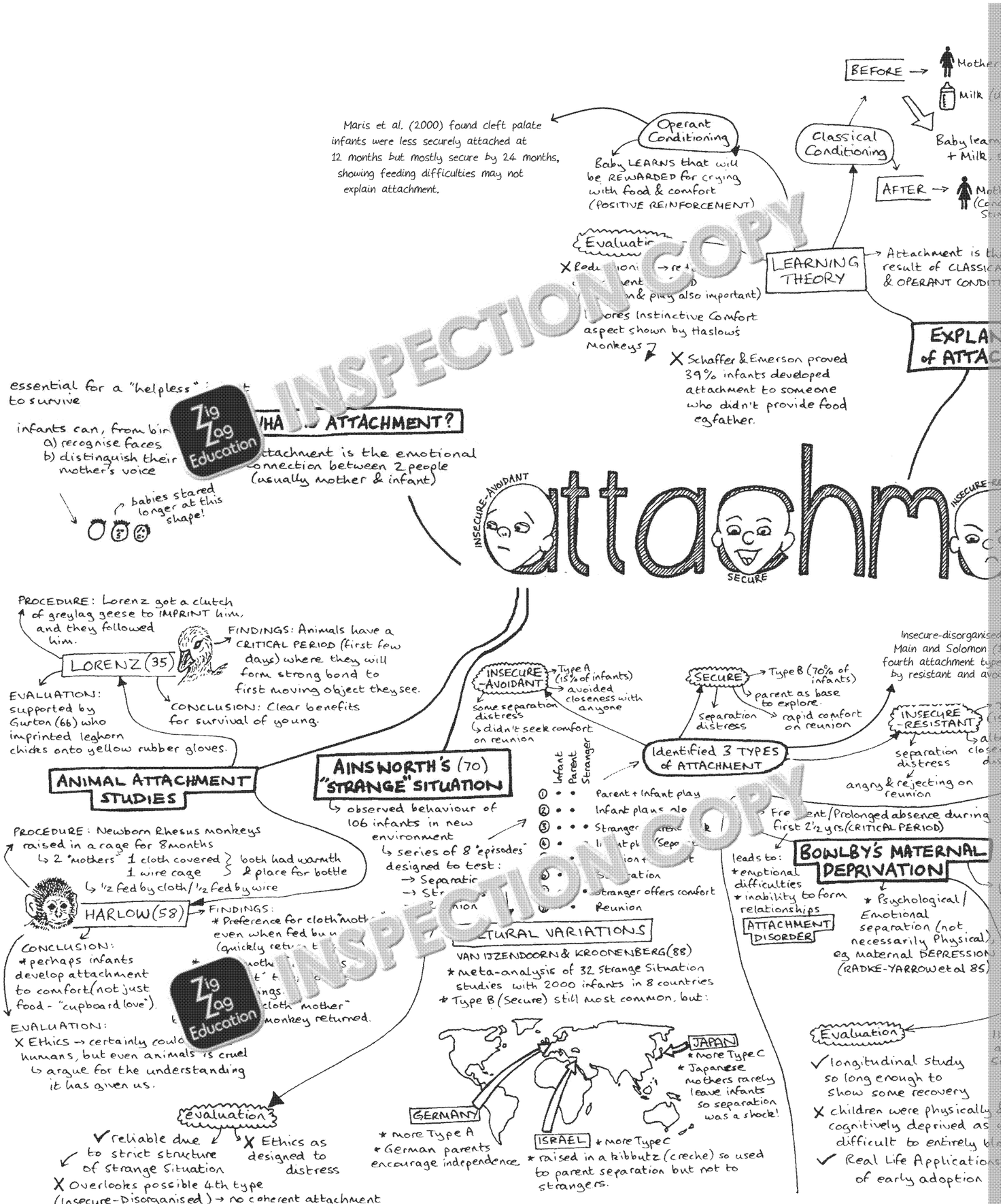

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DEFINITIONS & TREATMENTS IN THE FIELD OF MENTAL HEALTH

① DEVIATION FROM IDEAL MENTAL HEALTH

JAHODA (1958)

↳ a healthy personality would have most of these, so anyone lacking too many is ABNORMAL.

1. POSITIVE ATTITUDE TOWARDS SELF eg self-respect/self-confidence
2. SELF-ACTUALISATION OF ONE'S POTENTIAL → strive to reach potential
3. RESISTANCE TO STRESS
4. PERSONAL AUTONOMY ↳ cope without support
5. ACCURATE PERCEPTION OF REALITY → not overly positive OR negative
6. ADAPTING TO ENVIRONMENT

Evaluation
- X Difficult to reach potential
- X Benefits of stress, eg actors
- X Culturally bound.

② DEVIATION TO SOCIAL/CULTURAL NORMS

↳ Society has EXPLICIT (written) & IMPLICIT rules, and to break these is ABNORMAL

eg: → sitting beside H... only passenger ... empty ... is
→ schizophrenia
Chearing
→ OCD
→ Antisocial Personality Disorder →

Evaluation
- X Benefits of breaking norms, eg Suffragettes
- X Bound by Culture
- X Subjective
- X Excessive conformity is Abnormal

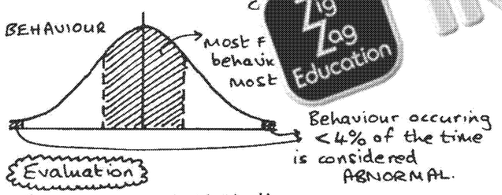
③ FAILURE TO FUNCTION ADEQUATELY

ZIMBARDO (1995) → the more of these displayed, the more abnormal.

1. DYSFUNCTIONAL BEHAVIOUR ↳ interferes with normal life (eg. Alcoholism)
2. PERSONAL DISTRESS/DISCOMFORT ↳ eg depression
3. OBSERVER DISCOMFORT ↳ behaviour that upsets/distresses others
4. UNPREDICTABLE BEHAVIOUR ↳ behaviour that doesn't fit the context, eg crying at a funny film
5. IRRATIONAL BEHAVIOUR ↳ behaviour that doesn't fit any context

Evaluation
- X Sometimes no distress (eg psychopaths)
- X Distress is subjective
- X Irrational behaviour can be good (eg great scientists)

④ STATISTICAL INFREQUENCY → the more infrequent a behaviour is, the more abnormal it is



Evaluation
- ✓ Objective as statistically measureable
- X Culturally bound as normality defined by society
- X Doesn't distinguish desirable abnormal behaviour

TREATMENTS

"SD"

SYSTEMATIC DESENSITISATION
↳ start by teaching relaxation techniques, eg → breathing exercises → visualisations → muscle relaxation

Then either → DESENSITISATION HIERARCHY OR → FLOODING

DESENSITISATION HIERARCHY
a) pics/... of cl...
b) non-contact introduction (through window)
c) distance contact (from doorway)
d) in personal ...
e) phuri...
↓ ... each stage move on
→ learn COUNTER-CONDITIONING (new relaxed response)

FLOODING
one long session (2-3hrs) where exposed t... worst fea... eg roc... fu... of cl...ins' fea...ides

Evaluation
- ✓ McGrath et al (90) found 75% people respond to SD.
- X Ohman et al (75) found it more effective for treating learned phobias than survival ones.
- ✓ Choy et al (07) found Flooding more effective than hierarchy
- X Doesn't work for everyone, and quitting during process may reinforce fear

EXPLANATIONS

LITTLE ALBERT
Watson & Rayner (20)

BEFORE → RAT (neutral stimulus) + LOUD NOISE (uncondition... stimulus)

Experimenters then paired the rat and the loud noise, so that:

AFTER → RAT (conditioned ...ulus) = FEAR (conditione... respons...

BEHAV...AL APPROACH

✓ Bandura & Rosenthal ... proved social learnin... creating a fear of a bu... after observation of a ... pain response to the ...

PHOBIAS

→ fearful anxiety out of ... with the actual danger ... eg arachnophobia ... pogonophobia ...

CHARACTERISTICS:
- BEHAVIOURAL → fight/fli... ↳ avoidance ↳ disrupts ...
- COGNITIVE → inability to reason ↳ recognition of irrationality
- EMOTIONAL → excessive fear/panic ↳ inability to concentrate.

CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY & MENTAL HEALTH

DEPRESSION

a prolonged & severe mood disorder (as opposed to a temporary period of feeling "a bit down").

CHARACTERISTICS:
- BEHAVIOURAL ↳ reduced activ... ↳ sleep problem...
- COGNITIVE → irra... negative view of the...
- EMOTIONAL → sadness ↳ loss of interest

BECK'S NEGATIVE TRIAD

Negative schemas often start in childhood and are triggered/reactivated by negative life events → lead to BIASES/COGNITIVE DISTORTIONS

- * MINIMISATION ↳ eg "I was lucky in tha...
- * MAGNIFICATION ↳ couldn't ... t... try sud... be s...

COGNITIVE APPROACH

...CTIVATING EVENT (eg get fired)
↓
BELIEF (often IRRATIONAL, eg they've always hated me)
↓
CONSEQUENCE (usually unhealth emotion, eg depression)

...our BELIEFS about life's events that governs us (rather than the events themselves).

MUSTURBATORY THINKING

If we have this philosophy, small failings in these can lead to DEPRESSION
1. I MUST do well & win approval
2. Others MUST treat me kindly
3. Life MUST be easy

EXPLANATIONS / TREATMENTS

Evaluation
- ✓ Irrational thinking argument backed up by Krantz (76) → depressed people make more logic errors when interpreting writing
- Blames the person not the situation
- ✓ Great practical applications for therapy
- ✓ Good for feeling in control
- X Bad as ignores context of disorder

Robinson (90) found CBT more effective than no treatment in review of 57 studies

Evaluat...

Kuyken & Tsivrikos ... found 15% of outc... variation was due t... therapist competenc...

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APPROACHES IN PSYCHOLOGY

BIOLOGICAL APPROACH

Based on early discovery by Broca that speech was controlled by specific part of brain (1861).
Case of Tan, who lost power of speech due to damage to one part of brain.

Our behaviour is controlled by our BIOLOGY → firmly at the NATURE end of NATURE-NURTURE DEBATE!

✓ Has led to successful drug therapy for disorders such as depression & schizophrenia

Evaluation
- ✓ The recent move to scientific methods (eg brain scans) is more reliable than early case study techniques
- X Reductionist as ignores environmental factors → if behaviour was entirely biology, Monozygotic Twins would have 100% concordance.
- X Cultural traditions passed down generations could explain "evolutionary explanations".

BIOLOGICAL STRUCTURE
→ certain areas of brain do different things:
- PARIETAL LOBES → sensory
- OCCIPITAL LOBES → visual
- FRONTAL LOBES → thought & speech
- TEMPORAL LOBES → memory

based on various studies
- eg Taxi drivers have larger hippocampus (memory) as have to learn 25,000 London streets (Woollett & Maguire (11)).
- Phineas Gage (railroad worker) whose temperament changed after explosion drove steel bar through brain.

GENES
has allowed comparison between healthy brains and brain damage, which can tell us a lot about the healthy brain.

COGNITIVE NEUROSCIENCE
use of Positron Emission Tomography (PET) or functional Magnetic Resonance
- GENOTYPE is the embedded structure of our genes eg a car when comes out of factory
- PHENOTYPE is the struc… behaviou… al or… d with … car …
- …ras o… …ed to do a task (eg memory test) to see different areas working.

NEUROCHEMISTRY
nerve endings in the brain release neurotransmitters to pass nerve impulses across synapses in brain.
neuron → synapse (gap) → neuron
Dop… neur… trans… dopam… …eeds up …increases …rush"
SERO… is an INHIBITORY neurotransmitter that slows transmission eg low levels found in aggressive people. → Crockett et al (08)

EVOLUTION & BEHAVIOUR
Natural Selection "survival of the fittest" states that any traits that make a creature more likely to survive (eg run fast) will be passed on, as that creature will be around to mate & pass on genes.
eg women with a 0.7 waist : hip ratio are more successful in carrying a child, therefore that trait is passed on to their children → consequently men find 0.7 ratio attractive as it ensures survival of their genes.

This is due to the fact this is a qualitative approach (lacks scientific methods) and ignores the role of the environment, such as culture.

X There is no way to test much of this approach, though humanists would argue that was the point

Evaluation
- ✓ Highly influential in modern counselling
- ✓ Accepts that change is possible, and that responsibility lies with the self
- X Culturally invalid as based on individualist society (self-actualis… not importa…

COGNITIVE APPROACH

INFERENCE → since we can't directly measure INTERNAL MENTAL PROCESSES, we set up experiments that allow us to INFER (work out) what is happening based on a certain response.

Based on the realisation that simple Stimulus → Response experiments weren't good enough to understand the bit in between (the Cognitive Processes).
- → ATTENTION
- → PERCEPTION
- → MEMO…
- ✓ Ver… …ed on …ft methods … reliable
- X Computers don't have biases or forget things, unlike humans.
- CBT i… of … therapies … depression/ anxiety

Evaluation
- X Ignores Motivation & Emotions → too much focus on HOW things happen and not WHY.

SCHEMAS
packages of information about objects/people/jobs that allow us to "fill in the gaps" when interpreting the world.
essential to allow us to filter useful information, BUT can lead to stereotyping as we make assumptions based on our schemas.
eg schema for a cow: * 4 legs * bla…

THE USE OF MODELS
Simple diag… internal m…
models allow us to make predictions that can be tested → these lead to adaptation of the model eg
- CENTRAL EXEC
- EPISODIC BUFFER
- PHONO LOOP
- VISUAL-SPATIAL SCRATCHPAD
- added 2 bcurs after original model designed. → S…

LEARNING (BEHAVIOURAL) APPROACHES

Rejected INTROSPECTION as too VAGUE → set out to TEST behaviours

SOCIAL LEARNING THEORY - BANDURA (61)
- IMITATION: behaviour is copied far quicker than could be learnt through conditioning
- IDENTIFICATION: must feel connection (eg same sex) to model and believe will get same response to behaviour (important when designing adverts or health campaigns)
- VICARIOUS REINFORCEMENT: don't need reward or punishment themselves, it is enough to watch the model be rewarded.
- MEDIATIONAL PROCESSES: In order to learn, child must:
  a) pay attention to model
  b) retain the behaviour (remember it!)
  c) be physically capable of replicating behaviour
  d) Motivated to replicate

Children observed an attack by an adult on a BOBO DOLL (5ft inflatable doll).
- When placed in room with many toys, children who had witnessed attack were more aggressive towards BOBO.
- → very specific movements (eg hitting with mallet) and speech (eg "POW!") were imitated

Evaluation
- ✓ Application eg Ahrens (98) found link between criminal behaviour and seeing others & potential rewards for crime
- X Ignores other influences on behaviour (eg genetic factors) → cause & effect?

OPERANT CONDITIONING - SKINNER (53)
Behaviour is learnt through rewards & punishment (consequences of behaviour)
- Skinner put a rat in a SKINNER BOX (basic box with lever, food dispenser).
- RAT learns to press lever for FOOD (POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT → behaviour leads to increase in something good).
- Also works with NEGATIVE REINFORCEMENT if pressing lever stops someth… bad (loud noise).
- …can also be unlearned …ED) if food stops …ean
- → Far h… …er to EXTINGUISH if food only ever appears on every 3rd/10th press.

Evaluation
- ✓ Skinner Box is highly controlled (not extraneous).
- X Humans have free … unlike animals (… Skinner … appear … actuali… …ll a … …st reso… …nvir…

BEHAVIOURIST
CLA… CONDI… - PAV…
- An asso… 2 things … leads to …
- Pavlov see… test this, … to food:
- BEFORE: DOG → FOOD (UNCOND… STIMULUS)
- DURING: FOOD (NEUTRA…
- AFTER: BELL (CONDITIO… STIMULUS)
- experiment … time as Watson
- Evalua…
- ✓ Very applicable to therapy, eg … relearn respons… to phobias (rel…

HUMANISTIC APPROACH

Carl ROGERS

Abraham MASLOW
HIERARCHY OF NEEDS
can't access a level if anything below isn't met.
- Self Actualisation → reach our full … pursuit of … meaningful, …ative or enjoyable
- Esteem → feeling good about oneself.
- Love & Belonging
- Safety (physical & psychological)
- Physiological needs → survival (food, water, sleep)

based on treating us as individuals, and analysing the whole person rather than one aspect
→ deliberately unscientific as humans are SUBJECTIVE in their thought/behaviour

FREE WILL → humanists believe we have choice in our actions, and control of our destiny
→ sometimes restricted in our options, but still get to choose.

THIS WAY / THAT WAY

self-concept → how we perceive ourselves
ideal self → how we would like to be.

an individual will experience CONGRUENCE if these two are close together.
→ most people experience some INCONGRUENCE, but too much can be psychologically harmful.

Our feelings of self-worth are based on CONDITIONS OF WORTH that others impose on us, eg a child only being accepted fully if they demonstrate sporting ability

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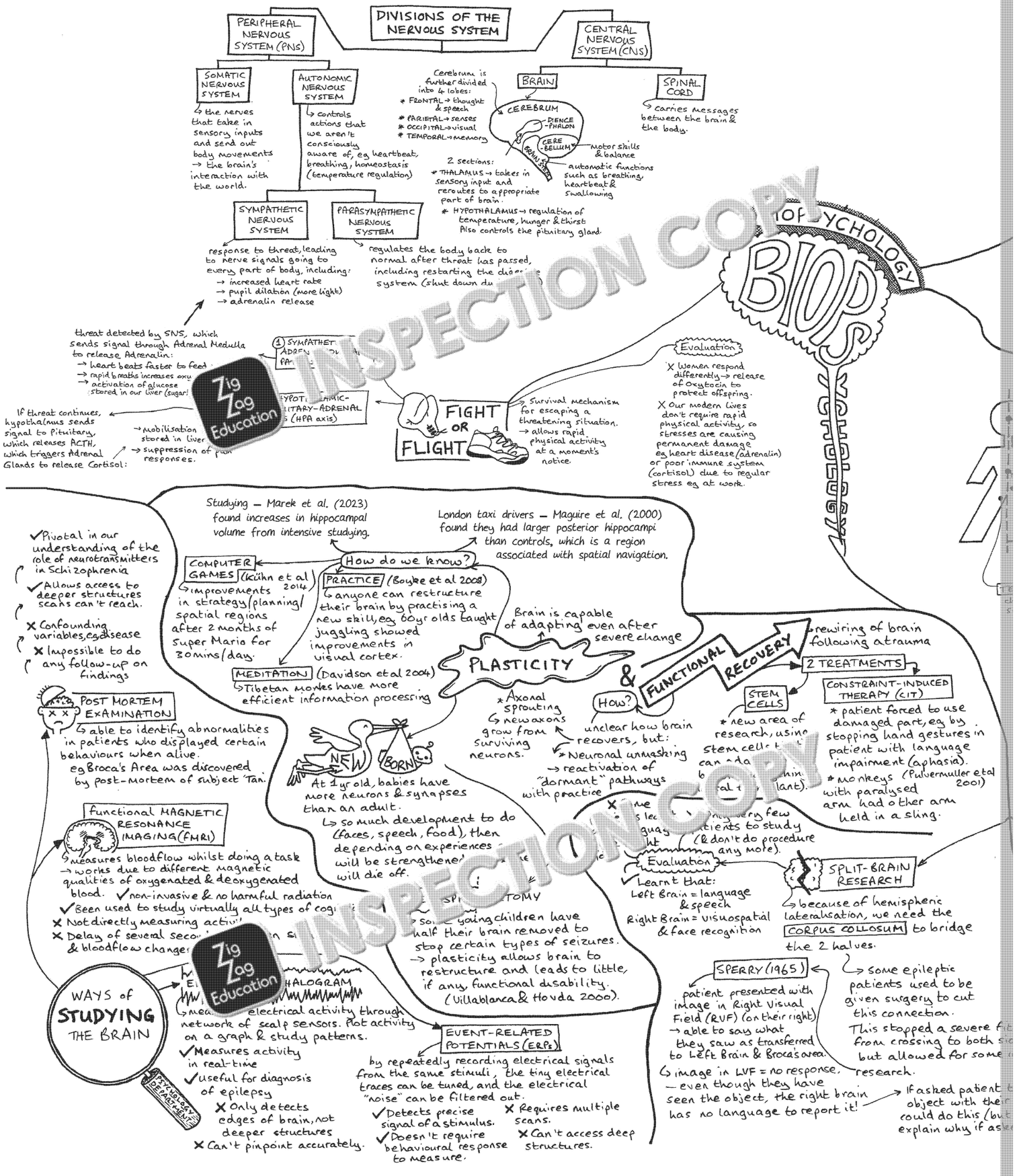

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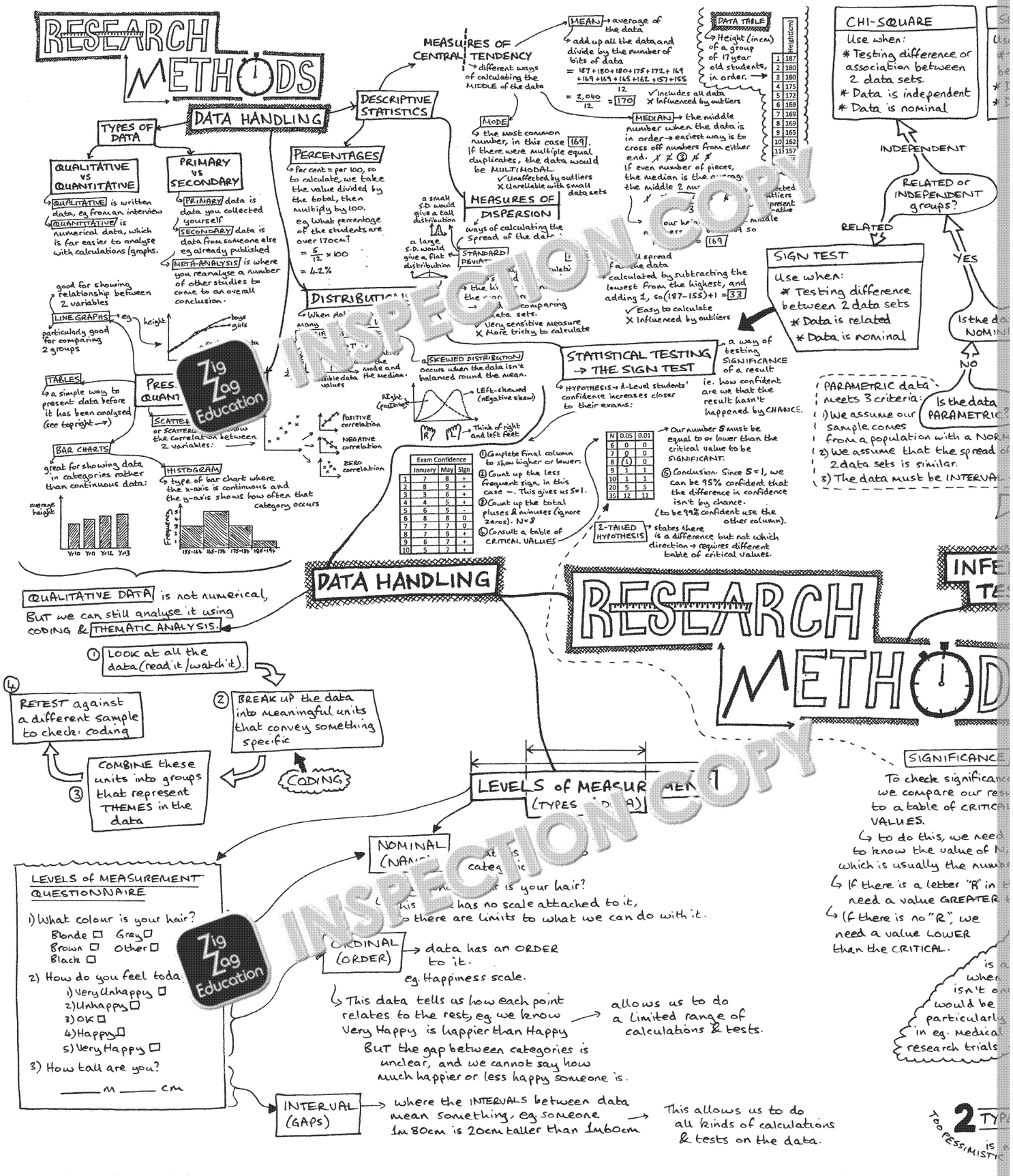

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RESEARCH METHODS

EXPERIMENTS

FIELD EXPERIMENT → outside the lab, where the experimenter still manipulates a variable, but participants may not be aware of study
- ✓ More realistic with some control
- X Ethics of participants lack of awareness

LAB EXPERIMENT → highly controlled environment, where participants know they are being studied
- ✓ High Control
- X Poor Ecological Validity/Realism

NATURAL EXPERIMENT → experimenter observes a "naturally-occuring" change eg introduction of TV to a remote island.
- ✓ Good for studying things that can't be practically manipulated
- X Cause & Effect?
- ✓ often good ecological validity

QUASI-EXPERIMENT → measure naturally-occuring difference between groups eg genders.

DESIGNS
3 ways to compare the Control Group with the Experimental Group (manipulated)

INDEPENDENT GROUPS → 2 completely separate groups are used for 2 conditions
- ✓ Few demand characteristics
- X Extraneous variables
- X Requires many participants

REPEATED MEASURES → same participants are used for both conditions
- ✓ No variables between participants
- X Order effects & demand characteristics

MATCHED PAIRS → participants are paired as closely as possible then split between groups.
- ✓ Controls variation
- X Matching is tricky

SAMPLING

RANDOM → No investigator bias
- X Still a chance won't be representative

SYSTEMATIC → take every nth person eg every 10th.

STRATIFIED → certain division within population are replicated in sample eg gender split.

OPPORTUNITY → who we can find

VOLUNTEER → self-select

POPULATION → SAMPLE → Need to choose a REPRESENTATIVE sample from the TARGET POPULATION

Bias is very likely

AIMS & HYPOTHESES

AIM → general statement about what is being tested/studied, eg "The effect of absence on A Level Grades."

HYPOTHESIS → based on the aim, a specific and testable statement (not a question), eg "School absence affects A Level grades"

DIRECTIONAL HYPOTHESIS → states the direction of the relationship eg "School absence reduces A Level Grades"

NON-DIRECTIONAL → just states that there is a relationship.

PILOT STUDIES
→ a small-scale trial run of experiment → allows any problems (eg unclear questions or demand characteristics) to be observed, and hopefully corrected before real study undertaken.

VARIABLES

EXTRANEOUS VARIABLES → random differences between participants that MAY impact on the DV.

CONFOUNDING VARIABLES must be CONTROLLED to ensure we are testing what we had planned to test.

OPERATIONALISE → to make something testable eg "ideas" rather

INDEPENDENT VARIABLE (IV) → measuring the

DEPENDENT VARIABLE (DV)

If the experiment is well designed, we can argue that changes to the IV caused the changes in the DV.

CONTROL

RANDOM ALLOCATION → randomly assigning participants to groups to avoid participant variable error.

RANDOMISATION → participants are given different experimental conditions in a random order, to avoid order effects.

COUNTERBALANCING → ensuring the order of the conditions is balanced eg one half do A then B, others do B then A. → avoids order effects

DEMAND CHARACTERISTICS → the participant may get clues that help them guess the purpose of experiment
- answers may then become artificial.

ETHICS

INFORMED CONSENT → participants must be told what will happen & must agree → can cause problems as don't want to tell them everything

DECEPTION → must not withhold information → can lead to demand characteristics if tell them everything!

RIGHT TO WITHDRAW → participants must be allowed to leave at any time.

PROTECTION FROM HARM → experiment must cause no physical or psychological damage.

CONFIDENTIALITY → publication must make participants anonymous (legal right).

Psychologists must balance Ethics with Effectiveness of Research.

BRITISH PSYCHOLOGICAL SOCIETY
① RESPECT
② CONFIDENTIALITY
③ RESPONSIBILITY
④ INTEGRITY

PEER REVIEW

PEER REVIEW is the QUALITY-CONTROL mechanism of scientific research.
- → research is submitted to be published in a journal (scientific magazine) and is first reviewed by experts
- → returned with comments:
  - publish
  - reject
  - revise before publication

reviews are also used to:
- → decide on funding (eg the Medical Research Council)
- → rate university departments on research

Potential Problems
- → Publication bias
- → Anonymity
- → Finding

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE ECONOMY

SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS → Psychology is in making social
- → 40% of incapacity depression research & could have implications

research into reducing crime, drugs or violence could make a big economic change.

TECHNIQUES

NATURALISTIC VS CONTROLLED → either completely natural or some variables can be manipulated

OVERT VS COVERT → usually participants are aware of observation

PARTICIPANT/NON-PARTICIPANT

TECHNIQUES in lead

Evaluation

	High Control	Natural	Ethical	Detailed	Objective
Naturalistic/Controlled	X	✓	✓		
Overt	✓	X	✓		
Covert	✓	✓	X		
Participant	✓	✓	✓		
Non-partic.	X	✓	X		

OBSERVATIONS

EVENT SAMPLING → create a simple tally of how many times behaviour occurs.

OR

TIME SAMPLING → observations are taken at predetermined intervals eg. every 30 seconds. → allows order to be analysed.

DESIGNS / **BEHAVIOUR CATEGORIES** → decide beforehand what behaviour will be looked for eg aggression:
- → kicking
- → biting
- → shouting

etc etc. then code each behaviour for ease of recording

CORRELATIONS

CORRELATIONAL STUDY → a study that looks at the association between 2 co-variables

✓ Allow for study of variables we couldn't experiment on
X Needs a reasonable sample size
X Cannot establish cause & effect

POSITIVE CORRELATION → as one variable rises, so does the other eg age & height of high school pupils.

NEGATIVE CORRELATION → as one variable rises, the other falls eg school absence & A Level grades

SCATTERGRAMS → graph to show correlation: positive, negative

CORRELATION COEFFICIENT → a number that tells us how correlated the co-variables are:

-1 (perfect negative) — 0 (no correlation) — +1 (perfect positive)

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CORRELATIONS AND EXPERIMENTS
- → Correlations only show association → it requires understanding of the data and a good sample size to suggest that one change causes the other (CAUSATION)
- → Could be due to:

THIRD VARIABLE eg ice cream sales have a positive correlation with aggression, but heat is the likely cause of both.

CHANCE RELATIONSHIP → some variable correlate by chance. important sample size a significance your coefficient

SELF-REPORT

INTERVIEWS → can be STRUCTURED, like a verbal questionnaire with predetermined qs. or UNSTRUCTURED, following themes but guided by the conversation

Large volume of qualitative data
X Depends on skill of interviewer, and open to bias

DESIGN OF INTERVIEWS
① FACTUAL questions at start as more likely to get detail when interviewee has relaxed
② PRACTICE & TRAINING is required to become a good interviewer

DESIGN

QUESTIONNAIRE CONSTRUCTION
① CLARITY is essential to get accuracy eg avoiding not using questions that don't contain double-negatives!
② BIAS should be avoided, so try to avoid questions people feel pressure to answer in a certain way.
③ FILLER QUESTIONS are used to distract from the true purpose of the study. (avoid demand characteristics)
④ SEQUENCE → better to start easy to avoid people giving up.

OPEN QUESTIONS → allow respondant to write freely about opinion eg "how could your revision be improved?"
- ✓ Allows for flexibility & detail.
- X Time consuming to answer & analyse

CLOSED QUESTIONS → must choose from fixed responses eg yes/no or multiple choice eg "how many hours revision do you do per day? 0-2/2-4/5-6"
- ✓ Great for analysis
- ✓ Minimum effort to answer
- X Frustrating if your answer is not

TECHNIQUES

QUESTIONNAIRES → list of predetermined questions given to large number of participants
- ✓ Large sample relatively easily
- X Response rates typically low if posted or e-mailed

CASE STUDIES

usually over a long period of time (longitudinal).
→ often used where something unusual has occured, eg case of "Tan" by Broca.
- ✓ Can be very detailed
- ✓ Good for studying rare occurences, or ones you couldn't ethically replicate
- X Not replicable
- X Can be difficult to remain objective.
- X Poor Population Validity due to small sample.

CODING SYSTEMS

① AIM/HYPOTHESIS → start by deciding what is being studied, eg Men look for beauty & women look for money.

② CHOOSE SAMPLE → decide which media, eg Lonely Hearts columns from 4 US newspapers between Feb & April 1994

③ CODING SYST… → …words?

④ TEST CODING → check reliability, perhaps with a different sample, and adjust if required.

⑤ ANALYSIS → interpret findings

CONTENT… not directly studying behaviour, the CONTENT of some form of MEDIA. → TV, Newspapers, Novels, Crime Reports

- ✓ Usually easy to access the media
- ✓ No direct contact needed with participants
- X Observer bias as requires interpretation
- X Describes rather than explains.

* Usually use multiple raters to improve reliability

There are certain sections all studies have.

REPORT… PSYCHOLOGICAL INVESTIGA…
→ once studies are complete, they are published, allowing psychologists to re…

① …of the findings
② INTRODU… → backg… of the st… how the… fits in…

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ISSUES & DEBATES IN PSYCHOLOGY

GENDER BIAS

ANDROCENTRISM
↳ Male bias, where much of Psychological research has been done on men, but has been presented as universal to both genders, eg. Milgram's research used only men, but the resulting findings were presented as universal.
↳ sometimes male behaviour is set as standard, and any female difference is viewed as "abnormal" or "sub-standard."

ALPHA BIAS
↳ overemphasises DIFFERENCE between the sexes (or cultures).
eg. Freud argued women have weaker moral codes
OR Sociobiological theory of mate selection where men want beauty & women want Money.

BETA BIAS
↳ overemphasises SIMILARITIES between the sexes (or cultures).
eg. the fight-or-flight response was presented as universal, but Harley (2012) found women were more likely to "tend and befriend"

UNIVERSALITY & BIAS

↳ the findings of some research can be globally applied.

↳ some findings are biased to a particular group/culture.

ETHNOCENTRISM
↳ the assumption that [illegible] seen in "norm"

IDIOGRAPHIST vs NOMOTHETIST
↳ "Western" culture is focussed on the goals & achievements of the individual.
"Non-western" are more concerned by group success.

Most research in Psychology has been done in "western" culture, therefore some doesn't work everywhere, eg. Relationships research into mate choice doesn't work in cultures with arranged marriage.

Tindle (2021) found that 96% of participants in published psychological studies were from WEIRD (Western, Educated, Industrialised, Rich and Democratic) societies.

CULTURE

CULTURAL RELATIVISM
↳ The belief that what is considered "right" or "wrong" is culturally specific, eg an Aboriginal man communicating with deceased relatives may appear perfectly normal, but in the UK this could be grounds for a diagnosis of Schizophrenia.

THERAPY

↳ based on the concept of being able to choose your behaviour and change

MOTIVATION

Maslow (1943) self-actualisation requires an ability to choose our path.

REFLECTION

↳ [illegible] look back [illegible] from our [illegible] behaviour

FREE WILL

↳ at the heart [illegible] means to be
↳ gives us choice

MORALS/RESPONSIBILITY

↳ no point in a system of Morals if we have no free will. Without free will, we have no responsibility for our actions

NATURE

Chomsky (1965) argued for an innate language acquisition device to explain how babies could develop something as complex as language

Piaget's (1952) developmental stages are thought to be innate as they must be in a fixed order.

EXAMPLES

GENES/HEREDITY
↳ how much do we INHERIT from our parents?

Schizophrenia appears to be at least partly genetic
→ Concordance rate for identical twins is 52% compared to non-identical at 12%

genes control a lot of our physical characteristics so why not also our behaviour?

Nature debate is inherently DETERMINISTIC

HOLISM

↳ argues that human behaviour is too complex to reduce down to one [illegible]
→ drawn to higher levels of explanation eg context/society
→ less scientific, more subjective & difficult to test/predict

LEVELS of EXPLANATION

MORE REDUCTIONIST

BIOLOGICAL → everything is explained by working of the brain.
EVOLUTIONARY → explained by adaptations
BEHAVIOURAL → learning processes
COGNITIVE → the way information is processed.
SOCIAL/ENVIRONMENTAL → impact of context/society/culture

BRITISH PSYCHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

↳ set out ethical guidelines for research.
→ Most research institutions have a panel of experts to decide whether research should be allowed.

INFORMED CONSENT
↳ should be told everything about study in advance, so can make an informed decision.

DECEPTION
↳ participants shouldn't be lied to unless absolutely necessary (more often than... Might think!!).

RIGHT TO WITHDRAW
↳ should be allowed to le[illegible] or remove their data at any t[illegible]

CONFIDENTIALITY & ANONYMIT[illegible]
↳ no data should be traceable to an individual.

DEBRIEFING
↳ Must be informed of full purpose, given chance to withdraw data, check for harm, answer questions.

PSYCHOLOGICAL HARM
↳ all reasonable steps must be taken to avoid physical or psychological harm.

SOCIALLY SENSITIVE RESEARCH

↳ any research with wider implications beyond the context of the research.

* Any sub-groups/religions/sexual orientations that have been portrayed in a negative light
→ could lead to discrimination.
* Areas such as dom[illegible] abuse or family [illegible] studied ve[illegible]

SOCIAL SENSITIVITY IN PSYCHOLOGICAL RESEARCH

[illegible] broke[illegible]

[illegible] deception [illegible] withdraw had [illegible] broken for the study to work, Milgram never expected such high obedience rates

DO THE ENDS JUSTIFY THE MEANS?
examples
YES! AND it was a beneficial study due to the knowledge gained

[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] an murdered [illegible] of >30 [illegible]nesses.

↳ LATANE & DARLEY (1968) created some experiments that replicated this experience, causing distress to many participants
BUT it was justified to try to explain what happened to Kitty.
↳ hearing someone have a seizure in a room full of smoke.

IDIOGRAPHIC RESEARCH

case studies
interviews
unstructured observations
all very qualitative

↳ Piaget used only small number of children (including his own) to investigate development stages.
↳ Gardner & Gardner (1969) studied language using a chimp called Washoe, to whom they taught American Sign Language.
↳ ✗ hard to generalise
↳ ✗ due to the close bond that will likely develop with the p[illegible] there is a risk of subject demand characteristics

✓ provides very detailed info on one individual
✓ often uncovers something than can lead to further study beyond that individual

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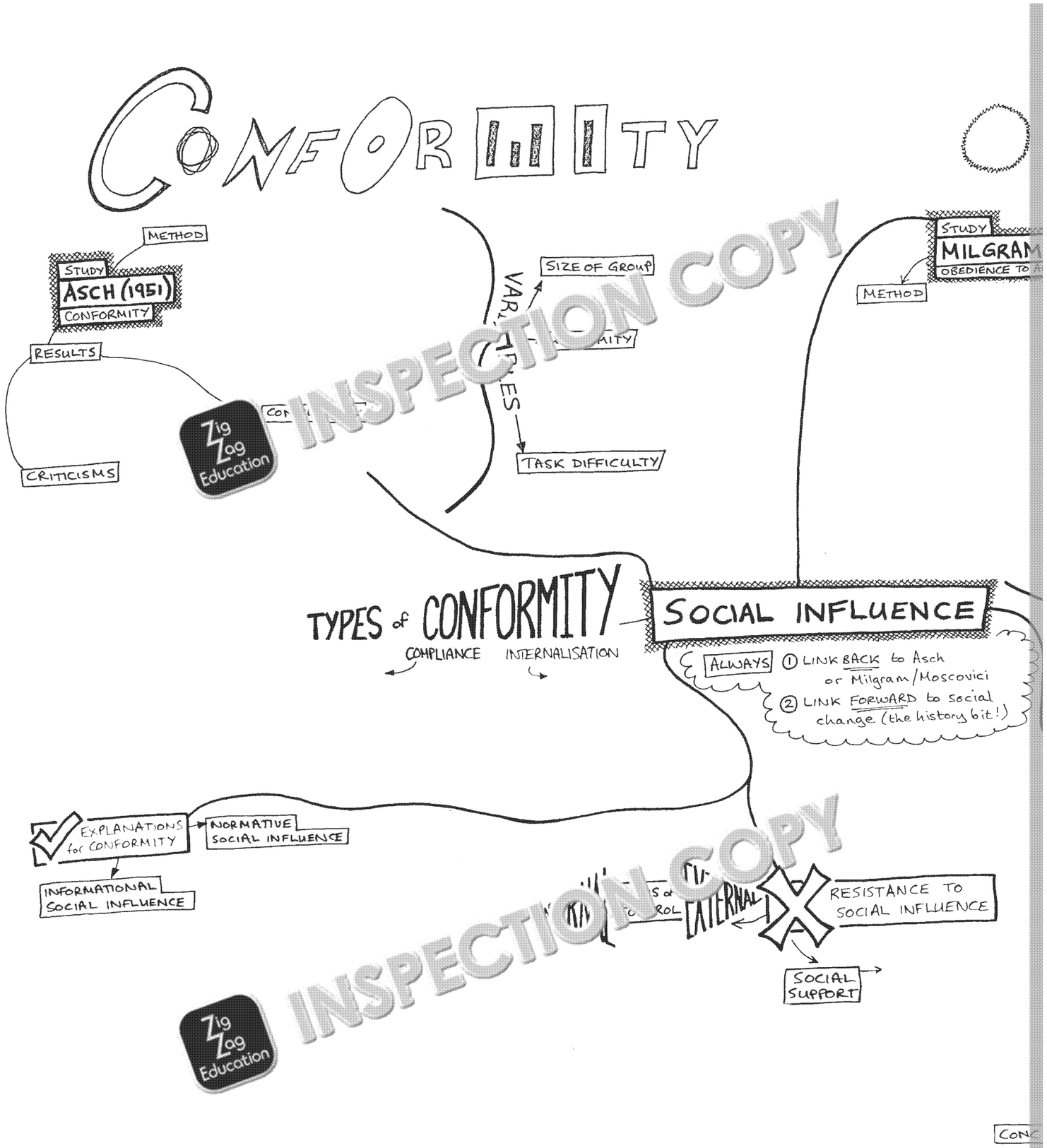

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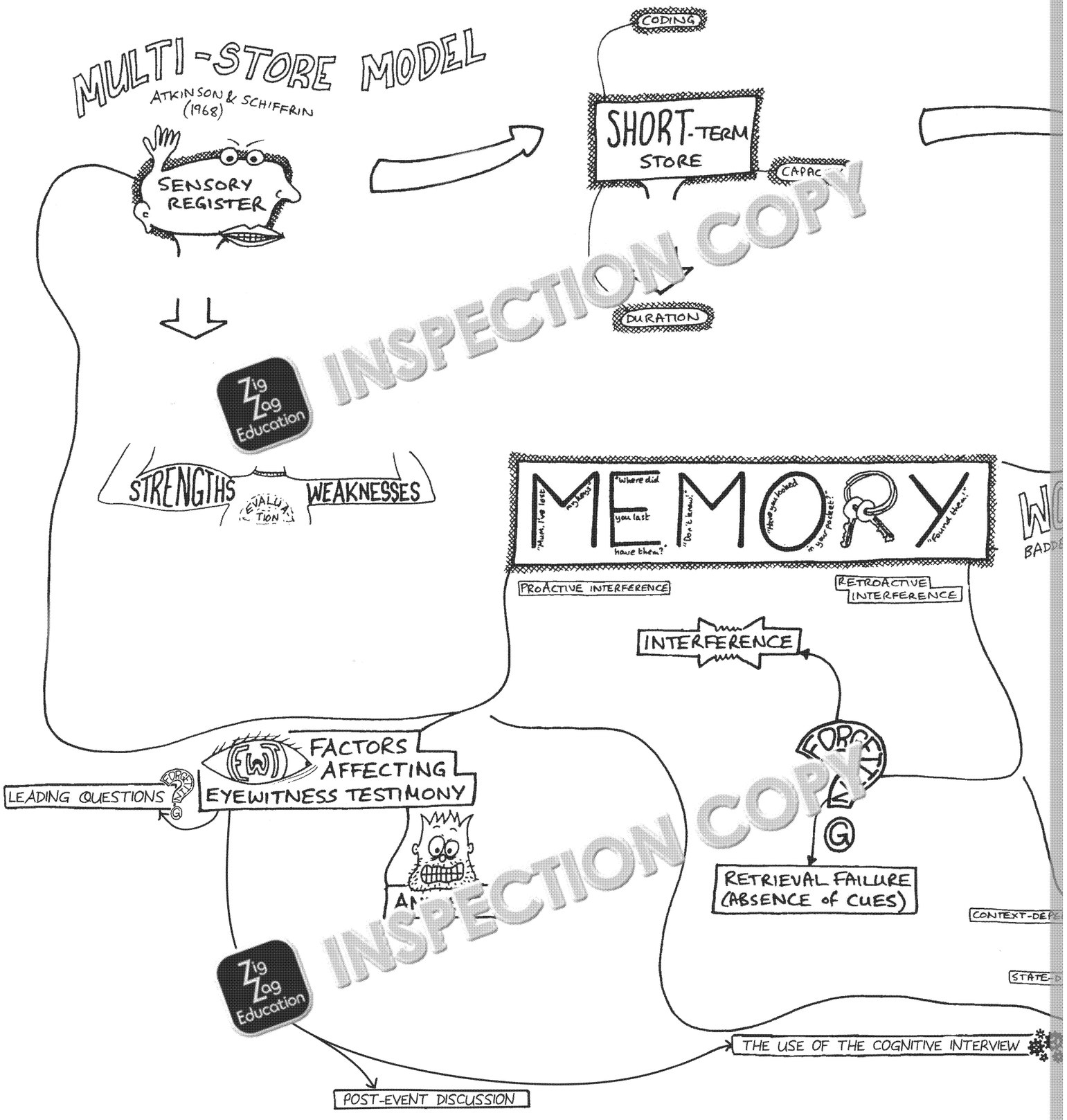

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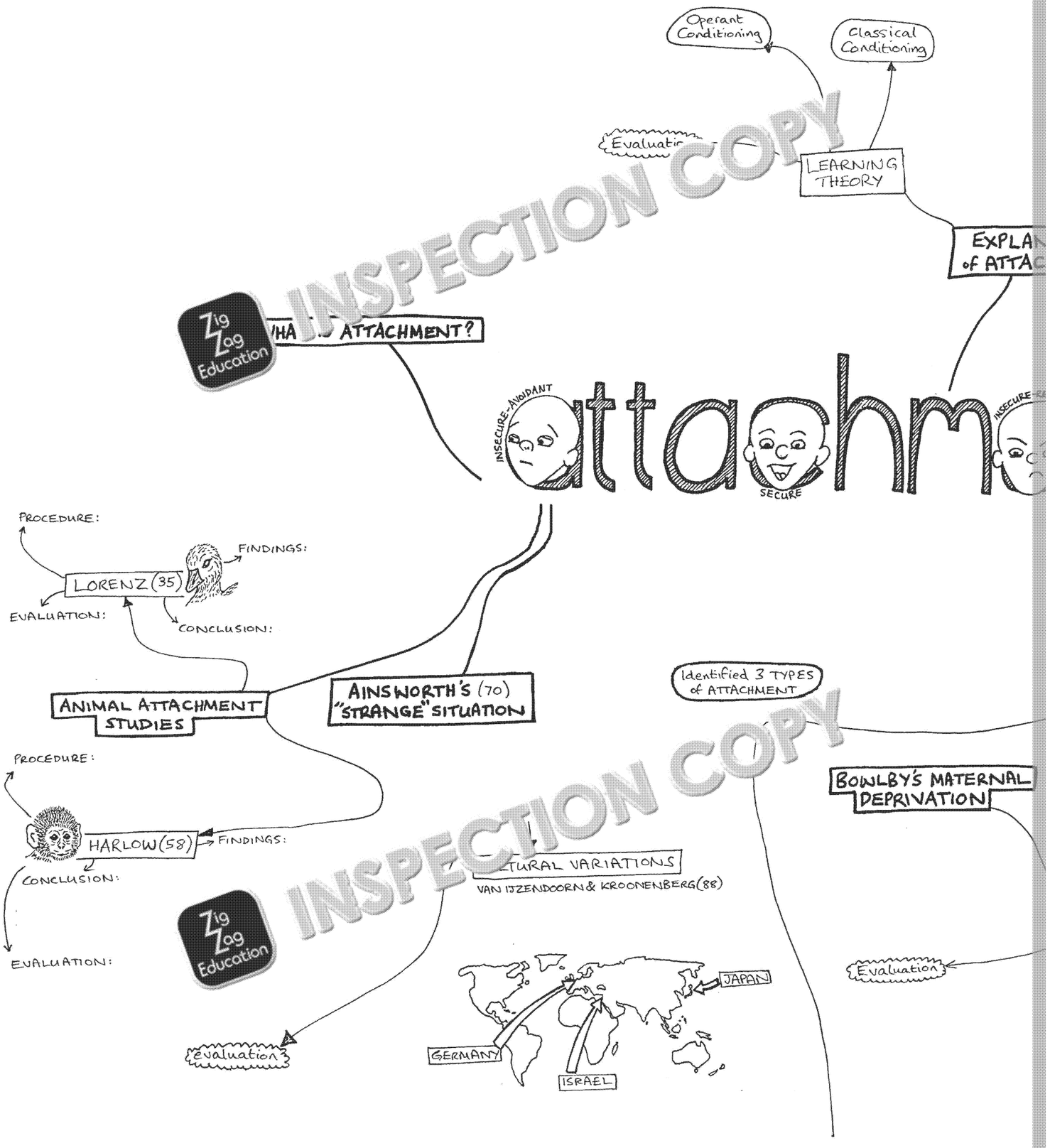

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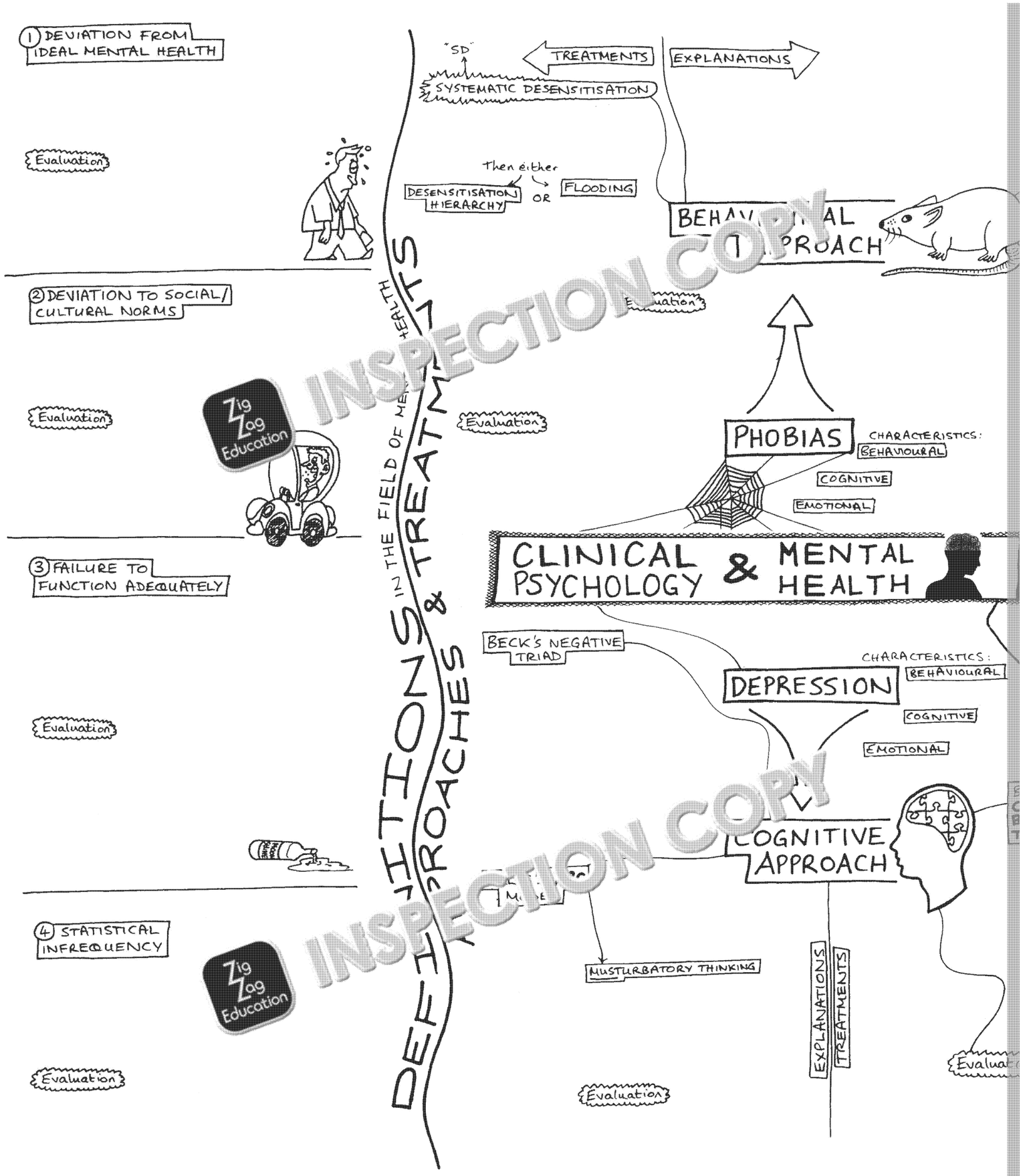

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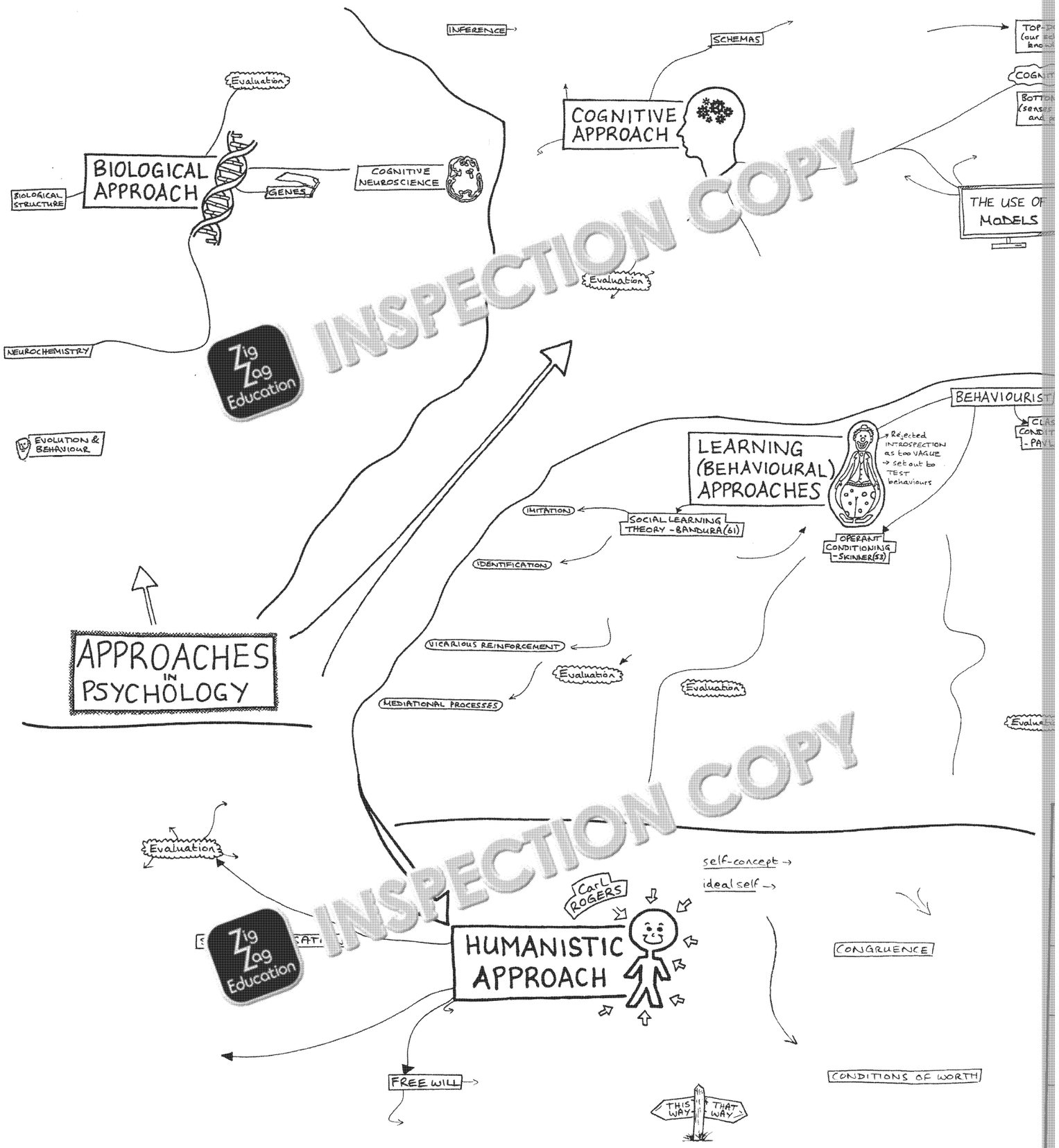

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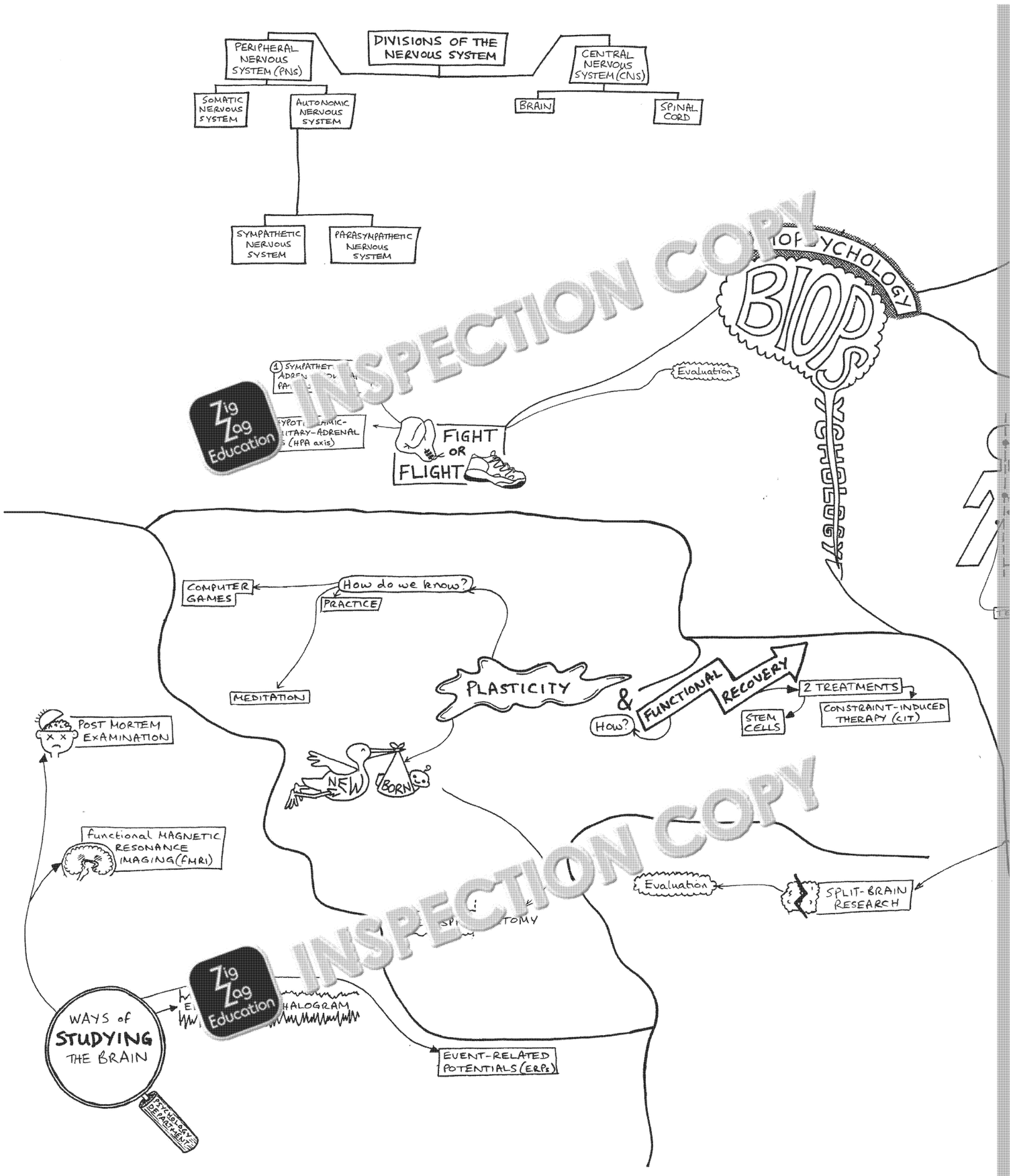

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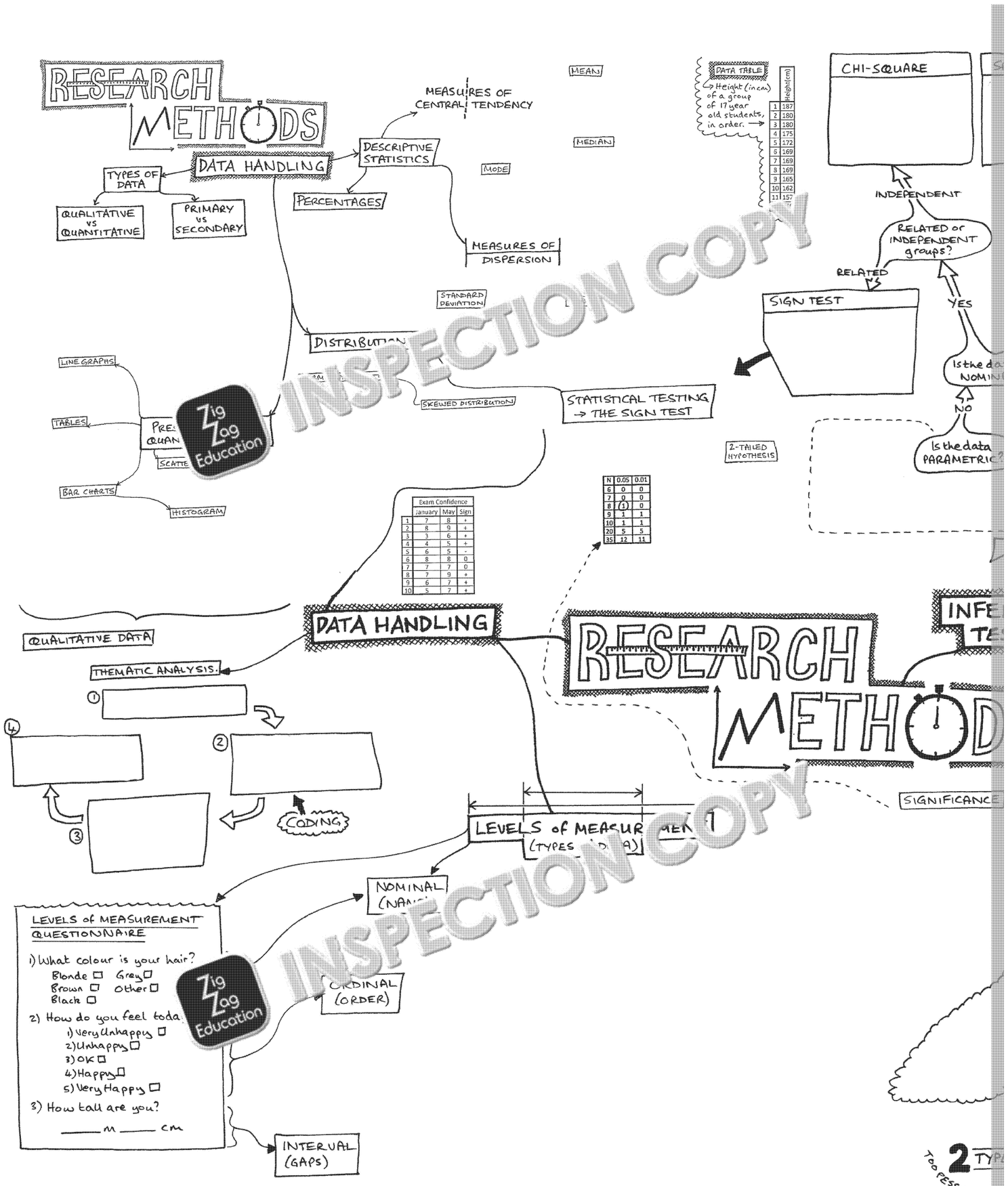

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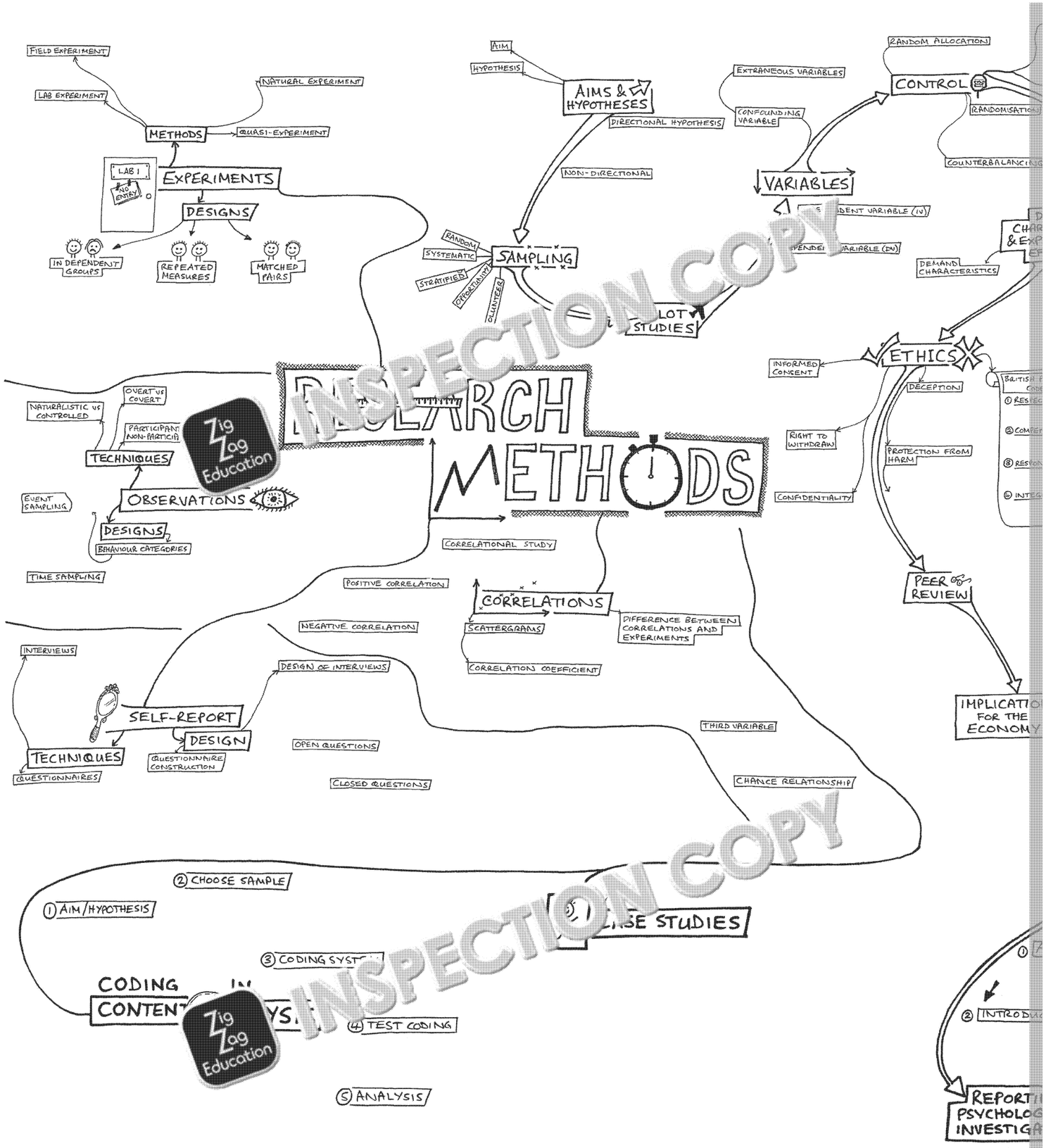

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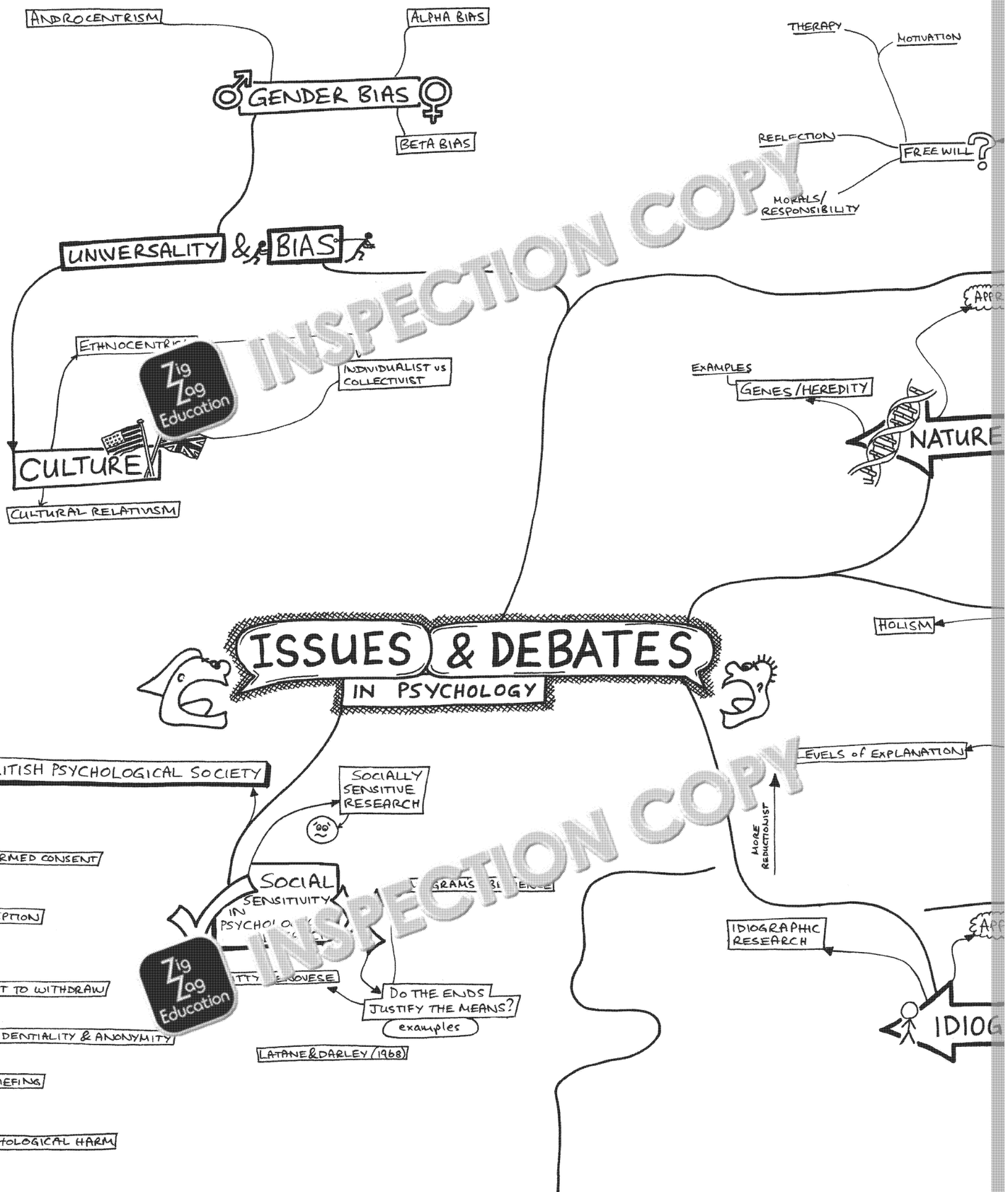

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