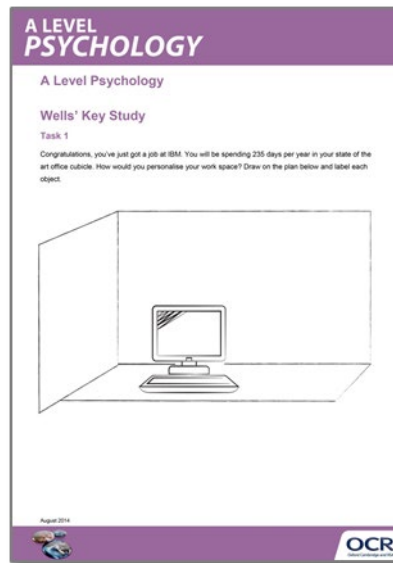# A LEVEL
PSYCHOLOGY

Lesson Element

Wells' Key Study

Instructions and answers for teachers

These instructions should accompany the OCR resource 'Wells' Key Study' activity *which supports OCR A Level Psychology.*

The Activity:

Aim: to introduce the major features of Wells' key study from Unit 3 Environmental Psychology 'Territory and personal space' topic (Wells, M. M., 2000. Office clutter or meaningful personal displays: The role of office personalization in employee and organisational wellbeing. Journal of Environmental Psychology, 20(3).)

Objectives: Learners should develop a good understanding of:

- the main features and terminology from Wells' key study.
- the key findings of Well's study.

Learners should have practised data analysis skills and literacy skills.

This activity offers an opportunity for English skills development.

This activity offers an opportunity for maths skills development.

Associated materials:

'Wells' Key Study' Lesson Element learner activity sheet.

Suggested timings:

Task 1: 15 minutes   **Task 2:** 15 minutes   **Task 3:** 15 minutes

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This is a good introductory activity for Well's key study and will cover many of the key concepts required. It should just be possible to complete the tasks in a one hour lesson but it is probably better to allow longer.

This lesson element is designed to introduce Wells' key study from the territory and personal space topic within environmental Psychology. The study investigated how office workers personalised their workspaces through self-report questionnaires and a smaller number of interviews with employees. They also investigated the different policies that businesses had towards personalisation of workspaces. This was to see how workspace personalisation impacts on the individual and the organisation that they belong to.

It is important to be knowledgeable about Well's study, its methodology, results and conclusion as they relate strongly to the task. It will also help if students ask for more detail about certain aspects of the research. As with all psychological research, the use of some terminology may lead to confusion so it is worth having a student glossary for students to complete for any confusing terms. (This also evidences development of literacy.) It may be worth having a summary of Well's research to hand out at the end of the lesson.

Task 1

Task 1 is a good starter activity and could be completed while the teacher attends to register etc. Give students about 10-15 minutes to complete this and encourage them to be creative (perhaps introduce a competitive element to the task.) Provide coloured pens etc. The teacher could use the best examples in a display.

Task 2

Task 2 is designed to introduce the key categories of workspace personalisation investigated by Wells and is a paired activity. Learners swap diagrams and record the number of items under each category on the provided handout. It may be useful to discuss with students the definitions for each category before they attempt the task. 10-15 minutes should be long enough to complete this.

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Task 3

Learners should assemble into larger groups (4-6) to then analyse patterns in the data. The key focus should be that of gender differences so hopefully there will be sufficient males within the class to allow this. Allow groups to feedback on any patterns they've found in the data.

Then bring in key findings from Well's study and see if they agree with the class results. For example, the study identifies a number of gender differences: females tend to have more personalisations overall than men; females display more personal relationship, trinket and plant displays; males have more sport or achievement displays. 10-15 minutes.

Tasks 4 and 5

Tasks 4 and 5 require the student to think about how this personalisation of a workspace could influence the employee and also the organisation. Again give the students time to think about each question and then select a few students to put forward their views. This could be opened up into a debate. Once more use this as an opportunity to bring in relevant findings or conclusions from Wells' study. For example, as the amount of personal items displayed on or around a desk increased, so did employee satisfaction with the work environment. The more employees were allowed to personalise, the more they were satisfied with the work environment. The more control that an employee had over the arrangement of their workspace, the more satisfaction they had with the work environment.

Satisfaction with the work environment was strongly correlated to job satisfaction. For organisational well-being, the companies that allowed more personalisation of work space reported a more positive work environment, a more positive social climate among employees, greater levels of worker morale and reduced staff turnover.

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