

Defining Issues Test (DIT-2)

The DIT is a device for activating moral schemas (to the extent that a person has developed them) and for assessing them in terms of importance judgments. Based on Kohlberg's theory of moral development, the subject's task is to read a moral dilemma, and rate and rank corresponding statements in terms of their moral importance.

As the subject encounters an item that both makes sense and also taps into the subject's preferred schema, that item is rated and ranked as highly important. Alternatively, when the subject encounters an item that either doesn't make sense or seems simplistic and unconvincing, the item receives a low rating and is passed over for the next item. The items of the DIT balance "bottom up" processing (stating just enough of a line of argument to activate a schema) with "top down" processing (not a full line of argument so that the subject has to "fill in" the meaning from schema already in the subject's head).

In the DIT we are interested in knowing which schemas the subject brings to the task (are already in the subject's head). Presumably those are the schemas that structure and guide the subject's thinking in decision-making beyond the test situation.

SOURCE:

<http://www.centerforthestudyofethicaldevelopment.net/Instruments,%20Services,%20and%20Materials.htm>