

教育·心理影印版系列教材

心理学批判思维^{影印版}

Critical Thinking in Psychology

A Unified Skills Approach

D. Alan Bensley

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(影印版)

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图书在版编目(CIP)数据

心理学批判思维 = Critical Thinking in Psychology/
(美) 本斯利 (Bensley, D. A.) 著. —影印本. 北京:
中国轻工业出版社, 2005.1
(教育·心理影印版系列教材)
ISBN 7-5019-4627-2

I . 心 ... II . 本 ... III . 心理学 - 教材 - 英文
IV . B84

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字 (2004) 第 108767 号

版权声明

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总策划: 石 铁
策划编辑: 张乃柬
责任编辑: 张乃柬 审读人: 潘 平 责任监读: 朱 玲
责任监印: 刘智颖

出版发行: 中国轻工业出版社 (北京东长安街 6 号, 邮编: 100740)

印 刷: 北京天竺颖华印刷厂

经 销: 各地新华书店

版 次: 2005 年 1 月第 1 版 2005 年 1 月第 1 次印刷

开 本: 787 × 1000 1/16 印张: 18.00

字 数: 300 千字

书 号: ISBN 7-5019-4627-2/B · 036 定价: 30.00 元

著作权合同登记 图字: 01-2004-6038

咨询电话: 010-65595090, 65262933

发行电话: 010-88390721, 88390722

网 址: <http://www.chlip.com.cn>

E-mail: club@chlip.com.cn

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内 容 简 介

- 从本质上讲，人类是自私的吗？
- 心理治疗师能够使人们回忆起他们遗忘了多年的性受虐经历吗？
- 月亮会使人们发疯或犯罪吗？
- 通过感觉，我们对世界到底能“知道”些什么？

以上只是本书回答的有趣问题中的一小部分。在这本教科书中，作者运用批判思维领域中的最新成果，指导学生以富于逻辑性、理性和批判性的方法，研究、思考和回答心理学问题。全书论述严谨，语言浅显，各章中的练习有助于培养学生成为更有效的思考者。

Preface

The Purpose of This Book

This book was written for students and instructors who are serious about the improvement of critical thinking. The specific purpose is to teach the component skills necessary for critical thinking in psychology. The emphasis is on how psychologists use critical thinking when engaging in professional activities involving scientific thinking: analyzing situations to determine causation, generating hypotheses, clinical decision making, and especially critical reading of literature reviews and critical writing. These thinking skills are taught together with coverage of important psychological concepts and fascinating psychological questions, such as whether our emotions make us irrational and whether people accurately remember previously unrecalled memories of sexual abuse.

The Theory Behind This Book

This book assumes that critical thinking in each discipline is a complex set of cognitive skills and dispositions, some of which are shared and many of which are specific to the discipline. The book also assumes that knowledge and thinking skills are often context-specific. Critical thinking skills are taught as you learn the concepts of and do the work of a particular discipline. Further, the book assumes that people use their own beliefs and commonsense theories to try to explain behaviors they observe. Research on science education suggests that these everyday theories should be taken into account when the effort is made to think critically about scientific questions.

This book defines critical thinking as reflective thinking involving the evaluation of evidence relevant to some claim so that a sound conclusion can be drawn about the claim. This definition is general enough to subsume deductive reasoning, inductive reasoning, and informal reasoning. A single definition helps organize and provide the framework for learning about a variety of kinds of thinking used in psychology.

The Approach of This Book

Because this book uses the general definition of critical thinking to create an organizational framework for teaching a set of related skills, it takes a “unified skills” approach. The exercises are designed to teach a variety of skills that support inquiry in psychology using a single critical thinking model and vocabulary. The target skills include distinguishing arguments from nonarguments, finding the central question, evaluating the kinds and quality of evidence, making predictions from theories, generating good hypotheses, and constructing good arguments. The exercises offer practice in the various components of scientific thinking in psychology. The exercises also focus on the skills that overlap in critical reading and writing. Solutions to the exercises are given in the text and in Appendix A.

The first three chapters form the basis for the remainder of the book, which has been designed to be modular. The exercises and foundational skills introduced in the first three chapters prepare students for the exercises in later chapters. To encourage readers to confront their own beliefs and “theories” about the questions critically discussed, each chapter begins by asking, “What do you think?”

The chapters and exercises differ, not only in content, but also in the kinds of target skills they are designed to develop. Several exercises (in Chapters 3, 4, 6, 8, 10, and 13) are designed to teach analytic reading skills. These primarily train students in the inductive reasoning skills that are so important to psychologists who are trying to make sense of what is known about a specific question in psychology. These are also the skills required to evaluate a psychological literature review or a textbook discussion of a question. Other chapters (Chapter 1 and 7) are designed to train students in deductive reasoning skills, the important kind of reasoning used by psychologists to make predictions from theories and to argue from theories and definitions. Chapters 2 and 11 discuss how to generate hypotheses to account for behavior.

As is appropriate for a text on critical thinking, important philosophical questions are raised in this book. For example, Chapter 3, covering whether people are basically selfish, deals with the nature versus nurture question. Chapter 4 addresses the mind-body problem. Chapter 5, on perception and illusions, deals with epistemological questions concerning the influence of perception on what we know, including a discussion of empiricism and rationalism. Chapter 6, on hypnosis, discusses issues related to whether people have free will. Chapter 10, on whether emotions make us irrational, deals with the old question of whether the passions cloud our reason. Throughout the book questions of ethics are raised: for example, in issues related to how we test people in Chapter 2, the problem of stereotyping and witch hunts, in Chapter 11; and the potential for harm to victims and those accused of sexual abuse in the “repressed memory” controversy, in Chapter 13.

Other chapters teach critical thinking through writing. In Chapter 7, students are guided through a deductive reasoning exercise in which they must justify in writing that an example from their own experience fits a definition.

Chapter 14 provides extensive training in writing responses to essay questions; in writing a short, argumentative term paper; and in writing an introduction to a research report. Chapter 14 should be covered after students have had experience with critical reading in earlier chapters.

Using This Book in Different Courses

General Psychology

The content selection, modular organization, and skills objectives of the book make it especially suitable for supporting a general psychology course. The book is filled with examples and exercises from various areas of psychology. Also, each chapter focuses on a specific topic that parallels the coverage in general psychology, such as helping behavior in Chapter 3, localization of function in Chapter 4, the definition of learning in Chapter 7, basic memory concepts in Chapter 8, introduction to judgment and decision making in Chapter 9, introduction to motivation and emotion in Chapter 10, basic issues related to identifying abnormal behavior in Chapters 11 and 12, and an introduction to the classification of mental disorders in Chapter 12. The first two chapters introduce students to how critical thinkers and scientists approach the fascinating questions that psychologists address, and the third chapter introduces critical reading. After covering the first three chapters, introductory psychology instructors may select any of the later chapters to support coverage in their own course because the chapters are independent in content and thinking skills practice. In addition to critical thinking skills, the book focuses on literacy skill development—so important to the beginning college student—in active reading in Chapter 3 and a review of the basics of writing and how to write essay question responses and short papers in psychology in Chapter 14.

Research Methods and Experimental Psychology

An important objective of this book is to help students learn how psychologists approach scientific questions; many of the chapters support this objective. Chapter 1 introduces critical thinking, basic concepts related to inquiry, and the derivation of hypotheses from theories. Chapter 2 discusses the distinction between science and pseudoscience, the evaluation of different kinds of scientific and nonscientific evidence, the advantages of science over other approaches to knowledge, the drawing of sound conclusions from reviews of the research literature, causation, and hypothetico-deductive reasoning. Chapter 3 provides instruction in the critical reading of a literature review, using the question whether people are basically selfish as an example. Several other chapters, including Chapters 4, 6, 8, 11, and 13, provide further instruction in critical reading of literature reviews. Finally, Chapter 14 discusses how to prepare for and write an introduction to a research report, returning to a study of the factors that influence helping behavior.

Cognitive Psychology

This book has several chapters that could be used to supplement a cognitive psychology course. In particular, these include Chapter 5 on perception, Chapter 6 on hypnosis and memory, Chapter 7 on behavioral versus cognitive definitions of learning, Chapter 8 on reconstruction and accuracy of memory, Chapter 9 on improving judgments and decisions, and Chapter 13 on repressed memory. In general, this book raises many issues concerning the quality of human thinking, cognition, perception, and knowledge. Taken together, these chapters discuss questions that have important implications for our capacity to know the world, to think about our experience, and to think critically. As such, this book may also be viewed as a guided tour into the territory of our mental abilities—their limits and capacities. Also, because this book discusses many implications of cognitive and educational psychology for the improvement of thinking, it could add a more personal, applied focus to cognitive psychology, a subject that often seems abstract to students.

Social Psychology

Several chapters in this book could be used to support a social psychology course. Chapters 1 and 2 use many examples from social psychology in their introduction of critical thinking concepts and in the overview of scientific methods. Chapter 3 has a lengthy discussion of altruism and prosocial behavior. Chapter 9 deals with the social basis of decisions and judgments. Chapter 10 discusses emotional and motivational influences on judgment and decision making related to issues in social cognition and uses practice problems involving analysis of social situations. Chapter 11 discusses implicit theories of personality, stereotypes, and in-groups and out-groups; it also offers a social psychological explanation of historical witch hunts and recent concern about satanic ritual activities. Chapter 14 discusses writing using examples from the study of social learning theory and the modeling of aggression and helping.

Abnormal Psychology, Personality, and Counseling

Other chapters (10, 11, 12, and 13) apply the critical thinking model to the study of abnormal psychology, personality, and clinical psychology questions and to the acquisition of important clinical thinking skills. More specifically, Chapter 10 reviews some literature on the disruptive effects of emotions such as depression and anxiety on psychological functioning. Chapter 11 discusses concepts of abnormality and whether those accused of witchcraft during the witch hunts of the 14th through 16th centuries actually had mental disorders. Chapter 13 discusses a controversial question confronting clinical psychologists: whether a person can accurately recall previously unrecalled memories of sexual abuse. At the end of Chapter 13 are exercises for analyzing client-therapist interactions in which sexual abuse is an issue.

The text also can help to simplify learning the classifications of many of the various psychological disorders found in the DSM-IV and discussed in Chapter 12. Chapter 12 relates important symptoms of disorders to a set of questions a

clinician might seek to answer in coming to a diagnosis. Four sample cases are provided for practice in using the questions to come to a diagnosis.

How to Organize Your Course to Teach Critical Thinking

While instructors are free to use any of the chapters in the book after students have read the first three, some permutations of chapter use are expected to be more effective than others. For example, it is recommended that students do an additional critical reading exercise early in the course for three reasons. First, they will be able to practice with an exercise similar to one presented to them in Chapter 3. Second, students' reading skills are fundamental to their later success in the course, since much of their knowledge is acquired through reading their main textbook. Third, critical reading is probably less difficult than critical writing. Critical reading involves recognition of information (including claims, evidence, and conclusions), whereas critical writing involves at least one additional cognitive processing step: the generation of claims, evidence, and conclusions. Therefore, critical reading should precede critical writing assignments, such as the critical essay or the short argumentative term paper.

Instructors would do well to sample different types of critical thinking activities in the exercises. Such sampling will provide practice with the general model for critical thinking while introducing students to various applications of the model to psychology and will help develop component thinking skills, as well as help maintain student interest in the program. Let's examine a hypothetical example to see how a wide variety of thinking and communication skills used in psychology and academia, in general, may be covered by sampling only a few chapters. For example, if only Chapters 1, 2, 6, and 11 and part of Chapter 14 are used, these chapters would provide training in perspective taking and critical discussion, critical reading and writing, inductive and deductive reasoning, causal reasoning, hypothetico-deductive reasoning in clinical diagnosis, the application of critical thinking to students' own everyday thinking, and information about how perception and confirmation bias may distort the inferences we make about our world.

Teaching Critical Thinking

Instructors and students alike must realize that thinking critically is a complex, effortful process. It requires practice of specific kinds of thinking tasks and commitment to apply the skills learned to new situations. Everyone needs to improve his or her ability to think critically, since the purpose of critical thinking is to obtain good answers to questions that come up in psychology and everyday life.

Finally, I would appreciate the comments of both students and instructors who use the book. Write me or send in the attached comment form at the back of the book.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank several people who have helped me with my own critical thinking and in preparation of this book. This book owes much to their help, but I take responsibility for any errors that remain.

First, I would like to thank several of my teachers who planted the seeds of my own efforts to become a critical thinker. They are Larry Sensenig of Morningside College and Mark Altom, Joel Cadwell, John A. Carpenter, Arnold Glass, Jeannette Haviland, Robert Karlin, Eileen Kowler, Kenneth Monteiro, H. Richard Schiffman, and Vicki Tartter, who were my teachers at Rutgers University.

Next, I would like to thank colleagues who made insightful suggestions and reviewed parts of the manuscript. I would especially like to thank Chrismarie Baxter, Thomas Hawk, and Ronald Reed for their influence on my work in critical thinking and their helpful comments about the book. Thanks also go to other members of the psychology department of Frostburg State University for their support while I wrote this book, many of them reading parts of the manuscript and pointing me in the right direction on various chapters. They are: Ann Bristow, Albert Crall, Cindy Herzog, Anthony LoGiudice, Kevin Peterson, Lee B. Ross, Patricia Santoro, Gabie Smith, and William Southerly. Thanks also to Gary Brosvic of Rider University, who reviewed the chapter on perception.

Brooks/Cole obtained the help of several fine reviewers who helped me in many ways to improve the manuscript; my thanks go to Bernard Beins, Ithaca College; Michael Bergmire, Jefferson College; James Calhoun, University of Georgia; M. Ann Dirkes; Robert Grissom, San Francisco State University; Kathleen Morgan, Wheaton College; Gary Poole, Simon Fraser University; and Ronald Reed, Texas Wesleyan University.

I would also like to thank other students and colleagues at Frostburg State for their help. Several graduate and undergraduate students worked on research projects related to this book, including Mary Bolton, Jill Brooks, Tanya De Both, Diane McGowan, Barb Palardy, and Jen Post. Thanks to Dean Kenneth Stewart and to Terry Kasecamp for their comments on diagnosis and concepts of psychological disorders. Thanks also to students in my general psychology, research methods, and advanced research evaluation and interpretation courses for their useful comments on the manuscript. For helping me obtain many articles and books cited in this book, thanks go to the Ort Library staff of Frostburg State, especially Delores Miller and Carole Bodnar of the Interlibrary Loan Department. Thanks in general to Frostburg State University, which provided three different grants to help me develop parts of this book.

Finally, I would like to thank the staff of Brooks/Cole for their support and guidance on this project, especially editor Jim Brace-Thompson, his assistant, Terry Thomas, Marjorie Sanders, production editor, and Cathy Cambron, copy editor.

D. Alan Bensley

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