PSYCHOLOGY: PERSPECTIVES ON BEHAVIOR

SPEAR PENROD BAKER

PSYCHOLOGY: PERSPECTIVES ON BEHAVIOR

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This book is dedicated to our families:

Meredith, Eli, and Jessica Joan and Rachel Linda and Hannah

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PREFACE

Why Write an Introductory Psychology Textbook?

As we wrote this book, friends and colleagues often asked why we were writing an introduction to psychology textbook when there already are so many introductory textbooks available. One reason is the fun and excitement of introducing students to a whole new realm of information about their world and of guiding students to think about their world in new ways. We have taught the introductory psychology course to thousands of college students over the past 10 to 15 years, and we continue to find it a stimulating and enlightening experience. The enjoyment of teaching psychology led us to write the book, and we hope the book reflects that.

A second reason for writing this book is that when teaching the introductory psychology course we often felt dissatisfied with the textbooks that were available. We found that high-level, scholarly texts were dry and lost the student's interest, whereas texts that captured the student's interest were too simplistic and superficial. In addition, the available texts tended to artificially divide the field into separate disciplines without integrating the various "areas" of psychology or showing how they are related. This book is an attempt to remedy these shortcomings by presenting an introduction to psychology that is scholarly, integrated, and interesting.

Specific Goals of the Book

One goal of the book is to provide a balanced, up-to-date, and scholarly overview of psychology. The field of psychology encompasses a broad range of inquiry, from the operation of the brain in controlling behavior to the nature of complex social interactions. Obviously, it is not possible to cover everything that is known about psychology in an introductory text. However, we have taken care to give a comprehensive overview of classic research, major theories, and the most important and active modern research. Our own research interests span the field of psychology, from neuroscience, sensation and perception, and development (P.D.S.), to learning, motivation, and clinical psychology (T.B.B.), to memory, information processing, and social psychology (S.D.P.). This background, plus a continued active involvement in research, has helped us bring a critical and contemporary perspective to the range of material that is discussed in the book. A balanced and rigorous overview of psychology is the foundation on which our other goals rest. A second goal is to give students an appreciation of the *process* by which knowledge about psychology is obtained. Psychology is presented not merely as a collection of facts, but as an exciting and dynamic science that continues to broaden and enrich our knowledge of human behavior. The book describes the research process that leads to new observations, it provides critical discussions of research, and it recognizes and discusses controversies in the field. By doing this, we hope to lead students to *think* about how psychologists know what they know. We hope to teach students to have critical minds, not just fact-filled ones.

A third goal is to provide a more integrated view of psychology than is presented in other books. Introductory psychology texts tend to isolate the topics that are presented in each chapter. Topics such as developmental psychology, physiological psychology, learning, motivation, social psychology, and so on, often are presented as separate disciplines that are relegated almost entirely to separate, unrelated chapters. But these are not isolated disciplines; in many ways the different areas of psychology are simply different perspectives on thought and behavior. Any particular phenomenon or behavior (such as perception, learning, or psychopathology) can be analyzed in terms of its physiological bases, its functional significance from an evolutionary standpoint, how it changes during development and aging, the extent to which it is influenced by genetic and environmental factors, how it is affected by cognitive processes, how it is influenced by and expressed in social psychological phenomena, and so on. One of the main themes of this book is that behavior and psychological phenomena can be understood best by viewing them from a variety of different perspectives, or levels of analysis. This "levels of analysis" approach helps to integrate the topics that are discussed in the book and helps the student gain a deeper understanding of psychology than is possible otherwise.

Our fourth major goal is to stimulate and maintain the student's interest in psychology. The other goals can be met adequately only if the student's interest is sustained. We do this in part by using examples that relate to the student's everyday life and by providing self-demonstrations that make phenomena being discussed relevant to the student's own experience. In addition, we engage the student in the process of psychology as a live and dynamic science. Topics are introduced in a way that stimulates the student's curiosity about questions to be answered, and the student is led progressively through the research that answers these questions and in turn raises new questions. We try to tell a story of psychology that ties together past and present findings and shows how each new discovery builds on previous ones. We believe that telling an integrated and progressive story of psychology leads to greater interest as well as greater understanding.

Organization of the Book

The book contains 17 chapters plus appendixes on research methods in psychology, the use of statistics in psychology, and careers in psychology. We have organized the chapters into a sequence that progresses from phenomena that relate primarily to individuals to phenomena that involve wider social interactions among individuals. In addition, the chapter sequence progresses from how people gather information about the world, to how people process information and change, to how people act on and interact with others. This organizational sequence corresponds to that used by most instructors in their courses. We have used it in the book because we believe the sequence makes sense and also because it will allow instructors to easily integrate the book with their already established course organization.

Nevertheless, there are several distinctive features of the book's organization that we have incorporated because we believe they reflect modern psychology and help the student to understand psychology. In keeping with the levels of analysis approach, developmental psychology is considered throughout the book, not just in a single chapter. Although a chapter on this topic (Chapter 9) is included to discuss the fundamental concepts of developmental psychology, developmental aspects of psychological phenomena are discussed in virtually all of the chapters. Furthermore, we recognize that development refers to the process of change throughout life and, accordingly, we have taken a life-span approach (including aging).

Physiological psychology also is considered throughout the book. A chapter on Biological Foundations (Chapter 2) is included to give students the foundations of biology and neuroscience necessary to understand how people behave. However, physiological psychology is not limited to this chapter. Biological bases of behavior are considered throughout the book in the context of the topics that are discussed in each chapter (for example, sensation and perception, learning, memory, psychopathology, aggression, interpersonal attraction, and so on). This reflects the fact that the brain and body are an integral part of all behavior, and it reflects the recent trend in psychology to consider biological along with psychological mechanisms of thought and behavior.

Methods of psychology also are integrated with content material throughout the book. Appendix A presents an overview of conceptual issues in experimental design and methods of doing psychological research. However, specific methods and experimental designs that are used by researchers in particular areas of psychology are presented where they are relevant to the substance and content of psychological knowledge that is being discussed. This avoids a long and tedious section on methods and makes methods in psychology more concrete and relevant to the student.

Another distinctive aspect of the book's organization is the treatment of sensation and perception. Other texts have one chapter (or section of a chapter) on sensation and a second on perception, which tends to artificially dichotomize the two topics. Furthermore, the discussion of perception is almost always devoted exclusively to *visual* perception; little or nothing is said about perception in other sensory systems. We have organized these topics into one chapter on visual sensation and perception (Chapter 3) and a second chapter on sensation and perception in the other senses (hearing, taste, smell, touch, and so on) (Chapter 4). This gives greater continuity to the discussion of each sensory system. In addition, we have included three to four times more coverage of the nonvisual senses than other texts, and this is virtually the only text that discusses *perception* as well as sensation in the nonvisual sensory systems.

The coverage in the two social psychology chapters (16 and 17) gives a stronger emphasis than other texts to the contemporary application of cognitive psychology to understanding social psychological phenomena. The growth of social-cognition research is reflected not only in discussions of self and social perception, but also in discussions of traditional social psychological questions such as attitude change, social influence, aggression, and pro-social behavior.

When writing a textbook or deciding whether to adopt one for a course, an important consideration is the length of the book. For several reasons, this textbook is slightly longer than other introduction to psychology texts. Psychology is an active empirical science, and new research adds information to the existing body of knowledge; it does not simply change or replace old information. We have tried to include new information without shortchanging the foundations on which it is based. In addition, instead of giving superficial statements of important psychological concepts, we have chosen to explain them and to provide examples that will help make the concepts clear and interesting to students. We have also used illustrations (line-drawings and photographs) extensively, and these have been printed in a large format that makes them easy to see and understand. These choices have combined to make each chapter an average of 3 to 4 pages longer than comparable chapters in other texts. We believe students would rather read chapters that may be slightly longer, but are clear and interesting than slightly shorter chapters that are cursory and more difficult to understand.

Instructors may organize their courses somewhat differently depending on the time available (e.g., one semester or one quarter), the type of students, and the objectives of the course. For shorter courses, we believe it is better to cover less material fully than to attempt to cover everything and do it superficially. Shorter courses could omit Chapters 4 (Sensation and Perception: Auditory, Chemical, and Body Senses), 8 (Language and Thought), 10 (Basic Models of Motivation), 14 (Assessment of Personality, Behavior, and Intelligence), 17 (Social Interaction), and/or the appendixes. The remaining chapters still provide the important concepts of psychology; for example, Chapter 3 covers the basic concepts of sensation and perception in the context of vision. Chapters that are not assigned can be read by interested students and can be used for reference.

Learning Aids

Throughout the book we have incorporated a variety of features intended to make psychology interesting and alive to the student and to help the student understand what he or she has read. One such feature is the liberal use of relevant examples and self-demonstrations that are chosen to make the material meaningful to the student as well as to help clarify concepts that are discussed. We use these examples and demonstrations in our own classes and find that they help engage the student and show him or her how research and theory in psychology applies to everyday life and experience.

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As noted earlier we also have used illustrations extensively throughout the book. For example, Chapters 2 (Biological Foundations) and 7 (Memory) contain over 30 figures each and Chapter 3 (Sensation and Perception: Vision) contains approximately 50 figures. The figures are chosen to clarify and illuminate and not simply as window-dressing. In the text itself, we have taken care to indicate when the student should refer to a figure so that the figures are well integrated with the material they are intended to illustrate.

Within each chapter, there are separate "boxes" in which special aspects of the topic under consideration are discussed. The boxes are designed to draw students into psychology by providing detailed information about theories and research findings that form the basis of conclusions drawn in the text or by discussing special applications related to material in the text. The number and placement of the boxes within the text have been considered carefully so that the boxes do not distract the student or break the flow of the text, but rather illuminate material being discussed.

Within the text, reference citations are given for major statements of results or conclusions. This is done to give investigators credit for their observations and also to provide a concrete reminder to students that findings discussed in the text are made by scientists carrying out research. The reference citations also make it possible for students to look up specific papers on a subject if they wish. The number and placement of the citations have been chosen carefully to avoid clutter and disruption of the flow of the text. At the end of each chapter there also is an annotated list of further readings for interested students.

Frequent summaries and statements of major conclusions are woven into the text within each chapter. In addition, each chapter ends with a thorough summary of the material that has been discussed. These chapter summaries are overviews of the main content, conceptual issues, and conclusions and not simply cursory statements of a few facts.

Important terms are printed in **bold** when they first appear in the text and they are defined in the glossary at the end of the book. A unified glossary at the end of the book makes it easy for students to look up terms that reappear from chapter to chapter.

A *Study Guide* is available that includes chapter outlines and reviews, key terms and concepts, and statements of the main learning objectives for each chapter. The Study Guide also provides interesting and easy exercises to help the student understand the main concepts of the book. Practice test questions, with an answer key, also are provided.

An *Instructor's Manual* is available for the teacher. This manual includes an overview and detailed summary of each chapter. Suggestions for discussion topics and classroom demonstrations also are provided. In addition, the manual includes a list of suggested lecture topics that can be used to supplement the material covered in the text. Source materials are given for these topics as well as for topics that are discussed in the text. A list of relevant films and film sources also is given.

A set of color *slides and overhead transparencies* also is available. Background and descriptive material for each of these illustrations is included in the *Instructor's Manual* so that the illustrations can be easily integrated with the instructor's lectures. The *Test Bank* has been written with special care. The most common complaint that students have about multiple-choice questions is that they are "too picky" or that they are too ambiguous. We have made an effort to include questions that are clear and a list of answers that are unambiguous. In addition, we have included many questions that test the student's understanding of concepts and his or her ability to integrate material. We believe that tests are an important opportunity to encourage students to think about what they have learned, and we have tried to devise test questions that stimulate that thinking.

All three authors have taken an active part in developing and writing these supplements. We believe that the supplements are an important part of the learning package and should be of the same high quality as the text itself. In addition, we have tried to integrate the supplements with the text so that the text and supplements can be used interactively.

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