

ESSENTIALS OF
UNDERSTANDING
PSYCHOLOGY

ROBERT S. FELDMAN






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PREFACE

The human behavior that we find in the world defies easy explanation. There is behavior which is good and there is that which is bad; there is the sensible, and there is the irrational; there is cooperation, and there is violent competition among the world's peoples. How to explain these extremes of behavior, and the countless forms of behavior that lie in between, represents the challenge of the science of psychology.

Essentials of Understanding Psychology, which is designed to meet the challenges presented by the field of psychology, is a condensed and updated version of the 21-chapter *Understanding Psychology*, published by McGraw-Hill. *Essentials of Understanding Psychology* preserves the basic features of the original text, but in a shorter form, concentrating on the fundamentals of the field while still making clear the relevance of psychology to people's everyday lives.

Essentials of Understanding Psychology was written to accomplish three major goals. First, it is meant to provide effective coverage of the major areas of the field of psychology, introducing readers to its theories, research, and applications. Second, it is intended to foster an appreciation for the scientific basis of the field, as well as providing an impetus for readers to begin to think as scientific psychologists even after their recall of specific content has waned. Finally, it is designed to be engaging and interesting, a book in which readers' intellectual curiosity about the world is aroused and manifested in an appreciation of the discipline of psychology.

These goals, of course, are interdependent. In fact, I would argue that if the text is successful in accurately communicating the nature of psychology, understanding and interest regarding the field will follow naturally. To that end,

the writing style of this book has received considerable attention. The style of the book is intended to provide as close a facsimile to two people sitting down and discussing psychology as can be conveyed with the written word. When I use “we,” I am referring to the two of us—me, the author, and you, the reader.

Moreover, the book has features in every chapter that are designed to involve you (Try It! questionnaires and demonstrations), challenge you (Cutting Edge inserts with the latest findings), demonstrate the everyday relevance of psychology (Psychology at Work boxes), and improve the quality of your own life (Informed Consumer of Psychology sections). In addition, in a feature new to this version of the text, each chapter ends with a section called “Psychology Looks toward the 1990s,” which suggests where the discipline is headed as we move into the last decade of the twentieth century.

Essentials of Understanding Psychology is also a book that has been carefully designed to promote learning. Material is presented in rational, manageable chunks, followed by a succinct summary (called a “Recap”) and a set of questions on the material (a “Review”). Readers who answer these questions—and then check the answers, which are provided on a following page—will be able to assess their degree of mastery of the material, as well as having a head start on long-term recall of the information.

In sum, *Essentials of Understanding Psychology* is, as I reiterate in the first chapter, designed to be “user-friendly.” It is a book that not only exposes you to the content—and promise—of psychology, but does so in a way that will bring alive the excitement of the field and keep that excitement alive long after you have completed your introduction to the discipline.

THE CONTENT OF ESSENTIALS OF UNDERSTANDING PSYCHOLOGY

Essentials of Understanding Psychology contains seven parts, divided into 15 chapters. Part One opens with an overview of the field, examining its theoretical, historical, and methodological underpinnings. We then turn, in Part Two, to the ways in which the biological structures and functions of the body affect behavior, considering the nervous system, brain, and sensation and perception.

Part Three presents the fundamental principles of learning and thinking, and we focus on learning, memory, thinking and reasoning, and intelligence. Part Four and Part Five describe the ways in which people experience the world, and here we consider motivation, emotions, and states of consciousness, as well as the development and differentiation of individuals. We explore the course we all travel through life, beginning at birth and ending at old age and death. We also consider personality here, including both the characteristics that differentiate one person from another and the degree of uniformity an individual displays in behavior in different situations.

Finally, in Part Six and Part Seven, we turn to mental health and the social world in which we live. We focus on the various forms of psychological disturbance and the treatments that psychologists have devised for them. We then consider how our attitudes about others develop and function and the influence that others have on us. We also examine some of the fundamental forms of social behavior in human life: liking and loving, aggression, and helping behavior.

As this brief overview suggests, *Essentials of Understanding Psychology* emphasizes the traditional topical areas of psychology, including the biological foundations of behavior, sensation and perception, learning, memory, cognition, human development, personality, abnormal behavior, and social psychological foundations of behavior. Notably, however, it also includes material that focuses on applications of psychological theory and research in nonlaboratory, field settings.

The flexibility of this organizational structure is considerable. Because chapters are self-contained, this book can be used in either biologically oriented or socially oriented introductory psychology courses by choosing only the relevant chapters. Moreover, the material on applications is well-integrated throughout the chapters that cover the most traditional, theoretical topics, successfully conveying the relevance of psychology to readers.

Overall, then, the book includes a combination of traditional core topics and contemporary applied subjects, presenting the fundamentals of psychology in a readable, involving format. It should be apparent that this book is neither an applied psychology text nor a theories-oriented text. Instead, it draws from theoretical and applied approaches and integrates them with presentations of research that illustrate how the science of psychology has evolved and grown. Indeed, *Essentials of Understanding Psychology* exemplifies the view that a theory-application dichotomy is a false one. Applications are not presented as devoid of theory; instead, they are placed in a theoretical context, grounded in research findings. Likewise, when theoretical material is presented, practical implications are drawn from it.

An example can illustrate this approach. If you turn to the material on sensation and perception (Chapter 3), you will find that it includes the traditional material on hearing and the sense of balance in the ear. But the text moves beyond a mere recitation of the various parts of the ear and explanations of hearing and balance; it also explores current work involving an electronic ear implant in the cochlea to help the deaf, as well as NASA's attempts to solve the problem of astronauts' space sickness. By providing a theoretical context for understanding the sense of hearing and balance, then, the text demonstrates how applications grow out of the theoretical and research base of the field.

In its integration of theory, research, and applications, *Essentials of Understanding Psychology* emphasizes the presentation of knowledge and theories in an objective, eclectic manner. At the same time, the complexities of the analytical underpinnings of the field of psychology, as well as divergent and controversial findings, are included, but they are summarized and synthesized in a way that makes them accessible. Moreover, no single theoretical position or point of view is supported. Rather, the goal is to present theories, research, and applications in a rational, logical, and orderly manner—views that are representative of the field.

LEARNING AIDS AND FEATURES OF ESSENTIALS OF UNDERSTANDING PSYCHOLOGY

Essentials of Understanding Psychology has been designed with its ultimate consumer—the student—in mind. As you can see from the following list of elements that are common to every chapter, this book incorporates educational

features, based on learning and cognitive instructional design theory and research, that make it an effective learning device and, at the same time, enticing and engaging:

■ *Chapter Outline.* Each chapter opens with an outline of the chapter structure. Not only does the outline provide a means of understanding the interrelationships of the material within the chapter, but it serves as a form of chapter organizer, helping to bridge the gap between what a reader already knows and the subsequent chapter content.

■ *Prologue.* Every chapter starts with an account of a real-life situation that involves major aspects of the topics in the chapter. These openers are used to demonstrate the relevance of basic principles and concepts of psychology to everyday issues and problems. For example, the chapter on learning starts with a description of how the behavior of an Olympic gold medalist is affected by learning processes; one chapter on social psychology begins with an account of a campus referendum; and the chapter on intelligence describes a profoundly retarded individual who produces internationally acclaimed paintings.

■ *Looking Ahead.* A chapter overview follows the introduction. It presents the key themes, issues, and questions and a set of chapter objectives. The chapter objectives pinpoint material on which to focus.

■ *Psychology at Work.* Each chapter includes a boxed insert that illustrates an application of psychological theory and research findings to a real-world problem. For example, the chapter on the biological bases of behavior discusses how advertisers use findings regarding brain hemispheric specialization to prepare advertisements, the memory chapter includes a discussion of eyewitness identification in judicial settings, and the chapter on personality presents assessment procedures used by business firms.

■ *The Cutting Edge.* Each chapter contains a box that describes a contemporary research program that is in the forefront of the discipline—suggesting where the field of psychology is heading. This feature helps provide a sense of the growing and developing status of the science of psychology. For instance, the memory chapter presents work on the biochemical basis of memory, and the intelligence chapter discusses artificial intelligence.

■ *The Informed Consumer of Psychology.* Every chapter includes information designed to make readers more informed consumers of psychological information and knowledge by giving them the ability to critically evaluate what the field of psychology offers. For example, this feature includes ways of dealing with drugs and alcohol (states of consciousness chapter), evaluating computer-assisted instructional programs (learning chapter), personality/vocational testing (personality chapter), and evaluating psychological therapy (treatment chapter).

■ *Try It!* In order to promote involvement in the chapter content, each chapter contains a “Try It!” box. Material in this kind of box presents a demonstration that readers can carry out themselves. For instance, the chapter on the biology underlying behavior provides a biofeedback demonstration.

■ *Recap and Review.* Research is clear in indicating the importance of stressing the organization of textual material, learning material in relatively small chunks, and actively reviewing material. Consequently, each chapter is divided into three or four sections, each of which concludes with a Recap and Review. The Recaps summarize the key points of the previous section, and the Reviews present a series of questions for students to answer. There are a variety of types of ques-

tions, including multiple-choice, fill-in, short answer, and matching, in order to test both recall and higher-level understanding of the material.

■ **Running Glossary.** Key terms are defined in the margin of the text, along with a pronunciation guide for difficult words. There is also an end-of-book Glossary.

■ **Looking Back.** To facilitate the review of the material covered in each chapter and to aid in the synthesis of the information covered, there is a numbered summary at the end of every chapter. The summary emphasizes the key points of the chapter.

■ **Key Terms and Concepts.** A list of key terms and concepts, keyed to page numbers where they are first introduced, is at the end of each chapter.

■ **For Further Study and Application.** An annotated bibliography is appended to each chapter. This bibliography contains two types of selections—books and articles which deal with theory, and others that are more oriented toward applications.

■ **Psychology Looks toward the 1990s.** Each chapter ends with a feature new to this edition of the book: Psychology Looks toward the 1990s. This section highlights advances in the field and suggests ways in which the discipline will evolve and is apt to grow during the last decade of the century. For example, the chapter on learning discusses the search for computer models of learning and the chapter on personality discusses evidence that is just now unfolding regarding the genetic components of personality.

■ **A full-color graphic design.** To support the instructional design features of the text, a graphic design structure was developed to enhance the pedagogy of the text. For example, all Try It! boxes are in green, Cutting Edge boxes in magenta, and Psychology at Work boxes in blue. Moreover, parts and chapters are color-keyed on every page, making the structure of the book more explicit. The beautiful design and photos make the text inviting and a book from which it is easy to learn.

ANCILLARY MATERIALS

Essentials of Understanding Psychology is accompanied by an extensive ancillary package that enhances the value of the text as a teaching and learning tool. The *Study Guide*, by Valerie J. Sasserath, includes an introductory section on how to study and how to use the Guide effectively with the text. Following this material are chapters (corresponding to each text chapter) which include chapter outlines and overviews, learning objectives, more than one thousand questions in a variety of formats, and application exercises. *Micro Study Guide*, a computerized version, is also available for use with the Apple and IBM PC computers.

There are two test files in this package, which together offer close to 3,000 multiple-choice and true-false questions that test both factual recall and higher-order understanding. These questions are keyed to the learning objectives in the text and are arranged under the major text headings. Answers and text page references are included for all questions. Test File A was prepared by David Arnold of St. Lawrence University, Linda Baker of the University of Maryland, Baltimore Campus, Frank McAndrew of Knox College, John Rosenkoetter of Southwest Missouri State University, Thomas Thieman of the College of St. Catherine, and William Zachry of the University of Tennessee at Martin. Test

File B was developed by William O. Dwyer of Memphis State University. Both test files are available in computerized formats for use with mainframe and microcomputers.

The *Instructor's Manual*, prepared by the authors of Test File A, offers chapter overviews, lecture objectives and topics, key terms, discussion topics, "Take a Stand" sections (which outline issues for debate), demonstrations and projects, essay questions with answers, and an annotated bibliography of audiovisual resources.

In addition to the print supplements described above, the ancillary package includes a set of fifty overhead transparencies of illustrations in the text. These transparencies can be used in conjunction with the 110 generic overheads in the *McGraw-Hill Introductory Psychology Overhead Transparency Set*. The *McGraw-Hill Introductory Psychology Slide Set*, consisting of 110 slides which duplicate the generic overheads, McGraw-Hill/CRM Films, and a series of videotapes covering the major areas of psychology are also available to adopters.

Psychworld by John C. Hay of the University of Wisconsin in Milwaukee is an acclaimed generic software package that contains fourteen simulations of classic psychology experiments. Professors can use it in the classroom and students can use it in the lab. In addition, *MacLaboratory for Psychology* by Douglas L. Chute of Drexel University and Robert S. Daniel of the University of Missouri is available for use on Apple Macintosh computers. This software consists of thirteen projects that convert the computer into various pieces of laboratory equipment. Your local McGraw-Hill sales representative can explain the details of *Psychworld* and *MacLaboratory for Psychology*.

Each of these features is designed to achieve the goals of introducing you to psychology's theories, research, and applications, fostering your appreciation of the scientific basis of the field, and doing so in an engaging and interesting manner. If, after reading this book, you feel that psychology can provide answers to your curiosity about the world and improve the quality of your life and the lives of others, I will feel satisfied that these goals have been met.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

As the long list of reviewers on page vi attests, this book involved the efforts of many psychologists. They lent their expertise to evaluate all or parts of the manuscript, providing an unusual degree of quality control. Their careful work and thoughtful suggestions have improved the manuscript many times over from its first-draft incarnations. I am grateful to every one of them for their comments.

My thinking has been shaped by many teachers along the way. My first introduction to psychology came at Wesleyan University, where several committed and inspiring teachers—and in particular Karl Scheibe—made the excitement and relevance of the field clear to me. Although the nature of the University of Wisconsin, where I did my graduate work, could not have been more different from the much smaller Wesleyan, the excitement and inspiration were similar. Once again, a nucleus of excellent teachers—led, especially, by the late Vernon Allen—molded my thinking, and by the time I left Wisconsin to begin teaching I could envision no other career but that of psychologist.

There are several students at the University of Massachusetts who make the pleasures of being a professor particularly salient; among them are Bob Custrini, Pierre Philippot, and Lee Rosen. My colleagues at the university provide ongoing intellectual stimulation and friendship, and I thank them for making the

university a very good place to work. Several people also provided extraordinary research and editorial help: Carolyn Dash, Richard Fleming, Kate Ward, Janice Rose, and Kate Schildauer. Finally, the initial inspiration for this book came from David Serbun, whose good advice and friendship I continue to value.

Anyone who reads this book owes a debt of gratitude to Rhona Robbin, senior developmental editor at McGraw-Hill. Her adept editing, insightful questioning, and—when necessary—prodding and pushing resulted in a level of quality that could not have otherwise been attained. Jim Anker provided the impetus for this book; and his insight, savvy, and friendship brought the book to fruition. Other people at McGraw-Hill were instrumental in producing this book; these include David Dunham, Alison Meerschaert, Phil Butcher, Joan O'Connor, and Inge King. I am proud to be a part of this first-class team.

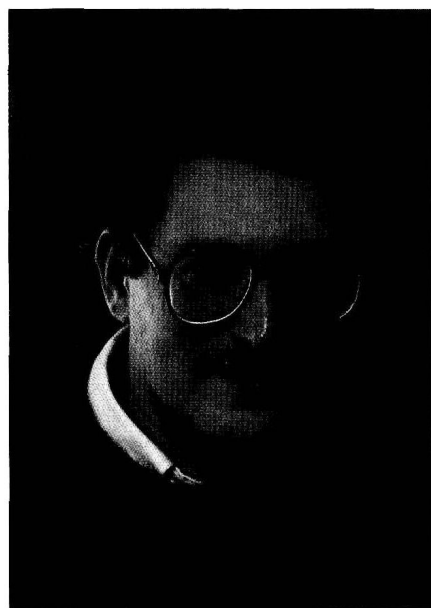
Finally, I am, as always, indebted to my family. The love and support of my parents, Leah Brochstein and the late Saul D. Feldman, remain a bedrock of my life. Other family members also play a central role in my life; these people include, more or less in order of age, my nieces and nephews, my brother, various brothers- and sisters-in-law, Ethel Radler, Harry Brochstein, and the late Mary Vorwerk, whose unconditional positive regard I especially miss.

Ultimately, my children, Jonathan, Joshua, and Sarah, and my wife, Katherine, are the focal point of my life. I thank them, with fondness and love.

Robert S. Feldman

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Robert S. Feldman is Professor of Psychology at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. A former Fulbright Senior Research Scholar and Lecturer, he is a Fellow of the American Psychological Association and author of more than seventy scientific articles, book chapters, and papers. He has also written or edited five books, including *Social Psychology: Theories, Research, and Applications* (McGraw-Hill, 1985). A committed teacher, Professor Feldman has taught the introductory psychology course for fifteen years. His spare time is most often devoted to serious cooking and earnest, inelegant (but improving) piano playing. He lives with his wife, also a psychologist, and three children in Amherst, Massachusetts.



USING ESSENTIALS OF UNDERSTANDING PSYCHOLOGY: STRATEGIES FOR EFFECTIVE STUDY

Essentials of Understanding Psychology has been written with the reader in mind, and it therefore includes a number of unique features that will allow you to maximize your learning of the concepts, theories, facts, and other kinds of information that make up the field of psychology. To take advantage of these features, there are several steps that you should take when reading and studying this book. Among the most important:

■ Familiarize yourself with the logic of the book's structure. Begin by reading the Table of Contents. It provides an overview of the topics that will be covered and gives a sense of the way the various topics are interrelated. Next, review the Preface, which describes the book's major features. Note how each chapter is divided into three or four self-contained units; these provide logical starting and stopping points for reading and studying. Also note the major landmarks of each chapter: a chapter opening outline, a Prologue, a Looking Ahead section that includes chapter objectives, Recaps and Reviews of key information following each of the major units, and—at the end of every chapter—a Looking Back section, Key Terms and Concepts, and a Further Study and Application section. Because every chapter is structured in the same way, you are provided with a set of familiar landmarks as you chart your way through new material, allowing you to organize the chapter's content more readily.

■ Use a study strategy. Although we are expected to study and ultimately learn a wide array of material throughout our schooling, we are rarely taught any systematic strategies that permit us to study more effectively. Yet, just as we wouldn't expect a physician to learn human anatomy by trial and error, it is the unusual student who is able to stumble upon a truly effective studying strategy.

Psychologists, however, have devised several excellent—and proven—techniques for improving study skills. By using these procedures—known by the initials “SQ3R” and “MURDER”—you can raise your ability to learn and retain information, not just in psychology but in all academic subjects.

The SQ3R method includes a series of five steps, having the initials S-Q-R-R-R. The first step is to *survey* the material by reading the chapter outlines, chapter headings, figure captions, recaps, and Looking Ahead and Looking Back sections, providing yourself with an overview of the major points of the chapter. The next step—the “Q” in SQ3R—is to *question*. Formulate questions—either aloud or in writing—prior to actually reading a section of the material. For instance, if you had first surveyed this section of the book, you might jot down in the margin, what do “SQ3R” and “MURDER” stand for? The reviews that end each section of the chapter are also a good source of questions. But it is important not to rely on them entirely; making up your own questions is critical. *Essentials of Understanding Psychology* has wide margins in which you can write out your own questions. Such questioning helps you to focus in on the key points of the chapter, while putting you in an inquisitive frame of mind as well.

It is now time for the next, and most traditional, step: to *read* the material. Read carefully and, even more important, actively. For instance, while you are reading, answer the questions you have asked yourself. You may find yourself coming up with new questions as you read along; that’s fine, since it shows you are reading inquisitively and paying attention to the material.

The next step—the second “R”—is the most unusual. This “R” stands for *recite*, in which you look up from the book and describe and explain to yourself, or to a friend, the material you have just read and answer the questions you have posed earlier. Do it aloud; this is one time when talking to yourself is nothing to be embarrassed about. The recitation process helps you to clearly identify your degree of understanding of the material you have just read. Moreover, psychological research has shown that communicating material to others (even imaginary others, if you are reciting aloud to yourself and not a friend) aids you in learning it in a different—and deeper—way than material which you do not intend to communicate. Hence, your recitation of the material is a crucial link in the studying process.

The final “R” refers to *review*. As we will discuss in Chapter 5, reviewing is a prerequisite to fully learning and remembering material you have studied. Look over the information; reread the Recaps and Looking Back summaries; answer in-text review questions; and use any ancillary materials you may have available. (There is both a traditional and a computerized student study guide available to accompany *Essentials of Understanding Psychology*.) Reviewing should be an active process, in which you consider how different pieces of information fit together and develop a sense of the overall picture.

An alternative approach to studying—although not altogether dissimilar to SQ3R—is provided by the MURDER system of Dansereau (1978). Despite the unpleasant connotations of its title, the MURDER system is a useful study strategy.

In MURDER, the first step is to establish an appropriate mood for studying by setting goals for a study session and choosing a time and place in which you will not be distracted. Next comes reading for understanding, in which careful attention is paid to the meaning of the material being studied. Recall is an immediate attempt to recall the material from memory, without referring to the

text. Digesting the material comes next; you should correct any recall errors, and attempt to organize and store newly learned material in memory.

You should work next on expanding (analyzing and evaluating) new material, and try to apply it to situations that go beyond the applications discussed in the text. By incorporating what you have learned into a larger information network in memory, you will be able to recall it more easily in the future. Finally, the last step is review. Just as with the SQ3R system, MURDER suggests that systematic review of material is a necessary condition for successful studying.

Both the SQ3R and MURDER systems provide a proven means of increasing your study effectiveness. It is not necessary, though, to feel tied to a particular strategy; you might want to combine other elements into your own system. If a study system results in your full mastery of new material, stick with it.

■ The last aspect of studying that warrants mention is that *when* and *where* you study are in some ways as important as *how* you study. One of the truisms of the psychological literature is that we learn things better, and are able to recall them longer, when we study material in small chunks over several study sessions, rather than massing our study into one lengthy period. This implies that all-night studying just prior to a test is going to be less effective—and a lot more tiring—than employing a series of steady, regular study sessions. If you have always had trouble with deadlines and have difficulty scheduling regular study sessions, you should also investigate formal time management techniques, discussed in Chapter 4.

In addition to carefully timing your studying, you should seek out a special location to study. It doesn't really matter where it is, as long as it has minimal distractions and is a place that you use *only* for studying. Identifying a special "territory" allows you get in the right mood for study as soon as you begin.

A final comment

By using the proven study strategies presented above, as well as by making use of the pedagogical tools integrated in the text, you will maximize your understanding of this book, and, more importantly, the field of psychology. It is worth the effort: the excitement, challenge, and promise that psychology holds for you is immense.

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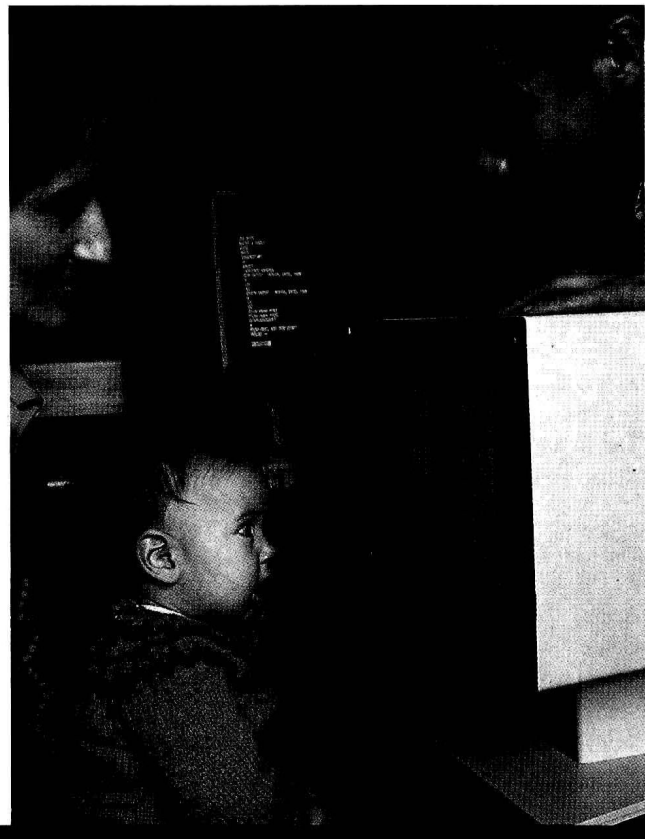
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