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Welcome to the study of Psychology.

In this chapter we will be discussing:

- Psychology's Early and Modern History
- The Diversified Role of Psychology in today's world
- The seven unifying themes of psychology
- And we will also cover how to improve your academic performance and how to develop good critical thinking skills

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The science of Psychology is somewhat of a paradox.

Humans have probably been curious about the workings of the mind from the first prehistoric man. And in today's modern world we are still asking many of the same questions as the ancient Greek Philosophers about our thought processes and behaviors.

But the study of the mind really only emerged as a scientific discipline about 140 years ago.

Wilhelm Wundt founded the first psychology laboratory in Leipzig, Germany in 1879, and is probably the man that most consider as the "father of psychology".

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He believed the mind should be studied by using introspection to define the "immediate experience" or consciousness by breaking it down into the most basic elements. It was dubbed **structuralism**.

William James, an American student of Wundt's had a different theory and believed that psychology should study the **function** of the mind not the structure.

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Although there was a strong European/German foundation in psychology as a new discipline, many of the students there were Americans, like William James.

The movement quickly moved to North American colleges and universities.

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Mary Whiton Calkins founded an early psychology laboratory at Wellesley College and was the first woman president of the APA

Margaret Floy Washburn was the first woman to earned a Ph. D in psychology and authored an influential book, The Animal Mind.

Leta Stetter Hollingworth did pioneering work on adolescent development and the fallacy of women's inferiority

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Sigmund Freud was a Medical Doctor in Austria and is one of the most well-known, influential, and controversial psychologists of all times.

He founded what we know as **psychoanalysis**. His theory: the unconscious, which is all the thoughts, memories and desires that lay hidden just below our awareness is what drives all our behaviors.

His emphasis on hidden sexual desires and aggression are what make his theories so controversial, but very interesting and probably contributed to his becoming so famous.

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Watson strongly disagreed with the ideas of Freud.

He believed that in order for psychology to be a true science, it should only study what can be observed and measured, not the mind. He conducted research to prove his hypothesis that behavior could be molded by the environment one lived in.

Behaviorism became quite popular for a brief time. But Watson left the academic world and became very successful in the field of advertising.

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Skinner's theory states that all organisms tend to repeat behaviors that are rewarded/reinforced and not repeat those that lead to neutral or negative results.

Thus he introduced the idea that we are all products of our environment and there is no such thing as free will.

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Carl Rogers was one of the most notable theorists of the Humanistic approach to the study of psychology.

He believed our behaviors are controlled by our "self-concept", and that all humans have the drive to become the best they can be.

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Freud and his followers like Carl Jung, and Alfred Adler, believed we are controlled by our unconscious desires and wishes stemming from repressed thoughts about sexuality and aggression.

Freud laid the foundation for Psychoanalysis that is still practiced by some clinical psychologists today.

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Originated by Ivan Pavlov in Russia with his study of salivation in dogs, leading to Classical Conditioning where stimulus/response relationships are formed.

John B. Watson and B.F. Skinner, already discussed, continued with the theories that only observable behavior can be studied scientifically. And we are all products of the environment we live in.

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The U. S. Army slogan says it all: "Be all you can be". This fairly well sums up the Humanistic approach to psychology.

Abraham Maslow was a major contributor to this approach to the study of psychology. He designed the Hierarchy of Needs that shows we are motivated to meet our needs on scale shaped like a pyramid with the most basic at the bottom—and we work our way up to the top where we reach full potential.

Carl Rogers, discussed earlier, was also a major force in the Humanistic approach. He believed we all need unconditional positive regard in order to develop a positive self-concept and become all we can be.

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The Cognitive Perspective is all about thoughts and mental processes.

It studies how people acquire, store, and process information.

Famous Developmental Psychologist, Jean Piaget, did not believe that children are born as “blank slates”, but that we start from birth with skills that are specific for each stage of growth and move sequentially through them to adulthood.

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This is also known as the Neuropsychological Perspective.

It is based on the belief that we are merely the result of the function of the physiological processes of the brain and body.

No Brain = no person.

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The tenets of Evolutionary Psychology tell us that we have established patterns of behavior that serve to preserve us as a species.

It views adaptation to one's environment and problem-solving as methods that enhance natural selection of the fittest of a species.

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The relative prominence of four major schools of thought in psychology.

To estimate the relative productivity and influence of various theoretical orientations in recent decades, Joseph Spear (2007) conducted a keyword search of the psychological research literature indexed in PsycINFO to estimate the percentage of articles relevant to each school of thought. Obviously, his approach is just one of many ways one might gauge the prominence of various theoretical orientations in psychology.

Nonetheless, the data are thought provoking. His findings suggest that the cognitive perspective surpassed the behavioral perspective in its influence on research sometime around 1975 and that it has continued as the leading perspective since then. His data also demonstrate that the neuroscience perspective has grown steadily in influence since the 1950s.

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Although psychology had its earliest beginnings in the European arena, the U.S. has dominated the field since then.

Due to globalization and an ever-shrinking world enabled by technological advances, we are more in touch with other cultures than ever before and we are beginning to understand there are other perspectives that are just as valid as our own and should be considered and incorporated into the body of knowledge.

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In the late 1990s Martin Seligman turned away from the predominate thoughts that we needed to study what was wrong with people to understand their behaviors.

He started the **Positive Psychology** movement based on three areas of concern:

1. Positive subjective experiences – emotions like happiness, love, and gratitude
2. Positive individual traits – a person's strengths and virtues instead their shortcomings
3. Positive institutions & communities – how societies can promote strong, healthy, happy environments

Basically it is looking at the glass as half full instead of half empty!

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Membership in the American Psychological Association, 1900–2010. The steep rise in the number of psychologists in the APA since 1950 testifies to psychology's remarkable growth as a science and a profession.

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Employment of psychologists by setting. The work settings in which psychologists are employed have become very diverse. One third of psychologists are in private practice, while 28% work in colleges and universities.

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Major research areas in contemporary psychology. Most research psychologists specialize in one of these nine broad areas.

Clinical psychologists are concerned with the evaluation, diagnosis, and treatment of individuals with psychological disorders, as well as treatment of less severe behavioral and emotional problems.

Counseling psychology overlaps with clinical psychology in that specialists in both areas engage in similar activities - however, counseling psychologists usually work with a somewhat different clientele, providing assistance to people struggling with everyday problems of moderate severity.

Educational psychologists work to improve curriculum design, achievement testing, teacher training, and other aspects of the educational process.

Industrial and organizational psychologists perform a wide variety of tasks in the world of business and industry.

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Principal professional specialties in contemporary psychology.

Most psychologists who deliver professional services to the public specialize in one of the four areas described here. The figures in the pie chart reflect the percentage of APA members delivering professional services who identify each area as their chief specialty. (Based on data published by the American Psychological Association)

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These are the themes that relate to psychology as a field of study.

1. **Empiricism** is the premise that knowledge should be acquired through observation.
2. A **theory** is a system of interrelated ideas used to explain a set of observations. The conclusions in psychology are based on direct observation.
3. Trends, issues, and values in society influence psychology's evolution - putting psychology in both a social and historical context.

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These themes relate to psychology's subject matter.

4. Psychology shows that there are multiple causes of behaviors.
5. Culture - widely shared customs, beliefs, values, norms, and other products of a community - is also a determinant of human behavior.
6. Heredity and environment - or nature and nurture - are both important and have complex connections to human behavior.
7. Motives and expectations color our experience, which can make perception a subjective experience.

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Being a successful student can be achieved, and following a few simple guidelines can help you reach your academic goals.

First – Set up a schedule for studying. Schedule specific dates and times and keep to them – never just wait for the best time or for the “mood to strike you”. It probably won’t.

Second – Find a suitable place to study. One that is free from distractions.

Third – Reward yourself – don’t just wait for the grade – allow yourself to take a break and get a snack when you’ve been working hard.

Be realistic in setting your goals and reward yourself when you meet them.

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1. Make sure you are getting your information from a reliable and valid source
2. Apply the rules of formal logic – don’t resort to emotional pleas and tactics, and always remain civil in discourse
3. Think effectively in terms of probabilities – consider what is likely and what is not and whether they are positive or negative
4. Carefully evaluate the information – be skeptical but not overly so – strike a happy medium
5. Check and recheck to be sure the conclusions that are drawn are sound and meaningful.

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Time management is crucial to success in college.

Many students today work while they attend college.

This can be detrimental since many study hours are lost to jobs which pay very little.