Introduction to Psychology

Chapter 1

Definition

- Psychology – study of human and animal behavior and mental processes
- How people think
- How people feel
- How people behave

Experiencing Psychology: How Much Do You Know About Behavior?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>True</th>
<th>False</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>People are either left-brain or right-brain thinkers.</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genes only affect people during prenatal development.</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For most people, intelligence peaks in their late 30s or early 40s.</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>During sleep, the brain is mostly resting and inactive.</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling good can make you smile, but not the reverse.</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expressing pent-up anger reduces feelings of aggression.</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most relationships follow the idea that “opposites attract”</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

History of Psychology

- 5000 BCE - Assyria - studied dreams
- (falling dream and being chased)
- Ancient greeks – people were dominated by the gods

The Goals of Psychology

- To Describe Behavior
- To Explain Behavior
- To Predict Behavior
- To Control or Change Behavior

The Roots of Psychology – Philosophy

- Plato (427–347 BCE) to René Descartes (1596–1650)
  - Pondered the relationship between the mind and body, and between knowledge and experience
- Empiricists such as Locke (1632-1704)
  - Viewed the mind as a blank slate
- Eventually, philosophical concepts and a physiological understanding of the brain merged into what we now call “psychology”
John Locke

• Empiricism – all knowledge obtained from observation and experience
• Tabula Rosa – blank slate

Jun 5-7:22 AM

Sir Francis Galton 1869

• Hereditary influences
• Believed in nature
• Began nature vs. nurture debate

Jun 5-7:22 AM

von Helmholtz

Made a connections between processing time
Figured out it took a person longer to respond to touching of toe than thigh

Jun 10-8:17 AM

Structuralism – Wilhelm Wundt (1832–1920) and Edward Titchener (1867–1923)

・ Key idea: our consciousness can be broken down into its essential elements

Sep 3-9:33 AM

Psychology as a Science

• Wilhelm Wundt (1879) – mentor of von helmholtz

・ founder of psychology
・ Physiologist but interested in studying the mind
・ First psychology lab measured with a machine reaction times
 Structuralism - mind could be broken down into the smallest elements of mental processes

Jun 5-7:22 AM
William James - Functionalism

- interested in conscious mind - why we do things
- Thinking, feeling, remembering

Psychodynamic Theory – Sigmund Freud (1856–1939)

- Key idea: our behavior is deeply influenced by unconscious thoughts, impulses, and desires
  - Many unconscious drives are sexual or destructive in nature.

B.F. Skinner 1940’s

- Operant conditioning
- Train a voluntary response
- Ideas used to toilet train, lose weight, quit smoking

Humanistic Psychology – Abraham Maslow (1908–1970) and Carl Rogers (1902–1987)

- Key idea: we have free will to live more creative, meaningful, and satisfying lives
Humanistic Psychology
People are innately good
People strive to improve
Only bad when corrupted by society
Abraham Maslow - hierarchy of needs - self-motivation
Carl Rogers - Client-centered therapy (rather than patient)

Key idea: to understand consciousness, we must study the whole, not just its component parts

Cognitive Psychology – Ulric Neisser (1928–2012)
Key idea: how our brain processes information influences how we behave

Biological - physical mechanisms of behavior
Evolutionary - behavior of survival
Cognitive Psychology - thinking/processing information
Social Psychology - social environment/culture
Developmental Psychology - life span
Clinical Psychology - explain/treat disorders

Integrating the Perspectives
The eclectic, or integrated, approach
- Combining several perspectives provides a more complete picture of behavior
- For example, anxiety may be described as:
  - A change in brain chemistry
  - A learned behavior
  - An adaptive response
  - A product of unresolved feelings
  - Rooted in a dissatisfaction with one's self

Perspective of Psychology
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