

Lesson 3: Psychology Perspectives

Lesson Objectives:

- Students will explore different perspectives in psychology.
- Students will examine in more depth areas of specialization.



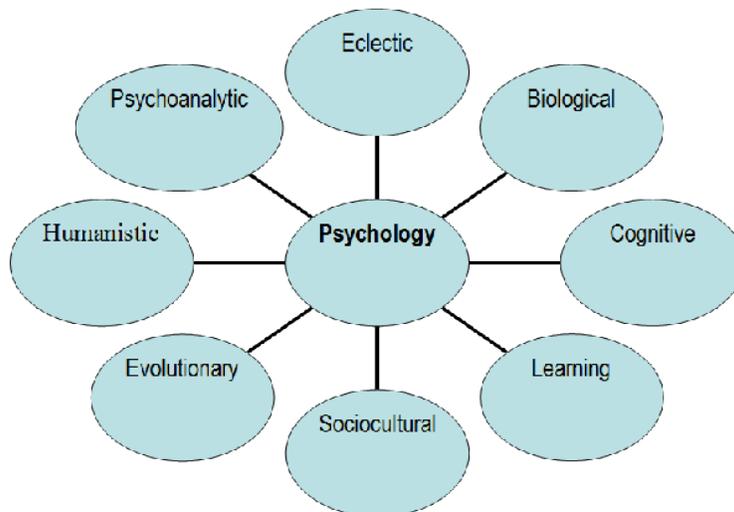
The Greek letter Psi

The pioneers of psychology each had their own interpretations and approaches to this fascinating field. These perspectives have been used to study behavior for years. Psychologists today still follow these same ideas.

In this lesson we are going to:

- Explore different perspectives in psychology
- Examine areas that psychologists specialize in

Perspectives in Psychology



Let's look at the different perspectives in psychology and the individuals who followed these practices.

The study of observable behavior is the proper subject matter of psychology is referring to **learning**. John Watson, Ivan Pavlov and B.F. Skinner adopted this method of thinking.



B.F. Skinner

Skinner epitomizes this approach because he avoids mention of internal states. He only looks at the consequences of behaviors and what actions are reinforced by others.

The **psychoanalytic** approach was used by Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung and Alfred Adler. Psychoanalytic means that in order to understand one's personality, one has to look at the underlying drives and motivations from childhood. One has to look inward and analyze childhood fears, wishes, and thoughts.

The **humanistic** school of thinking is a reaction to the behaviorists. They argue that the focus of psychology should be on the self-concept or the self.

Based on this method, Carl Rogers developed a theory of therapy and Abraham Maslow developed a theory of motivation.

Roger Sperry and James Olds focused on the biological aspects. They looked at **biological** structures that influence everyday behaviors. Things like our genetic make-up, hormones and our nervous system are examples of biological structures.

The **sociocultural** perspective focuses on issues such as, how our thinking varies with our cultural heritage. By this, we mean how does our ethnicity, gender and diversity affect our thinking? It also looks at how our thoughts and perceptions store and interpret information.

Charles Darwin is credited with being the father of **evolutionary** psychology and adaptive survival. The premise here is that certain behaviors, such as aggression are hereditary in nature.

The **cognitive** perspective deals with how our thoughts and perceptions store and interpret information. Our interpretations of a situation might make us angry. The anger then affects our thinking as well. Albert Ellis and Aaron Beck focused on this approach.

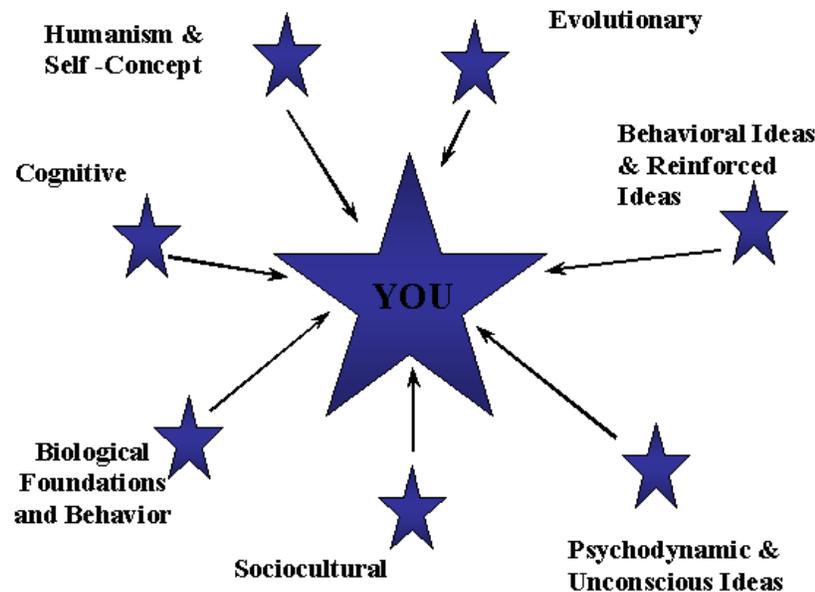
The Eclectic Model

I have just presented the extreme views of behavior.

Most people pick and choose from the previous models and come up with a personal set of values that guide behavior.



*"Thought is action in rehearsal."
-Sigmund Freud*



Subfields in Psychology

Just as there are different ways to study behavior, there are also different areas of focus in psychology that psychologists specialize in. We should keep in mind that subfields in psychology are subject to change as practices in psychology change. The following table outlines the main areas of specialization in psychology:

Subfields in Psychology

Developmental psychologists	Forensic psychologists	Social psychologists
Clinical psychologists	Biological psychologists	Personality psychologists
Experimental psychologists	Consumer Psychologists	Counseling Psychology
School Psychology	Industrial Psychology	Health Psychology

Experimental Psychology focuses on the basic psychological processes of learning, memory, perception, cognition and emotion. Experimental psychologists conduct various types of research to look at these simple processes.

Developmental Psychology explores human development in terms of psychological development. Previously this field focused more on childhood



development. However, as people continue to live longer, they have recognized the importance of studying aging as well.

Health Psychology concentrates on various components of well being including biological, psychological and social aspects. A health psychologist is interested in identifying why people seek certain types of medical treatment; ways people cope with illness; factors that influence people's willingness to comply or not comply with medical advice, etc. In some cases, health psychologists focus on specific health issues affecting a population, such as teen pregnancies, substance abuse, etc. Overall, they are interested in health promoting strategies for one's well-being.

Clinical Psychology is used for treating disorders resulting from either short-term crises or chronic conditions. For example, someone with schizophrenia would receive treatment from a clinical psychologist. Clinical psychologists practice in clinics, community health centers, hospitals or private practice.

Industrial Psychology is utilized for improving productivity in the work place. Industrial psychologists use different methods in psychology to improve upon work quality, employee development, trainings and any other relevant work issues. These psychologists are usually employed in businesses, government agencies and academic settings.

Neuropsychology studies correlations that exist between brain systems and behaviors. This field explores how the brain is able to create and store memories, how the brain is affected by disease and injury, normal brain functions, etc. Neuropsychologists can assess and treat people, especially individuals, who have a brain injury.

Engineering Psychology focuses on people's interactions with machines. What do we mean by this? In today's technology-oriented society, this is an important field. For example, for people that use a computer everyday for work, it can be straining on their eyes. Engineering psychologists look at the design of the computer in terms of preventing eye strain.

Forensic Psychology is a combination of psychological and legal factors. A forensic psychologist is frequently called upon in legal issues where their expertise is needed to help evaluate someone's mental competence to stand trial.

Educational Psychology maintains a focus on effective teaching and learning processes. Educational psychologists use this information to help with curriculum development, and testing and educational procedures. They may be employed through schools, universities or companies that design student tests.

School Psychology serves an important function in both public and private schools. A school psychologist's role is to help students, work with parents and school staff members. School psychologists are instrumental in helping students with emotional and learning problems. Interventions are implemented when needed.



Counseling Psychology helps individuals to deal with changes in their life or with making lifestyle changes. For people that are battling addictions, dealing with the loss of a loved one, a counseling psychologist would be able to help them.

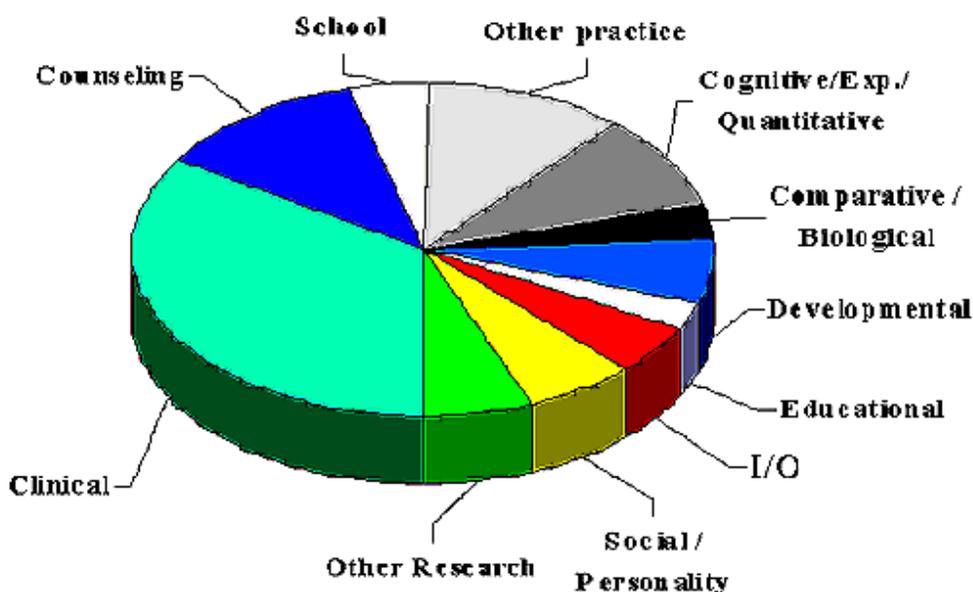
Consumer Psychology studies human responses to product and service experiences. Consumer psychologists look at reasons why people choose to purchase certain products or to not purchase them. How do advertisements, labels, and other factors influence consumer responses? This type of psychologist focuses on consumer behavior and what makes them "tick."

Cognitive Psychology is devoted more to research and studying mental processes. Cognitive psychologists focus more on scientific experiments to learn ways that people interpret and store information. This type of psychology is usually practiced in academic settings or research labs.

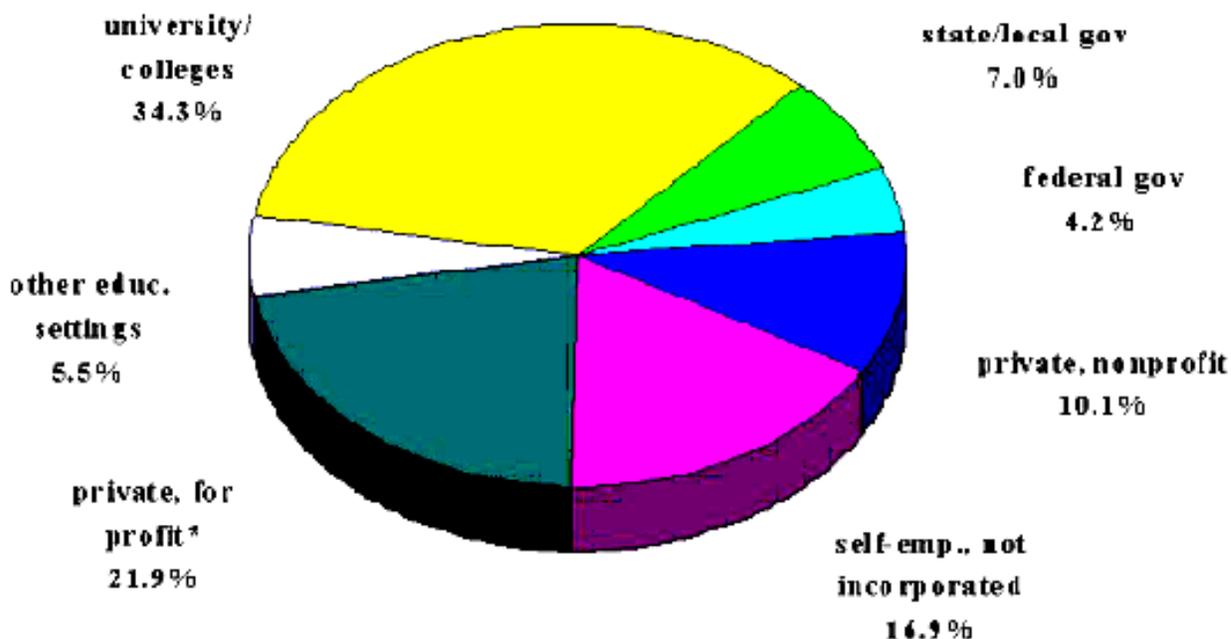
Sports Psychology is a growing field. A sports psychologist works with athletes to help them stay focused, increase their levels of motivation and to effectively deal with the stresses of competition. Sports psychologists usually work as consultants for sports teams or within an academic setting.

Now that we have looked at a brief overview of these specialty areas in psychology, maybe one of them peaked your interest. Take a look at the following charts to see how these areas break down in terms of where other people's interests are and where psychologists work.

New PhDs in Psychology by Subfield: 1999



Source: Graduate Study in Psychology 2000. Compiled by APA Research Office.



DID YOU KNOW?

Everyone has what is called a "working memory," which refers to a very short-term memory. Our working memory stores information in an adequate amount of time for us to understand it and can store on average, seven digits maximum. This function allows us to search for a phone number and remember the number in order to dial it.

Grading for this Lesson:

- To get a 10: In the first submission, assignment questions are completed, facts are correct, responses are thoughtful, presentation is clear, grammar and spelling are correct.
- To get a 9: In the first submission, a few assignment questions are incomplete OR a few facts are incorrect OR a few responses are careless OR there are a few grammar and spelling errors. After prompting, all corrections are made in revisions.
- To get an 8: In the first submission, many assignment questions are incomplete OR many facts are incorrect OR many responses are careless OR there are numerous grammar and spelling errors. After prompting, all corrections are made in revisions.
- To get a 7: After prompting, a few assignment questions remain incomplete OR a few facts remain incorrect OR a few responses remain careless OR a few grammar and spelling errors remain.
- To get a 6: This grade is reserved for administrative use.



To get a 5: Plagiarism, purposeful or mistaken, which will lower your final grade for the course (so be very careful when posting your work!) OR lack of effort, disrespect, or attitude (we are here to communicate with you if you don't understand something). Lesson requirements have been met.

Also be aware that you will have a chance to revise your work. Since revisions result in a lower grade, remember to read the directions carefully and make sure you meet the requirements.

Assignment for Lesson 3

You are to answer the following questions in your own words. Please post the questions with your answers in the text box below to submit your work. Remember to use complete sentences, use proper grammar, and don't forget to proofread and spell check your work before submitting it. This may require additional internet research, so be sure to cite your sources.

1. Ivan Pavlov is famous for his discoveries with classical conditioning. Discuss Pavlov's work with this.
2. Explain what is meant by Freud's dream analysis with repression and the unconscious.
3. Using the sociocultural psychology perspective, think of an example of how one's culture could affect their way of thinking. Explain your example completely.
4. Do some research on Carl Rogers' theory of therapy. Discuss his ideas as well as the three qualities he believed were necessary for an effective therapist.
5. Discuss B.F. Skinner and his ideas with operant conditioning.
6. Based on the cognitive psychology perspective, provide an example of how your interpretation of a situation can affect your thinking. You can either use an actual life experience or make up an example.
7. Discuss Darwin and some of his contributions to evolutionary psychology.
8. Which of the sub fields of psychology interests you most? Support your answer.
9. Do some research to find an actual court case that involved a forensic psychologist. Briefly discuss the case and the significance of the role of the forensic psychologist in the case. How did forensic psychology influence the outcome of the case?



10. John Watson was the first prominent psychologist to first apply psychology to advertising. How do you think his ideas and contributions influenced consumer psychology?

Use complete sentences to explain what the following terms mean in your own words.

11. Freudian slip -

12. Classical conditioning -

13. Operant conditioning -

14. Psychological adaptation -

Think About It

15. B. F. Skinner quoted the following, "The consequences of an act affect the probability of it's occurring again." In your own words, write a 100 word paragraph explaining what you think Skinner meant by this statement.

Please post the questions with your answers in the text box below to submit your work. Remember to use complete sentences, use proper grammar, and don't forget to proofread and spell check your work before submitting it.

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