

Preface

Students take introductory psychology for a variety of reasons, but few of them are motivated primarily by the desire to know what psychologists are doing. They want to know what is relevant to their lives, their futures, and the problems confronting society. They want the subject matter to be pertinent to their own interests as well as to pressing social issues that require intelligent decisions. As in previous editions, we have attempted to write for the student, but in a manner that will satisfy the critical psychologist as well. Our goal has been to be responsive to student interests without sacrificing scientific rigor or scholarship.

To accomplish this goal, we have relied on consultation and feedback from three sources—students, instructors, and specialists in various areas of psychology. To make certain our subject matter was readily comprehensible to students and pertinent to the human issues with which they are concerned, we asked a number of students to comment on each section of the text in terms of interest value, clarity, and level of difficulty. We found their responses helpful and enlightening.

Several college instructors who specialize in teaching the introductory course read the manuscript as it evolved, commenting on its suitability for their students and on any problems they foresaw in teaching the material to beginning psychology students. We also benefited greatly from the many detailed comments and suggestions we received from users of the sixth edition.

To keep abreast of developments in psychological theory and research, we asked experts in the appropriate area to review each chapter. Typically, three or more specialists, outstanding in their field, commented on each chapter in the early stages of revision and in its final form. By such extensive consultation we sought to ensure that the material presented in this book represents accurately the current state of knowledge in psychology.

Users of the sixth edition will recognize that the organization of the book remains essentially the same, with two exceptions. The central elements in the chapter on optimizing learning have been updated and integrated into Chapter 7, "Conditioning and Learning," and Chapter 8, "Remembering and Forgetting." The order of the two chapters in Part Six, "Personality and Individuality," has been reversed, so that intelligence and ability testing are now treated before personality and personality assessment. Although the overall organization is largely unchanged, each chapter has been carefully revised, and a number of them are entirely new.

The idea that psychological problems can be studied from different viewpoints, explicitly introduced in the last edition, has been further elaborated in

this edition. Chapter 1 introduces five approaches to the study of psychology—neurobiological, behavioral, cognitive, psychoanalytic, and phenomenological/humanistic. These approaches reappear in later chapters whenever a particular topic can be examined from several viewpoints. A consideration of alternative approaches provides a cohesive framework for examining a wide array of different phenomena and the theories that have been proposed to explain them.

The chapters written by Professor Daryl J. Bem of Cornell University for the last edition—"Social Psychology" and "Psychology and Society"—received high praise for their interest and clarity. His revisions of these chapters for this edition include provocative and lively new material on such topics as social influence, race prejudice, the mass media, and environmental psychology.

Professor Edward E. Smith of Stanford University has contributed two new chapters in his area of expertise. Chapter 8, "Remembering and Forgetting," is a remarkably well integrated presentation of current theories and research on the three stages of memory—encoding, storage, and retrieval—as they relate to both short- and long-term memory. It also includes material on improving memory, as well as a section on the way we use inferences, stereotypes, and schemata to "construct" memories of complex events. Chapter 9, "Language and Thought," provides a clear and interesting account of the way people form concepts and use them to communicate and to solve problems.

Professors Bem and Smith have had outstanding research careers and are both known as brilliant teachers of the introductory psychology course. We are extremely pleased that they are contributing to this book.

We have tried to cover contemporary psychology in a textbook of reasonable length. But each instructor must design his or her course according to course objectives, type of students, and available time. Even if not all chapters are assigned, students will at least have them for reference. For a short course we believe that it is better to treat a reduced number of chapters fully than to attempt to cover the entire text. Two possible 14-chapter courses are proposed below, one for a course with an experimental-biological emphasis, the other for a course with a personal-social emphasis. These outlines only illustrate possible combinations.

	EXPERIMENTAL- BIOLOGICAL EMPHASIS	PERSONAL- SOCIAL EMPHASIS	CHAPTER
Part One	1	1	The Nature of Psychology
Part Two	2	—	Biological Basis of Behavior
	3	3	Psychological Development
Part Three	4	—	Sensory Processes
	5	5	Perception
	6	6	Consciousness and Control
Part Four	7	7	Conditioning and Learning
	8	8	Remembering and Forgetting
	9	—	Language and Thought
Part Five	10	—	Basic Drives and Motives
	—	11	Human Motivation and Emotion
Part Six	12	12	Mental Abilities and Their Measurement

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	13	13	Personality and Its Assessment
Part Seven	14	14	Conflict and Stress
	—	15	Abnormal Psychology
	—	16	Methods of Therapy
Part Eight	17	17	Social Psychology
	—	18	Psychology and Society

The order of topics can be changed. For example, some instructors feel that student interest can be better aroused by beginning the course with material on personality, abnormal, and social psychology, leaving more difficult topics such as learning, perception, and physiological psychology until later. The authors have experimented with such a scheme in their own teaching and have not found it satisfactory. Beginning with the more personally relevant and intriguing topics may get the course off to a fast start, but it often gives the students a distorted idea of what psychology is about. In addition, many students are ill prepared for, and disgruntled by, the more difficult material when it is sprung on them later in the course. Our preferred approach is to cover the chapter on developmental psychology early in the course, thereby exposing the student to a range of provocative topics in psychology. Then we turn to some of the more technical areas like perception, learning, and motivation, and end the course with personality, abnormal, and social psychology. But each instructor must choose the order of topics he or she finds congenial; the book has been written so that a variety of arrangements is possible.

The many decisions that must be made in teaching the introductory psychology course are skillfully discussed by Professor John C. Ruch of Mills College in the *Instructor's Handbook*. Instructors are urged to obtain a copy of this handbook, which provides valuable information for both the beginning and the experienced instructor, as well as for teaching assistants. As further instructional aids, we have again provided a thoroughly revised *Study Guide with Programmed Units and Learning Objectives*, a *Mastery Study Guide*, which can be used as a self-paced course, a *Mastery Instructor's Guide*, and a new, expanded set of test items.

Our debts of gratitude to those who have helped with the preparation of the book continue to mount. Among the individuals acknowledged on pages viii-ix, we owe special thanks to John C. Ruch, whose advice at every stage of this revision was invaluable.

We are also indebted to Carolyn Young for the dedication with which she undertook the monumental task of typing the manuscript, compiling the references, and checking for errors. Her skill at all of these tasks is unsurpassed. We are thankful too for the patience, skill, and efficiency of our publisher's staff.

Richard Atkinson is currently on leave of absence from Stanford University, serving as Director of the National Science Foundation, Washington, D.C. Since the responsibilities of this position required a total commitment of his time and energy, he did not participate in the preparation of the current edition. He plans to return to research and teaching when his term as Director of the Foundation is completed and to contribute to future revisions of the book.

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