
PREFACE

There is an old story concerning a peasant woman whose shawl kept unraveling at one end, and who kept knitting on an equivalent amount at the other end. After all the material had changed, was it the same shawl? A similar question may be asked of a textbook going into its eighth edition, with each edition thoroughly revised. Is it still the same textbook? The reply in each case is a conditional “yes,” because both shawl and book serve the same purposes today that they served in the past. There is continuity in the midst of change. The purpose of this book has always been to introduce contemporary psychology to the beginning student, in full recognition that between editions both psychology and students change. As a simple measure of the amount of change that occurs in psychology, we note that about 40 percent of the references are new to this edition.

Students take introductory psychology for a variety of reasons, but few of them are motivated by the desire to know what psychologists are doing. Most students are concerned with what is relevant to their lives and their futures and with the problems confronting society. 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 manuscript in terms of interest value, clarity, and level of difficulty. Their responses were 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 from the many comments and suggestions we received from users of previous editions.

To keep abreast of developments in psychological theory and research, we asked experts to review each chapter. Typically, several specialists commented on each chapter in the early stages of revision and in its final form. By such consultation, we sought to ensure that the material represents accurately the current state of knowledge in psychology.

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 all chapters are not assigned, students will at least have them for reference. For a short course, we believe that it is better to treat fewer chapters fully than 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, however.

CHAPTER	EXPERIMENTAL– BIOLOGICAL EMPHASIS	PERSONAL– SOCIAL EMPHASIS
Nature of Psychology	1	1
Neurobiological Basis of Psychology	2	—
Psychological Development	3	3
Sensory Processes	4	—
Perception	5	5
States of Consciousness	6	6
Learning	7	7
Memory	8	8
Language and Thought	9	—
Basic Drives and Motives	10	—
Motivation and Emotion	—	11
Mental Abilities and Their Measurement	12	12
Personality and Its Assessment	13	13
Conflict and Stress	14	14
Abnormal Psychology	—	15
Methods of Therapy	—	16
Individual Social Behavior	17	17
Social Influence	—	18

The order of chapters 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 while leaving more experimental topics such as memory, perception, and physiological psychology until later. The authors have tried this approach but 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 experimental 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 students to a range of provocative topics in psychology. Then we turn to the more technical areas like perception, memory, and motivation, and end the course with per-

sonality, 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 discussed in the *Instructor's Handbook*. Instructors are urged to obtain a copy of this handbook, which is useful for both beginning and experienced instructors, as well as for teaching assistants. As further instructional aids, we have again provided a thoroughly revised *Study Guide* for students and an expanded set of test items.

We are again pleased to include the contributions of our former colleagues at Stanford University, Edward E. Smith and Daryl J. Bem. Professor Smith, who is now at Bolt, Beranek, and Newman, Inc., and Harvard University, was responsible for Chapter 8 (Memory) and Chapter 9 (Language and Thought). Professor Bem, now at Cornell University, has reorganized his two chapters on social psychology. Chapter 17 (Individual Social Behavior) is concerned with how people process social information; Chapter 18 (Social Influence) focuses on group and environmental influences on behavior. These chapters, from two outstanding scientists and teachers, add immeasurably to the quality of this book.

Among the individuals acknowledged on pages ix–xii, we owe special thanks to John Foley, University of California, Santa Barbara, for his contributions to Chapters 4 and 5, and to Edmund Fantino, University of California, San Diego, for his contributions to Chapter 7.

RITA L. ATKINSON
RICHARD C. ATKINSON
ERNEST R. HILGARD