

History & Perspectives

- Distinguish and apply some of the important questions that concern psychologists.
- Distinguish between the contributions of philosophy, the physical sciences, and the six early schools of psychology to the field of psychology.
- Explain the major perspectives of contemporary psychology and how they are interconnected.
- Identify some of the disciplines and types of work that psychologists perform in the field of psychology and explore the APA website.

Questions That Psychologists Ask

Nature versus nurture

- . Are genes or environment most influential in determining the behavior of individuals and in accounting for differences among people? Scientists now agree that both genes and environment play crucial roles in most human behaviors.

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"So, how do you want to play this?
Nature, nurture, or a bit of both?"

Mind versus Body

- The relationship between the mind and body/brain has been debated for centuries and the early predominate belief was that the mind and body were separate entities. This belief became known as the mind-body dualism in which *the body is physical and the mind is nonphysical, mysterious, and somehow controls the body*. The debate of mind versus body does not have an either-or answer; we know today that the mind and body are intricately intertwined.



Automatic versus controlled processing

- Much of our normal thinking, perceiving, and acting occurs through brain processes that work automatically, often because we have learned to do them so well and practiced them so much that they occur whether or not we are aware of their occurrence. For example, as you read these words, your visual system quickly and effortlessly translates black lines on a white background into words that have meaning. This is automatic processing, and you can't avoid it.

Differences versus similarities

To what extent are we all similar, and to what extent are we different? For instance, are there basic psychological and personality differences between men and women, or are men and women by and large similar? And what about people from different ethnicity and cultures? Are people around the world generally the same, or are they influenced by their backgrounds and environments in different ways? Personality, social, and cross-cultural psychologists attempt to answer these classic questions.



Early Psychologists

- Greek philosophers – they questioned nature v nurture and mind v body
- Greek Philosopher Plato (428-347 BC) he sided with nature that knowledge was innate or inborn
- Greek Philosopher Aristotle (384-322 BC) he sided with nurture, children were born an “empty slate “ or tabula rasa

European Philosophers

- Rene Descartes (1596-1650) French philosopher believed mind-body dualism – the mind and body are separate entities
- John Locke (1632-1704) English philosopher is known for empiricism – belief that a newborn's mind is a blank slate

The Early Schools of *Psychology*: *No Longer Active*

School of Psychology	Description	Earliest Period	Historically Important People
Structuralism	Uses the method of introspection to identify the basic elements of "structure" of psychological experiences.	Late 19th Century	Wilhelm Wundt Edward B. Titchener
Functionalism	Inspired by Darwin's work in biology. Attempted to explain behavior, emotion, and thought as active adaptations to environmental pressures. These ideas influenced later behaviorism and evolutionary psychology.	Late 19th Century	William James, John Dewey

Early Schools of Psychology: Still Active and Advanced Beyond

School of Psychology	Description	Earliest Period	Historically Important People
Psychodynamic Psychology	Focuses on the role of our unconscious thoughts, feelings, and memories and our early childhood experiences in determining behavior. Modern psychodynamic psychology has built on Freud's original ideas, and it has also influenced modern neuroscience.	Very late 19th to Early 20th Century	Sigmund Freud, Erik Erikson
Behaviorism	Based on the premise that it is not possible to objectively study the mind. Therefore, psychologists should limit their attention to the study of behavior itself. Contemporary behaviorism is an active field increasingly integrated with cognitive-neuroscience.	Early 20th Century	Ivan Pavlov, John B. Watson, B. F. Skinner
Cognitive Development	Studies the growth of thought and language processes in infants and children. Emphasizes the idea that children are not incompetent adults but think creatively and effectively based on their limited experience in the world. Modern cognitive psychology owes a great deal to these early cognitive development researchers.	1920s	Jean Piaget, Lev Vygotsky
Humanistic Psychology	Emphasizes the development of a healthy, effectively functioning person. Rejects the idea that clinical psychology and other applied areas should focus only on disorders and problems. This school developed ideas of self-actualization, personal responsibility, and human potential. Contemporary positive psychology has been strongly influenced by humanistic psychology.	1950s	Abraham Maslow, Carl Rogers

Structuralism a school of psychology whose goal was to identify the basic elements or “structures” of psychological experience.

- Wundt’s research in his laboratory in Leipzig focused on the nature of consciousness itself.
- Structuralists used the method of introspection
- Introspection involves *asking research participants to describe exactly what they experience as they work on mental tasks, such as viewing colors, reading a page in a book, or performing a math problem.*

Best known of the structuralists

- **Edward Bradford Titchener (1867–1927).** Titchener was a student of Wundt who came to the United States in the late 1800s and founded a laboratory at Cornell University.
- Titchener and his students claimed to have identified more than 40,000 sensations, including those relating to vision, hearing, and taste.



Functionalism

to understand why animals and humans have developed the particular psychological aspects that they currently possess.

- William James and the other members of the functionalist school were influenced by Charles Darwin's (1809–1882) theory of natural selection, which proposed that *the physical characteristics of animals and humans evolved because they were useful, or functional.*
- Although functionalism no longer exists as a school of psychology, its basic principles have been absorbed into psychology and continue to influence it in many ways. The work of the functionalists has developed into the field of evolutionary psychology.

Psychodynamics an approach to understanding human behavior that focuses on the role of unconscious thoughts, feelings, and memories.

- Freud believed that many of the problems that his patients experienced, including anxiety, depression, and sexual dysfunction, were the result of the effects of painful childhood experiences that the person could no longer remember.
- Erik Erikson believe that it is possible to help the patient if the unconscious drives can be remembered, particularly through a deep and thorough exploration of the person's early sexual experiences and current sexual desires. These explorations are revealed through talk therapy and dream analysis, in a process called *psychoanalysis*.

Behaviorism

a school of psychology that is based on the premise that it is not possible to objectively study the mind, and therefore that psychologists should limit their attention to the study of behavior itself.

- The first behaviorist was the American psychologist John B. Watson (1878–1958). Watson was influenced in large part by the work of the Russian physiologist Ivan Pavlov (1849–1936), who had discovered that dogs would salivate at the sound of a tone that had previously been associated with the presentation of food.
- Watson – Little Albert experiment – video
- The most famous behaviorist was Burrhus Frederick (B. F.) Skinner (1904–1990), who expanded the principles of behaviorism and also brought them to the attention of the public at large. He trained pigeons and other animals.

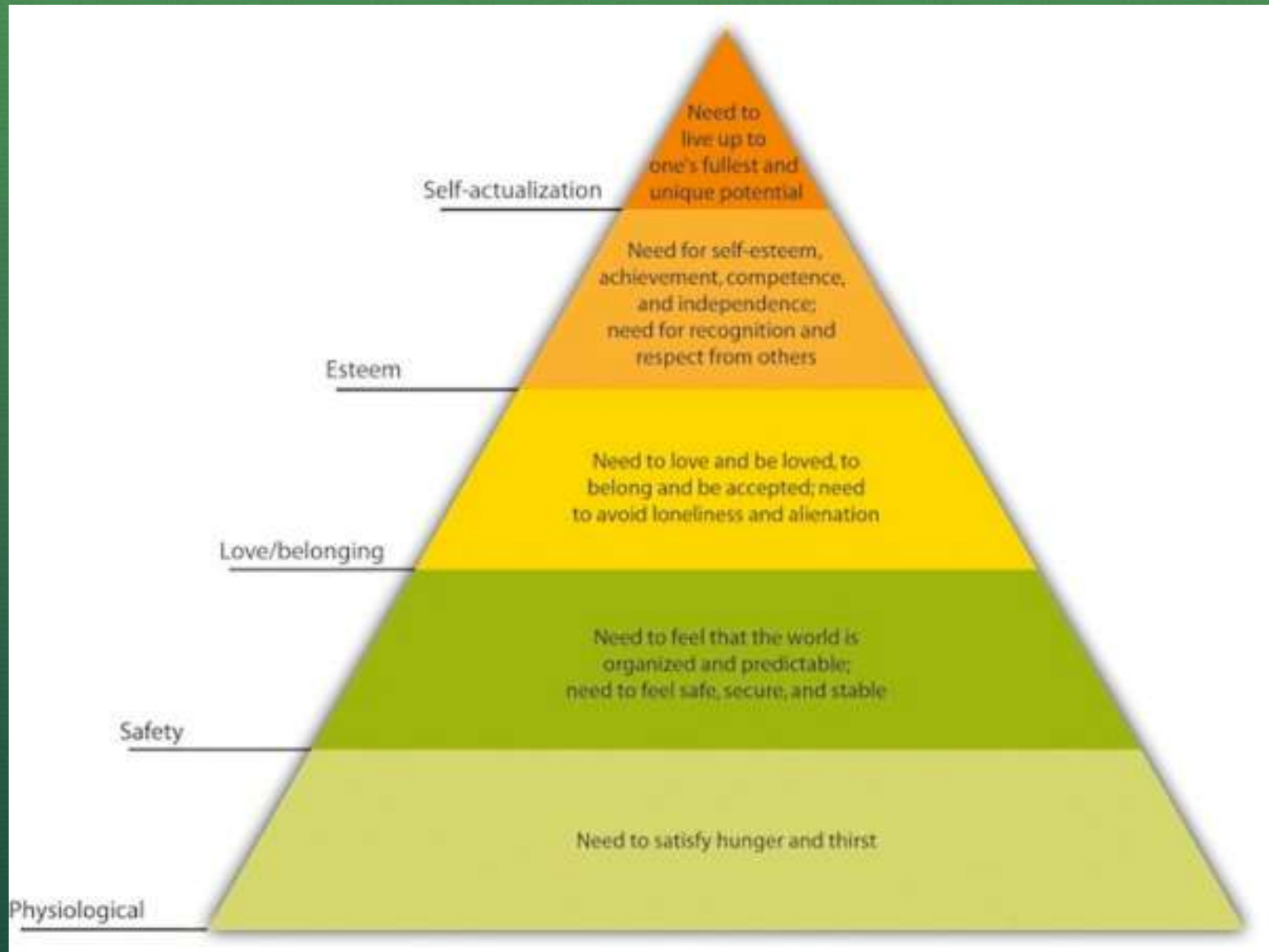
Cognitive psychology a field of psychology that studies mental processes, including perception, thinking, memory, and judgment.

- the strongest impact on contemporary cognitive psychology were two great students of child development: the Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget (1896–1980) and the Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky (1896–1934).
- Piaget - egocentrism, *the child's thinking is centered in his or her own view of the world (not that the child is selfish).*
- Vygotsky's best known contribution was his analysis of the interactions of children and parents that lead to the development of more and more sophisticated thinking.
- Scaffolding *-helps the child reach beyond his or her current level of thinking by creating supports*

Humanistic Psychology

an early school of psychology which emphasized that *each person is inherently good and motivated to learn and improve to become a healthy, effectively functioning individual..*

- Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers are credited for developing the humanistic approach in which they asked questions about what made a person good.
- Abraham Maslow (1908–1970) developed the theory of self-motivation in which we all have *a basic, broad need to develop our special unique human potential, which he called the drive for self-actualization.*
- hierarchy of needs represents *our internal motivation to strive for self-actualization.*



- Carl Rogers (1902–1987), originally a psychodynamic therapist, developed a new therapy approach which he called client-centered therapy. This therapy approach viewed the person, not as a patient, but rather as a client with more equal status with the therapist.