

# Preface



Why do I describe psychology as a discovery experience? Much of my reasoning is very personal: My own study of psychology, including my career in this scientific discipline, has been a true journey of discovery. Growing up in a small town did not offer many opportunities to learn about the social sciences. However, during my first year in college, I was introduced to psychology and became hooked. I spent the following summer reading a stack of psychology books. After my sophomore year I began conducting research, and since then, I am repeatedly reminded that the science of psychology is a valuable way to understand behavior and the process of living on this planet.

What can I offer you as an enticement to read this book? Well, are you interested in becoming more competent in dealing with past, current, and future life events? For example, how do you make sense of what you and everyone else on this planet dealt with during the COVID-19 pandemic? Has this worldwide event changed the way in which you currently approach your daily living, and perhaps even how you might navigate your life in the years to come? Because psychology involves the “study of the mind,” this introductory psychology text and the accompanying course material can help you gain insight into both large and small events in your life by gaining a better understanding not only of other people but also of yourself. Seeking such knowledge is a distinguishing feature of young adulthood, and the college experience is specifically designed to foster this quest. In writing this text, I sought to bring to these pages that same message of hope and discovery that infuses the entire field of psychology. Does this sort of journey interest you?

I have written this text in a way that introduces you to the science of psychology as a journey of discovery, undertaken both by researchers in their search for knowledge over the past century and by students over the course of the term. I explain how psychology has expanded our understanding of how people think, feel, and behave, while also motivating you to apply this knowledge to better understand yourself and others. By regularly encouraging you to consider how psychological knowledge relates to your own life, I place your learning

experience within a personally relevant context that will help you remember course material, while also fostering self-insights that can be applied to your daily living.

The history of psychology is infused with compelling stories of how researchers’ intense interest in learning about the nature of human and animal behavior led them on a journey of discovery that eventually culminated in important new knowledge. The fundamental difference between our personal journeys of discovery and the journeys of discovery found in psychology is that the vehicle employed in the latter journeys is the scientific method. Throughout *Essentials of Psychology*, I present discovery stories in psychology so that you will appreciate both the human element and the ever-evolving nature of scientific knowledge and insight.

Following Chapter 1’s introduction to psychology—which covers the field’s history, areas of specialization, and research methodology—we examine the subject matter spanning the entire field of psychology. Each chapter also includes boxes that discuss selected studies in detail. This emphasis on the scientific enterprise encourages a healthy scientific skepticism of the many, often contradictory, commonsense truisms we learn from others.

One last thing I would like to mention about the stories you will read in this book is that some of them involve personal disclosures about me and my friends and family. Because I am asking you to take this discovery journey with me, I think it is only fair that I share some of my life experiences as they relate to chapter topics. I hope you enjoy these stories and that, in turn, you begin to consider how psychological knowledge can help you understand some of your own past and unfolding life stories.

## Encouraging Self-Discovery

While encouraging you to analyze the scientific journey of discovery in psychology, the text also facilitates a personal journey of discovery by including more than 20 Self-Discovery Questionnaires that ask you to consider how the specific text material relates to your life. Many of these Self-Discovery Questionnaires include self-report surveys that researchers currently use to study

the selected self-discovery topic, and the results of studies employing them are part of the text material. Thus, as you learn about various psychological theories and relevant research findings, you also learn something about yourself.

## Applying Psychology to Everyday Experiences

Beyond self-report questionnaires, I also present a Psychological Applications section at the end of each chapter that demonstrates how psychology can be applied to your life. In these sections, you learn how the theories and research in a particular chapter can be applied to real-world settings. Topics covered in the Psychological Application sections include: developing critical thinking skills, learning how to exercise self-control in your academic and personal life, improving everyday memory, encouraging your creativity, managing your emotions and controlling test anxiety, and many others.

## Encouraging Critical Thinking

You can develop an understanding of yourself and others by reading astrological predictions, internalizing the varied messages of popular culture, and uncritically accepting the advice and “wisdom” of friends, family, and (yes!) college professors. Yet, what is the value of this understanding if it is not subjected to critical cognitive analysis? Critical evaluation is an important component of *Essentials of Psychology*. Throughout the text, critical thinking is facilitated by numerous Closer Look boxes that examine specific chapter topics in greater detail and encourage you to ponder and analyze the research and theory underlying each topic. Each chapter also features Journey of Discovery questions, which require critical analyses of current discussion topics. Possible answers to these questions are provided in the appendix. Strategically placed Info-Bits in each chapter provide additional information on selected topics. Critical thinking is also encouraged by the questions frequently posed in the main body of the text, inviting you to guess a study’s hypotheses, results, or alternative interpretations of findings. Questions that appear in the captions of figures, tables, and photos inspire further analysis of text material. Last, but certainly not least, are the end-of-chapter Practice Quiz questions. These questions test your knowledge of various topics and the end-of-text answers provide immediate feedback on the extent of your understanding.

## Recognizing the Diversity and Unity of People

Integrated within this book’s journey of discovery theme is the encouragement to recognize the ways in which people are both similar to, and different from, one another. *Essentials of Psychology* tells the story of the science of psychology in such a way that you will recognize the “yin-yang” of unity and diversity, whether you are trying to understand the thoughts, emotions, and behavior of your college roommates or those of people from other cultures. This emphasis on diversity can be seen most clearly in the numerous Exploring Culture & Diversity boxes found throughout the book.

The text not only analyzes how culture and our individual developmental experiences influence the way we think, feel, and behave, but also examines how humans, as a species, often respond similarly to their physical and social surroundings. The “yin” in this diversity-unity analysis is the sociocultural perspective, while the “yang” is the evolutionary perspective. The text explains that the culture of a people is based on their relationship with the environment, and the evolution of our species is a story of how we have adapted to our surroundings. Thus, just as our bodies and brains are products of evolutionary forces, so, too, is our culture. Yet, cultural change occurs much more rapidly than genetic change. This is why the world’s cultures vary greatly, despite little meaningful genetic variation among cultural groups.

Two belief systems that explain how individuals relate to their groups, and that are important to understanding the psychology of human behavior, are individualism and collectivism. Individualism is a philosophy of life stressing the priority of personal goals over group goals, a preference for loose-knit social relationships, and a desire to be relatively independent of others’ influence. In contrast, collectivism is a philosophy of life stressing the priority of group needs over individual needs, a preference for tightly knit social relationships, and a willingness to submit to the influence of one’s group. Although we know that cultures differ in their individualist-collectivist orientations, we do not know whether one is better than the other in any ultimate evolutionary sense. *Essentials of Psychology* periodically examines how the psychology of people from different cultures differs due to their individualist-collectivist beliefs. For those chapter topics where the individualist-collectivist analysis is not especially relevant, other more relevant cultural factors are highlighted.

## New to the Seventh Edition

The seventh edition of *Essentials of Psychology* has a good deal of new content, including many new photos, figures, and tables, as well as more than 200 new references. Other significant changes in this new edition include:

### Chapter 1

- New chapter-opening story
- New discussion on pseudoscience

### Chapter 2

- Discussion of how individual differences in the levels of the hormone oxytocin might have affected people's reactions to social distancing measures during the COVID-19 pandemic
- Expanded discussion of sex and gender

### Chapter 3

- New research on the development of self-regulation in children
- Expanded coverage of emerging adulthood
- New research on cross-sex friendships
- New discussion of intensive parenting

### Chapter 4

- Expanded discussion of the olfactory system
- New coverage of inattention blindness

### Chapter 5

- New chapter-opening story
- New coverage of alcohol use disorder

### Chapter 6

- New research on violence in video games

### Chapter 7

- New Closer Look exercise on semantic networks
- Revised discussion of levels of information processing
- Expanded coverage of absentmindedness

### Chapter 8

- New chapter-opening story

### Chapter 9

- New chapter-opening story
- New research on obesity and excessive eating
- Expanded coverage of cultural thinness standards
- New research on gender comparisons in sexual motivation
- New research on sexual assaults

### Chapter 10

- New research on the five-factor model

### Chapter 11

- New research on COVID-19 mental health issues
- New discussion of the stigma surrounding mental illness
- New discussion of clinical depression and the COVID-19 pandemic
- New research on personality disorders

### Chapter 12

- New research on therapy through a managed care system
- New section on Acceptance and Commitment Therapy
- New section on online therapy during the COVID-19 pandemic

### Chapter 13

- New chapter-opening story
- New section on stress experienced by minority groups due to prejudice
- New Closer Look box on stress during the COVID-19 pandemic

### Chapter 14

- New chapter-opening story
- Completely revamped chapter
- New research on the mere exposure effect
- New section on how race-based appearance cues can trigger discrimination
- New section on sexism
- New research on obedience
- New research on the biology of aggression
- New section on aggressive cues triggering violence
- New discussion on how expressing gratitude benefits romantic relationships
- Expanded Psychological Applications section on how the internet can influence voting behavior

## Pedagogical Aids

*Essentials of Psychology* enhances learning with the following pedagogical devices:

1. Each chapter opens with a chapter outline.
2. Short, statement headings compactly summarize the content of chapter sections and facilitate recall of text topics.
3. A bulleted summary at the end of each major chapter section reviews the section's most important concepts.
4. Beautifully rendered, four-color illustrations throughout the text clarify and enhance chapter concepts.
5. Key terms and concepts are highlighted and defined on first appearance. Key terms are also defined in the text margins and listed in alphabetical order with page references at the end of each chapter. A glossary at the end of the book presents all of the definitions alphabetically.
6. Journey of Discovery questions within each chapter require critical analyses of current discussion topics. Possible answers are found online, as well as in the appendix at the end of the book.
7. Info-Bits briefly describe the results from psychological studies that enhance text material.
8. Quotes from famous individuals in other fields illustrate text material.
9. Self-Discovery Questionnaires, Exploring Culture & Diversity boxes, and Closer Look vignettes enhance your understanding of a variety of topics. See the List of Vignettes on pages xv and xvi.
10. Psychological Applications sections help you to apply each chapter's psychological concepts to real-world situations.
11. Suggested websites at the end of each chapter provide online sources that you can access to obtain a better understanding of chapter material.
12. Review Questions at the end of each chapter allow you to check your comprehension of the chapter's major concepts.

## APA Principles for Quality Undergraduate Education in Psychology

The APA Board of Educational Affairs (BEA) has developed a set of principles and recommendations for creating a world-class educational system that provides students with

- the workplace skills needed in the Information Age
- a solid academic background that prepares them for advanced study in a wide range of fields
- the knowledge, skills, and values they will need to enter and succeed in the workforce and thrive in their daily lives.

These principles and recommendations are available at [www.apa.org/education/undergrad/principles.aspx](http://www.apa.org/education/undergrad/principles.aspx)

## Acknowledgments

While writing this text, many people at BVT Publishing provided me with invaluable assistance. First, I would like to thank Publisher and Managing Director Richard Schofield for providing the necessary resources to bring this new edition to fruition. I would also like to thank the many people I worked so closely with while completing this seventh edition: Project Manager Janai Escobedo, Copy Editor Regina Roths, Designer Tim Gerlach, Typesetter Suzanne Schmidt, and Ancillary Coordinator Kristy Williams. All of these talented people did a wonderful job coordinating and organizing numerous book tasks, many of which I was not even aware! I would also like to thank Proofreader Teresa Daly for her work on the project.

## And Finally ...

I welcome your comments and feedback. The prospect of being able to develop a robust exchange of ideas with current users, both students and faculty, is truly exciting. You can reach me at [stephen.franzoi@marquette.edu](mailto:stephen.franzoi@marquette.edu).

*Very best wishes,*  
Steve Franzoi