

Reading report in psychology

Psychology, Behaviorism



Reading Report in Psychology Questions: 1. What are the different schools of thought in Psychology? 2. What are the contemporary approaches to

Psychology? 3. What are the different subfields in Psychology? Answers: 1.

Different Schools of Thought in Psychology a) Structuralism - Structuralism

was the first school of psychology, and focused on breaking down mental processes into the most basic components. Major structuralist thinkers

include Wilhelm Wundt and Edward Titchener. The focus of structuralism was on reducing mental processes down into their most basic elements.

Structuralists used techniques such as introspection to analyze the inner

processes of the human mind. b) Functionalism - Functionalism formed as a

reaction to the theories of the structuralist school of thought and was heavily influenced by the work of William James. Major functionalist thinkers included

John Dewey and Harvey Carr. Instead of focusing on the mental processes themselves, functionalist thinkers were instead interested in the role that

these processes play. c) Behaviorism - Behaviorism became a dominant school of thought during the 1950s. It was based upon the work of thinkers

such as: John B. Watson, Ivan Pavlov, B. F. Skinner. Behaviorism suggests

that all behavior can be explained by environmental causes rather than by internal forces. Behaviorism is focused on observable behavior. Theories of

learning including classical conditioning and operant conditioning were the focus of a great deal of research. d) Psychoanalysis - Psychoanalysis is a

school of psychology founded by Sigmund Freud. This school of thought

emphasizes the influence of the unconscious mind on behavior. Freud

believed that the human mind was composed of three elements: the id, the

ego and the superego. The id is composed of primal urges, while the ego is

the component of personality charged with dealing with reality. The superego is the part of personality that holds all of the ideals and values we internalize from our parents and culture. Freud believed that the interaction of these three elements was what led to all of the complex human behaviors. Freud's school of thought was enormously influential, but also generated a great deal of controversy. This controversy existed not only in his time, but also in modern discussions of Freud's theories. Other major psychoanalytic thinkers include Anna Freud, Carl Jung, Erik Erikson. e) Humanistic

Psychology - Humanistic psychology developed as a response to psychoanalysis and behaviorism. Humanistic psychology instead focused on individual free will, personal growth and the concept of self-actualization. While early schools of thought were largely centered on abnormal human behavior, humanistic psychology differed considerably in its emphasis on helping people achieve and fulfill their potential. Major humanist thinkers include Abraham Maslow & Carl Rogers. Humanistic psychology remains quite popular today and has had a major influence on other areas of psychology including positive psychology. This particular branch of psychology is centered on helping people living happier, more fulfilling lives.

f) Gestalt Psychology - Gestalt psychology is a school of psychology based upon the idea that we experience things as unified wholes. This approach to psychology began in Germany and Austria during the late 19th century in response to the molecular approach of structuralism. Instead of breaking down thoughts and behavior to their smallest elements, the gestalt psychologists believed that you must look at the whole of experience. According to the gestalt thinkers, the whole is greater than the sum of its

parts. g) Cognitive Psychology - Cognitive psychology is the school of psychology that studies mental processes including how people think, perceive, remember and learn. As part of the larger field of cognitive science, this branch of psychology is related to other disciplines including neuroscience, philosophy and linguistics. Cognitive psychology began to emerge during the 1950s, partly as a response to behaviorism. Critics of behaviorism noted that it failed to account for how internal processes impacted behavior. This period of time is sometimes referred to as the "cognitive revolution" as a wealth of research on topics such as information processing, language, memory and perception began to emerge. One of the most influential theories from this school of thought was the stages of cognitive development theory proposed by Jean Piaget.

2. Contemporary Approaches to Psychology

a) Biological Approach - The study of physiology played a major role in the development of psychology as a separate science. Today, this perspective is known as biological psychology. Sometimes referred to as biopsychology or physiological psychology, this point of view emphasizes the physical and biological bases of behavior. This perspective has grown significantly over the last few decades, especially with advances in our ability to explore and understand the human brain and nervous system. Tools such as MRI scans and PET scans allow researchers to look at the brain under a variety of conditions. Scientists can now look at the effects of brain damage, drugs, and disease in ways that were simply not possible in the past.

b) Behavioral Approach - Behavioral psychology is a perspective that focuses on learned behaviors. While behaviorism dominated psychology early in the twentieth century, it began to lose its hold during the 1950s.

Today, the behavioral perspective is still concerned with how behaviors are learned and reinforced. Behavioral principles are often applied in mental health settings, where therapists and counselors use these techniques to explain and treat a variety of illnesses. c) Cognitive Approach - During the 1960s, a new perspective known as cognitive psychology began to take hold. This area of psychology focuses on mental processes such as memory, thinking, problem solving, language and decision-making. Influenced by psychologists such as Jean Piaget and Albert Bandura, this perspective has grown tremendously in recent decades. d) Cross-Cultural Approach - Cross-cultural psychology is a fairly new perspective that has grown significantly over the last twenty years. These psychologists and researchers look at human behavior across different cultures. By looking at these differences, we can learn more about how our culture influences our thinking and behavior. e) Evolutionary Approach - Evolutionary psychology is focused on the study of how evolution explains physiological processes. Psychologists and researchers take the basic principles of evolution, including natural selection, and apply them to psychological phenomena. This perspective suggests that these mental processes exist because they serve an evolutionary purpose — they aid in survival and reproduction. f) Humanistic Approach - During the 1950s, a school of thought known as humanistic psychology emerged. Influenced greatly by the work of prominent humanists such as Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow, this perspective emphasizes the role of motivation on thought and behavior. Concepts such as self-actualization are an essential part of this perspective. g) Psychodynamic Approach - The psychodynamic perspective originated with the work of Sigmund Freud. This view of

psychology and human behavior emphasizes the role of the unconscious mind, early childhood experiences, and interpersonal relationships to explain human behavior and to treat people suffering from mental illnesses. 3.

Different Subfields in Psychology a) Biopsychology - This area of psychology is known by a number of titles including behavioral neuroscience, psychobiology, and neuropsychology. Biopsychologists study the relationship between the brain and behavior, such as how the brain and nervous system impact our thoughts, feeling, and moods. This field can be thought of as a combination of basic psychology and neuroscience. b) Clinical Psychology - Clinical psychology is the largest specialty area in psychology. These psychologists apply psychological principles and research to assess, diagnose, and treat patients with mental and emotional illnesses. Clinicians often work in private practices, but many also work in community centers or at universities and colleges. c) Developmental Psychology - Developmental psychologists study the physical and cognitive development that occurs over the course of the lifespan. These psychologists generally specialize in an area such as infant, child, adolescent, or geriatric development, while others may study the effects of developmental delays. d) Forensic Psychology - Forensic psychologists apply psychological principles to legal issues. This may involve studying criminal behavior and treatments, or working directly in the court system. Forensic psychologists often conduct evaluations, screen witnesses, or provide testimony in court cases. e) Industrial-Organizational Psychology - Psychologists in this field apply psychological principles to research on workplace issues such as productivity and behavior. Some psychologists in this field work in areas such as human factors,

ergonomics, and human-computer interaction. Research in this field is known as applied research because it seeks to solve real world problems. f)

Personality Psychology - Personality psychologists study the characteristic patterns of thoughts, feelings, and behavior that make each person unique.

These psychologists often work in academic settings as instructors or

researchers. g) Social Psychology - Social psychologists study social

behaviors, including how individual self-image and behavior is impacted by interactions with others. These psychologists often conduct research in

academic settings, but others work in such areas such as advertising and

government. h) School Psychology - School psychologists work within the

educational system to help children with emotional, social, and academic issues. These psychologists collaborate with teachers, parents, and students

to find solutions to academic, social, and emotional problems. Most school

psychologists work in elementary and secondary schools, but others work in

private clinics, hospitals, state agencies, and universities. Some go into

private practice and serve as consultants, especially those with a doctoral

degree in school psychology. Submitted by: Weslie L. Villejo BSBA-BM TG0A