

Glossary of Psychology “PSY-502 History & Systems of Psychology”

Innate:

Innate is an adjective meaning inborn (possessed at birth) or inherent.

Determinism:

The doctrine that all events—physical, behavioral, and mental—are determined by specific causal factors that are potentially knowable.

Id:

The primitive, unconscious part of the personality that operates irrationally and acts on impulse to pursue pleasure.

Ego:

The aspect of personality involved in self-preservation activities and in directing instinctual drives and urges into appropriate channels.

Superego:

The aspect of personality that represents the internalization of society's values, standards, and morals.

Repression:

In Psychoanalytic Theory, the defense mechanism whereby our thoughts are pulled out of our consciousness and into our unconscious.

Self Actualization:

The process of understanding oneself more completely and being aware of issues affecting one's life.

Sensorimotor Stage:

The first stage in Piaget's Stages of Cognitive Development where a child's primary way of learning about the world is through the senses and movement.

Stimulus:

Anything in the environment to which one responds.

Fixed Interval Schedule:

A schedule in which the reinforcement is presented after a specific period of time.

Gestalt:

German word typically translated as meaning 'whole' or 'form.'

Insight:

A sudden awareness of the relationship among various elements that previously appeared to be independent of each other.

Density:

The mass of a unit volume of a substance.

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Closure:

If a part of a familiar shape is missing we tend to fill it up, and see the shape as whole, this is closure leading to gestalt. For example, if one of the corners of a star is missing, we tend to fill in the missing part by ourselves and perceive the star as its complete shape.

Similarity:

Element that were alike in their structure would tend to be perceived together, unless there were other factors in the field overriding them.

Proximity:

Here, elements which were close together either in time or space would tend to be grouped together.

Accommodation:

According to Piaget, the process of restructuring or modifying cognitive structures so that new information can fit into them more easily; this process works in tandem with assimilation.

Assimilation:

According to Piaget, the process whereby new cognitive elements are fitted in with old elements or modified to fit more easily; this process works in tandem with accommodation.

Behavior:

The actions by which an organism adjusts to its environment.

Behaviorism:

A scientific approach that limits the study of psychology to measurable or observable behavior.

Behaviorist perspective:

The psychological perspective primarily concerned with observable behavior that can be objectively recorded and with the relationships of observable behavior to environmental stimuli.

Classical conditioning:

A type of learning in which a behavior (conditioned response) comes to be elicited by a stimulus (conditioned stimulus) that has acquired its power through an association with a biologically significant stimulus (unconditioned stimulus). Conditioned response (CR): In classical conditioning, a response elicited by some previously neutral stimulus that occurs as a result of pairing the neutral stimulus with an unconditioned stimulus. Conditioned stimulus (CS): In classical conditioning, a previously neutral stimulus that comes to elicit a conditioned response.

Conditioning:

The ways in which events, stimuli, and behavior become associated with one another.

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Difference threshold:

The smallest physical difference between two stimuli that can still be recognized as a difference; operationally defined as the point at which the stimuli are recognized as different half of the time.

Phi phenomenon:

The simplest form of apparent motion, the movement illusion in which one or more stationary lights going on and off in succession are perceived as a single moving light.

Psychology:

The scientific study of the behavior of individuals and their mental processes.

Psychodynamic perspective:

A psychological model in which behavior is explained in terms of past experiences and motivational forces; actions are viewed as stemming from inherited instincts, biological drives, and attempts to resolve conflicts between personal needs and social requirements.

Reflex:

An unlearned response elicited by specific stimuli that have biological relevance for an organism.

Schedules of reinforcement:

In operant conditioning, the patterns of delivering and withholding reinforcement.

Schemes:

Piaget's term for cognitive structures that develop as infants and young children learn to interpret the world and adapt to their environment.

Absolute threshold:

The minimum amount of physical energy needed to produce a reliable sensory experience; operationally defined as the stimulus level at which a sensory signal is detected half the time.

Apparent motion:

A movement illusion in which one or more stationary lights going on and off in succession are perceived as a single moving light; the simplest form of apparent motion is the phi phenomenon.

Reinforcer:

Any stimulus that, when made contingent upon a response, increases the probability of that response.

Animism:

It is process of attaching human characteristics and qualities to inanimate objects. The belief that nonliving objects and phenomena (such as clouds etc) are inhabited and motivated by a nonphysical agent is known as Animism.

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yoga:

An ancient system of practices originating in India. It is aimed at integrating mind, body and spirit to enhance health and well-being. There are many different forms of yoga. Hatha yoga — the most widely practised form of yoga in the Western world — uses specific postures and breathing exercises.

Structuralism:

The study of the structure of mind and behavior; the view that all human mental experience can be understood as a combination of simple elements or events.

Functionalism:

An early approach to psychology that concentrated on what the mind does—the functions of mental activity—and the role of behavior in allowing people to adapt to their environment.

Gestalt psychology:

An approach to psychology that focuses on the organization of perception and thinking in a “whole” sense, rather than on the individual elements of perception.

Free will:

The human ability to make decisions about one’s life.

Unconscious:

The domain of the psyche that stores repressed urges and primitive impulses.

Humanistic perspective:

A psychological model that emphasizes an individual's phenomenal world and inherent capacity for making rational choices and developing to maximum potential.

Consciousness:

Awareness of yourself and the world around you.

Law of Effect:

Theory proposed by Thorndike stating that those responses that are followed by a positive consequence will be repeated more frequently than those that are not.

Preoperational Stage:

Piaget's second stage of cognitive development in which a child develops objects permanency and language.

Fixed Ratio Schedule:

A schedule in which the reinforcement is presented after a specific number of responses.

Introspection:

A procedure used to study the structure of the mind, in which the subjects are asked to describe in detail what they are experiencing when they are exposed to a stimulus.

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History:

External events that take place during a research study that are not part of the study but have an effect on the outcome.

Catharsis:

The emotional release associated with the expression of unconscious conflicts.

Projection:

In Psychoanalytic Theory, the defense mechanism whereby we transfer or project our feelings about one person onto another.

Psychoanalysis:

Developed by Sigmund Freud, this type of therapy is known for long term treatment, typically several times per week, where the unresolved issues from the individual's childhood are analyzed and resolved. These issues are considered to be primarily unconscious in nature and are kept from consciousness through a complex defense system.

Psychoanalytic Theory:

Theory developed by Freud consisting of the structural model of personality, topographical model of personality, defense mechanisms, drives, and the psychosexual stages of development. The primary driving force behind the theory is the id, ego and superego and the division of consciousness into the conscious mind, the pre/subconscious, and the unconscious.

Acquisition:

The stage in a classical conditioning experiment during which the conditioned response is first elicited by the conditioned stimulus.

Ageism:

Prejudice against older people, similar to racism and sexism in its negative stereotypes.

Algorithm:

A step-by-step procedure that always provides the right answer for a particular type of problem.

Ambiguity:

A perceptual object that may have more than “one interpretation.

Amygdala:

The part of the limbic system that controls emotion, aggression, and the formation of emotional memory.

Analytic psychology:

A branch of psychology that views the person as a constellation of compensatory internal forces in a dynamic balance.

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Anchoring heuristic:

An insufficient adjustment up or down from an original starting value when judging the probable value of some event or outcome.

Animal cognition:

The cognitive capabilities of nonhuman animals; researchers trace the development of cognitive capabilities across species and the continuity of capabilities from nonhuman to human animals

Anticipatory coping:

Efforts made in advance of a potentially stressful event to overcome, reduce, or tolerate the imbalance between perceived demands and available resources.

Anxiety disorders:

Mental disorders marked by physiological arousal, feelings of tension, and intense apprehension without apparent reason.

Anxiety:

An intense emotional response caused by the preconscious recognition that a repressed conflict is about to emerge into consciousness.

Archetype:

A universal, inherited, primitive, and symbolic representation of a particular experience or object

Attention:

A state of focused awareness on a subset of the available perceptual information.

Automatic processes:

Processes that do not require attention; they can often be performed along with other tasks without interference.

Aversion therapy:

A type of behavioral therapy used to treat individuals attracted to harmful stimuli; an attractive stimulus is paired with a noxious stimulus in order to elicit a negative reaction to the target stimulus.

Behavior analysis:

The area of psychology that focuses on the environmental determinants of learning and behavior.

Behavioral rehearsal:

Procedures used to establish and strengthen basic skills; as used in social-skills training programs, requires the client to rehearse a desirable behavior sequence mentally.

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Biofeedback:

A self-regulatory technique by which an individual acquires voluntary control over nonconscious biological processes.

Biopsychosocial model:

A model of health and illness that suggests that links among the nervous system, the immune system, behavioral styles, cognitive processing, and environmental factors can put people at risk for illness.

Blocking:

A phenomenon in which an organism does not learn a new stimulus that signals an unconditioned stimulus, because the new stimulus is presented simultaneously with a stimulus that is already effective as a signal.

Body image:

The subjective experience of the appearance of one's body.

Case study:

Intensive observation of a particular individual or small group of individuals. Central nervous system (CNS): The part of the nervous system consisting of the brain and spinal cord.

Centration:

A thought pattern common during the beginning of the preoperational stage of cognitive development; characterized by the child's inability to take more than one perceptual factor into account at the same time.

Child-directed speech:

A special form of speech with an exaggerated and high-pitched intonation that adults use to speak to infants and young children.

Chronic stress:

A continuous state of arousal in which an individual perceives demands as greater than the inner and outer resources available for dealing with them.

Chronological age:

The number of months or years since an individual's birth.

Chunking:

The process of taking single items of information and recoding them on the basis of similarity or some other organizing principle.

Client:

The term used by clinicians who think of psychological disorders as problems in living, and not as mental illnesses, to describe those being treated.

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Client-centered therapy:

A humanistic approach to treatment that emphasizes the healthy psychological growth of the individual; based on the assumption that all people share the basic tendency of human nature toward self-actualization.

Cognition:

Processes of knowing, including attending, remembering, and reasoning; also the content of the processes, such as concepts and memories.

Cognitive appraisal theory of emotion:

A theory stating that the experience of emotion is the joint effect of physiological arousal and cognitive appraisal, which serves to determine how an ambiguous inner state of arousal will be labeled.

Cognitive behavior modification:

A therapeutic approach that combines the cognitive emphasis on the role of thoughts and attitudes influencing motivations and response with the behavioral emphasis on changing performance through modification of reinforcement contingencies.

Cognitive development:

The development of processes of knowing, including imagining, perceiving, reasoning, and problem solving.

Cognitive map:

A mental representation of physical space.

Cognitive perspective:

The perspective on psychology that stresses human thought and the processes of knowing, such as attending, thinking, remembering, expecting, solving problems, fantasizing, and consciousness.

Cognitive processes:

Higher mental processes, such as perception, memory, language, problem solving, and abstract thinking.

Cognitive psychology:

The study of higher mental processes such as attention, language use, memory, perception, problem solving, and thinking.

Cognitive therapy:

A type of psychotherapeutic treatment that attempts to change feelings and behaviors by changing the way a client thinks about or perceives significant life experiences.

Collective unconscious:

The part of an individual's unconscious that is inherited, evolutionarily developed, and common to all members of the species.

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Comorbidity:

The experience of more than one disorder at the same time.

Concepts:

Mental representations of kinds or categories of items or ideas.

Conditioned reinforcers:

In classical conditioning, formerly neutral stimuli that have become reinforcers.

Conformity:

The tendency for people to adopt the behaviors, attitudes, and values of other members of a reference group.

Conservation:

According to Piaget, the understanding that physical properties do not change when nothing is added or taken away, even though appearances may change.

Consistency paradox:

The observation that personality ratings across time and among different observers are consistent, while behavior ratings across situations are not consistent.

Correlation coefficient (r):

A statistic that indicates the degree of relationship between two variables.

Correlational methods:

Research methodologies that determine to what extent two variables, traits, or attributes are related.

Covariation principle:

A theory that suggests that people attribute a behavior to a causal factor if that factor was present whenever the behavior occurred but was absent whenever it did not occur.

Criterion validity:

The degree to which test scores indicate a result on a specific measure that is consistent with some other criterion of the characteristic being assessed; also known as predictive validity.

Cross-sectional design:

A research method in which groups of participants of different chronological ages are observed and compared at a given time.

Crystallized intelligence:

The facet of intelligence involving the knowledge a person has already acquired and the ability to access that knowledge; measures by vocabulary, arithmetic, and general information tests.

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Debriefing:

A procedure conducted at the end of an experiment in which the researcher provides the participant with as much information about the study as possible and makes sure that no participant leaves feeling confused, upset, or embarrassed.

Decision making:

The process of choosing between alternatives; selecting or rejecting available options.

Developmental age:

The chronological age at which most children show a particular level of physical or mental development.

Descriptive statistics:

Statistical procedures that are used to summarize sets of scores with respect to central tendencies, variability, and correlations.

Developmental psychology:

The branch of psychology concerned with interaction between physical and psychological processes and with stages of growth from conception throughout the entire life span.

Dissociative disorder:

A personality disorder marked by a disturbance in the integration of identity, memory, or consciousness.

Divergent thinking:

An aspect of creativity characterized by an ability to produce unusual but appropriate responses to problems.

Dream analysis:

The psychoanalytic interpretation of dreams used to gain insight into a person's unconscious motives or conflicts.

Drives:

Internal states that arise in response to a disequilibrium in an animal's physiological needs.

DSM-IV-TR:

The current diagnostic and statistical manual of the American Psychiatric Association that classifies, defines, and describes mental disorders.

Ego defense mechanisms:

Mental strategies (conscious or unconscious) used by the ego to defend itself against conflicts experienced in the normal course of life.

Egocentrism:

In cognitive development, the inability of a young child at the preoperational stage to take the perspective of another person.

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Emotion:

A complex pattern of changes, including physiological arousal, feelings, cognitive processes, and behavioral reactions, made in response to a situation perceived to be personally significant.

Etiology:

The causes of, or factors related to, the development of a disorder.

Evolutionary perspective:

The approach to psychology that stresses the importance of behavioral and mental adaptiveness, based on the assumption that mental capabilities evolved over millions of years to serve particular adaptive purposes.

Expectancy theory:

A cognitive theory of work motivation that proposes that workers are motivated when they expect their efforts and job performance to result in desired outcomes.

Extinction:

In conditioning, the weakening of a conditioned association in the absence of a reinforcer or unconditioned stimulus.

Face validity:

The degree to which test items appear to be directly related to the attribute the researcher wishes to measure.

Fear:

A rational reaction to an objectively identified external danger that may induce a person to flee or attack in self-defense.

Figure:

Object-like regions of the visual field that are distinguished from background.

Fixation:

A state in which a person remains attached to objects or activities more appropriate for an earlier stage of psychosexual development.

Fixed-interval schedule:

A schedule of reinforcement in which a reinforcer is delivered for the first response made after a fixed period of time.

Fixed-ratio schedule: A schedule of reinforcement in which a reinforcer is delivered for the first response made after a fixed number of responses.

Flooding: A therapy for phobias in which clients are exposed, with their permission, to the stimuli most frightening to them.

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Fluid intelligence:

The aspect of intelligence that involves the ability to see complex relationships and solve problems.

Foundational theories:

Frameworks for initial understanding formulated by children to explain their experiences of the world.

Free association:

The therapeutic method in which a patient gives a running account of thoughts, wishes, physical sensations, and mental images as they occur. Fundamental attribution error (FATEhe):d ual tendency of observers to underestimate the impact of situational factors and to overestimate the influence of dispositional factors on a person's behavior.

Genetics:

The study of the inheritance of physical and psychological traits from ancestors.

Heredity:

The biological transmission of traits from parents to offspring.

Heuristics:

Cognitive strategies, or “rules of thumb,” often used as shortcuts in solving a complex inferential task.

Hierarchy of needs:

Maslow's view that basic human motives form a hierarchy and that the needs at each level of the hierarchy must be satisfied before the next level can be achieved; these needs progress from basic biological needs to the need for transcendence.

Hormones:

The chemical messengers, manufactured and secreted by the endocrine glands, that regulate metabolism and influence body growth, mood, and sexual characteristics.

Hypnosis:

An altered state of awareness characterized by deep relaxation, susceptibility to suggestions, and changes in perception, memory, motivation, and self-control.

Hypothesis:

A tentative and testable explanation of the relationship between two (or more) events or variables; often stated as a prediction that a certain outcome will result from specific conditions.

Iconic memory:

Sensory memory in the visual domain; allows large amounts of information to be stored for very brief durations.

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Identification and recognition:

Two ways of attaching meaning to percepts.

Illusion:

An experience of a stimulus pattern in a manner that is demonstrably incorrect but shared by others in the same perceptual environment.

Implosion therapy:

A behavioral therapeutic technique that exposes a client to anxiety-provoking stimuli, through his or her own imagination, in an attempt to extinguish the anxiety associated with the stimuli.

Incentives:

External stimuli or rewards that motivate behavior although they do not relate directly to biological needs.

Independent variable:

In experimental settings, the stimulus condition whose values are free to vary independently of any other variable in the situation.

Inferences:

Missing information filled in on the basis of a sample of evidence or on the basis of prior beliefs and theories.

Inferential statistics:

Statistical procedures that allow researchers to determine whether the results they obtain support their hypotheses or can be attributed just to chance variation.

Insight therapy:

A technique by which the therapist guides a patient toward discovering insights between present symptoms and past origins.

Insomnia:

The chronic inability to sleep normally; symptoms include difficulty in falling asleep, frequent waking, inability to return to sleep, and early-morning awakening.

Intelligence quotient (IQ):

An index derived from standardized tests of intelligence; originally obtained by dividing an individual's mental age by chronological age and then multiplying by 100; now directly computed as an IQ test score.

Intelligence:

The global capacity to profit from experience and to go beyond given information about the environment.

Interference:

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A memory phenomenon that occurs when retrieval cues do not point effectively to one specific memory.

Intimacy:

The capacity to make a full commitment—sexual, emotional, and moral—to another person. Just noticeable difference (JND) T: he smallest difference between two sensations that allows them to be discriminated.

Kinesthetic sense:

Sense concerned with bodily position and movement of the body parts relative to each other.

Latent content:

In Freudian dream analysis, the hidden meaning of a dream.

Law of proximity:

A law of grouping that states that the nearest, or most proximal, elements are grouped together.

Law of similarity:

A law of grouping that states that the most similar elements are grouped together.

Learned helplessness:

A general pattern of nonresponding in the presence of noxious stimuli that often follows after an organism has previously experienced noncontingent, inescapable aversive stimuli.

Learning:

A process based on experience that results in a relatively permanent change in behavior or behavioral potential.

Libido:

The psychic energy that drives individuals toward sensual pleasures of all types, especially sexual ones.

Lightness constancy:

The tendency to perceive the whiteness, grayness, or blackness of objects as constant across changing levels of illumination.

Long-term memory (LTM):

Memory processes associated with the preservation of information for retrieval at any later time

Lucid dreaming:

The theory that conscious awareness of dreaming is a learnable skill that enables dreamers to control the direction and content of their dreams.

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Manifest content:

In Freudian dream analysis, the surface content of a dream, which is assumed to mask the dream's actual meaning

Mean:

The arithmetic average of a group of scores; the most commonly used measure of central tendency.

Median:

The score in a distribution above and below which lie 50 percent of the other scores; a measure of central tendency.

Meditation:

A form of consciousness alteration designed to enhance self-knowledge and well-being through reduced self-awareness.

Memory:

The mental capacity to encode, store, and retrieve information.

Mental age:

In Binet's measure of intelligence, the age at which a child is performing intellectually, expressed in terms of the average “age at which normal children achieve a particular score.

Mental retardation:

Condition in which individuals have IQ scores 70 to 75 or below and also demonstrate limitations in the ability to bring adaptive skills to bear on life tasks.

Motivation:

The process of starting, directing, and maintaining physical and psychological activities; includes mechanisms involved in preferences for one activity over another and the vigor and persistence of responses

Motor neurons:

The neurons that carry messages away from the central nervous system toward the muscles and glands.

Natural selection:

Darwin's theory that favorable adaptations to features of the environment allow some members of a species to reproduce more successfully than others.

Nature–nurture controversy:

The debate concerning the relative importance of heredity (nature) and learning or experience (nurture) in determining development and behavior.

Need for achievement:

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An assumed basic human need to strive for achievement of goals that motivates a wide range of behavior and thinking.

Negative punishment:

A behavior is followed by the removal of an appetitive stimulus, decreasing the probability of that behavior.

Negative reinforcement:

A behavior is followed by the removal of an aversive stimulus, increasing the probability of that behavior.

Nonconscious:

Information not typically available to consciousness or memory.

Object permanence:

The recognition that objects exist independently of an individual's action or awareness; an important cognitive acquisition of infancy.

Object relations theory:

Psychoanalytic theory that originated with Melanie Klein's view that the building blocks of how people experience the world emerge from their relations to loved and hated objects (significant people in their lives).

Observational learning:

The process of learning new responses by watching the behavior of another.

Observer bias:

The distortion of evidence because of the personal motives and expectations of the viewer.

Operant:

Behavior emitted by an organism that can be characterized in terms of the observable effects it has on the environment.

Operant conditioning:

Learning in which the probability of a response is changed by a change in its consequences.

Operant extinction:

When a behavior no longer produces predictable consequences, its return to the level of occurrence it had before operant conditioning.

Operational definition:

A definition of a variable or condition in terms of the specific operation or procedure used to determine its presence.

Opponent-process theory:

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The theory that all color experiences arise from three systems, each of which includes two “opponent” elements (red versus green, blue versus yellow, and black versus white).

Organizational psychologists:

Psychologists who study various aspects of the human work environment, such as communication among employees, socialization or enculturation of workers, leadership, job satisfaction, stress and burnout, and overall quality of life.

Orientation constancy:

The ability to perceive the actual orientation of objects in the real world despite their varying orientation in the retinal image.

Pain: The body's response to noxious stimuli that are intense enough to cause, or threaten to cause, tissue damage.

Parallel processes:

Two or more mental processes that are carried out simultaneously.

Partial reinforcement effect:

The behavioral principle that states that responses acquired under intermittent reinforcement are more difficult to extinguish than those acquired with continuous reinforcement.

Patient:

The term used by those who take a biomedical approach to the treatment of psychological problems to describe the person being treated.

Perceived control:

The belief that one has the ability to make a difference in the course or the consequences of some event or experience; often helpful in dealing with stressors.

Perceptual organization:

The processes that put sensory information together to give the perception of a coherent scene over the whole visual field.

Peripheral nervous system (PNS):

The part of the nervous system composed of the spinal and cranial nerves that connect the body's sensory receptors to the CNS and the CNS to the muscles and glands.

Personality:

The unique psychological qualities of an individual that influence a variety of characteristic behavior patterns (both overt and covert) across different situations and over time.

Personality inventory:

A self-report questionnaire used for personality assessment that includes a series of items about personal thoughts, feelings, and behaviors.

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Personality types:

Distinct patterns of personality characteristics used to assign people to categories; qualitative differences, rather than differences in degree, used to discriminate among people.

Persuasion:

Deliberate efforts to change attitudes.

Phenotype:

The observable characteristics of an organism, resulting from the interaction between the organism's genotype and its environment.

Phobia:

A persistent and irrational fear of a specific object, activity, or situation that is excessive and unreasonable, given the reality of the threat.

Physical development:

The bodily changes, maturation, and growth that occur in an organism starting with conception and continuing across the life span.

Physiological dependence:

The process by which the body becomes adjusted to and dependent on a drug.

Pitch:

Sound quality of highness or lowness; primarily dependent on the frequency of the sound wave.

Pituitary gland:

Located in the brain, the gland that secretes growth hormone and influences the secretion of hormones by other endocrine glands.

Place theory:

The theory that different frequency tones produce maximum activation at different locations along the basilar membrane, with the result that pitch can be coded by the place at which activation occurs.

Placebo control:

An experimental condition in which treatment is not administered; it is used in cases where a placebo effect might occur.

Pons:

The region of the brain stem that connects the spinal cord with the brain and links parts of the brain to one another.

Positive punishment:

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A behavior is followed by the presentation of an aversive stimulus, decreasing the probability of that behavior.

Positive reinforcement:

A behavior is followed by the presentation of an appetitive stimulus, increasing the probability of that behavior

Possible selves:

The ideal selves that a person would like to become, the selves a person could become, and the selves a person is afraid of becoming; components of the cognitive sense of self.

Posttraumatic stress disorder:

An anxiety disorder characterized by the persistent reexperience of traumatic events through distressing recollections, dreams, hallucinations, or dissociative flashbacks; develops in response to rapes, life-threatening events, severe injuries, and natural disasters.

Preconscious memories:

Memories that are not currently conscious but that can easily be called into consciousness when necessary.

Prejudice:

A learned attitude toward a target object, involving negative affect (dislike or fear), negative beliefs (stereotypes) that justify the attitude, and a behavioral intention to avoid, control, dominate, or eliminate the target object.

Primacy effect: Improved memory for items at the start of a list.

Problem solving:

Thinking that is directed toward solving specific problems and that moves from an initial state to a goal state by means of a set of mental operations.

Prototype:

The most representative example of a category

Psychiatrist:

An individual who has obtained an M.D. degree and also has completed postdoctoral specialty training in mental and emotional disorders; a psychiatrist may prescribe medications for the treatment of psychological disorders.

Psychoactive drugs:

Chemicals that affect mental processes and behavior by temporarily changing conscious awareness of reality.

Psychoanalyst:

An individual who has earned either a Ph.D. or an M.D. degree and has completed postgraduate training in the Freudian approach to understanding and treating mental disorders.

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Psychological assessment:

The use of specified procedures to evaluate the abilities, behaviors, and personal qualities of people.

Psychologist:

An individual with a doctoral degree in psychology from an organized, sequential program in a regionally accredited university or professional school.

Psychometrics:

The field of psychology that specializes in mental testing.

Psychopharmacology:

The branch of psychology that investigates the effects of drugs on behavior.

Psychosurgery:

A surgical procedure performed on brain tissue to alleviate a psychological disorder.

Puberty:

The attainment of sexual maturity; indicated for girls by menarche and for boys by the production of live sperm and the ability to ejaculate.

Rational-emotive therapy (RET) A:

comprehensive system of personality change based on changing irrational beliefs that cause undesirable, highly charged emotional reactions such as severe

Reasoning:

The process of thinking in which conclusions are drawn from a set of facts; thinking directed toward a given goal or objective.

Reinforcement contingency:

A consistent relationship between a response and the changes in the environment that it produces.

Reliability:

The degree to which a test produces similar scores each time it is used; stability or consistency of the scores produced by an instrument.

Reticular formation:

The region of the brain stem that alerts the cerebral cortex to incoming sensory signals and is responsible for maintaining consciousness and awakening from sleep.

Reversal theory:

Theory that explains human motivation in terms of reversals from one to the other opposing metamotivational states.

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Rules:

Behavioral guidelines for acting in certain ways in certain situations.

Sample:

A subset of a population selected as participants in an experiment.

Saturation:

The dimension of color space that captures the purity and vividness of color sensations.

Schemas:

General conceptual frameworks, or clusters of knowledge, regarding objects, people, and situations; knowledge packages that encode generalizations about the structure of the environment.

Schizophrenic disorder:

Severe form of psychopathology characterized by the breakdown of integrated personality functioning, withdrawal from reality, emotional distortions, and disturbed thought processes.

Scientific method:

The set of procedures used for gathering and interpreting objective information in a way that minimizes error and yields dependable generalizations. Selective optimization with compensation: for successful aging in which one makes the most of gains while minimizing the impact of losses that accompany normal aging.

Self-actualization:

A concept in personality psychology referring to a person's constant striving to realize his or her potential and to develop inherent talents and capabilities.

Self-awareness:

The top level of consciousness; cognizance of the autobiographical character of personally experienced events

Self-esteem:

A generalized evaluative attitude toward the self that influences both moods and behavior and that exerts a powerful effect on a range of personal and social behaviors.

Set:

A temporary readiness to perceive or react to a stimulus in a particular way.

Signal detection theory:

A systematic approach to the problem of response bias that allows an experimenter to identify and separate the roles of sensory stimuli and the individual's criterion level in producing the final response.

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Situational variables:

External influences on behavior.

Social development:

The ways in which individuals' social interactions and expectations change across the life span.

Social-learning theory:

The learning theory that stresses the role of observation and the imitation of behaviors observed in others.

Social norms: The expectation a group has for its members regarding acceptable and appropriate attitudes and behaviors.

Social support: Resources, including material aid, socioemotional support, and informational aid, provided by others to help a person cope with stress.

Spontaneous recovery: The reappearance of an extinguished conditioned response after a rest period.

Standardization: A set of uniform procedures for treating each participant in a test, interview, or experiment or for recording data.

Stimulus discrimination: A conditioning process in which an organism learns to respond differently to stimuli that differ from the conditioned stimulus on some dimension.

Stress: The pattern of specific and nonspecific responses an organism makes to stimulus events that disturb its equilibrium and tax or exceed its ability to cope.

Systematic desensitization: A behavioral therapy technique in which a client is taught to prevent the arousal of anxiety by confronting the feared stimulus while relaxed.

Test–retest reliability: A measure of the correlation between the scores of the same people on the same test given on two different occasions.

Theory: An organized set of concepts that explains a phenomenon or set of phenomena.

Traits: Enduring personal qualities or attributes that influence behavior across situations.

Transference:

The process by which a person in psychoanalysis attaches to a therapist feelings formerly held toward some significant person who figured in a past emotional conflict.

Unconditional positive regard:

Complete love and acceptance of an individual by another person, such as a parent for a child, with no conditions attached.

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Unconditioned response (UCR):

In classical conditioning, the response elicited by an unconditioned stimulus without prior training or learning.

Unconditioned stimulus (UCS):

In classical conditioning, the stimulus that elicits an unconditioned response

Unconscious inference: Helmholtz's term for perception that occurs outside of conscious awareness.

Validity: The extent to which a test measures what it was intended to measure.

Variable: In an experimental setting, a factor that varies in amount and kind.

Variable-ratio schedule: A schedule of reinforcement in which a re-in forcer is delivered for the first response made after a variable number of responses whose average is predetermined.

Variable-interval schedule: A schedule of reinforcement in which a re-in forcer is delivered for the first response made after a variable period of time whose average is predetermined.

Weber's law: An assertion that the size of a difference threshold is proportional to the intensity of the standard stimulus.

Working memory: A memory resource that is used to accomplish tasks such as reasoning and language comprehension; consists of the phonological loop, visuospatial sketchpad, and central executive.