

PSY101 Introduction to Psychology

Glossary

Forensic Psychology : Forensic psychology is the application of psychological principles and knowledge to various legal activities. Typical issues include child custody disputes, child abuse or neglect, assessing personal capacity to manage one's affairs, matters of competency to stand trial, criminal responsibility, personal injury, and advising judges in matters relating to sentencing regarding various mitigants and the actuarial assessment of future risk.

Linguistics : The scientific study of language, which may be undertaken from many different aspects, for example, sounds (phonetics) or structures of words (morphology) or meanings (semantics).

Empathy : Ability to imagine oneself in another's place and understand the other's feelings, desires, ideas, and actions. The empathic actor or singer is one who genuinely feels the part he or she is performing. The spectator of a work of art or the reader of a piece of literature may similarly become involved in what he or she observes or contemplates. The use of empathy was an important part of the psychological counseling technique developed by Carl R. Rogers

Object assembly : A Wechsler performance subtest consisting of one sample and four test-item jigsaw puzzles of common objects. The child is asked to assemble the pieces to complete a picture. Items are presented one at a time in a specified pattern. The items are timed, with bonus points awarded for speed; some points are awarded for partially correct responses. Object assembly is a test of synthesis, involving visual organization and visual-motor coordination and attention. ...

Reliability : The extent to which a measurement instrument yields consistent, stable, and uniform results over repeated observations or measurements under the same conditions each time. For example, a scale is unreliable if it weighs a child three times in three minutes and gets three different weights.

Validity : In statistics a valid measure is one which is measuring what it is supposed to measure. Validity implies reliability (accuracy). A valid measure must be reliable, but a reliable measure need not be valid.

Analytical intelligence : Analytical intelligence involves conscious direction of our mental processes to find thoughtful solutions to problems.

Cognitive Therapy : The treatment approach based on the theory that our cognitions or thoughts control a large part of our behaviors and emotions. Therefore, changing the way we think can result in positive changes in the way we act and feel.

Construct : any variable that can not be directly observed but rather is measured through indirect methods. (Examples: intelligence, motivation)

Convergent Thinking : Logical and conventional thought leading to a single answer.
Conversion Disorder : A somatoform disorder where the individual experiences a loss of sensation or function due to a psychological belief (e.g., paralysis, blindness, deafness).

Counter conditioning : The use of conditioning to eliminate a previously conditioned response. The conditioned stimulus (CS) is replaced with a different unconditioned stimulus (UCS) to eventually elicit a new conditioned response (CR)

Episodic Memory : Subcategory of Declarative memory where information regarding life events are stored.

Equity Theory : The theory that argues a couple must see each other as contributing and benefiting equally to the relationship for them both to feel comfortable in the relationship.

Etiology : Causal relationships of diseases; theories regarding how the specific disease or disorder began.

Experimental Group : In research, the group of subjects who receive the independent variable.

Experimental Method : Research method using random assignment of subjects and the manipulation of variables in order to determine cause and effect.

Insight : The understanding of a relationship between current thoughts, feelings, and/or behaviors and where these originated or how they are maintained.

Intelligence : The degree to which one can adapt to one's environment.

Intelligence Quotient [IQ] : The scores achieved on psychological tests aimed at quantifying intellectual ability.

Latent Learning : Learning that occurs without apparent reinforcement but is not demonstrated until such time as reinforcement occurs.

Learning : A relatively permanent change in behavior due to an interaction with the environment.

Learning Theory : Based on the idea that changes in behavior result more from experience and less from our personality or how we think or feel about a situation.

Libido : Sigmund Freud's terminology of sexual energy or sexual drive.

Limbic System : A brain system that plays a role in emotional expression, particularly in the emotional component of behavior, memory, and motivation.

Long Term Memory : Relatively permanent memory.

Lucid Dream : A dream in which you are aware of dreaming and are sometimes able to manipulate the dream.

Manifest Content : According to Freud, the story-like superficial content of a dream, often representing only the daily activities and little underlying unconscious material.

Maslow, Abraham : Humanistic Theorist most famous for the development of the Hierarchy of Needs.

Medulla Oblongata : Part of the brainstem that controls vital life-sustaining functions such as heartbeat, breathing, blood pressure, and digestion.

Meta Analysis : The statistical procedure used to combine numerous and independent research results into one study. Each research study becomes one subject in the meta-analysis.

Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory, 2nd. : An Objective test utilizing 567 items which have been empirically derived to measure a variety of psychological concerns.

Modeling : Learning through the imitation or observation of others.

Mortality : Subject drop-out in a research study. Mortality becomes a problem when a disproportionate drop out rate occurs between two or more groups (Example: 30% of males drop out of group one while only 2% of males drop out in group two, resulting in uneven groups).

Motive : Internal states that provide direction for one's behaviors.

N : Symbol used for the number of subjects or data in a distribution. A study with 10 subjects would have an N equal to 10.

Naturalistic Observation : A research method where the subject(s) is(are) observed without interruption under normal or natural circumstances.

Negative Correlation : a correlation where one two variables tend to move in the opposite direction (example: the number of pages printed and the amount of ink left in your printer are negatively correlated. The more pages printed, the less ink you have left.)

Neuron : A specialized nerve cell.

Occipital Lobe : One of four lobes of the brain. Contains the visual cortex and therefore plays a major role in the interpretation of visual information.

Parasympathetic Nervous System : A subsystem of the Autonomic Nervous System (ANS) that returns the body to homeostasis.

Parietal Lobe : One of four lobes of the brain. Contains the Somatosensory Cortex and is therefore involved in the processing of touch, pressure, temperature, and pain.

Penis Envy : In Psychoanalytic Thought, the desire of girls to possess a penis and therefore have the power that being male represents.

Perception : The process of organizing and using information that is received through the senses.

Perceptual Constancy : The ability to perceive objects as unchanged despite the change noticed by the senses (e.g., the ability to understand and see buildings as remaining the same height even though they appear larger as we get closer to them).

Perfect Correlation : A correlation of either +1.0 or -1.0. A perfect correlation is extremely rare and when it occurs means that predicting one score based on another score is perfect or without error.

Person Centered Therapy : The therapeutic technique based on humanistic theory which is non-directive and empathic.

Persuasion : The deliberate attempt to influence the thoughts, feelings or behaviors of another.

Primary Reinforcer : A reinforcer that meets our basic needs such as food, water, sleep, or love.

Proactive Interference : Interference in memory due to prior learning.

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.

Psychosis : Break from reality, usually identified by hallucinations, delusions, and/or disorientation.

Psychotropic Medication : Prescription medication used primarily to treat mental illness.

Sample : Portion of the entire population used to estimate what is likely happening within a population.

Shaping : Gradually molding a specific response by reinforcing responses that come close to the desired response.

Short Term Memory : The stage of memory where information is stored for up to 30 seconds prior to either being forgotten or transferred to long term memory.

Skinner, B. F. : Considered the father of behavioral therapy. He once stated that with the ability to control a child's environment, he could raise a child to become anything he wanted.

Social Learning Theory : Developmental theory arguing that personality is learned through the interactions with the environment.

Social Psychology : The branch of psychology which focuses on society and its impact on the individual.

Somatic Nervous System : Sub system of the Peripheral Nervous System (PNS). Primary function is to regulate the actions of the skeletal muscles.

Stage Theory : The idea that an individual must pass through one stage of development before he or she can reach the next stage.

State : A temporary internal characteristic (e.g., depressed, angry)

State Dependent Memory : The theory that information learned in a particular state of mind (e.g., depressed, happy, somber) is more easily recalled when in that same state of mind.

Sublimation : A defense mechanism where undesired or unacceptable impulses are transformed into behaviors which are accepted by society.

Superego : In Psychoanalytical theory, the part of the personality that represents the conscience.

Suppression : The defense mechanism where we push unacceptable thoughts out of consciousness and into our unconscious.

Temperament : A person's typical way of responding to his or her environment.

Trait : A relatively permanent internal characteristic (e.g., friendly, outgoing)

Unconditional Positive Regard : The nonjudgmental empathy and respect for another person.

Unconditioned Stimulus : The stimulus in a stimulus-response chain that is naturally occurring as opposed to learned.

Unconscious : According to Freud, the area of the psyche where unknown wishes and needs are kept that play a significant role in our conscious behavior.

Variable : Any factor which has the potential to influence another factor in a research study.

Acetylcholine : A neurotransmitter associated with voluntary movement, sleep and wakefulness.

Aggressive : An interpersonal style where only the immediate needs of the self are considered rather than the needs of others. (As opposed to passive or assertive)

Agoraphobia : An anxiety disorder characterized by an intense fear of leaving one's home.