

Preface

Mind and behaviour: It is difficult to think of anything more fascinating. But we didn't all recognize this when we began university. The original authors of the US edition of this textbook, Michael Passer and Ronald Smith were destined for lifetimes in physics and journalism when they embarked upon their studies. Nigel Holt entered university to study Economics, whereas Michael Vlieg and Andy Bremner turned up at university having chosen Psychology but weren't really sure why. But each of us took an introductory psychology course, and suddenly our life-paths changed. Because of instructors who brought the subject to life, we were hooked, and that initial enthusiasm has never left us.

Now, through this textbook, we have the pleasure and privilege to share our enthusiasm with today's lecturers and students. The original US version of this text is an extremely strong text and one which we as the adapting authors felt privileged to take on. As is the case with the original version, we have endeavoured to put together a thoughtfully integrated book and multimedia package of uncompromising student friendliness and scientific integrity – a teaching tool that introduces students to psychology as a science while highlighting its relevance to their lives and to society. Indeed, the reason that we have embarked upon this adaptation of the original US text was to ensure that the material is especially relevant to those who will use this book. By focusing on examples and research geared towards a more international audience, we want to help students to experience, as we did, the intellectual excitement of studying the science of mind and behaviour. We also seek to help students sharpen their critical-thinking skills and dispel commonly held myths. All of this is done within the simple conceptual framework emphasized in the original US text; the structured explanation of relationships between biological, psychological, and environmental levels of analysis.

THIS ADAPTATION

The original version of this textbook was written by Michael Passer and Ronald Smith to be relevant to North American students, and to facilitate the type of courses which their instructors would convene. Many teachers outside the US saw the great strengths of Michael and Ronald's approach and have been using the American version of the text in their universities across Europe, South Africa and Australasia. However, teaching and learning is better facilitated by using examples and research which is more relevant to the students' and teachers' cultures. And so with this goal in mind, we have developed this adaptation to be more relevant to an international audience of students and teachers. A comparison of this text and the original US book will also show a very significant change in how the book has been laid out. The publisher proposed these changes to us following careful research into the existing books on the European and South African markets. Notable changes to bring this book more in-line with psychology teaching in these parts of the world include the subdivision of the life-span development chapter into two chapters, the first on physical and cognitive development and the second focusing on social-emotional development. Additionally, the original chapter on biological approaches to psychology has been subdivided into one chapter on genetic and evolutionary research, and a second on the neural bases of psychology. Overall we feel that the open, clear layout of this book will provide readers with a pleasant, fresh and uncluttered reading experience. We have not replaced everything from the original book. After all, 'if it aint broke, don't fix it'! However, we have updated references and used examples that European and South African readers would expect to see, better reflecting the academic environments in those countries. An adaptation like this is much more than altering the spelling and adding a few references; it is concerned with tailoring a successful textbook to the needs of a slightly different audience. This, the end-product of a 3 year project, will provide you the reader with focused access to relevant psychological thought and research at the beginning of your university career. We hope also that you will keep your copy of our book on your shelf for years to come. We often find ourselves reaching for the

introductory text we used as undergraduate students as it forms a familiar, friendly reference from which to begin our research and writing.

We are particularly excited about the unique way in which this textbook is integrated with its supplements. This integration results in a learning package that ‘uses science to teach science.’ This approach draws on research (e.g., Hamilton, 1985; Moreland et al., 1997; Thiede & Anderson, 2003) showing that recall of textual material is significantly enhanced by asking students to summarize material they have just read and by presenting focus questions and learning objectives that serve as retrieval cues and help students identify important information. Marginal Focus Questions integrated into each chapter of this textbook serve these purposes and help students assess their mastery of the material. But well beyond that, these Focus Questions provide a comprehensive learning framework for the supplements.

What you will find throughout the supplements is a carefully developed integration of the in-text Focus Questions with Learning Objectives. Instructors and students alike will be guided by the Learning Objectives, as they form the cornerstone of the Instructor’s Manual, Online Learning Centre, In-Psych interactive programme and Test Banks. Items in the Test Bank are keyed specifically to the Focus Questions and Learning Objectives.

Let’s take a closer look at the features of our edition of this tried and tested textbook:

THE BIG PICTURE: A SIMPLE UNIFYING FRAMEWORK THAT EASILY ADAPTS TO THE INSTRUCTOR’S PREFERENCES

Psychology is a vibrant but sprawling discipline, and the tremendous diversity of issues covered in the introductory course can lead students to perceive psychology as a collection of unrelated topics. To reduce this tendency and also help students become more sophisticated in their everyday understanding of behaviour, we present a simple unifying framework that is applied throughout the book. This framework, called *Levels of Analysis* (LOA), emphasizes how psychologists examine *biological, psychological, and environmental factors* in their quest to understand behaviour. The LOA framework is easy for students to understand and remember; is consistently applied in every chapter; accurately portrays the focus of modern psychology; supports critical thinking; and also helps students understand how biological, psychological, and environmental factors are related to one another.

Although we carry the LOA framework throughout the book in textual discussion and schematics, we are careful to apply it selectively so that it does not become overly repetitious for students or confining for instructors. Indeed, one of the beauties of the LOA framework is that it stands on its own and thus instructors can easily adapt it to their personal teaching preferences.

For example, some adopters of the book have told us that they never bring up the LOA framework explicitly in class. Instead, they emphasize their own preferred theoretical perspective in lectures while resting assured that, behind the scenes, each textbook chapter illustrates for students how behaviour can be studied from multiple angles, that is, from different levels of analysis. Other instructors consistently incorporate a levels-of-analysis approach into their lectures. Finally, as we do in our own courses, instructors can explicitly bring the LOA framework into their lectures only for selected topics, once again knowing that for other topics the textbook will round out their students’ conceptual exposure.

READABILITY, RIGOUR, AND RELEVANCE

A textbook has long-term educational value only if students read it, understand its content, and find that content to be worthwhile. We have worked diligently to develop a narrative that will excite students and draw them into the fascinating world of mind and behaviour. We have made every attempt to use clear prose, careful explanations, engaging and relevant examples, and supporting artwork to make the book and multimedia accessible to our students. The students at our own institutions form a fairly representative cross-section of those who may use the book. And so, as we wrote with our own students in mind, we hope that this will mean that those who read it will find the approach helpful. More broadly, we hope to portray psychology as the rigorous and keenly relevant discipline that it is. The following elements support these goals.

- **Focus on Scientific Psychology:** Throughout the narrative we portray *psychology as a contemporary science* without becoming excessively formal or terminological. And because we live in an era in which students (along with everyone else) are bombarded with scientific information and misinformation, we focus not only on principles derived from research, but also on how good research is done.
- **Focus on Personal and Societal Applications:** Everyday examples are used throughout the narrative not only to illustrate psychological principles and concepts, but also to engage students and personalize their learning experience. We also highlight numerous ways in which psychological knowledge has been used to enhance the welfare of society.
- **Focus on Relations between Basic Science and Application:** Whether in the context of their personal lives or of larger societal issues, we emphasize that many questions studied from a basic science perspective are inspired by real-world questions and issues, and that basic research findings often guide solutions to individual and societal problems.
- **Focus on Helping Students to Think Critically and Dispel Misconceptions:** In diverse ways, we strongly emphasize critical thinking as a skill for students to learn and practice. In the general narrative throughout the text, we repeatedly address basic critical-thinking issues, such as the importance of identifying alternative explanations and recognizing that correlation does not establish causation. We emphasize that many faulty inferences – in everyday life as well as in science – are made by failing to pay attention to basic critical-thinking principles.
- **Integrated and Featured Coverage of Cultural and Gender Issues:** Cultural and gender issues are at the forefront of contemporary psychology, and rather than isolating this material within dedicated chapters, we integrate it throughout the text. Our levels-of-analysis approach conceptualizes culture as an environmental factor and also as a psychological factor that reflects the internalization of cultural influences. In addition to coverage of cultural and gender issues throughout the narrative, these topics are addressed via features such as the *Research Close-Ups* and *What Do You Think?* exercises. Notable in this regard are sections in Chapter 10 (Intelligence) on sex differences in cognitive abilities and the effects of stereotypes on math performance, in Chapter 16 (Health Psychology: Adjusting to Life) on possible reasons why women live longer than men, and in Chapter 18 (Treatment of Psychological Disorders) on cultural and gender issues in psychotherapy.
- **New Artwork:** Many of the images and figures in this new adaptation have been changed to make them more relevant to the proposed audience.
- **Updated coverage:** This edition is rich in discussions of research and new references – hundreds of the book's citations are from the years 2000 to 2008, and a good deal of the cited research reflects the research interests of the countries in which the focus audience work and study.