

# Current Trends in Psychology

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# Current Trends in Psychology

- Evolutionary psychology

- The school of psychology that studies how humans' genetically inherited tendencies and dispositions influence a wide range of behaviors
- Has been called a combination of evolutionary biology and cognitive psychology

# Current Trends in Psychology

- Differences in evolutionary psychology and biological psychology
  - Evolutionary psychology
    - Provides explanations of how certain biologically based behaviors came to be common in an entire species
    - Focuses on traits that exist in every member of a species

# Current Trends in Psychology

- Differences in evolutionary psychology and biological psychology (continued)
  - Biological psychology
    - Looks for links between specific behaviors and equally specific biological processes that often help explain individual differences
    - Studies the structures of the brain and central nervous system, the functioning of neurons, the delicate balance of neurotransmitters and hormones, and heredity to look for links between these biological factors and behaviors

# Current Trends in Psychology

## ● Neuroscience

- A field that combines the work of psychologists, biologists, biochemists, medical researchers, and others in the study of the structure and function of the nervous system
- Discovered that defects in nerve cell membranes interfere with the cells' ability to make use of brain chemicals that help us control body movement

# Current Trends in Psychology

- Background and cultural experiences affecting behavior
  - Sociocultural explanations and research studies emphasize social and cultural influences on human behavior and stress the importance of understanding those influences when interpreting the behavior of others
  - Social cognition – Bandura, Sears

# Current Trends in Psychology

- Psychological perspectives
  - General points of view used for explaining people's behavior and thinking, whether normal or abnormal
  - Psychologists occasionally have an eclectic position
    - Choosing a combination of approaches to explain a particular behavior

# Major Perspectives in Psychology

- Behavioral perspective: environmental factors
- Psychoanalytic perspective: emotions, unconscious motivations, early childhood experiences
- Humanistic perspective: subjective experiences, intrinsic motivation to achieve self-actualization
- Cognitive perspective: mental processes

# Major Perspectives in Psychology

- Evolutionary perspective: inherited traits that enhance adaptability
- Biological perspective: biological structures, processes, heredity
- Sociocultural perspective: social and cultural variables
- Social cognition: Reciprocal determination among social/cultural, behavior, and personal characteristics

# Psychologists at Work

- Clinical psychologists
  - Specialize in the diagnosis and treatment of mental and behavioral disorders
- Counseling psychologists
  - Help people who have adjustment problems that are less severe than those generally handled by clinical psychologists
- Physiological psychologists
  - Also called neuropsychologists
  - Study the relationship between physiological processes and behavior

# Psychologists at Work

- Experimental psychologists
  - Specialize in the use of experimental research methods
  - Conduct experiments in most fields of specialization in psychology
- Developmental psychologists
  - Study how people grow, develop, and change throughout the life span
- Educational psychologists
  - Specialize in the study of teaching and learning

# Psychologists at Work

- **Social psychologists**
  - Investigate how the individual feels, thinks, and behaves in a social setting—in the presence of others
- **Industrial/organizational psychologists**
  - Study the relationships between people and their work environments