

## GLOSSARY

- abnormal** maladaptive cognitions, affects, and/or behaviors that are at odds with social expectations, and result in distress or discomfort
- absolute threshold** the physical intensity of a stimulus that a person reports detecting 50 percent of the time
- accommodation** according to Piaget, the process that allows a child to modify his or her schemas to account for objects and experiences (or to create wholly new schemas, if need be)
- accommodation** the process of the changing of the shape of the lens by the ciliary muscles to focus images on the retina in vision
- acquisition** the stage of classical conditioning during which the CS and UCS are paired and the strength of the CR increases
- action potential** (about +40 mV) the electrical charge that results when the ions within the neuron become more positive than the area outside the neuron
- activation-synthesis theory** the position that dreams are activated by physiological mechanisms in the brainstem, probably in the pons
- actor-observer bias** a discrepancy between the way we explain our behaviors (as actor) and the way we explain someone else's (as observer)
- adaptation** according to Piaget, the process of developing the appropriate schemas to meet the demands of the environment
- adolescence** a developmental period of transition from the dependence of childhood to the independence of adulthood, beginning at puberty (sexual maturity) and lasting through the teen years – the second decade of life
- adrenal glands** secrete a variety of hormones into the bloodstream that are very useful in times of stress, danger, or threat
- affect** (af' -ekt) one's feelings, emotions, or moods
- ageism** discrimination and/or prejudice against a group on the basis of age
- agenda setting** the phenomenon in which the media tells us which issues we should think about, and how we should think about those issues
- aggression** any behavior intended to inflict physical and/or psychological harm on another organism or the symbol of that organism
- agoraphobia** (literally, "fear of open places"); an exaggerated fear of venturing forth into the world alone
- algorithm** a strategy that, if correctly applied, guarantees a solution to a problem eventually
- all-or-none principle** the observation that a neuron either fires or it doesn't
- Alzheimer's dementia (AD)** a disorder characterized by a slow deterioration of memory and other intellectual functioning
- anorexia nervosa** an eating disorder characterized by an inability (or refusal) to maintain one's body weight
- anterograde (forward-acting) amnesia** an inability to form memories of events that happened after the amnesia began
- antianxiety drugs** (tranquilizers) medications designed to help reduce the felt aspect of anxiety
- antidepressant drugs** medications designed to elevate the mood of persons who are depressed
- antipsychotic drugs** medications designed to alleviate or eliminate psychotic symptoms
- antisocial personality disorder** a disorder characterized by an exceptional lack of regard for the rights or property of others, and impulsive behaviors with little or no regard for the consequences of those behaviors
- anxiety** a general feeling of tension, apprehension, and dread that involves predictable physiological changes
- approach-approach conflict** a situation in which an organism is caught between two (or more) alternatives, and each of them is positive, or potentially reinforcing
- approach-avoidance conflict** a situation in which a person is faced with only one goal and would like to reach that goal, but at the same time, would like not to
- aptitude tests** psychological tests of cognitive ability that are used to predict future behaviors
- aqueous humor** the material that provides nourishment to the cornea and other structures at the front of the eye
- arbitrary symbolic reference** the observation that there need be no resemblance between a word and its referent
- arousal** one's overall level of activation or excitement
- assimilation** according to Piaget, a process that occurs when a child incorporates new information into an existing schema
- association areas** regions of the cerebral cortex where sensory input is integrated with motor responses and where cognitive functions, such as problem-solving, memory, and thinking, occur
- atonia** a period of muscular immobility
- attachment** a strong and reciprocal emotional relationship between a child and mother or primary caregiver
- attachment theory** the position that interpersonal relationships can be classified into one of three types – secure, avoidant, or anxious/ambivalent – depending on the attitudes one has about such relationships
- attitude** a relatively stable disposition used to evaluate an object or event

- attribution theory** an attempt to understand the cognitions we use when we try to explain the causes or sources of our own or other's behavior
- audience inhibition** the tendency to be hesitant about doing things in front of others, especially strangers
- autonomic nervous system** that system involved in activating the smooth muscles, such as those of the stomach and intestines, and the glands
- availability heuristic** the assumption that things that readily come to mind are more common (or occur more frequently) than things that do not come as readily to mind
- aversion therapy** a form of behavior therapy in which a stimulus that may be harmful but that produces a "pleasant" response is paired with an aversive, painful stimulus until the original stimulus is avoided
- avoidance-avoidance conflict** a situation in which a person is faced with several alternatives, each of them negative or in some way punishing
- avoidance conditioning** a procedure in which an organism learns to get away from (avoid) an unpleasant, painful, aversive situation before it occurs
- axon** a long protuberance extending away from a neuron's cell body that carries neural impulses to other neurons, muscles, or glands
- axon terminals** a branching series of bare end points where an axon ends
- basal ganglia** lower brain centers that are involved in the planning, initiation, and coordination of large, slow movements
- baseline design** technique of arranging conditions so that each participant serves in both the experimental and in the control group conditions
- behavior** what organisms do — their actions and reactions
- behavior genetics** the discipline that studies the effects of genetics on psychological functioning
- behavioral observation** a method of drawing conclusions about someone's personality on the basis of observations of his or her behaviors
- behaviorism** associated with Watson, the argument that psychology should give up the study of the mind and study observable behaviors
- biofeedback** the process of providing information to an individual about bodily processes in some form that he or she might be able to use to modify those processes
- bipolar disorder** a disorder involving episodes of depression interspersed with episodes of mania
- blind spot** the place at which the nerve impulses from the rods and cones, having passed through many layers of cells, exit the eye
- bottom-up processing** a process that occurs when what we perceive is determined to some extent by the bits and pieces of information we receive from our senses
- brightness constancy** the process that causes familiar objects to be perceived with their usual brightness, regardless of the actual amount or type of light under which they are viewed
- bulimia nervosa** an eating disorder characterized by episodes of binge eating followed by purging — usually self-induced vomiting or the use of laxatives to rapidly rid the body of just-eaten food
- case history** a method in which one person — or a small group of persons — is studied in-depth, often over a long period of time
- category relationship** the situation in which the parties involved in a social interaction are perceived to belong together in some way
- cell body** the largest concentration of mass in the neuron, containing the nucleus of the cell
- central nervous system (CNS)** all neurons and supporting cells found in the spinal cord and brain
- cerebellum** the lower brain center that smoothes and coordinates rapid body movements
- cerebral cortex** the large, convoluted outer portion of the brain that makes us uniquely human, giving us our ability to think, reason, and use language according to certain rules of combination
- chemical ions** particles that carry a small, measurable electrical charge that is either positive (+) or negative (-)
- chunk** the representation in memory of a meaningful unit of information
- ciliary muscles** powerful muscles that expand or contract to reflexively change the shape of the lens to bring an image into focus
- classical conditioning** (Pavlovian conditioning) a learning process in which a neutral stimulus is paired with a stimulus that elicits an unconditioned response
- client-centered therapy** the variety of psychotherapy in which the goal is to help the individual self-actualize — to grow and develop to the best of his or her potential
- closure** the process by which we tend to fill in spaces or gaps in our perceptual world
- cochlea** the snail-like structure of the inner ear, which contains the receptor cells for hearing
- cognitions** mental events, such as perceptions, beliefs, thoughts, ideas, and memories
- cognitive-behavior therapy (CBT)** a form of psychotherapy with the joint focus to a) change the way that one has been behaving, and b) change the way one interprets and thinks about the situations in which behavior change is required
- cognitive dissonance** a motivating state of tension or discomfort that exists when we hold and are aware of inconsistent cognitions
- cognitive map** a mental picture, or representation, of the physical environment, noting significant landmarks when possible
- cognitive restructuring therapy** a technique based on the assumption that considerable psychological distress stems from a few simple, but misguided, beliefs (cognitions)
- cognitive therapists** those psychotherapists who believe that what matters most are a client's beliefs, thoughts, perceptions, and attitudes about himself or herself and the environment

- color constancy** the process that allows one to perceive the color of a familiar object as constant, despite changing lighting conditions
- common fate** the tendency to group together in the same figure those elements of a scene that appear to move together in the same direction and at the same speed
- comorbidity** the occurrence of two or more disorders in the same individual at the same time
- compulsions** constantly intruding, repetitive behaviors that bring no pleasure, but are distressing
- concepts** mental categories or classes into which we place the events and objects that we experience
- concrete operations stage** Piaget's stage of cognitive development (7 to 11 years) in which children begin to develop many new concepts and show that they can manipulate those concepts
- conformity** the modification of behavior, under perceived pressure to do so, to make it consistent with the behavior of others
- conscious** the level of consciousness containing ideas, memories, feelings, or motives of which we are actively aware
- consciousness** the subjective awareness of the environment and of one's own mental processes
- conservation** the awareness that changing the form or the appearance of something does not change what it really is
- contingency management and contingency contracting** techniques following the learning principles of operant conditioning in which a person comes, through reinforcement, to appreciate the consequences of his or her behaviors
- continuity (or good continuation)** a process that operates when we see things as ending up consistent with the way they started
- continuous-reinforcement (CRF) schedule** a procedure in which each and every response is reinforced after it occurs
- control group** participants in an experiment who receive a zero level of the independent variable
- conventional morality** Kohlberg's stage of moral development in which moral judgments are based on an accepted social convention
- convergence** a cue to three-dimensionality that occurs when our eyes turn toward each other when we view something up close
- convergent thinking** the process of taking many ideas or bits of information and attempting to reduce them to a single solution
- conversion disorder** a disorder in which there is a loss or altering of physical function that suggests a physical disorder; the symptoms are not intentionally produced and cannot be explained by any physical disorder
- cornea** the tough, round, virtually transparent outer shell of the eye that begins focusing light waves
- corpus callosum** the structure that richly interconnects the two hemispheres of the cerebral cortex
- correlation coefficient** a number with a value between  $-1.00$  and  $+1.00$  that tells us about the nature and extent of a relationship between the variables we have measured
- correlational research** a scientific method seeking associations between variables that are observed and measured, but are not manipulated
- credibility** a communicator's believability, reflecting assessments of both expertise and trustworthiness
- cross laterality** the name given to the process of nerve fibers crossing from one side of the body to the opposite side of the brain
- dark adaptation** the process in which the visual receptors become more sensitive with time spent in the dark
- death instincts (thanatos)** opposed to life instincts, these instincts are largely impulses of destruction
- decibel scale** a scale of sound intensity measuring perceived loudness
- declarative memory (explicit memory)** memory systems from which information can be intentionally recalled
- deductive reasoning** mental processes that lead to specific conclusions about events based on a small number of general principles
- defense mechanisms** unconsciously applied techniques that protect the conscious self (the ego) against strong feelings of anxiety
- delusions** false beliefs – ideas that are firmly held, regardless of evidence to the contrary
- dementia** a condition characterized by the marked loss of intellectual abilities
- dendrites** protuberances that reach out to receive messages, or neural impulses, from nearby neurons
- denial** a defense mechanism in which a person refuses to acknowledge the realities of an anxiety-producing situation
- dependent variable (or a "dependent measure")** a measure of the behavior of the participants in an experiment
- depressants** psychoactive drugs that reduce awareness of external stimuli, slow bodily functioning, and decrease levels of overt behavior
- deviation IQ** a numerical estimate of intelligence that uses established group norms and allows for comparing intelligence scores across age groups
- diagnosis** the act of recognizing a disorder on the basis of specified symptoms
- diathesis-stress model** the approach that proposes that individuals inherit multiple genes, which may give rise to the predisposition to express certain behaviors, and that these behaviors are expressed only if activated by stress or trauma
- difference threshold** the difference between stimuli that is detected 50 percent of the time
- diffusion of responsibility** the observation that the greater the number of people present, the smaller is each individual's perceived obligation to intervene
- discrimination** a biased, often negative, behavior directed at a member of a social group simply because of that person's group membership

- discrimination learning** a process of classical conditioning in which an organism learns to discriminate between different stimuli, emitting a CR in the presence of some stimuli and not in the presence of others
- discrimination training** in operant conditioning, a matter of differential reinforcement – responses made to appropriate stimuli are reinforced, while responses made to inappropriate stimuli are ignored or extinguished
- displacement** the defense mechanism that involves redirecting aggression at a substitute person or object, rather than expressing it directly
- dissociative amnesia** the inability to recall important personal information – an inability too extensive to be explained by ordinary forgetfulness
- dissociative disorders** psychological disorders in which a person seeks to escape from some aspect of life or personality seen as the source of stress, discomfort, or anxiety
- dissociative fugue** amnesic forgetfulness, accompanied by a change of location – seemingly pointless travel
- dissociative identity disorder** a disorder characterized by two or more distinct personalities or personality traits within the same person
- divergent thinking** the process of starting with one idea and generating from it a number of new ones
- drive** a state of tension, arousal, or activation – aimed at satisfying a need
- dualism** associated with Descartes, the position that humans possess more than just a body: they have a mind.
- dysthymia** a mood disorder that involves recurrent pessimism, low energy level, and low self-esteem; a chronic, continual sense of being depressed and sad
- ego** the part of the personality that develops through one's experience with reality; the rational, reasoning part of our personality
- elaboration likelihood model** the point of view that there are two routes to persuasion: the central route and the peripheral route
- elaborative rehearsal** the process of moving information into long-term memory by thinking about it, organizing it, forming images of it, and making it meaningful – relating it to something already in long-term memory
- electroconvulsive therapy (ECT)** shock treatments that involve passing an electric current of between 70 and 150 volts across a patient's head for a fraction of a second
- electroencephalograms (EEGs)** recordings of the electrical activity of the brain
- electroencephalograph (EEG)** an instrument that measures and records the electrical activity of the brain
- electromyogram (EMG)** a record of a muscle's activity, tone, or state of relaxation
- embryonic stage** the period of development during which the embryo develops at a rapid rate, and all of the organ systems of the body are laid in place – lasts about six weeks
- emotion** an experience that includes a subjective feeling, a cognitive interpretation, a physiological reaction, and a behavioral expression
- emotion-focused** strategies that deal with how you feel and with finding ways to change the way you feel when faced with stress
- empathy** a compassionate understanding of how a person in need feels
- empathy-altruism hypothesis** the proposal that empathy is one reason for helping those in need
- empirically supported therapies (ESTs)** approaches to psychotherapy for which there is empirical evidence that an approach is effective in the treatment of specific disorders
- empiricists** those who credit experience and observation as the source of mental life
- encoding** the process of putting information into memory, or forming cognitive representations of information
- encoding specificity principle** the assertion that how one retrieves information depends on how it was encoded in the first place
- endocrine system** a network of glands that affect behaviors by secreting chemicals called hormones
- episodic memory** the type of LTM in which memories of life events and experiences are stored
- equity theory** a position that considers the appraisal of rewards and costs for both parties of a social relationship
- escape conditioning** a procedure in which an organism learns to get away from (escape) a painful, noxious, aversive situation once in it
- etiology** the source or cause of disorders
- excitatory** the name of the process in which neurotransmitter chemicals are released from vesicles, cross the synaptic cleft, and stimulate the next neurons in the sequence to fire
- experiment** a series of operations used to investigate whether changes in the values of one variable cause measurable changes in another variable, while all other variables are controlled or eliminated
- experimental group** participants in an experiment exposed to some value of the independent variable
- experimental research** a scientific method in which investigators manipulate a variable (or more than one) and then look for a relationship between those manipulations and changes in the value of some other variable
- explicit stereotype** one of which we are consciously aware and which is under conscious control
- external attributions** explanations of the source of a person's behavior in terms of the situation or context in which the person finds himself or herself
- extinction** in operant conditioning, the decrease in the rate of a response as reinforcers are withheld
- extinction** the process of classical conditioning in which the strength of a CR decreases with repeated presentations of the CS alone

- extraneous variables** those factors, other than the independent variables, that can influence the dependent variable of an experiment
- family therapy** an approach to psychotherapy that focuses on the roles, interdependence, and communication skills of family members
- fantasy** the defense mechanism that provides escape from anxiety through imagination or daydreaming
- fetal alcohol syndrome (FAS)** a problem in which smaller babies with retarded growth, poor coordination, poor muscle tone, and intellectual retardation result when the mother consumes alcohol during pregnancy
- fetal stage** the period of development during which the organs of the body continue to increase in complexity and size, and also begin to function – includes months three through nine
- field experiments** those done, not in a laboratory, but in the “real world”
- figure-ground relationship** the name for the process in which those stimuli that are attended to and grouped together are figures, whereas all the rest are the ground
- fixed-interval schedule (FI)** a procedure in which time is divided into set (fixed) intervals, and after each interval, a reinforcer is delivered when the next response occurs
- fixed-ratio schedule (FR)** a procedure in which one establishes (fixes) a ratio of reinforcers to responses
- formal operations stage** Piaget’s stage of cognitive development (12 and older), characterized by the logical manipulation of abstract, symbolic concepts
- fovea** the place on the retina where visual acuity is best in daylight or in reasonably high levels of illumination
- free association** a technique in psychoanalysis in which patients are to say aloud whatever comes into their minds
- frustration** the blocking or thwarting of goal-directed behavior
- frustration-aggression hypothesis** the claim that frustration could produce several different reactions, including aggression, but that aggression was always caused by frustration
- functional fixedness** a type of mental set – the inability to discover an appropriate new use for an object because of experience using the object for some other purpose
- functionalism** the approach to psychology that focuses on the mind, but emphasizes its adaptive functions
- functions** according to Piaget, the processes children use to learn about objects and events in the world and create schemas
- fundamental attribution error** the general tendency to favor internal, personal attributions for behaviors, rather than to favor external, situational explanations
- gender** one’s sense of maleness or femaleness
- General Adaptation Syndrome (GAS)** the most widely accepted description of the physiological reactions to chronic (long-lasting) stressors, including alarm, resistance, and exhaustion
- generalization** (in doing experiments) the ability to apply results beyond the restrictive conditions of an experimental setting
- generalization** in operant conditioning, a process in which responses conditioned in the presence of a specific stimulus appear in the presence of other, similar stimuli
- generalized anxiety disorder (GAD)** distressing, felt anxiety; unrealistic, excessive, persistent worry
- generativity** a concern for family and for a person’s impact on future generations
- germinal stage** the period of development that lasts from the time of fertilization until the blastocyst implants itself into the uterus – about two weeks
- Gestalt psychology** the approach to psychology that focuses on perception, concerned with how we select and organize information from the outside world
- Gestalt therapy** the variety of psychotherapy aimed at assisting a person to integrate his or her thoughts, feelings, and actions; to increase the person’s self-awareness, self-acceptance, and growth
- grammar** the formal expression of the syntax of a language
- group polarization effect** the phenomenon in which group participation makes an individual’s reactions more extreme, or polarized
- group therapy** an approach to psychotherapy that amounts to several people receiving therapy together
- groupthink** an excessive concern for reaching a consensus in group decision-making to the extent that critical evaluations are withheld
- gustation** the technical term for taste
- habituation** a simple form of learning in which an organism comes to disregard a stimulus of little or no consequence
- hallucinations** false perceptions – perceiving that which is not there, or failing to perceive that which is
- hallucinogens** psychoactive drugs with unpredictable effects on consciousness, including the formation of hallucinations
- heuristic** an informal, rule-of-thumb strategy of generating and testing problem solutions
- homeostasis** a state of balance or equilibrium among internal physiological reactions
- humanistic psychology** the approach to psychology that takes the position that the individual, or the self, should be the central concern
- hypnosis** an altered state of consciousness characterized by a) a marked increase in suggestibility, b) a focusing of attention, c) an exaggerated use of imagination, d) an unwillingness or inability to act on one’s own, and e) an unquestioning acceptance of distortions of reality
- hypochondriasis** the diagnosis for someone preoccupied with the fear of a serious disease
- hypothesis** a tentative explanation of some phenomenon that can be tested and then either accepted or rejected
- id** the totally inborn portion of personality, residing in the unconscious; it is through the id that basic instincts are expressed
- idealistic principle** the basis of operation of the superego – to promote what is right or good, regardless of pressure from the id

- identity crisis** the struggle to define and integrate the sense of who one is, what one is to do in life, and what one's attitudes, beliefs, and values should be
- illicit drugs** those chemicals whose use, possession, or sale is illegal
- illusions** experiences in which our perceptions are at odds with reality
- implicit stereotype** one that operates on an unconscious level and is activated automatically, without conscious thought
- incentives** the end states, or goals, of behavior that organisms are motivated to attain
- independent variable** the variable in an experiment that the experimenter manipulates
- inductive reasoning** mental processes that lead to a likely general conclusion based on separate, specific facts and observations
- inferiority complex** (according to Adler) the feeling that we are less able than others to solve life's problems and get along in the world
- information processing** the means by which we find out about the world, make judgments about it, learn from it, and remember what we have learned
- inhibitory** the name of the process in which neurotransmitters flood across the synaptic cleft, bind to receptor sites, and prevent the next neuron from firing
- insanity** a legal term implying that a person did not fully understand the consequences of his or her actions at a given time, could not discern the difference between right and wrong, and was unable to exercise control over his or her actions at the time a crime was committed
- insomnia** the inability to fall asleep or stay asleep when one wants to
- instinctive drift** a pattern in which an animal is conditioned to perform some task, but eventually drifts back to more typical, natural, or instinctive patterns of behavior
- instincts** unlearned, complex patterns of behavior that occur in the presence of certain stimuli
- intelligence** the capacity of an individual to understand the world about him or her and his or her resourcefulness to cope with its challenges
- interactive dualism** Descartes' position that the mind and the body are separate entities and interact or influence each other; knowing the body provides knowledge of the mind
- internal attribution** an explanation of the source of a person's behavior in terms of a person's characteristics—personality traits or dispositions
- interneurons** those within the central nervous system
- interpersonal attraction** a positive, favorable, and powerful attitude toward another person
- interview** a method that yields data of what people say about themselves, rather than what they do
- IQ** a numerical estimate of intelligence found by dividing a person's mental age (MA) by his or her actual, chronological age (CA), and then multiplying by 100
- iris** the colored part of the eye that can expand or contract, depending on the intensity of light striking the eye
- just noticeable difference (jnd)** the amount of change in a stimulus that makes it just detectably different from what it was
- just world hypothesis** an error in which people believe that we live in a world where good things happen only to good people, and bad things happen only to bad people
- kinesthetic sense** the sense that informs us about body position with receptors in the joints, muscles, and tendons
- language** a large collection of arbitrary symbols that have a common, shared significance for a language-using community and that follow certain rules of combination
- latent content** the "true," underlying meaning of the dream that resides in a person's unconscious mind
- latent content** the aspects of a dream seen as a symbolic representation of the contents of the unconscious
- latent learning** a "hidden" learning that is not shown in behavior until it is reinforced
- law of effect** responses are learned when followed by a "satisfying state of affairs," and if a response is not followed by a satisfying state of affairs, or if a response leads to "discomfort," an organism will tend not to make that response again
- learned helplessness** a phenomenon of learning that there is no escape from a punishing stimulus and passively giving in to it without resistance
- learning** a process demonstrated by a relatively permanent change in behavior that occurs as the result of practice or experience
- lens** a flexible structure that changes shape in order to focus images onto the back of the eye
- libido** the driving force of the id; the sexual/sensual energy by which the id operates
- life instincts (eros)** impulses for survival, including those that motivate sex, hunger, and thirst
- limbic system** a collection of small structures in the center of the brain
- lobotomy** a surgical procedure that severs the major neural connections between the prefrontal lobes and lower brain centers
- loneliness** a subjective, psychological state that arises when there is a discrepancy between relationships we would like to have and those we actually have
- long-term memory (LTM)** that level or store of memory that holds large amounts of information for long periods of time
- maintenance rehearsal** the simple repetition of the information already in STM in an effort to keep it there
- major depressive disorder** a disorder in which a person must have experienced two or more depressive episodes, where such an episode is defined as a period of at least two weeks, during which the person experienced five or more of these symptoms nearly every day: a) depressed or sad mood, b) loss of pleasure or interest in normal activities, c) weight loss or dramatic change in appetite, d) significantly more or less sleep than normal, e) either physical slowness or agitation, f) unusual fatigue or loss of energy, and g) recurrent thoughts of death or suicide

- mania** an elevated mood with feelings of euphoria or irritability
- manifest content** the aspects of a dream as recalled and reported
- matching phenomenon** the observation that people select partners whose level of physical attractiveness is similar to their own
- meaningfulness** the extent to which to-be-remembered items elicit existing associations in memory
- mechanism** associated with Descartes, the notion that if the body consists essentially of tubes, gears, valves, and fluids, its operation must be subject to natural physical laws, and those laws can be discovered
- meditation** a self-induced state of consciousness, characterized by a focusing of attention and relaxation
- medulla** the lower brain center that controls such functions as coughing, sneezing, tongue movements, and reflexive eye movements
- memory** a set of systems involved in the acquisition, storage, and retrieval of information
- menarche** the first menstrual period, indicative of the beginning of puberty in females
- mental retardation** a disability characterized by significant limitations both in intellectual functioning and in adaptive behavior as expressed in conceptual, social, and practical adaptive skills
- mental set** the cognitive process of being psychologically ready, or predisposed to perceive something
- mere exposure phenomenon** the likelihood of developing positive evaluations of stimuli increases with repeated exposures
- meta-analysis** a statistical procedure of combining the results of many studies to see more clearly the relationship(s), if any, between or among variables
- method of loci** the mnemonic technique in which the learner imagines a familiar location and places the material to be recalled in various places throughout that location in a sensible order
- Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI)** a personality test that measures several personality dimensions with the same set of items
- mnemonic devices** techniques that aid retrieval by helping one to organize and add meaningfulness to new material
- Modal Memory Model** a way of looking at memory, i.e., that information is processed through three distinct memory storage systems: sensory memory, short-term memory (STM), and long-term memory (LTM)
- modeling** a form of behavior therapy that involves the acquisition of an appropriate response through the imitation of a model
- modern racism** a variety of racism that is not expressed openly, as in the past, but, rather, is manifested in an uncertainty in feelings and behaviors toward minorities
- mood disorders** those disorders that demonstrate a disturbance in emotional reactions or feelings
- morphemes** the smallest units of meaning in a spoken language — a collection of phonemes that means something
- motivation** the process that arouses, directs, and maintains behavior
- motor areas** those parts of the brain in which most voluntary activity is initiated (in strips at the very back of the frontal lobes)
- motor neurons** those that carry impulses away from the spinal cord and brain to muscles and glands
- multiple approach-avoidance conflict** a situation in which an individual is faced with a number of alternatives, each one of which is in some way both positive and negative
- myelin** a white substance composed of fat and protein, that covers, insulates, and protects about half the axons in an adult's nervous system
- naïve realism** the tendency for us to believe that we see the world in a more rational, objective way than others
- narcolepsy** the sleep disorder that involves going to sleep, even during the day, without any intention to do so
- narrative chaining** the process that aids retrieval by the weaving of unorganized material into a meaningful story
- naturalistic observation** the method of systematically watching behaviors as they occur naturally, with a minimum of involvement by the observer
- need** a lack or shortage of some biological essential required for survival
- need for affiliation** the need to be with others, to work with others toward some end, and to form friendships and associations
- need for intimacy** the need to form and maintain close affectionate relationships
- need for power** the need to be in control, to be in charge of both the situation and of others
- need to achieve (nAch)** the acquired need to meet or exceed some standard of excellence in one's behaviors
- negative correlation coefficient** a value between 0.00 and -1.00 that tells us that as the values of one variable increase, the values of the other variable decrease
- negative reinforcer** a stimulus that increases (or maintains) the rate of a response that precedes its removal
- negative symptoms** those characterized by a loss of or a decrease in normal functions
- neonate** the name given to a newborn
- neural impulse** a rapid, reversible change in the electrical charges within and outside a neuron
- neural threshold** the minimum level of stimulation required to fire a neuron
- neurogenesis** the term used to describe the production of functioning neurons after birth
- neuron** the microscopically small cell that transmits information — in the form of neural impulses — from one part of the body to another
- neuroscientists** scientists concerned with the development, structure, function, chemistry, pharmacology, and pathology of the nervous system
- nondeclarative memory** (implicit or procedural memory) memory that involves the acquisition, retention, and retrieval of performance skills

- nondeclarative (or procedural) memory** the type of LTM in which well-learned chains of responses are stored
- object permanence** the awareness that objects still exist even if they cannot be seen and that their reappearance can be anticipated
- observer bias** a problem that occurs when an observer's own motives, expectations, and previous experiences interfere with the objectivity of the observations being made
- obsessions** ideas or thoughts that involuntarily and constantly intrude into awareness
- obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD)** an anxiety disorder characterized by a pattern of recurrent obsessions and compulsions
- olfaction** the technical term for smell
- operant** a behavior or behaviors an organism uses to operate on its environment in order to produce certain effects
- operant conditioning** a form of learning that changes the rate, or probability, of responses on the basis of the consequences that result from those responses
- operational definition** a definition of concepts in terms of the procedures used to measure or create them
- opponent-process theory** a theory of color vision that proposes that color vision works by means of three pairs of mechanisms that respond to different wavelengths of light: a blue-yellow processor, a red-green processor, and a black-white processor
- optic chiasma** where fibers in the optic nerve get directed to the occipital lobe
- optic nerve** the collection of neurons that leaves the eye and starts back toward other parts of the brain
- orienting reflex** a simple, unlearned response of attending to a new or unusual stimulus
- overlearning** the process of practicing or rehearsing material over and above what is needed to learn it
- panic disorder** an acute "attack" of anxiety that is recurrent, unpredictable, unprovoked, sudden, and intense
- parasympathetic division** the component of the ANS that is actively involved in maintaining a relaxed, calm, and unemotional state
- Parkinson's disease** a disorder involving the basal ganglia in which the most noticeable symptoms are impairment of movement and involuntary tremors
- perception** the process that involves the selection, organization, and interpretation of stimuli
- peripheral detail** aspects of the environment that do not draw our attention, and make up our perceptual background
- peripheral nervous system (PNS)** all neurons in our body not in the CNS; the nerve fibers in our arms, face, fingers, intestines, and so on
- personality** those affects, behaviors, and cognitions of individuals that characterize them in a number of situations over time
- personality disorders** long-lasting patterns of perceiving, relating to, and thinking about the environment and oneself that are inflexible and maladaptive and cause either impaired functioning or distress
- persuasion** the application of rational and/or emotional arguments to deliberately convince others to change their attitudes or behavior
- pheromones** chemicals that produce distinctive odors that may be related to attracting members of the opposite sex
- phobic disorder (or phobia)** a persistent and excessive fear of some object, activity, or situation that leads a person to avoid that object, activity, or situation
- phonemes** the individual speech sounds of a language
- pinna** the outer ear
- pituitary gland** the master gland, reflecting its direct control over the activity of many other glands in the system
- placebo** something given to participants that has no identifiable effect on the dependent variable
- pleasure principle** the basis of operation of the id – to find satisfaction for basic pleasurable impulses
- pluralistic ignorance** the belief on the part of the individual that only he or she is confused and does not know what to do in an emergency, whereas everyone else is standing around doing nothing for a good reason
- point of viability** the point in time at which the fetus could survive if it were born
- pons** a relay station or bridge, sorting out and relaying sensory messages from the spinal cord and the face up to higher brain centers, and similarly relaying motor impulses from higher centers of the brain down to the rest of the body
- positive correlation coefficient** a value between 0.00 and +1.00 that tells us that as values of one variable increase, the values of the other variable increase as well
- positive reinforcer** a stimulus given to an organism after a response is made that increases (or maintains) the rate of that response
- positive symptoms** those characterized by new affects, behaviors, and/or cognitions, including hallucinations and delusions
- positive test strategy** the strategy that claims that if something works, one should not drop it to try something else
- postconventional morality** Kohlberg's stage of moral development in which moral reasoning at this highest level reflects complex, internalized standards
- post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)** disorder that involves distressing symptoms that arise some time after the experience of a highly traumatic event
- pragmatics** the study of how language is related to the social context in which it occurs
- preconscious** the level of consciousness containing aspects of our experience of which we are not conscious at any moment, but that can easily be brought to awareness
- preconventional morality** Kohlberg's stage of moral development in which moral reasoning is mostly concerned about the rewards and punishments that come from breaking a rule
- prejudice** attitudes that represent a biased, often negative, disposition toward groups of people

- prenatal period** the time from conception to birth
- preoperational stage** Piaget's stage of cognitive development (2 to 7 years), in which a child's thinking is self-centered, or egocentric
- primary reinforcers** those that do not require previous experience to be effective; they are related to the organism's survival and are usually physiological or biological in nature
- proactive interference** the process that occurs when previously learned material interferes with the retrieval of more recently learned material
- problem** a situation that exists when there is a discrepancy between one's present state and one's perceived goal state and there is no readily apparent way to get from one to the other
- problem-focused** strategies that deal with finding the underlying situation causing one's stress
- problem-solving strategy** a systematic plan for generating possible solutions that can be tested to see if they are correct
- projection** seeing one's own unacceptable, anxiety-producing thoughts, motives, or traits in others
- projective technique** an assessment technique that asks a person to respond to ambiguous stimuli
- prototypes** members of a category that typify or best represent the category to which they belong
- proximity (or contiguity)** the observation that events occurring close together in space or time are perceived as belonging together and being part of the same figure
- psychiatry** that field of medicine that studies, diagnoses, and treats mental disorders
- psychoactive drugs** chemicals that alter a person's affect, behavior, or cognitions
- psychoanalytic psychology** associated with Freud, the approach to psychology that emphasizes innate strivings and the unconscious mind
- psychological test** an objective, standardized measure of a sample of behavior
- psychology** the science that studies behavior and mental processes
- psychophysics** the study of relationships between the physical attributes of stimuli and the psychological experiences they produce
- psychosurgery** surgical procedures, usually directed at the brain, used to affect psychological reactions
- psychotic symptoms** those that signal loss of contact with reality, such as delusions and hallucinations, and a gross impairment of functioning, inappropriate affect, or total loss of affect
- puberty** sexual maturity and an ability to reproduce
- punishment** in operant conditioning, a process that occurs when a stimulus delivered to an organism decreases the rate, or probability, of the response that preceded it
- pupil** an opening through which light enters the eye
- random assignment** a procedure by which each participant in the research program has an equal chance of being assigned to any one of the groups in the experiment
- rapid eye movements** times when a sleeping person's eyes dart around rapidly under his or her closed eyelids; associated with dreaming
- rational-emotive therapy (RET)** a form of cognitive therapy with the basic premise that psychological problems arise when people try to interpret what happens in the world on the basis of irrational beliefs
- rationalization** making up excuses for one's behaviors, rather than facing their (anxiety-producing) causes and consequences
- reality principle** the basis of operation of the ego — to find satisfaction for the id, but in ways that are reasonable and rational
- reasoning** the process of reaching conclusions that are based on either a set of general (cognitive) principles or an assortment of acquired facts and observations
- recall** the process that occurs when someone produces information to which he or she has been previously exposed
- receptor sites** special places on a neuron where neurotransmitters can be received
- recognition** the process in which someone is asked to identify material previously experienced
- reconstructive memory** the notion that we store only features of what has been experienced, and then, retrieve those features and construct what was encoded and stored
- refractory period** the brief time during which a neuron, having just fired, cannot fire again
- regression** a return to earlier, more-primitive, childish levels of behavior that were once effective in securing the desired outcome
- reinforcement** the process of strengthening a response
- reinforcement-affect model** the position that we are attracted to people whom we associate with rewarding experiences
- reinforcer** the actual stimulus used in the process of reinforcement that increases the probability or strength of a response
- relearning** the change in performance that occurs when a person is required to learn material for a second time
- reliability** the ability of a test to produce the same or highly similar results across similar testing situations
- representativeness heuristic** the assumption that judgments about the most prototypic member of a category will hold for all members of the category
- repressed memory** a stored memory that so disturbs a person that the person pushes it deep into the unconscious and can no longer readily retrieve it
- repression** the most basic defense mechanism — referred to as motivated forgetting
- resistance** in psychoanalysis, the unwillingness or inability to discuss freely some aspect of one's life
- resting potential** the tension that results from the positive and negative ions' attraction to each other
- reticular formation** an ill-defined collection of nerve fibers involved in determining our level of activation or arousal

- retina** the place where vision begins to take place, where light energy is transduced into neural energy
- retinal disparity** a binocular cue to depth caused by the fact that when we look at a nearby three-dimensional object, each eye gets a somewhat different view of it
- retrieval** the process of finding and moving information out of memory for use
- retroactive interference** the processes of inhibiting the learning to be remembered or retrieved by the acquisition of information learned after the to-be-recalled information
- retrograde (backward-acting) amnesia** the loss of memory of events that occurred before the onset of the amnesia
- reuptake** the process by which neurotransmitters are reabsorbed by the membrane of the neuron from which they came
- rods/cones** the photo-receptor cells (transducers) found in the retina
- salient detail** an aspect or detail of the environment that captures our attention
- sample** a subset, or portion, of a larger group (population) that has been chosen for study
- schema** an internal, organized, general knowledge system stored in long-term memory
- schemas** according to Piaget, integrated mental representations that children construct to make sense of the world
- schizophrenia** a psychological disorder characterized by a distortion of reality, a retreat from other people, and disturbances in affect, behavior, and cognition
- science** a discipline that demonstrates 1) an organized body of knowledge (a set of scientific laws), and 2) the use of scientific methods
- scientific methods** techniques of acquiring knowledge that involve observing a phenomenon, formulating hypotheses about it, making additional observations, and refining and re-testing the hypotheses
- secondary drives** those drives derived from learning experiences
- secondary reinforcer** a conditioned, acquired, or learned reinforcer
- self-serving bias** occurs when we attribute successes – positive outcomes – to personal, internal sources, and failures – negative outcomes – to situational, external sources
- semantic memory** the type of LTM in which vocabulary, simple concepts, and rules are stored
- semantics** the study of meaning
- sensation** the action of detecting external stimuli and converting those stimuli into nervous-system activity
- sense receptors** the specialized neural cells in the sense organs that change physical energy into neural impulses
- sensorimotor stage** Piaget's stage of cognitive development (birth to 2 years), in which children discover by sensing (sensori-) and by doing (motor).
- sensory adaptation** what occurs when our sensory experience decreases with continued exposure to a stimulus
- sensory area** those parts of the cerebral cortex that receive impulses from the senses
- sensory memory** a variety of memory that stores large amounts of information for very short periods (a few seconds, or less)
- sensory neurons** those that carry impulses toward the brain or spinal cord
- sensory threshold** the minimal intensity of a stimulus energy needed to operate your sense organs
- sexually transmitted diseases (STDs)** contagious diseases usually passed on through sexual contact
- shape constancy** the perception that objects maintain their shape, even though the retinal image they cast may change
- shaping** the process of reinforcing successive approximations of a response you ultimately want to condition
- short-term memory (STM)** a level, or store, in memory with a limited capacity and, without the benefit of rehearsal, of brief duration
- signal detection theory** the position that stimulus detection is a decision-making process of determining if a signal exists against a background of noise
- similarity** the observation that stimuli that are alike or share properties tend to group together in our perception
- size constancy** the tendency to see objects as unchanging in size, regardless of the size of the retinal image they produce
- sleep apnea** patterns of sleep during which breathing stops entirely
- social exchange theory** the position that, with regard to interpersonal attraction, what matters most is a comparison of the costs and benefits of establishing or maintaining a relationship
- social facilitation** the process that occurs when the presence of others improves an individual's performance on some task
- social learning theory** a position associated with Bandura that learning often takes place through the observation and imitation of models
- social loafing** the tendency to work less (to decrease individual effort) as the size of the group in which one works becomes larger
- social psychology** the field of psychology concerned with how others influence the thoughts, feelings, and behaviors of the individual
- socioeconomic status (SES)** a measure that reflects income, educational level, and occupation
- somatic nervous system** those neurons that are outside the CNS, serve the skeletal muscles, and pick up impulses from our sense receptors
- somatization disorder** a disorder indicated by several recurring, and long-lasting complaints about bodily symptoms for which no physical cause can be found
- somatiform disorders** psychological disorders that involve physical or bodily symptoms with no known medical or biological cause for the symptoms
- spanking** a form of punishment that is physically non-injurious, intended to modify behavior, and administered with an opened hand to the extremities or buttocks

- spinal reflexes** simple, automatic behaviors that occur without conscious voluntary action of the brain
- split-brain procedure** a surgical procedure that destroys the corpus callosum's connections between the two hemispheres of the cerebral cortex
- spontaneous recovery** in operant conditioning, the automatic return of an extinguished response following a rest interval
- spontaneous recovery** the process of classical conditioning that occurs after extinction and following a rest interval in which the extinguished CR automatically reappears
- stereotype** a rigid set of positive or negative beliefs about a group of people, especially members of an out-group
- stereotype threat** the observation that when a person is asked to perform a task for which there is a negative stereotype attached to their group, that person will perform poorly because the task is threatening
- stimulants** psychoactive drugs that stimulate or activate an organism, producing a heightened sense of arousal and an elevation of mood
- stimulus generalization** a process in classical conditioning by which a conditioned response is elicited by stimuli different from, but similar to, the original CS
- storage** the process of holding encoded information in memory
- stress** a complex set of reactions made by an individual under pressure to adapt
- stressors** the sources of stress
- structuralism** Wundt's approach to psychology, committed to describing the structure of the mind and its operations
- subjective contours** a perceptual phenomenon in which arrangements of lines and patterns enable us to "see" figures that are not actually there
- sublimation** a defense mechanism involving the repression of unacceptable sexual or aggressive impulses and allowing them to surface in socially acceptable behaviors that are not sexual or aggressive
- superego** one's sense of morality or conscience, reflecting one's internalization of society's rules
- survey** a data-collection method of systematically asking a large number of persons the same question or set of questions
- sympathetic division** the component of the ANS that is actively involved in states of emotionality
- synapse** the location at which a neural impulse is relayed from one neuron to another
- synaptic cleft** a microscopic gap between the axon terminal of one neuron and the dendrites (or cell body) of another neuron
- syntax** the rules that govern how sentences are formed or structured in a language
- systematic desensitization** the technique of applying classical conditioning to ease the feelings of anxiety, particularly those associated with phobic disorders
- taste buds** the receptor cells for taste, located in the tongue
- test norms** results of a test taken by a large group of people whose scores are used to make comparisons
- thalamus** a relay station for impulses traveling to and from the cerebral cortex
- theory** an organized collection of testable ideas used to describe and explain a particular subject matter
- thinking** a term that refers to cognitive processes that build on existing cognitions – perceptions, ideas, experiences, and memories
- thyroid gland** regulates the pace of the body's functioning – the rate at which oxygen is used and the rate of body function and growth
- timbre** the psychological quality or character of a sound that reflects its degree of purity
- top-down processing** a process that occurs when what one selects and perceives depends on what the perceiver already knows
- trait (personality)** any distinguishable, relatively enduring way in which one individual differs from others
- transducer** a mechanism that converts energy from one form to another
- transference** in psychoanalysis, the process that occurs when the patient unconsciously comes to view and feel about the analyst much the same way he or she feels about another important person in his or her life
- trichromatic theory** a theory of color vision that proposes that the eye contains three (tri) distinct receptors for color (chroma)
- Type A behavior pattern (TABP)** characterizes a person who is competitive, achievement-oriented, impatient, who typically works at many tasks at the same time, is easily aroused, and is often hostile or angry
- unconscious** the level of consciousness containing cognitions, feelings, or motives that are not available at the conscious or preconscious level
- unconscious** the level of consciousness containing cognitions, feelings, or motives that are not available at the conscious or preconscious level
- validity** the extent to which a test actually measures what it claims to be measuring
- variable-interval schedule (VI)** a schedule in which one randomly varies the time intervals between reinforcers
- variable-ratio schedule (VR)** a schedule in which one varies the ratio of reinforcers to responses
- vesicles** incredibly small containers that hold complex chemicals called neurotransmitters
- vestibular sense** the sense that tells us about balance, where we are in relation to gravity, and acceleration or deceleration
- vicarious reinforcement or vicarious punishment** learning about the consequences of one's own behavior by observing what happens to someone else
- vitreous humor** the thick fluid in the interior of the eye (behind the lens) with the major function of keeping the eyeball spherical
- vomer nasal organ (VNO)** the primary organ involved in the detection of pheromones
- white light** a light of the lowest possible saturation, consisting of a random mixture of wavelengths
- zygote** the first new cell resulting from conception