

Prologue
A Psychology of All People

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For far too long, Western psychology, while assuming the universality of its findings, has taught a worldview based largely on data gathered from European Americans, many of them students. As teachers, we have too often failed to encourage our students to ask key questions, among them these:

Are there truly psychological principles or processes found universally across cultures? Do they transcend ethnic, racial, cultural, or national boundaries?

Are some principles or processes limited to the cultural or ethnic groups in which they are found? Might people of differing backgrounds experience basic psychological phenomena (e.g., emotion, cognition, development, sexuality) differently?

We have also too often failed to ask important questions of ourselves, for example:

Do I have cultural preconceptions or biases that I bring to my teaching? What do I believe about the role of culture and context in my understanding of human behavior?

Am I prepared to adequately discuss the role and influence of cultural context in my specialty area?

North Americans make up roughly 6 percent of the world's population, and Europeans about 10 percent. Yet it is Euro-American psychology that has long dominated our understanding of human behavior. The time has come for us to look seriously to the role of psychology teachers in broadening the scope of the field and of the knowledge and imaginations of our students.

Backdrop

It has been two decades since Segall, Lonner, and Berry (1998) marveled that it was still necessary, after so many years, to advocate for the

importance of taking culture into account when studying human behavior. And we are approaching three decades since Lonner (1990) found that culture was largely absent, or at best an afterthought, in most undergraduate psychology textbooks. Earlier, Cole (1984) lamented the fact that, in his own education, it was the methods and achievements of American experimental psychology that had seemed paramount, and that the curricula of such diverse cultures as Japan and the then Soviet Union were dominated by the American model. Well into the twenty-first century, the hegemony of this model, including its organization of the field around presumed universal mental processes at the expense of the applied domains of life – those aspects we might call culture – dominated Western psychology (e.g., Rozin, 2006).

The cultural limitations of much of our psychology are indeed longstanding, as Albee (1988) showed in discussing the prejudicial and ethnocentric views of a number of our forebears, including such luminaries as G. Stanley Hall, Francis Galton, and Robert Yerkes. These limitations have included not only the subject matter of the field but also the individuals whose behavior psychological scientists have studied, the people who have been research participants. Arnett (2008) found, for example, in an analysis of several mainstream journals of the American Psychological Association (APA), that authors sometimes did not report the ethnicity of their samples, and that when they did, the preponderance were European American. Perhaps this would be understandable if American psychologists were interested only in Americans, but as Sue (1999) noted, we often mistakenly assume American findings to be universal. We may thus find ourselves in the position of believing that 5 percent or less of the world's population can provide the basis for a universal understanding (Arnett, 2008).

We might assume that modern teachers of psychology would be alert to these limitations, and perhaps in their own research take pains to model a more inclusive approach to the design of studies intended to further broadly applicable pedagogical techniques. However, in a review of a quarter century of articles appearing in the journal *Teaching of Psychology*, Ocampo et al. (2003) found that only 7 percent (of more than 2,000) dealt with “diversity,” and of those, the single largest number concerned gender. The categories of international and racial/ethnic together comprised only 1.3 percent (26 articles).

Furthermore, in an analysis of four leading teaching of psychology journals, Richmond, Broussard, Sterns, Sanders, and Shardy (2015) found that nearly a quarter of empirical studies reported no demographic data

Prologue: A Psychology of All People

3

(other than college class level), and that fewer than one in six reported ethnicity of their samples. Among the 40 percent of teaching studies that reported sex of participants, women were significantly overrepresented, and in the studies reporting ethnicity, Caucasians were significantly overrepresented with other ethnicities significantly underrepresented. Finally, it is interesting to note that Richmond et al. found that over the five-year period from 2008 to 2013, the teaching journals they reviewed actually showed a decrease in reporting of demographic data on research samples.

Thus, it appears not only that the content of much of our research is culture limited but also that investigations of teaching are similarly restricted in their scope. Yet the American Psychological Association (APA, 2013), in its guidelines for the undergraduate psychology major, has endorsed the importance of incorporation of sociocultural factors, including such student skills as recognition of cultural and personal bias and identification of the limitations inherent in generalizing from Western research. The guidelines also address the need for infusion of cultural content across the curriculum. It is incumbent upon us as teachers to more adequately address the role of culture in the shaping of our knowledge, our teaching, and ultimately, our discipline.

Teaching and Culture

Teaching about culture in the context of psychology courses not only allows for achievement of curricular goals like those espoused by the APA but also enables students and teachers to more thoroughly address some of psychology's big questions, such as the role of culture in shaping the human psyche and in the evolution of human behavior (Morling, 2015). And despite the fact that cultures may differ in a variety of ways – economic, religious, social, or psychological – all cultures nevertheless face such common challenges as safety, health, reproduction, and survival (Matsumoto, 2009).

Cultural understanding is particularly crucial in an era in which we face a wide range of intercultural conflicts, not least among them fundamental governmental, political, and religious differences; the global challenges of climate change and inequitable distribution of resources; and the burgeoning revolution in electronic technology use. A broader understanding of culture and psychology can help as we deal with these daunting problems, and cultural understanding must come not just from specialized courses in cultural or cross-cultural psychology but also from the subfields that comprise the broader discipline of psychological science.

Textbooks

Early psychology textbooks (e.g., James 1892/1961; Ladd, 1894) often did not refer to cultural concepts, and even by the mid-twentieth century, popular introductory psychology books (e.g., Morgan & King, 1966) had very limited cultural content, sometimes with a brief focus on cultural or racial differences in intelligence, or cultural anthropology in so-called “backward” or “primitive” cultures. This limited coverage of culture and cultural concepts persisted at least until the 1980s in introductory psychology textbooks (Lonner, 2003; Quereshi, 1993), and perhaps even longer in textbooks on educational psychology (Snowman, 1997) and the history of psychology (Furumoto, 2003). In addition, as late as the 1990s, coverage of diverse cultural subgroups, though to some extent expanding, was nevertheless limited (Hogben & Waterman, 1997). More recently, introductory psychology textbooks have often presented a sociocultural perspective (Eaton & Rose, 2013), although analyses of introductory textbook content (e.g., Nairn, Ellard, Scialfa, & Miller, 2003) have sometimes not mentioned culture at all as a core concept.

Current introductory psychology textbooks may mention or actually define cultural or cross-cultural psychology (see, e.g., Gray & Bjorklund, 2014; Myers & DeWall, 2015), and their content often includes discussion of cultural aspects of a variety of psychological and behavioral phenomena, including such topics as attractiveness, development, emotion, intelligence, mental health, parenting, perception, and personality. As we might expect, contemporary social psychology textbooks may contain a significant amount of cultural material (e.g., Aronson, Wilson, Akert, & Sommers, 2016; Kassin, Fein, & Markus, 2014), and authors (e.g., Pickren & Rutherford, 2010) of history of psychology textbooks have begun to discuss the history of the field in relation to its cultural context. As David Matsumoto has noted, our textbooks have in fact become better in their coverage of cultural material; yet success in integrating culture in the teaching of psychology also depends critically upon the knowledge, viewpoint, and biases of the instructor (Hill, 2000).

What to Teach

The idea of integrating cultural content in the teaching of psychology is not new. Psychologists have for some years discussed the importance of teaching about gender and multicultural issues (often describing approaches to inclusion of cultural and subcultural groups within the

United States (see, e.g., Bronstein & Quina, 2003; Mio, Barker-Hackett, & Tumambing, 2007). Furthermore, integration of cultural and cross-cultural content in undergraduate psychology, including the introductory course, is an idea that has been with us for at least two or three decades (Hill, 2000; Triandis & Brislin, 1984).

Yet as teachers of psychology, we may wonder whether we are competent to teach cultural material, or what exactly it might mean to integrate cultural content in our courses. There are probably no clear and obvious answers to these questions, but there may be some wisdom in the oft-repeated Greek aphorism “Know thyself.” Are we, for example, aware of the possibility that some research findings may be culture bound? That others may be universal? Or that there may be dynamic interplay between people and their cultural environments? (See, for example, Lonner, 2003). We can explore such questions as these, and in so doing, expand our personal horizons and self-knowledge.

The subsequent chapters of this volume offer a rich array of ideas for teaching the various subfields of the discipline of psychological science, and they provide resources and references reflecting a wide-ranging literature focused on the role of culture in these subfields. These sources reflect not only the evolving *content* of an inclusive psychology but also the need for shifts in *methodological* thinking and teaching that accompany cultural and cross-cultural research interests (e.g., Byrne et al., 2009; Trimble & Vaughn, 2013; Valsiner, 2013).

If we were to take a traditional approach to the question of what to teach, we might try to teach students *about* culture as a distinct entity, treating culture as a subject matter unto itself. This approach, the teaching of culture as a subject matter, is perhaps the inevitable first step, and many colleges and universities have developed courses devoted specifically to the teaching of cross-cultural psychology, some of them (e.g., Akimoto, 2016; Morling, 2015) including excellent teaching suggestions and resources. Yet, as we have seen, the American Psychological Association (2013) guidelines suggest integration of culture across the curriculum, and as we will see in Chapter 1 of this volume, current thinking may expand even beyond the concept of culture to a broader contextual perspective.

Conceptualizing Culture and Psychology

We might think of culture across the curriculum much as past authors have described writing across the curriculum (e.g., Fulwiler, 1984; Nodine, 1990) or ethics across the curriculum (e.g., Davis, 1993; Matchett, 2008). Just as

those movements aspired to make writing and ethics integral to the teaching of all classes, so can we aim to make the role of cultural context a part of the natural flow of our teaching across the psychological science curriculum.

Thus, just as all teachers are in a sense teachers of writing or ethics, so too might we all become teachers of culture and context. I would suggest, along with other writers and researchers, that we should not aspire to study and to teach about only WEIRD (Western, educated, industrialized, rich, democratic) populations (Henrich, Heine, & Norenzayan, 2010). Sternberg (2014), in a cogent discussion of the relevance of culture to an understanding of cognitive development, argued that culture is not merely nice, but is in fact necessary to an understanding of intelligence. The history of our field arises from the indigenous work of psychological scientists, not only in Europe and North America, but in all places where individuals have attempted to articulate their understanding of the connection between their behavior and the world around them (Pickren & Rutherford, 2010).

In a sense then, we are all cultural psychologists, as Wang (2016) has argued we should be. An understanding of culture, she suggested,

functions as a mirror that compels psychologists to reflect on their work and critically evaluate their theories and findings, to go beyond the surface and convenience to question what truly matters, and to embrace the complexity of human experiences with an open mind and open heart. (p. 592)

Nearly a century ago, John Dewey (1922) observed that the maintenance of a way of life depends upon the transmission of the meaning of the environment we inherit from our forerunners. Despite the fact that the nature and meaning of our environment is inherent in the culture in which we find ourselves, psychologists interested in culture have in the past noted reasons for the neglect of culture in our teaching. These reasons have included (Albert, 1988):

- A relative lack of experience with other cultures
- A tendency to try to simplify behavioral events and explanations
- Overlooking cultural variability in an effort to avoid stereotyping
- Concern that finding between-group differences leads to discrimination
- Fear that a focus on group differences is inconsistent with egalitarian values
- Ethnocentric tendencies that may engender resistance to study of cultural variables

However, in a world made smaller by electronic communication and international travel, we can no longer afford to overlook the importance of cultural context. In addition to the need for enhanced understanding of

people across cultures, increasing access to higher education by subcultural groups within countries also makes cultural competence essential for the teachers delivering that education (Leiper, Van Horn, Hu, & Upadhyaya, 2008). Such cultural competence may in fact be an ethical necessity for psychology teachers (Tracey, 2005).

Our Task

One of the aims of this book is to provide resources and advice for psychology teachers who wish to more effectively highlight and integrate the role of culture in their various classes. The authors of the remaining chapters in this book take seriously the American Psychological Association (2013) *Guidelines* in their efforts to infuse sociocultural influences throughout the curriculum and the recognition in the *Guidelines* of “the urgency of producing culturally competent individuals” (p. 39).

So, in the words of Lewis Carroll’s (1872) immortal walrus, the time has come to talk of many things. And as we speak of the multifaceted field we know as psychological science, let us truly hear all its voices, see all its faces, and savor all that cultural understanding can do to enrich our lives and those of our students. It is a conversation that may begin in the classroom, but which students may carry on for a lifetime.

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Prologue: A Psychology of All People

9

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