

2.3 Extending skills

topic sentences • summarizing

A Study the words in box a. They are all from the text in Lesson 2.2.

- 1 Look back at the text on page 17. Find the words which go together with the words in the box.
- 2 Do they make noun or verb phrases?
- 3 What is the meaning of each phrase? Look at the context and check with your dictionary if necessary.

a foundation socio-historic
pure humanistic affective
influences view principles
discipline processes

B Study the words in box b. They are all from the text in Lesson 2.2.

- 1 What is the base word in each case? What part of speech is the base word?
- 2 Does the prefix/suffix change the part of speech?
- 3 How does the prefix/suffix change the meaning of the base word?

b classified practical
deprivation subjective validity
unconscious determinism

C Look back at the topic sentences from the text in Lesson 2.2 (Exercise E, page 16). Don't look at the text on page 17. What information comes after each topic sentence? Suggest possible content.

Example:

As psychology is such a wide discipline, it can be classified in a variety of ways.

branches of psychology, ways of categorizing psychology

D Write a summary of the text on page 17. Paraphrase the topic sentences. Add extra information and examples. See *Skills bank*.

2.4 Extending skills

using research questions • writing topic sentences • summarizing

A Can you remember:

- 1 all the main criteria for classifying psychology and the different divisions of each from Lesson 2.2?
- 2 the different fields of psychology?

B The lecturer has asked you to research *process* and *person* approaches to psychology.

- 1 What do you understand by each of these terms?
- 2 Think of good research questions before you read the text on the opposite page.
- 3 What is the best way to record information while you are reading?

C Study the text on the opposite page.

- 1 Highlight the topic sentences.
- 2 Read each topic sentence. What will you find in the rest of the paragraph?
- 3 Which paragraph(s) will probably answer each research question? Read those paragraphs and make notes.
- 4 Have you got all the information you need? If not, read other paragraphs.

D Use the Internet to research the relevance of the *person* approach to clinical psychology. Use the same research questions as in Lesson 2.2.

- 1 Make notes.
- 2 Write a series of topic sentences which summarize your findings.
- 3 Report back to the other students. Read out each topic sentence, then add extra details.

Process or person?

Which approach to human behaviour is more relevant to current professional practice: *process* or *person*? Since the mid-19th century, two contrasting approaches to understanding the mind and behaviour have been a topic of discussion: the scientific, or *process* approach, and the introspective, or *person* approach. The debate is important because it affects research methods and professional practice and, in the long term, commercial, medical and social progress. A review of these approaches will allow us to reach our own conclusions.



The *process* approach to psychology focuses on the analysis of the internal mental mechanisms which, scientists claim, can only be accessed through observable behaviour. This view is largely supported by physiologists and behaviourists. The *process* approach is founded on Pavlov's well-known research into stimulus and response, and supported by Watson, when he formulated the principles of behaviourism in 1913 (Gross, 2007). These include: complete scientific objectivity; the predictability and controllability of behaviour; and similarities between human and animal behaviour. It has been argued, however, that this last principle fails to take into account the existence of consciousness or self-awareness in humans. Countering this criticism, Watson maintained that introspection was subjective, unreliable as a data source and, therefore, unscientific.

In the late 19th century, John Dewey highlighted another limitation of the stimulus-response theory (Benjafield, 1996). Dewey pointed out that, depending on their situation and intention, human beings will respond differently to a similar stimulus, unlike animals, which have a limited range of responses. For example, if we see a child crying and alone in public, we will probably assume that he or she is lost, and look for its mother. On the other hand, when we see a child crying and with its mother, we do nothing. Our responses are determined not only by the stimulus, but also by the social context. By relating behaviour to social context, Dewey foreshadowed social-constructivist theories which form part of the *person* approach.

The *person* approach emphasizes the importance of individual experience as a means of understanding mental processes, and of the effect of social interaction on behaviour. This approach is supported

by the psychodynamic, humanist and social-constructivist theories. For instance, Freud claimed that dreams were the gateway to our unconscious and that relating and interpreting them was a valid means of understanding our inner life. According to the humanist, Carl Rogers, self-awareness is at the centre of our human experience and each individual's unique interpretation of reality is valid. Social constructivism looks beyond individual experience and explains behaviour as a fluid interaction between the person and a continuously changing society. The main argument against the validity of all theories supporting the *person* approach is that any data based on reported experience is necessarily subjective and, therefore, unverifiable.

An examination of two cases will illustrate the relevance of each approach in practice. In the first case, a forensic psychologist planning a programme of rehabilitation for a prisoner may use techniques which include a scientifically standardized psychometric test, developed according to the *process* approach, and just as important, a direct interview – a technique belonging to the *person* approach. In another case, a biopsychologist taking the *process* approach to testing the effects of narcotics on behaviour may limit his or her observations to laboratory animals. However, during subsequent testing on humans, the researcher may take the *person* approach and obtain valuable additional information from individual feedback.

In conclusion, whilst the *process* approach is scientifically valid, the *person* approach provides a wealth of information not available from objective observation. Each of these approaches provides researchers and practitioners with data and techniques which are applicable not only in experimental contexts, but also in the field.