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What's Behind The Research?: Discovering Hidden Assumptions In The Behavioral Sciences



Synopsis

This volume encourages students to engage in critical thinking by exploring the main assumptions upon which behavioral science theories are based and offering some alternatives to these assumptions. The text begins with a review and critique of the major theoretical approaches: psychoanalysis, behaviorism, humanism, cognitivism, eclecticism, structuralism and postmodernism. The authors then discuss the key assumptions underlying these theories - knowing, determinism, reductionism and science. They trace the intellectual history of these assumptions and offer contrasting options. The book concludes by examining ways of coming to terms with some of the inadequacies in the assumptions of the behavioral sciences.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Richard N. Williams is founding Director of the Wheatley Institution. From 2001 through 2008, he served as an Associate Academic Vice President for Faculty and Professor in the department of Psychology at Brigham Young University. His specialty areas include the philosophical, theoretical and historical foundations of psychology, with concentration on issues related to human agency, as well the science of psychology and research methods and statistics. Williams has authored, co-authored, or edited numerous journal, articles, and books. He has been a visiting faculty member at Duquesne University and at Georgetown University. He holds an M.S. and Ph.D. from Purdue University in Psychological Science and is a summa cum laude graduate of Brigham Young University. Williams and his wife Camille have 5 children and 18 grandchildren. [Click here to see a](#)

full professional curriculum vitae.

Really teaches you to critically think. I think this book is a must read for all social worker majors, counseling majors, psychology majors, etc. It really shows you the problems within each theory in the field and to think critically about each one. My only problem is that the authors seem repetitive at times, and also a little contradictory at times. I know that they are trying to get the reader to see both sides, but some of their arguments seem to contradict previous arguments. Overall, a great read.

Book was as advertised and arrived in a timely manner.

A book I needed for class

I have used and discussed this book for years in the various theory courses in psychology that I teach (Theories of Personality, Counseling Theories, etc.). It is a wonderful book. The chapter on epistemology (Ways of Knowing) alone makes this a must have book. It is indispensable. It is so clearly written; it makes a dense subject matter understandable and interesting. Students find the discussion on epistemology eye-opening. They are often floored when their empirical view of the world is challenged by the other ways of knowing (rationalism, social constructionism, and hermeneutics). Highly recommend this book!

This book is about the philosophy of the behavioral sciences. However, as the title indicates it is written as a sort of "Consumer guide". There are presentations and discussions of psychodynamic theory, behaviorist theory, humanist theory, cognitive theory, eclecticism, structuralism and postmodernism. There are also chapters on epistemology, determinism, reductionism and the nature of science. Taken as a consumer guide, I found the book useful. Especially, I found the discussion about eclecticism (and its hidden assumptions) and about the problems of being too applied useful. The book is not only relevant for psychology, but for many areas in the social sciences. I have used some of the arguments in this book about library and information studies (see my article "Library and information science: practice, theory, and philosophical basis" in the journal *Information Processing and Management*, vol. 36(3), 2000, pp. 501-531).

The book is easy to read, for a student in the behavioral sciences. Although written for undergraduates the book presents important concepts useful to anyone involved in scientific

research . In reviewing the history of research techniques used in the behavioral sciences the book makes a vivid distinction between assumptions and fact. Counter-intuitive ideas are presented in a clear and concise manner that will help the reader to be a better critical thinker and conduct more accurate research. Read early on in your undergraduate education for it will cultivate your mind.

I rated this book so high because it challenges the most mainstream of psychological theories and sheds light on views accepted by the field and does so in a fearless manner. Great book for anyone interested in behavioral science.

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