

System Important

Years ago, in his *Beginner's Psychology* (1915), Titchener, a Structuralist, gave the following advice to his readers. He said: (Psychology) has only recently turned to scientific methods; and when the time came for it to take its place among the sciences, there was naturally differences of opinion regarding the standpoint it should assume, the procedure it should follow, and the model it should seek to copy. When such differences of opinion are obtained, the best way to begin your study is to master one system thoroughly; your ideas are thus made consistent and your knowledge receives an orderly arrangement; then, as you read further you can use this system as a touch-stone whereby to test new ideas and to arrange new knowledge; and if the new ideas seem preferable to the old, or if the old framework breaks down under the new knowledge, you can alter your system accordingly. If you begin, on the contrary, by studying a number of works abreast, you are liable to become confused. And it is better to be wrong than muddled; for truth, as Bacon said emerges more quickly from error than from confusion."

This was wise counsel in 1915, and it is even wiser counsel today when we have so much new material, such a wide range of facts, to contend with in our science. It is important, both practically and theoretically, to organize your knowledge, especially if your first course in psychology is also to be your last one. The person who takes away from his/her first course nothing more than a large body of disconnected and sketchily examined items of fact, method, or theory has only a superficial and temporary advantage over the person who never attended the course at all. If, on the other hand, the student has acquired a systematic orientation, he/she should have learned to think psychologically about everyday affairs as well as those of the classroom or laboratory. His/Her approach to new problems should be more direct and incisive; his/her estimates of the significance of new findings should be more telling; and he/she should be less disturbed by the claims of quacks or blinded by the dust of popular fancy.

As a beginner in psychology, you need not fear that your study of a system of behavior will either restrict your movement or narrow your vision. The opposite is more nearly true. A thorough understanding of a system will increase both the quality and the quantity of your productive activity, and it will open up more exciting realms of thinking and discovery than you have ever known. In brief, it will give you a power and perspective that no other approach to psychology could possibly provide (From F.S. Keller, *Notes on the History of Psychology*).

S.B. 23-1

- 23-1 According to Keller, a thorough learning of one system of psychology will:
- A. increase the quality of productive activity
 - B. increase the quantity of productive activity
 - C. open up more exciting realms
 - D. give a perspective no other approach can offer

- E. all of the above (E)
- 23-2 Titchener asserts that the best way to begin a study is to:
A. make use of all available systems
B. avoid association with a system subject to strong criticism
C. master one system thoroughly
D. take other people's advice
E. all of the above (C)
- 23-3 Bacon contends that truth emerges more quickly from _____ than confusion.
A. error
B. confusion
C. questions
D. answers
E. all of the above (A)
- 23-4 The student who has acquired a systematic orientation should have learned to think psychologically about everyday affairs.
A. True
B. False (A)