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| 1. Gazzaniga, M.S. (1967): The split brain in man. | Michael S. Gazzaniga has conducted many experiments that have impacted psychology. His main studies have been in split-brain research. |
| 1. Rosenzweir, M.R., Bennett, E.L., and Diamond, M.C. (1972): Brain changes in response to experience. | Did experiments to prove that a stimulating environment changes brain anatomy and chemistry. After their experiments, many scientists have expanded and refined these findings. |
| 1. Bouchard, T., Lykken, D., McGue, M., Segal, N., and Tellegen, A. (1990): Sources of human psychological differences. | Did experiments on twins raised together and twins raised apart. They found that identical twins raised apart were remarkably similar in looks and overall health. They concluded that many traits attributed to a person’s environment may actually be the effect of their genetics, for example divorce. Since their experiment, many more such experiments have been conducted that could be applied to a number of different areas, especially in regard to human cloning. |
| 1. Gibson, E.J., and Walk, R.D. (1960): The ‘visual cliff’. | Used the “visual cliff” to determine if depth perception is an innate ability in humans and animals. While the animal results were predictable, the response of the babies varied and drew much criticism. Despite this, the “visual cliff” is still used for conducting experiments and for helping developmentally disabled children. |
| 1. Fantz, R.I. (1961): The origin of form perception. | Did experiments to prove that infants preferred complex patterns over simple, uniform patterns. His research has had a tremendous impact on the study of cognitive behavior. |
| 1. Aserinsky, E., and Kleitman, N. (1953): Regularly occurring periods of eye mobility and concomitant phenomena during sleep. | Studied eye movement during sleep. They found neurological changes during dream sleep and the need for dream sleep. Their research led to huge gains in this field and many more experiments by other researchers followed, including the relationship between schizophrenia and REM sleep. |
| 1. Hobson, J.A., and McCarley, R. W. (1977): The brain as a dream-state generator: an activation-synthesis hypothesis of the dream process. | Suggested that dreams are a nothing more than a person’s interpretation of random electrical impulses in the brain. Basically, they argued against dreams carrying any messages from the subconscious. Their conclusions are still debated and have spurred more research. |
| 1. Spanos, N. P. (1982): Hypnotic behavior: a cognitive, social, psychological perspective. | Suggested that hypnosis is not a result of an altered state of mind, rather it is a voluntary social activity. There is still a great deal of debate on this topic because it is unclear whether people can be convinced to perform behaviors outside their comfort zone. |
| 1. Pavlov, I. P. (1927): Conditioned reflexes. | Studied the effects of conditioned responses and behaviors. His extensive experiments proved that certain stimuli can generate responses that are considered involuntary like salivating. Pavlov’s research has been used extensively through the years. It is used to explain phobias and even to control involuntary behaviors. |
| 1. Watson, J. B. and Rayner, R. (1920): Conditioned emotional responses. 2. Skinner, B.F. (1948): Superstition in the pigeon. | Both did studies to show that the behavior of humans and animals can be controlled using certain stimuli. Unlike the pro-genetics scientists, these scientists believed that most behavior can be controlled by environmental responses. They used negative reinforcements to trigger certain behaviors. B.F. Skinner’s experiment with pigeons is not only widely cited to this day, but it has also been used to study other conditions like ADHD. |
| 1. Bandura, A., Ross, D., and Ross, S.A. (1961): Transmission of aggression through imitation of aggressive models. | Conducted research to show that children tend to imitate the behavior of adult role models. Children not only imitated the behavior of the adults in their presence, but even when the adult role model was absent. With violence and aggression being a concern for most societies, these studies continue to cited extensively. |
| 1. Rosenthal, R. and Jacobson, L. (1966): Teachers’ expectancies: determinates of pupils’ IQ gains. | Studied the effect of a teachers’ expectations and students’ performance. He showed a direct correlation between a teacher’s expectations of child being an “academic bloomer” and an increase in the child’s score on IQ tests in the lower grades. This experiment clearly proved that an experimenter’s expectations have on the subjects not just in controlled environments but also in the real world. Over the years, this technique has shown a strong correlation in numerous fields like medicine, business and the legal system. |
| 1. Gardner, H. (1983): Frames of mind: the theory of multiple intelligences. | Devised a system that went beyond the IQ test. The IQ test was considered biased towards certain groups. His system provided many more categories of intelligence including musical and spatial. This theory was embraced by educators to explain exceptional ability in students who don’t score well on the IQ test, but are clearly gifted in other areas. It has changed how intelligence is viewed. |
| 1. Tolman, E. C. (1948): Cognitive maps in rats and men. | Conducted experiments to prove that not just humans but other animals, specifically rats, also used cognitive maps to reach a specific destination. He also proved that animals were not just driven by stimulus - response driven behavior. These experiments have made the study of cognitive psychology one of the fastest growing fields. |
| 1. Loftus, E. F. (1975): Leading questions and the eyewitness report. | Conducted many experiments to prove that leading questions get biased answers from eyewitnesses. She showed that the way a question is phrased has a strong influence on how most eyewitnesses respond. Her research was crucial in decreasing the reliance on unreliable eyewitness reports. |
| 1. Harlow, H.F. (1958): The nature of love. | Did experiments to show a clear connection between a mother and child. Most people has assumed that the bond between a mother and child is mostly due to the care a mother provides. But in his tests using monkeys, H.F. Harlow was able to show a clear bond between mother and child regardless of food and care. These experiments have been applied to many areas including pre-mature infants and skin-to-skin contact. |

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| 1. Piaget, J. (1954): The development of object concept. | Piaget studied his own children to come up with stages of development. Even though he limited his studies to just his children, his findings were relevant to most children. His work, despite recent criticism, paved the way for more research into child development and most of his conclusions still stand today. |
| 1. Kohlberg, L. (1963): The development of children’s orientations toward a moral order: sequence in the development of moral thought. | Similar to Piaget, this was a staging of child’s development, but in relation to its moral development. Even though it received much criticism, it was the basis for the “Defining Issues Test” which is still used in politics and medicine. |
| 1. Langer, E. J., and Rodin, J. (1976): The effects of choice and enhanced personal responsibility for the aged: a field experiment in an institutional setting. | This experiment was conducted to test the level of happiness in elderly people in relation to personal power and choice. The experiment proved that when people perceive greater sense of control of their lives, they are happier and healthier. This study is of great relevance now given our current aging population, especially those in nursing homes. |