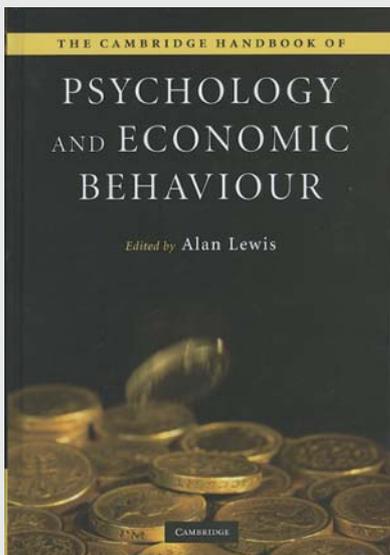


Understanding the economic mind

Ask yourself this, is psychology or economics the more rational science? One deals with the complexities of mind and behaviour, the other deals with the complexities of financial systems and monetary activity. One is heavily reliant on the



The Cambridge Handbook of Psychology and Economic Behaviour
Alan Lewis (Ed.)

synthetic methods of the natural sciences and a priori hypotheses, the other is naturalistic, analytic and generally looks back in order to predict what is in front.

Of course economics in the midst of a recession, technical or otherwise, is more likely, in Thomas Carlyle's words, to be viewed as the 'dismal science', but there is something about economics that seems to exude rationality and solidity. This, of course, is reification in its purest form; all that modelling, mapping and forecasting would be fine if the drivers of economic behaviour, which is of course you and me, behaved rationally ourselves. This, for my reading, is the central dilemma at the heart of economics, which the *Cambridge Handbook of*

Psychology and Economic Behaviour seeks to explore. Covering 21 chapters the Handbook covers theory and method, financial and consumer behaviour and the environment, along with the burgeoning field of evolutionary and neuro-economic psychology.

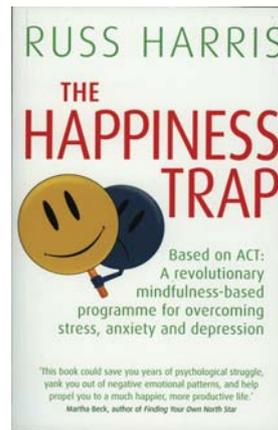
There are a number of outstanding chapters in this book and the very best of them work because they are about us. The topic may be inter-temporal choice, identity, household consumption or stock markets, but they all tell us something about how we relate both to abstractions such as 'the market' or 'government' as well as more tangible fields such as cars, houses and partners.

Psychology and Economic Behaviour reminds us that we not only respond to economic dynamics, but that we also create them – justification enough for trying to understand our economic mind.

Cambridge University Press; 2008; Hb £80.00

Reviewed by Robert Hill

who is Principal Clinical Psychologist with South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust



Values... not goals

The Happiness Trap – Based on ACT: A Revolutionary Mindfulness-based Programme for Overcoming Stress, Anxiety and Depression
Russ Harris

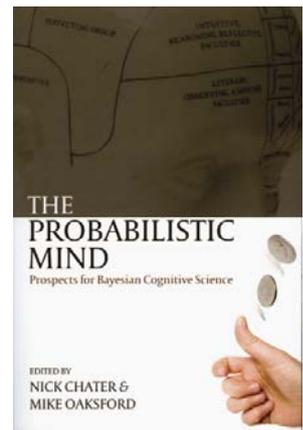
The 'happiness trap' refers to trying to find happiness by avoiding bad thoughts (using the definition of happiness as feeling good). However, the harder we try to do this, the more bad feelings we create. To avoid this trap, this book uses a different definition of happiness – living a rich and meaningful life.

The therapy is based upon is ACT (A = Accept your thoughts; C = Connect with your values; T = Take effective action). It encourages this telling the reader that it's OK to feel sad/anxious, it's just being human, and to be mindful of negative thoughts and emotions. The book then describes the tactics for this acceptance by getting the reader to think whether the thoughts are helpful to you. The final part encourages us to have a value-orientated life, not a goal-orientated one. Although it's OK to have goals, just focusing on these, prevents immediate reward and can lead to failure; however, if we focus on values, we can begin to live that life now.

You can download chapter 1 and read more information about the book at www.thehappinesstrap.com.

Robinson; 2008; Pb £9.99

Reviewed by Dawn-Marie Walker



For a good introduction

The Probabilistic Mind: Prospects for Bayesian Cognitive Science
Nick Chater & Mike Oaksford (Eds.)

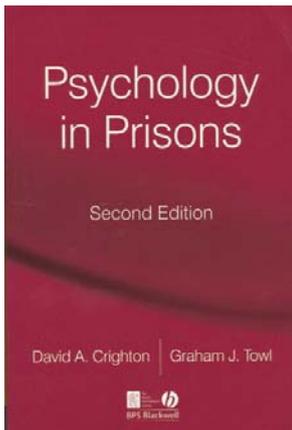
One of the defining features of the human mind is its capacity to deal with uncertainty. This publication is concerned with describing the probabilistic rules that underlie decision making under uncertainty and other cognitive processes. Bayesian statistics is particularly well-suited to this task, because certain causal inferences can be shown to be equivalent to conditional probabilities.

The contributions of the different authors are organised in five parts. The first one covers the methodological foundations, which makes this volume self-contained, while the four other parts are dedicated to inference, decision making, memory, and causality.

The book mildly suffers from the common pitfalls of an edited volume. It is sometimes difficult to find the common thread in the sequence of chapters. In the introduction, however, the editors succeed in bringing this into a coherent whole. This compendium is therefore recommended to any newcomers in cognitive psychology. With its preliminary chapters on Bayesian statistics and rational analysis, it will make a very good introduction to all researchers and graduate students who are interested in this new exciting field.

Oxford University Press; 2008; Pb £29.95

Reviewed by Cedric Ginestet



Not just for forensic psychologists

Psychology in Prisons (2nd edn)

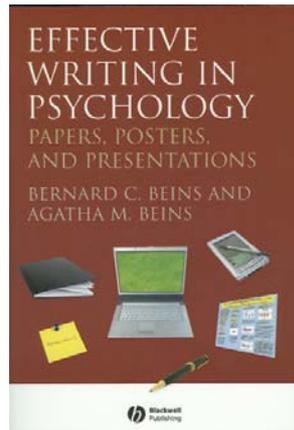
David A. Crighton & Graham J. Towl

This is an excellent introductory text that will undoubtedly appeal to those who work in prisons, as well as being relevant to psychologists working in other secure settings. It familiarises the reader with institutional systems and role requirements, and also warns of potential pitfalls.

The text is completely up to date with relevant literature and critically considers the evidence base for interventions. It pays attention to the gaps in service provision and considers the ways in which psychological services within prisons could be developed. This then stimulates thinking around what else needs to be done for those in prison. It also highlights that psychological issues in prison are not exclusively of a forensic nature with many other mental and emotional well-being issues being of importance.

This book provides a realistic assessment of the challenges that face those who wish to work in prisons without presenting either a doom-laden or overly optimistic narrative. I would recommend it to both clinical and forensic psychologists.

I BPS Blackwell; 2008; Pb £29.99
Reviewed by Amy Mckee



Engaging and inspiring

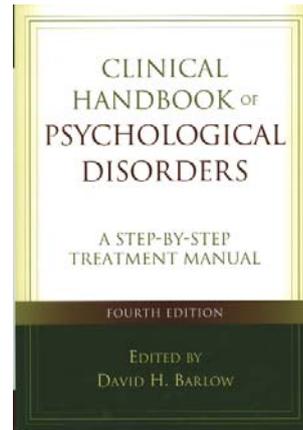
Effective Writing in Psychology: Papers, Posters, and Presentations
Bernard C. Beins & Agatha M. Beins

This book will prove very useful to undergraduate students writing essays and reports, as well as to academics in need of inspiration and guidance in writing for publication. The authors commendably attain a good balance between patronising the reader with obvious statements regarding writing clarity, and being overly complex and inaccessible.

A lovely pace and tone engage the reader in what can be a rather dry topic and make it a pleasure to read. The reader is inspired with confidence that they can emulate the lively writing style used by the authors, and is motivated to begin their own writing. The examples embedded within the text clearly illustrate the points that the authors make, and provide clear guidance for the aspiring writer. The discussion of APA guidelines for writing and referencing serves as both a comprehensive first introduction for students, as well as a good refresher for more experienced writers.

Overall, this book is a great resource for psychology students and academics alike, and would be useful addition to the bookshelf of any psychology student or academic.

I Blackwell; 2008; Pb £19.99
Reviewed by Hannah Fawcett



A useful resource

Clinical Handbook of Psychological Disorders: A Step-by-Step Treatment Manual (4th edn)
David H. Barlow (Ed.)

This is an authoritative and practical guide to current research evidence and clinical practice in the most common psychological disorders, written by clinicians and researchers. The vast majority of the approaches described are close relations of cognitive behaviour therapy, although they focus on advanced techniques tailored to each presenting problem, rather than on teaching the basics. Some of the literature reviews touch on other therapeutic approaches, but again the focus is on CBT.

The great strength of this book, in my opinion, is that each chapter is centred on a detailed treatment protocol, illustrated by one or more case studies. All chapters include literature reviews; some of these are quite brief, but others are very

thorough and provide useful evidence on, for example, the effects on treatment efficacy of the location or frequency of sessions. The detailed information provided means you could choose to use the treatment protocols exactly as they are given, or use the handbook as a resource for new ideas and a shortcut to the research literature.

Each chapter covers largely the same areas, but the structure is inconsistent and there are no chapter contents pages, which makes it very difficult to dip into the book or refer back to anything. My other complaint is the irritating frequency of typographical errors. These issues aside, this book will prove a useful resource for anyone using CBT-based approaches with working-age adults who wants to improve and expand their practice.

I Guilford Press; 2008; Hb £45.00
Reviewed by Emma Taylor

just in

The Overflowing Brain Torkel Klingberg

The Nature of Creative Development Jonathan S. Feinstein

Symbols and Embodiment: Debates on Meaning and Cognition

Manuel de Vega, Arthur Glenberg & Arthur Graesser

Stalkers and their Victims (2nd edn) Paul Mullen, Michele Pathe & Rosemary Purcell

Where Have All the Liberals Gone? Race, Class and Ideals in America James R. Flynn

History of Cognitive Neuroscience M.R. Bennett & P.M.S. Hacker

New Perspectives on Bullying Helen Cowie & Dawn Jennifer

Paranoia – The 21st Century Fear Daniel Freeman & Jason Freeman

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