Study ranks the top 20th century psychologists

Psychologists were put to a popularity contest in a new study that appears in the Review of General Psychology (Vol. 6, No. 2), which ranks 99 of the 100 most eminent psychologists of the 20th century.

B.F. Skinner topped the list, followed by Jean Piaget, Sigmund Freud and Albert Bandura.

The rankings were based on the frequency of three variables: journal citation, introductory psychology textbook citation and survey response. Surveys were sent to 1,725 members of the American Psychological Society, asking them to list the top psychologists of the century.

Researchers also took into account whether the psychologists had a National Academy of Sciences membership, were elected as APA president or received the APA Distinguished Scientific Contributions Award, and whether their surname was used as an eponym.

"I was not surprised by most of the names who made it toward the top of the list," says lead researcher Steven J. Haggbloom, PhD, psychology department chair at Western Kentucky University. "But there are some notable names not on the list."

For example, psychologist Hermann Ebbinghaus, the first to experiment with human learning and memory, didn't make it.

Omissions like that are why researchers followed the idea of researcher Eugene Garfield, who did a Top 100 list in 1977 but left off No. 100. So, No. 100 might be the many great psychologists that someone could make a compelling case to include, Haggbloom says.

—M. DITTMANN

For links to individual Top 100 lists of psychologists cited most frequently in introductory psychology textbooks, professional journals, and named most frequently in the survey, visit http://education.tph.uw.edu/~shaggbloom.htm.
Eminent psychologists of the 20th century

1. B.F. Skinner
2. Jean Piaget
3. Sigmund Freud
4. Albert Bandura
5. Leon Festinger
6. Carl R. Rogers
7. Stanley Schachter
8. Neal E. Miller
9. Edward Thorndike
10. A.H. Maslow
11. Gordon W. Allport
12. Erik H. Erikson
13. Hans J. Eysenck
14. William James
15. David C. McClelland
16. Raymond B. Cattell
17. John B. Watson
18. Kurt Lewin
19. Donald O. Hebb
20. George A. Miller
21. Clark L. Hull
22. Jerome Kagan
23. Carl G. Jung
24. Ivan P. Pavlov
25. Walter Mischel
26. Harry F. Harlow
27. J.P. Guilford
28. Jerome S. Bruner
29. Ernest R. Hilgard
30. Lawrence Kohlberg
31. Martin E.P. Seligman
32. Ulric Neisser
33. Donald T. Campbell
34. Roger Brown
35. R.D. Zajonc
36. Endel Tulving
37. Herbert A. Simon
38. Noam Chomsky
39. Edward E. Jones
40. Charles E. Osgood
41. Solomon E. Asch
42. Gordon H. Bower
43. Harold H. Kelley
44. Roger W. Sperry
45. Edward C. Tolman
46. Stanley Milgram
47. Arthur R. Jensen
48. Lee J. Cronbach
49. John Bowlby
50. Wolfgang Köhler
51. David Wechsler
52. S.S. Stevens
53. Joseph Wolpe
54. D.E. Broadbent
55. Roger N. Shepard
56. Michael I. Posner
57. Theodore M. Newcomb
58. Elizabeth F. Loftus
59. Paul Ekman
60. Robert J. Sternberg
61. Karl S. Lashley
62. Kenneth Spence
63. Morton Deutsch
64. Julian B. Rotter
65. Konrad Lorenz
66. Benton Underwood
67. Alfred Adler
68. Michael Rutter
69. Alexander R. Luria
70. Eleanor E. Maccoby
71. Robert Plomin
72-73. G. Stanley Hall
74-75. Lewis M. Terman
76-77. Eleanor J. Gibson
78-79. Paul E. Meehl
80. Leonard Berkowitz
81. William K. Estes
82. Eliot Aronson
83. Irving L. Janis
84. Richard S. Lazarus
85. W. Gary Cannon
86. Allen L. Edwards
87. Lev Semenovich Vygotsky
88. Robert Rosenthal
89. Milton Rokeach
89-90. John Garcia
89-90. James J. Gibson
89-90. David Rumelhart
89-90. L.L. Thurston
89-90. Margaret Washburn
89-90. Robert Woodworth
91-93. Edwin G. Boring
91-93. John Dewey
91-93. Amos Tversky
91-93. Wilhelm Wundt
94-96. Herman A. Witkin
97. Mary D. Ainsworth
98. Orval Hobart Mowrer
99. Anna Freud

*Numbers with . indicate a tie in the ranking; in these cases, the mean is listed.
Source: The Review of General Psychology (Vol. 6, No. 2).