**A Framework for Teaching High School Psychology: A Psychologist’s Recommendations**

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| **Standard Textbook\*** | **Psychologist’s Recommendations** |
| **Chapter 1: Psychology and Life** | **Unit 1: Introduction to Psychology and Research Methods in Psychology** |
| **Chapter 2: Research Methods in Psychology** | **Unit 2: Personality and Social Psychology** |
| **Chapter 3: The Biological and Evolutionary Bases of Behavior** | **Unit 3: Learning and Memory** |
| **Chapter 4: Sensation and Perception** | **Unit 4: Biological Psychology** |
| **Chapter 5: Mind Consciousness and Alternative States** | **Unit 5: Mental Disorders and Treatments** |
| **Chapter 6: Learning and Behavior Analysis** | **Unit 6: Student Choice (The two chapters in the text students want to learn most about- Taken by vote at the beginning of class).** |
| **Chapter 7: Memory** |  |
| **Chapter 8: Cognitive Processes** |  |
| **Chapter 9: Intelligence and Intelligence Assessment** |  |
| **Chapter 10: Human Development Across the Life Span** |  |
| **Chapter 11: Motivation** |  |
| **Chapter 12: Emotion, Stress, and Health** |  |
| **Chapter 13: Understanding Human Personality** |  |
| **Chapter 14: Psychology Disorders** |  |
| **Chapter 15: Therapies for Psychological Disorders** |  |
| **Chapter 16: Social Cognition and Relationships** |  |
| **Chapter 17: Social Processes, Society, and Culture** |  |

\* Gerrig, R. J. & Zimbrado, P. G. (2004). *Psychology and life (17th Edition).* Boston, MA: Pearson.

**Rationale**

The third chapter in any intro psychology textbook is usually the biological psychology chapter. Students struggle with this material the most and are often not excited about it. As a result, after covering the basics of psychology, going into a couple of chapters that students will find more interesting, such as personality and social (social is a really good chapter to cover at the beginning of the semester because students typically find the content interesting, even though it is usually placed at the end of intro psychology textbooks as afterthoughts).

Biological psychology should be covered before mental disorders and treatments because it provides an important foundation for much of what they will learn in those chapters. It is therefore good to cover the bio chapter right before the mental disorders and treatments chapters. Giving students a choice as to what else they would like to learn about gives them some autonomy, which increases their motivation to learn in the course (see self-determination theory on learning and motivation).

A teacher should never try to cover all of the chapters (it is too much) or even all of the material in each chapter they do cover (also too much). Instead, focus on the most important concepts they want their students to learn in each chapter and cover those concepts in depth. That way the students will learn more about the most important concepts and are more likely to remember them.

Teaching about psychology in this manner will allow for the teacher to develop inquiry based approaches corresponding to the topics under study (especially elements form research methods and social psychology). The four components of the C3 Framework\*\* are:

* Dimension 1: Developing questions and planning inquires
* Dimension 2: Applying disciplinary concepts and tools
* Dimension 3: Evaluating sources and using evidence
* Dimension 4: Communicating conclusions and taking informed actions

This approach will still provide high school students with a very good foundation in intro psychology. This will prepare them for further study in psychology should they choose that route, but more importantly continue to teach them the skills needed for College, Career, and Civic Life.

\*\*National Council for the Social Studies. (2013). *The college, career, and civic life (C3) framework for social studies state standards: Guidance for enhancing the rigor of K-12 civics, economics, geography, and history*. Silver Spring, MD: NCSS. <http://www.socialstudies.org/sites/default/files/c3/C3-Framework-for-Social-Studies.pdf>