tails about the questionnaires used and the strategies to achieve such a high rate of complete participation. Given that the analysis of diary data is relatively new, complicated, and not taught regularly in graduate school, researchers may be frustrated by the lack of detail about how the data were compiled and analyzed and that the data were not exploited as fully as they could be. The results of the Vienna Diary Study focus on a basic description of couples’ decision-making behavior in a rather static way, despite the potential to observe change over time. A key reason to use diary data is to uncover how behavioral patterns change over time or how behavioral patterns lead to changes in how happy couples are with their relationships. Thus, I found it most interesting when the authors discussed how the process and outcome of an earlier decision influenced a later one. But, given data over the entire course of a year, I was disappointed by the focus on which decision-making and conflict tactics distinguished satisfied from dissatisfied couples rather than examining which tactics preceded changes in how happy couples were with their relationship. Researchers may wish to refer to Bolger, Zuckerman, and Kessler (2000) for a more sophisticated treatment of using diary data to examine how spouses’ behavioral patterns change over time. Further, the sheer amount of information on spouses’ lives in the Vienna Diary Study lends itself to the emerging field of synergetics or dynamic systems analysis, which captures the evolution of transactions over time (e.g., Dumas, Lemay, & Dauwalder, 2001). Most marriage researchers cannot apply dynamic systems analysis to their research because they do not have enough observations. However, with 365 observations on husbands and wives, the Austrian team have the data to address the complexity of marital interactions over time with this approach. The team will make a significant contribution to our understanding of the ebb and flow of how spouses interact with each other if they delve deeper into their data in their next monograph.

References

An Anglocentric View of Undergraduate Education in Psychology

Study Skills for Psychology Students: A Practical Guide by Sylvie C. Collins and Pauline E. Kneale

Review by R. Eric Landrum

Would your students be helped with answers to any of the following questions?
- Do you know the difference between deep kipping (p. 1) and good wheezes (p. 5)?
- Do you understand that psychology degrees are traditionally divided into three years, called Year 1, Year 2, and Year 3 (p. 4, pp. 66-67)?
- Do you comprehend the subtle nuances between posters and stands (p. 203)?
- When taking an examination, do you know when to speak to the invigilator (p. 220)?
- During finals week, do you understand how to study for your viva (p. 226)?

If your students would benefit from advice on the questions above, then Collins and Kneale may well be the book for you. If these questions make little sense to you, then you might experience some of the same challenges I did with this text.

Collins and Kneale have written a text about various skills for psychology students. At the start, I was excited about this text because it looked like something my students would benefit from. Examining the Table of Contents further enhanced my excitement about the text, seeing sections on essay skills, citations and references, oral presentations, abstracts, graphs, ethics, and so on; topics that would be important for an undergraduate psychology major, yet, not presented in most textbooks. I organize this review of Study Skills for Psychology Students: A Practical Guide into four sections: Desirable Features of the Text, Major Problems With the Text, Minor Irritations With the Text, and Conclusions. My attempt here is to strike a balance in presenting the positive and negative aspects of the text. In addition, it is important to note that this is a textbook written by

SYLVIE C. COLLINS, School of Psychology, University of Leeds, Leeds, United Kingdom.
PULINE E. KNEALE, School of Geography, University of Leeds.
R. ERIC LANDRUM, Department of Psychology, Boise State University, 1910 University Drive, Boise, Idaho 83725-1716. E-mail: elandru@boisestate.edu
two faculty members at a British university and published by a British publisher. Conversely, I am an American psychologist writing for Contemporary Psychology, APA Review of Books and published by a U.S. publisher. Although I have strived to avoid an Anglophobic response to this book, I feel obligated to acknowledge the portions of it that are simply inaccurate and misleading for American students.

Desirable Features of the Text

This textbook has a number of valuable features that make it attractive. Chapter 3 presents good, basic study skills suggestions for students, including time management (pp. 28–30). Chapter 8, which focuses on the construction of arguments, is the best and most valuable chapter. The sections on rational and nonrational arguments (pp. 79–81) and potential minefields (pp. 81–83) are particularly strong. In the section on developing effective essay skills (Chapter 9), the editing exercise on pages 103–104 is a particularly good idea. The authors provide a good start to an evaluation instrument for poster presentations, with the verbal anchors for criteria most helpful (p. 207). However, I am confused by how to use the rating system accompanying the scale, with the possible ratings 1, 2:1, 2:2, 3, and Fails. What is a 2:2? The reference materials toward the end of the book are quite helpful as well, as I think students would appreciate the listing of Latin words (p. 240), the Greek alphabet (p. 241), and the acronym listing (pp. 249–251).

There are two other features of the textbook I found to be helpful, and with minor modifications these features would be invaluable. First, when the authors present a personal reflection table on pages 16–17, why not leave some blank space for students to fill in their current status on each of the skills? Second, I think the skills matrix presented in Figure 7.2 on pages 66–67 is a wonderful idea and quite helpful to psychology students from the United Kingdom. However, undergraduate education in the United States is not divided into Year 1, Year 2, and Year 3. Trust me, I am not being Anglophobic, but this material is clearly inaccurate for American students and it would be confusing. The authors of this text have included some very good features that I have outlined earlier. I think it might be a valuable reference text for a professor, but it is not a text that I would recommend for use with American students. My rationale for that conclusion is detailed in the next two sections of this review.

Major Problems With the Text

There are a number of problems with the text that are due to its Anglocentric approach (however, some of the problems are not due to this perspective at all). The portrayal of psychology degrees throughout the text (i.e., Years 1, 2, and 3) is a major problem in using this text with an American audience. Clearly this book was not written with this audience in mind, and to use it with American students would be a disservice and cause for unnecessary confusion. This approach is made most clear with a section such as For UK Students or Web of Science is a Goldmine and User-Friendly (p. 37). There is no parallel sentence that follows for U.S. students. By the way, I do not think the authors must write a textbook that applies to all students in all situations; however, if the authors want American faculty members to adopt the text for student use, it should be written with American students in mind (or at least applicable to American students).

One of the biggest problems I have with a text purporting to present study skills for psychology students are the incorrect examples of American Psychological Association (APA) format. Undergraduate students do struggle with APA format in American colleges and universities, and it does not help matters when textbooks cannot provide correct examples. The authors state that, in their chapter (10) on citations, references, and sources, “these recommendations follow a standard pattern and adopt conventions of the BPS (British Psychological Society) and the APA (American Psychological Association)” (p. 110). I cannot state with any authority whether the examples listed on pages 112–115 conform to the rules of the BPS, but I can state unequivocally that the examples cited for appropriate APA format are wrong, and if students were to follow the examples of this textbook, they would be making multiple mistakes. The book contains numerous mistakes in book and journal capitalization rules, punctuation, listing of issue numbers and volumes, citing differing editions, and so on. Readers expect texts giving advice on format issues to be accurate; this would be the last source I would provide for students as examples of APA format (the first source would be the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, itself, APA, 2001).

There are other significant problems with this text that I find troubling. When the authors present tips on effective reading, they present the SQ3R system. Why not present the originator of the idea—Robinson (1970)? It almost suggests an Anglophilic approach by the authors. I also think the authors go overboard in trying to be humorous. The most egregious example of this is on page 59, where the authors demonstrate how to take notes when reading journal articles. Part of the example notes taken reads “his results contrast those of Ididitniiyway’s (2010) report on condom use in Phuket, because. . . .” I am sure the authors thought this would be clever, but some students (both American and British) may find this attempt at humor distasteful. Finally, in a textbook devoted to providing psychology students with useful, practical study skills, why is there no reference at all to the body of work by Wilbert J. McKeachie? McKeachie has an international reputation in psychology.
and has devoted more than 50 years of teaching and research to understand how students learn. He has published numerous journal articles and textbooks about the learning (and teaching) process. I am amazed that this book does not contain one single reference to his work.

Minor Irritations With the Text

There are a number of minor irritations that I encountered when reading and reviewing this text. Though some of these problems center on the Anglocentric approach, other problems are not as limited in scope. Though none of these problems individually carry much weight, as they accumulate over the course of the book, the issues become more problematical and irritating.

As I carefully read the book, I found the graphics program to be overkill-too much, too often, too cluttered. It was as if someone found a new clip art program, combined with a knowledge of shading techniques and love of crossword puzzles, and they just went overboard (e.g., see pp. 9, 28–29, 41–44, 100–107, 138, 202, 216–219, and 235). In addition, the references at the end of each chapter are incomplete. Key elements are missing that would enable the reader to track down the information for himself or herself. For instance, if I wanted to examine the materials cited at the bottom on page 11 about careers, there is not enough reference material presented there to allow the reader to do so. As inferred earlier, it would be nice to see complete and accurate APA format, but in its absence, some format that provides the complete citation in enough detail that it could be retrieved by other is missing. That is the rationale for a reference section in the first place.

Other minor irritations tend to focus on language issues; some Anglocentric, others not. For instance, the authors' references to modules (p. 47), middling (p. 142), stands (p. 203), and vivas (p. 226) are typically lost on American readers. Colleges and universities in the United States do not define tutorials as rigidly as the UK universities (p. 6), and undergraduates do not write dissertations and final-year projects (p. 176), although they might complete something similar called a senior thesis. I also think that the authors err again with their attempt at humor on page 105. They label Exercise 9.8 "Synonyms for Psychosis?" I think this is inappropriate and insensitive to those individuals suffering from psychological disorders. I understand the author's attempt at humor and have quite a sense of humor myself, but I found nothing humorous here and something that could be taken by many as offensive.

Conclusions

Though much of this review has focused on aspects of the text that are inappropriate for American students, it is important to note that there are some highly desirable features of the text, as discussed earlier. For faculty members interested in resources that help to improve study skills, this text could be a valuable resource. However, given its Anglocentric approach, I believe that using this book with American students would cause more harm (i.e., confusion, misunderstanding, chaos) than good. For U.S. faculty interested in providing career advice to students, the book Majoring in Psychology Career Options for Undergraduates by Morgan and Korschgen (2001) would be better for advice for those seeking a career after they receive their bachelor's degree, and Wallfish and Hess's book (2001) Succeeding in Graduate School: The Career Guide for Psychology Students is better suited for those with postgraduate aspirations. With respect to study skills, Ellis's book (1997) Becoming a Master Student is written at a level that seems appropriate for all students.

British readers of this review will surely think that I am an Anglophobe, but I assure you that my motivation is to inspire my students to achieve success. Not coincidentally, my students attend a university with an American approach to undergraduate education. I believe that teaching our students study skills can provide them with valuable tools for success beyond their education and development as critical thinkers and educated citizens. I do not think, however, that Collins and Kneale's Study Skills for Psychology Students: A Practical Guide is the text to achieve that goal.

References


