

THE K & S IN BRAZIL

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Classes of Experimental Psychology I at the University of São Paulo back in 1962 were held in the Biological Sciences building in scattered locations in downtown São Paulo. I knew the place from my freshman year, when I had taken General Biology and Physiology classes there. To go to the Cidade Universitária was to lose a day. When Fred Keller came to Brazil for the first time, in 1961, some friends invited me to hear his classes. I refused on the grounds that the Cidade Universitária was too far and I had my own business to attend to. But in 1962 I had no choice. Despite the distance, I had to go because I needed Experimental I for my B.S. in psychology. The teacher then was not Keller but Rodolpho Azzi and, later in the year, Gil Sherman. The teacher was different, but the textbook was the same: Keller and Schoenfeld's *Principles of Psychology* (1950) or, as we came to call it, the K & S.

It was literally *the* book. We had one volume at the lab. Photocopying was not available yet, and the traditional copies of the time were expensive and of poor quality, so I first read the K & S before or after classes and in the lab, under the severe supervision of our lab monitors, Maria Amélia Matos and Dora Fix Ventura. It was worthwhile. After 3 years of psychology courses, I was finally enjoying one. In my first year at the USP I had taken two semesters of General and Experimental Psychology and had gotten bored with Gestalt and Perception tricks. In the second year I became interested in the Zeigarnik effect but a low grade on the report of an experiment discouraged me. Before graduation, in 1962, I had just been hired as a job analyst by General Electric and was reading only job-related material sent from the U.S. The psychology course at USP was beginning to look like a waste of time and effort. The K & S and my first rat changed things.

So far I had had good grades only in the

statistics course. There was no textbook, but the course was highly structured and well organized and was repeated year after year, the lectures each year exactly like those of the last. I borrowed the statistics notebook from a compulsive girlfriend. She not only compulsively wrote down anything the teacher said in class, but she had nice handwriting too. I typed the text in stencil, including my own variations of exercises, made mimeographed copies, and sold them at marvelous prices to students in education so traumatized by statistics classes that they paid me for extra lectures in a tender and loving atmosphere. But in Experimental I, I didn't have to organize my own text. We had the K & S, a highly structured course, and lab exercises related to the material just read. Keller and Schoenfeld point out the key to the success of *Principles of Psychology* at the very beginning of Chapter 1. It is a biological, experimental, and systematic approach to psychology. It uses the experimental analysis of behavior as a central locus to incorporate findings originally presented in different languages. Used in conjunction with laboratory exercises (as Keller and Schoenfeld designed the course at Columbia), it attracts the student to the development of a point of view that begins with a few principles, clearly presented, and gradually expands to show the possibilities for a science of human behavior.

The emphasis on human behavior from the very first chapter was, I believe, extremely important for the success of the book with beginning undergraduate students. "The subject matter of psychology" (pp. 2-3a) tentatively presents psychology as the science of the behavior of organisms, but then qualifies the statement. We are interested in the behavior of other animals insofar as it may throw light on human behavior. As a science, psychology studies behavior in its relation to the environment. To understand psychology as a systematic body of knowledge, the student

is asked to learn a new language: "Most [psychological terms and principles of everyday language] are lacking in scientific significance, because they are either poorly defined or unrelated to anything else" (p. 13).

Keller and Schoenfeld introduce the student to a new language that relates Skinner's work to preceding and contemporary developments in experimental psychology. The treatment is both comprehensive and consistent, an accomplishment possible only when one dares to address some issues anew and discard others. The goal of understanding human behavior is pervasive. References to examples from everyday life are everywhere: From simple conditioning and extinction, superstitious behavior, and fixed-ratio schedules to social and verbal behavior, data from nonhuman experimental studies are often discussed in a way that calls attention to variables possibly present in instances of human behavior. Discussing behavior generated by fixed-ratio schedules, for example, Keller and Schoenfeld not only indicate possible parallel processes in human behavior but also anticipate further developments in behavior analysis by noting

that "fixed-ratio reinforcement strengthens not only the individual response, but also the *rate* of the response" (p. 97). The reader will find discussion not only of basic phenomena such as reinforcement, discrimination, and chaining but also of such matters of human concern as romantic love, consistency of personality, cultural relativity, masochism, emotions and emotional expression, the family as social environment, understanding, and imagination.

K & S got me. The next year I was a monitor helping in the lab, and didn't hesitate when Carolina Bori asked if I would accept a teaching assistantship at the University of Brasilia. I left my job at General Electric and here I am, still using the Portuguese translation of *Principles of Psychology* to get undergraduate students hooked on behavior analysis.

REFERENCE

- Keller, F. S., & Schoenfeld, W. N. (1950). *Principles of psychology: A systematic text in the science of behavior*. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts.