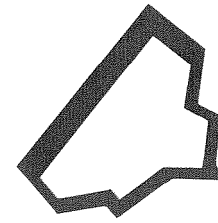

THE PSYCHOLOGY LAB EXPERIENCE



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The discipline of psychology has traditionally included a strong research component since its emergence as a separate discipline in the latter part of the 19th century. Research conducted by psychologists often involves experimentation in a controlled laboratory setting. The psychology laboratory facility on the fourth floor of the library at Kennesaw College was opened in the fall of 1983 in order to provide support for research efforts on aspects of human behavior by both faculty and students. The laboratory is primarily designed to be used as a facility where students enrolled in research-related courses in psychology can conduct supervised class and individual projects and demonstrations. The laboratory, however, also meets special needs for some psychology classes through its laboratory classroom and observation/small group meeting rooms. Finally, the laboratory helps meet faculty professional growth and development needs by providing a facility where faculty can conduct independent research.

Since its establishment, the psychology laboratory has become an integral part of the course offerings and research

activities of the Psychology department. Psychology has established itself as a science of behavior, and laboratory experiments are a critical component of a student's education in this field. The laboratory consists of a micro-computer lab, a psychophysiological lab, an experimental classroom, and behavior observation rooms.

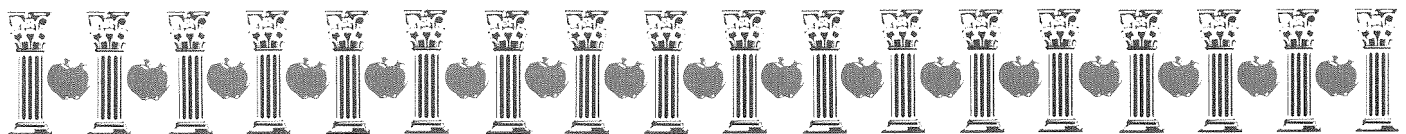
The microcomputer lab consists of six Apple IIe computers and a flourishing software library. The software consists of programs concerning many different areas of psychology, including memory and cognition, social psychology, learning and conditioning, biological psychology, and many others. These programs range from tutorial exercises to experimental programs that allow students actually to collect data and conduct their own research project. The computer lab is used extensively in many classes offered in the department. General psychology students can participate in laboratory exercises that allow "hands-on" experiences with the research findings and concepts they learn about in their coursework. Experimental psychology students use the lab to collect data and conduct individual research projects. The lab experience has become an increasingly vital part of both lower and upper division courses taken by the student in psychology.

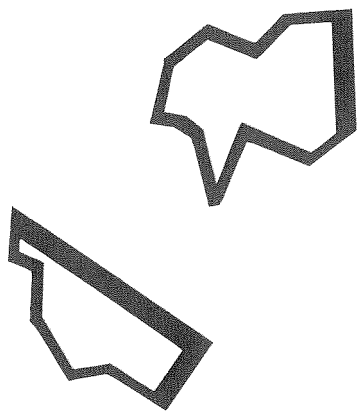
The psychophysiological laboratory consists of a copper-shielded room and equipment that is used to record several different psychophysiological measurements. For example, galvanic skin response, electrical brain wave

activity, heart rate, and respiration can be recorded in this laboratory. These measurements are excellent ways to demonstrate underlying physiological changes that occur during behavior. It can be used in such courses as biological psychology, learning and conditioning, and theories of perception. One useful exercise in this laboratory is showing the student how physiological responses such as galvanic skin response and heart rate can be conditioned to occur in response to stimuli such as lights or tones. The recordings from this laboratory can also be used as objective measures of different emotional states or states of arousal. Again, the purpose of the laboratory is to involve students in various scientific approaches to measuring and understanding behavior.

The psychology lab classroom is arranged to allow for experimental exercises and group discussion. The classroom is composed of tables and chairs rather than traditional classroom desks. The composition of the room is relaxed and comfortable; a setting that is often conducive for students to openly discuss ideas and concepts in groups or as a class. The observation/small group meeting rooms in the psychology lab are also frequently used in courses like Psychology of Adjustment and Leadership and Group Dynamics for small group discussions that would be restricted and unproductive in the larger classroom environment.

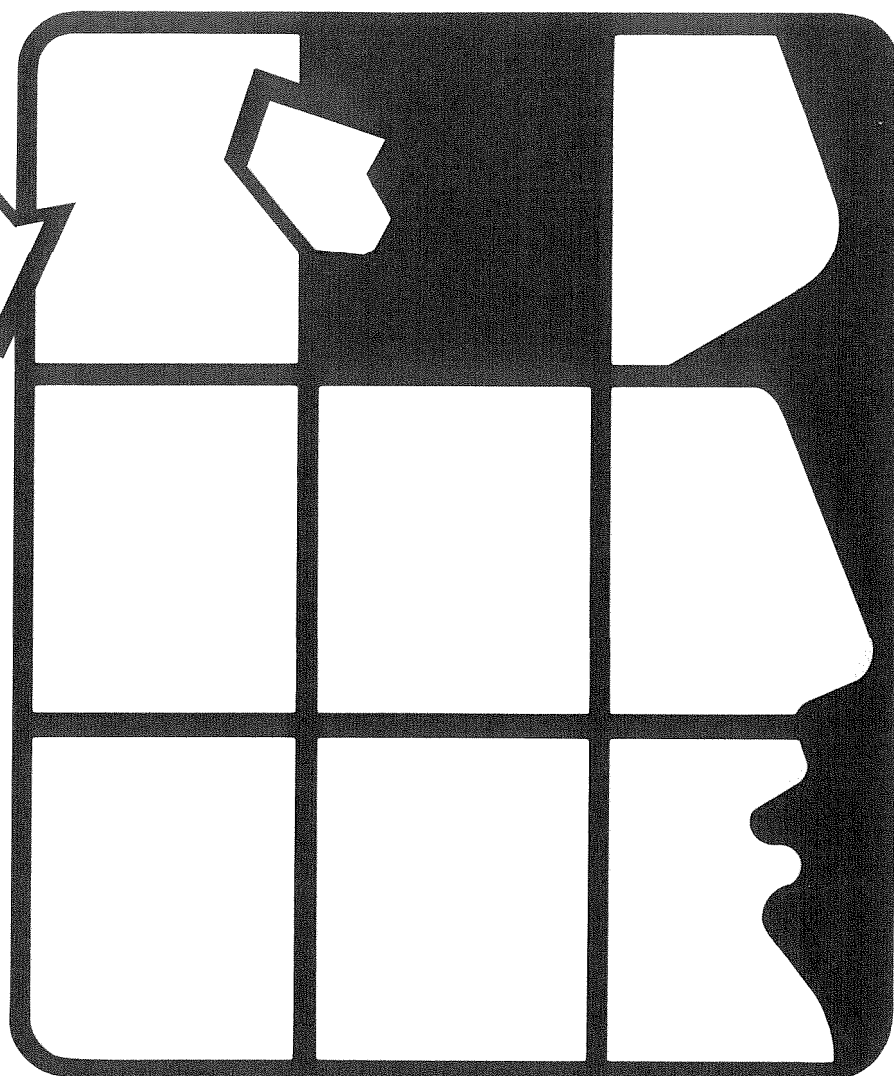
The behavior observation rooms have one-way mirrors that may be used for unobtrusive observation of behav-





ior. The rooms are used to demonstrate and train students in different methods of observation. One room will soon be equipped with filming equipment to record naturalistic behavior and behavior in structured settings. Recordings of this type of behavior will then be used as classroom demonstrations. The recording equipment and the room also supports ongoing and proposed research projects. It is currently being used by Dr. Chris Ziegler to videotape developmental changes in the behavior changes of an infant. The unobtrusive filming equipment will allow for continued recording of the infant's behavior as the project continues. Other exercises such as role playing techniques can be filmed and used for evaluation or demonstration. The observation room, as it continues to be upgraded, will become an important part of such classes as developmental psychology, social psychology and research methods. It will also be used to support research activities of both students and faculty.

The laboratory also operates as a resource center for faculty and students. A number of pieces of psychological equipment used for demonstrations and research are stored in the laboratory (e.g., reaction-time apparatus, psychomotor measurement instrumentation, physiological models, etc.). Most of the equipment presently housed in the laboratory is used primarily for either classroom demonstrations in the general psychology course or research projects conducted by students enrolled in upper-level experimental psychology courses. In addition, a psychology



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library is housed in the laboratory. This library contains books and journals donated by the psychology faculty, information about job opportunities, and information concerning graduate study in psychology at schools throughout the United States. A senior psychology major is hired each year as a laboratory assistant and is also located in the psychology lab. The lab assistant functions to coordinate lab usage, tutor students in psychology courses, and assist faculty in their research and classroom activities.

It can be seen that the psychology laboratory is an active and integral part of the academic and research goals of the department. It is used extensively by students and faculty to improve the quality of the classroom learning experience and by faculty in their professional development activities. The science of psychology would be a vague and abstract idea without the experiences offered to students in the laboratory. Its application and role in the department is just beginning to be realized. ●

