

What contribution has Titchener's structuralism made to psychology and what criticisms have been made of his work?

His contributions were based on observation, experimentation, and measurement. The subject matter was the conscious experience. The consciousness can only be perceived by the person having the conscious experience. The method for studying these subjects was with some form of self-observation. The method of introspection was defined as giving a verbal report based on experience. These reports involved cognitive processes. These verbal reports based on personal experience are legitimate forms of data collection. A significant contribution was its service of criticism. Structuralism provided a strong, established orthodoxy against which newly developing movements in psychology could array their forces. Titchener was criticized for firmly rooting in place when everyone else had moved on. The intellectual climate for the Americans and Europeans had moved forward but Titchener did not. His structural psychology was seen by other psychologists as antiquated in principles and methods. Some criticism argued that the mind if capable of observing its own self would have to divide itself in two parts: one observing and one being observed. This was seen by some as impossible. Another criticism was Titchener had difficulty defining exactly what is meant by the introspective method. Another attack was on what the structuralist introspectors were trained to do. The idea of developing an introspective language never happened since observers frequently disagreed even when experimental conditions were rigidly controlled. Introspectors at different labs reported different results. Critics also charged that introspection was a form of retrospection since time elapsed between the experience and the reporting of it. The structuralist movement was accused of artificially attempting to analyze conscious processes into elements. Critics argues that experience does not come to us in individual sensations, images, or affective states but in unified wholes. It was believe the conscious experience is inevitably lost in any artificial effort to analyze it or reduce it to its elemental parts.