

Behaviorism

About behaviorism

Some of the oldest learning theories belong to the behaviorism as [learning paradigm](#) and date back from the beginning of the 20th century. The key component to this paradigm are **stimulus-response** (S-R) events resulting in **observable behaviors** which can be **measured**.

Behaviorists view **learning as a visible change in ones behavior**. Behaviorism assumes that the learner starts off as a clear state and simply responds to environmental stimuli. Those responses **can be shaped through positive and negative reinforcement** increasing or decreasing the probability of repeating the same behavior.

This learning paradigm can roughly be divided in two phases: **behaviorism (1910 - 1930)** and **neobehaviorism (1930-1955)**. Neobehaviorism outgrew classical behaviorism by attempts to formalize the laws of behavior (sometimes in forms of mathematical equations) and beliefs that learning can also occur indirectly through observing. Neobehaviorists are sometimes considered a transitional group that shifted dominant learning perspective toward [cognitivism](#).

Among below listed learning theories within behaviorist framework, connectionism presents an introduction to behaviorist learning and setting its frames. Classical and operant conditioning present true behaviorist learning perspectives, and sign learning finally forms a bridge from behaviorism to cognitivism which has replaced it in the second half of 20th century.

Drive Reduction Theory
Discriminational Learning
Contiguity Theory
Stimulus Sampling Theory

Learning theories:

- [Connectionism - Edward Thorndike \(1874 - 1949\)](#)
- [Clasicall Conditioning - Ivan Pavlov \(1849 - 1936\)](#)
- [Contiguity Theory \(Edwin Guthrie \(1886 - 1959\)](#)
- [Operant Conditioning - Burrhus Skinner \(1904 - 1990\)](#)
- [Stimulus Sampling Theory William Estes \(1919 - \)](#)

Neobehaviorist learning theories:

- [Sign Learning - Edward Tolman \(1886 - 1959\)](#)
- [Drive Reduction Theory - Clark Hull \(1884 - 1952\)](#)
- [Discriminational Learning Keneth Spence \(1907 - 1967\)](#)

Criticisms

Behaviorism today mostly **lost its influence** and let **cognitivism take its place** as the dominant paradigm. Critics of behaviorist learning usually argue that behaviorism:

- **does not explain all kinds o learning** since it ignores inner mind activities,
- offers a very limited view on learning since it **ignores internal factors** such as emotions or motivation,
- ignores fact that learning depends on learner's **inner** subjective **representation of environment and learning history**.

Bibliography

[Stanford encyclopedia of philosophy: Behaviorism.](#)

[Classical Conditioning - Introduction to Classical Conditioning.](#)

Read more

Turner, M. B. Philosophy and the science of behavior. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1967.

Skinner, B. F. About Behaviorism. Paw Prints, 2008.

Baum, William M. Understanding behaviorism: science, behavior, and culture. Wiley-Blackwell, 1994.

From:
<https://learning-theories.org/> - **Learning Theories**

Permanent link:
https://learning-theories.org/doku.php?id=learning_paradigms:behaviorism&rev=1298034108

Last update: **2023/06/19 15:49**

