

# [The is the only way to comprehend behaviour.](https://assignbuster.com/the-is-the-only-way-to-comprehend-behaviour/)

The first theoryI will examine is Behaviourism.

Behaviourism is the idea that allbehaviour is the result of our environmental surroundings. Hence things that occurredin the environment leading up to the behaviour are what instigated it. Ourbehaviour is a response to the stimulus which the environment provides. Forexample picking up a hot pan, and then dropping it straightaway. Dropping thepan was the response whereas the heat of the pan was the stimulusThe behaviourist B. F Skinner (1948) established the term ‘ operantconditioning’.

Skinner stated that we don’t have such a thing as a mind howeverit is more dynamic to study observable behaviour instead of internal mentalevents. Skinners ideas stated that classical conditioning was too basic to be athorough explanation of complex human behaviour. He therefore argued thatlooking at the causes of an action and its consequences is the only way tocomprehend behaviour. He named this methodology operant conditioning. Operantconditioning is a process that tries to modify behaviour through reinforcementwhich skinner built from Thorndike’s law of effect (1905).

Through operantconditioning, an individual makes an association between a particular behaviourand a consequence however reinforcement comes in two forms: positive andnegative. Positive reinforces are favorable events/outcomes thatare given to the individual after the desired behavior. Skinner’s application of the ideasof operant conditioning to education lead to the development of programmedlearning. This presents information in a series of very small ‘ frames’ (singlefacts at a time), followed by a memory test. Positive feedback is given whenthe answer is correct therefore the student can move to the next frame.

If theanswer is wrong then the frame is repeated. This proposed to skinner thatteachers could be completely replaced by ‘ teaching computers’. Many studentssee this as a benefit. Relating to my own personal experiencewhere operant conditioning was used was within my primary school where my teacherused positive and negative reinforcement to reward and encourage myself as wellas my peers for good behavior and punish bad behavior. For example one specificway my teacher would incorporate operant conditioning was using the stickersystem.

She would award stickers to those students who behaved and acted in themanner which was expected. At the end of the week those who had a certainnumbers of stickers would receive a treat from the trolley. Eventually myselfand the rest of my class mates realized that when we voluntarily showedgood academic performance and completed all tasks which were assigned to us, itwould result us to earn more stickers and give us the opportunity to go to thetreat trolley. Overtime I grasped the idea that by performing a desiredbehavior, the consequences would be pleasant. Another example is when Icompleted my GCSE’s and achieved excellent grades and my parents rewarded mewith a phone. Due to this I did the same for my A levels and tried my very bestto please my parents as I knew they would reward me for this. This benefittedme as it motivated me to study harder and due to this my performance improved. Another theorist, Ivan Pavlov (1927) used ‘ conditioning’ to achieve apredictable response from a stimulus.

Heconducted an experiment with dogs, showing how classical conditioning takesplace. Pavlov taught the dogs to salivate to the sound of the bell by pairingthe bell with the food each time it was presented. As predicted the dogeventually started to respond by salivating to the sound of the bell withoutthe food being present. The behaviour which was learnt was an outcome of a sequence ofevents experienced, instead of a conscious thought process. He came upwith what is now known as ‘ classical conditioning’.

Withintraining, conditioning can be used to develop repetitive actions for instance fasteningyour seatbelt whilst looking in the mirror before driving. John B Watson 1913)added to Pavlov’s approach as he applied it to human beings. Watson studied an11 month old infant baby named Albert. The purpose of the study was tocondition baby Albert so that he becomes frightened of at white rat bycombining the white rat with a really loud noise (UCS). According to Watson andRayner (1920) at the start, baby Albert did not show any fear when he waspresented with the rat.

However as soon as the rat was continuously combinedwith the loud noise (UCS), it prompted fear, due to this Albert developed afear of white rats.  The implications ofWatson’s research proposed that classical conditioning could result somephobias in humans. I believe classical conditioning is still effective, especially within aclassroom environment. I know this from past experience at my primary schoolwhere the teacher conditioned us to behave. Before conditioning when theteacher would ask us to quiet down, there would be no response so she wouldclap 3 times, yet still there was no reaction to this.

But when she started toclap 3 times whilst telling us to keep quite we would see this and eventuallythere would be silence. After conditioning our teacher would only have to clap3 times and we would see this and immediately pay attention to her. Weassociated the clap with her wanting us to be silent and created the responseof stopping everything we were doing and focusing on her. I was conditioned ata young age which made it easier for me to understand it as I grew. For exampleat secondary school I was conditioned to the sound of the bell. As the bellwould ring I would know it is time for lunch so I would leave. The second timethe bell would ring I would know lunch is over so I would start heading back tolesson. This was a predictable response.

Classical Conditioning has therefore provided us with abetter understanding of human behavior. Prior to the experiments done on thedogs, we could not actually be sure of how certain stimuli influenced our behavior. However Pavlov’s work allowed us to understand that by applying neutral andunconditioned stimulus continuously, it would result a conditioned response. Thisresponse is unlike a natural response because it displays that animals andhumans can come to associate several stimuli with each other, in anticipationof a future event. Distress, hatred and love towards particularsubjects are created through conditioning. For example an English teacher withher/his faulty technique of teaching and incorrect behavior within theclassroom may be not accepted by students. The students begin to dislikeEnglish because of the teacher’s behavior.

On the other hand the thoughtfultreatment and good method my math’s teacher used brought desirable impacts uponme. I began to like the subject which I once found boring because of myteacher’s character. Operant conditioning has several beneficial applicationsto schools, which are easy to apply and easy for teachers as well as students tounderstand. For example certificates, tokens, stickers, and awards, detentions, suspensions and complaints to parents. Tactics like these are used bypractically most schools in the world therefore signifying behaviorism has hada tremendous impact on education globally. This is a scientific process of analyzing behavior, highlightingthe use of objective measuring technique as well as measurable results. Thisshows that in theory, it should be able to be applied to large numbers ofchildren in an unbiased way. One key criticism of behaviorist theories is that they donot take other approaches into consideration for example the cognitiveapproach.

By disregarding the fact that our though processes can influence ourbehavior, behaviorism does not provide a full explanation of human behavior asit is only brief. In addition to this, behaviorism is a deterministic theory asstudents have no choice about whether or not they behavior was changed usingthese approaches. To some extent this creates a discouraging view of humans ascreatures that only systematically respond to stimuli, raising ethicalquestions of consent too. In essencebehaviourist theories of learning stress the significance of the assertivenessof the teacher, and the passive participant who isn’t given much of a choiceother than to react in a predetermined way. In contrastcognitive theories focus with the role of the active mind in processinglearning opportunities and developing.

Cognitive psychology is the scientificstudy of mental processes. It beleieves that human behaviour can only beunderstood by analysing our though processes such as attention, solvingproblems, memory etc. The concepts and research of cognitive psychology havealready been applied to educational psychology. For instance within childdevelopment psychologists such as Vygotsky, Bruner and Piaget have studiedthoroughly how a child begins to see the world around them.

They did this byobserving both exceptional child development and learning difficulties such asdyslexia. One well-knowntheorist named Jean Piaget was the first to see that children think differentlyto adults. Before this, children were simply just seen as less developedversions of adults; however Piaget showed that they thought in a completelydifferent way to adults. He came up with the idea of schemas, how they wereformed and the methods by which they altered.  Another key idea discovered was that wedevelop in stages.

Piaget’s ideas have been vastly influential in educationhowever a theorist  known as Brunerfurther developed his ideas and came up with something called ‘ discoverylearning’. He stated that children make their own versions of reality. Consequently education system should help them discover their own meanings. Thus schools should stimulate the discovery of relationships so what a teachercould do is present information not in its final form but in a form where thechild is required to organise it themselves (Bruner, 1961). I still usestrategies such as mind maps at Uni to develop my schema to help process information. Using mind maps is a way of graphically organizing my thoughts.  As a childwithin primary school I was able to construct my own schemas and arrange my ownunderstanding about the world.

I interpreted the world differently compared toothers however my teachers helped develop my schema. For me this theory haduseful applications as it allowed me to develop teaching methods such asproblem based learning which benefitted me as I grew older and went intosecondary school. However I was yet a child and was self-discovering, I hadmisconceptions which were not being corrected which showed there was minimalteacher involvement.

Furthermore Ausubel would see Bruner’s ideas as being tootime-consuming to be used very frequently. I would agree with him as I wouldnot be pleased to have to ‘ discovery learn’ all the material for my A levels.  It may be convenient for younger children, thoughby the age were at secondary school we require abstract, complex information. Lev Vygotsky keyidea is that several theories undervalued the idea of culture and the socialenvironment on what a child learns.

He came up with something called zone ofproximal development (ZPD) to show us how individuals could help us learn newthings. The difference between what children can achieve independently inproblem solving and what they can achieve with the assistance of an adult canbe defined as the ZPD (Butterworth & Harris 1994). An example of this wasas a child when I could not complete a jigsaw puzzle by myself however afterthe interaction with my mother I was able to complete it. This shows that theadults who are more knowledgeable than the student are identified as moreknowledgeable others. Vygotsky theory can be applied to a classroom setting asmy teachers atschool were MKOs this is because they supportedme and my peers, by demonstrating accurate strategies, questioning us which tendedto simplify the problem as well as encouraged correct ideas.

This was verybeneficial as study has shown that children learn effectively in environmentswhere adults can successfully deliver scaffolding. Students can also be MKOsthis can be done by them working in groups of mixed ability. However there arecomplications with group work as there are more chances for children to beoff-task, and children who do not participate.

Overall cognitiveapproach has beneficialapplications to education, for example schools try to boostchildren to reflect of their own mental processing, in order to develop ‘ metacognition’. However the behaviourist approach would criticise thisapproach’s use of models and focus on unobservable thought processes, insteadof behaviour. Behaviourists would argue that thought processes could not be measuredaccurately.

Moreover unlike the behaviourist approach this approach isreductionist as it stresses mainly on the cognitive aspects of development, andpay no attention to the influence that biological factors may have ondevelopment