

School of thought in psychology

Psychology



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There are many schools of thought that developed during the early years of the twentieth century but we shall take up only the ones that greatly influenced the present-day psychology.

Structuralism Edward Bradford Titchener developed structuralism based on the concepts of his mentor Wilhelm Wundt. The followers of Titchener were called structuralists because they analyzed conscious experiences into its elements, namely: sensation, images, and affective states. These elements they called the structures of conscious experience. The method of study used was called introspection, a process of self-observation. In introspection, the researcher reports his own observation of himself. Many people questioned the validity and accuracy of the findings because the process is very subjective. It then paved the way for a new school of thought to emerge.

Functionalism Functionalism emerges toward the middle of 1850's through the effort of a group of American Psychologists. Most prominent of whom were William James and John Dewey. They redefined psychology as the study of the mind as it functions in adapting the organism to its environment. They studied consciousness as an ongoing process or stream instead of reducing it into elements. William James also argued that the proper subject matter of psychology was the study of the organism functioning as a whole in his environment. The method used by functionalists was objective observation and little of introspection.

Behaviorism While Functionalism was developing and structuralism was on its height, a revolution against the two was already in the mind of John Broadus Watson. He expressed dissatisfaction in the methods used. He <https://assignbuster.com/school-of-thought-in-psychology/>

instead advocated the use of objective experimental observation. He said the behavior and the behavioral acts are to be described objectively in terms of stimulus response, habit formation, and habit integration. Watson took the position that all behavior represents learned responses to particular environmental stimuli. Other educators who influenced behaviorism were Edward Lee Thorndike who used trial-error learning and B. F. Skinner who used rewards and punishments in shaping a behavior. The behaviorist technique has proven useful in the treatment of psychological disorders.

Gestalt Psychology While behaviorism was taking its roots in America, another school of thought emerged in Germany. This new school questioned the analysis of consciousness or behavior in the way the structuralists and behaviorists did. Gestalt psychology was developed by Max Wertheimer, Wolfgang Kohler, and Kurt Koffka. Gestalt is a German word which means form, shape, or configuration. The greatest contributions of Gestalt are in perception and learning. They emphasized learning by whole rather than by parts. The method used is called phenomenology. Gestalt psychology became useful in teaching-learning situations.

Psychoanalysis Psychoanalysis is not really a school of psychology because it did not concern itself with learning, sensation, attention, perception, and the other areas that preoccupied the previous schools of thought. It developed from the study and treatment of mental patients suffering from psychological disorders. The methods used were free association, dream analysis, and projective techniques. This movement started in Vienna under the leadership of Sigmund Freud, an Austrian physician specializing in diseases of the

nervous system. Psychoanalysis is responsible for the attention given to unconscious motivation and child development.

Phenomenology In the 1930's and 1940's, a group of psychologists, led by Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers, largely influenced by the philosophical approach known as phenomenology, began a new concept in human beings. Phenomenology studies how people subjectively experience phenomena. This new group believed that in order to understand why people act in particular ways, their subjective experiences must be taken into consideration. To phenomenologist, people have the power to shape their own fates, to be whatever they wish to be.

Basic Tenets of Psychology 401

Since you will be studying and identifying beliefs and assumptions in Psychology 401, it makes sense to recognize explicitly a few basic tenets of the course itself. It is useful to view reality as created by perception through experience. From this viewpoint, reality is formed by individuals and groups, not handed down by “ The Fates.”

The process of reflection is a key part of learning through life. Reflection serves to create order and to facilitate the making of meaning. This process includes reflection on assumptions as well as on content and process. Human beings have the ability to uncover and identify the assumptions that underlie their meaning schemes and meaning perspectives. Psychology 401 acknowledges the value of the quote attributed to Socrates, that “ the unexamined life is not worth living.”