

# The transformation of psychology

[Science](#)



The Transformation of Psychology From the 1920s to today, psychology has surely developed. Technological advancements as well as new ideas and ways of thinking about the subject helped to reform what psychology is today. Rather than completely changing, psychology has actually built up more and more through the decades. New branches were added to the field as those who studied it made new breakthroughs. Over the years many scientists and psychologists have contributed to the transformation of psychology. Up until the 1920's, psychology was defined as the science of mental life.

It wasn't until then that the idea of behaviorism became more prominent in psychology. During the time period between the 1920's and the 1960's, American psychologists led by John Watson redefined the meaning of psychology into a science of mental life and observable behavior. Not only did Watson redefine psychology, he also started the psychological school of behaviorism. It was also around this time that Watson and his partner Rosalie Rayner conducted their conditioning experiment. The idea of classical conditioning came into play when behaviorism became a major branch of psychology.

Between the 1950's and 1970s, the mental perspective of psychology came back, producing another new branch. This new branch was called cognitive psychology. Cognitive psychology focused mainly on mental processes such as thinking, problem solving, memory, decision making, and language. The term "cognitive psychology" was first used in 1967 by the American psychologist named Ulric Neisser. To go along with cognitive psychology is

the topic of cognitive development. This theory was concerned with the development of a person's thought process.

Jean Piaget published *The Moral Judgment of Children* which began his popularity as a theorist in cognitive development. As a reaction to behaviorism and psychoanalysis (a type developed by Freud, before the 1920s), another new type of psychology called humanism arose. Humanistic psychology stressed the importance of self-actualization and growth, and focused mainly on one's potential. This new view on psychology was created by Abraham Maslow in the 1950s. He published *Toward a Psychology of Being*, in which he described humanistic psychology as "the third force" in psychology (behind behavioral and psychoanalysis).

After the emergence of these new branches, psychology started to become more technologically advanced. Scientists and psychologists became interested in exploring the brain without removing it from subjects. They started to develop new technology. An example of this was in 1981, when a team developed the PET scan, which enabled doctors to view a computer-generated image of the brain and when it is most active during certain mental activities. Today, technology continues to improve, which helps psychologists discover more. Through the decades, psychology has undergone some great changes.

As new ideas came into play, new ways of thinking molded and shaped psychology into what it is today. Not only did psychology become a science of behavioral and mental life, but it also gained new branches that go even deeper. Psychology will most likely continue to grow and develop over the years. As technology advances, scientists and psychologists will discover

even more and psychology will continue to expand as it did from the 1920's until now.