

Timeline of the behaviourist approach



1901

Ivan Pavlov teaches dogs to salivate at the sound of a metronome

1920

John Watson demonstrates classical conditioning in a human; Little Albert

1924

Mary Cover Jones demonstrates desensitisation to a phobic stimulus

1931

B. F. Skinner demonstrates the use of the 'Skinner Box' in which animals are rewarded with food for particular behaviours



1948

B. F. Skinner demonstrates 'superstitious' behaviour in pigeons who repeated whatever behaviour they were performing when fed

1961

Albert Bandura demonstrates learning of aggression by imitation of a model

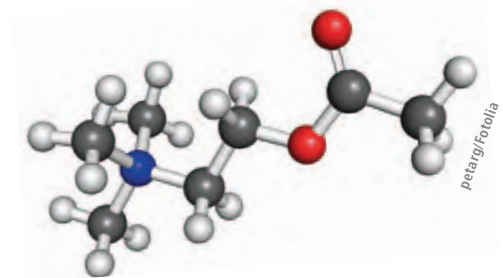


1968

Ayllon and Azrin use the first token economy system to improve behaviour in a psychiatric hospital

1984

McCormick and Thompson demonstrate the role of the cerebellum in classical conditioning



1991

Richardson and DeLong demonstrate the role of the neurotransmitter acetylcholine in operant conditioning

1900

1920

1940

1960

1980

2000

Classical conditioning

Early behaviourists focused on classical conditioning; learning to respond to a new (neutral) stimulus in the same way as an existing (unconditioned) stimulus. Classical conditioning is applied in desensitisation and aversion therapies.

Operant conditioning

Later behaviourists focused on learning by reward (reinforcement) and punishment. Operant conditioning is applied in token economy systems.

Social learning theory

Neo-behaviourists emphasised learning by imitation of selected others (models) and by witnessing their reinforcement and punishment.

Neuroscience

Much of the modern research into learning as proposed by the behaviourists centres on how learning takes place in the brain.

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