

*Who are the representative theorists within the behavioural perspective and why. In your opinion, are they representative of this perspective?*

The behavioural perspective is built up by many theorists. A good thing when dealing with this approach is that everything comes from clear facts. There are so many theorists that dealt with this perspective, but according to my opinion, John Watson, E. L. Thorndike, B. F. Skinner and Ivan Pavlov are the most important ones. What have these theorists done then, in order to represent this perspective? Of course they must have done something special. Below I will write a bit about each theorist; what they did and why they are representative of this perspective.

In 1945, B. F Skinner became the chairman of the psychology department at Indiana University. Apart from just being a psychologist he also was a writer. When he didn't succeed as a writer of fiction and poetry, he became a writer of psychology. One of his most famous books is *Walden II*, which is run by his behavioural principles. Skinner's entire system is based on operant conditioning. As the pioneer of operant conditioning he almost alone created the framework for the study of learned behaviour. Skinner's initial work on animals was quite similar to the work of Thorndike. Skinner developed a box, called the Skinner box, where he was able to study animals' behaviour. Inside the box there was a lever. If the lever was pressed a food pellet would be given. If a rat was put inside the box and the rat by mistake pressed the lever, a pellet was given. The result of this was that when the rat realized that a food pellet was given, he began to press it more and more often. Skinner expressed his theories like this: "behaviour is shaped and maintained by its consequences".

The work of John Watson is also somewhat interesting. He was the founder of behaviourism. He came from the United States and later on he began to write psychology articles when he took a job at J. Walter Thomson advertising firm. Watson wasn't just the founder of the behavioural approach, he was also the first who applied psychological theories to advertising and marketing. His articles were based on Ivan Pavlov's earlier work and Watson ended his career working in the field of marketing and advertising.

When someone hears the name Ivan Pavlov, he or she might at once think of his famous dogs. He has done experiments with dogs that are well known all over the world, but I will discuss that in a moment. However, Pavlov was born in Russia and pioneered the study of classical conditioning. His studies on the physiology of digestion he earned the Nobel Prize in 1905. His work on classical conditioning didn't start until 1902 when he discovered that a dog actually salivates before getting the food. Pavlov's theories about classical conditioning concerns associations between neutral stimuli and already existing unconditioned stimuli. To make this more clearly; the dogs started to salivate although they just heard Pavlov's footsteps (neutral stimulus). The reason for this is because they associated the footsteps with the arrival of food (unconditioned stimulus).

Edwin Thorndike studied problem solving in animals, using a series of puzzle-like tasks. An example of such a task is a cat in a box which has to push a lever in order to get out of the box. Thorndike is probably best known today for his "*law of effect*". With this concept Thorndike stated that a behaviour which follows by a positive outcome is strengthening and a behaviour which follows by a negative outcome is weakening. Edwin Thorndike was also a teacher at Teachers College at Columbia, where he wrote on education and psychology.