



Schools of Psychology

Psychology 390

Psychology of Learning

Steven E. Meier, Ph.D.

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1

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Structuralism (1875-1930's)

- Wundt Considered the first psychologist
- Titchener Considered the first US psychologist
- Was the first real school or group of psychology.
- Impressed with the sciences such as chemistry that were breaking down complex things into simple things.
Molecules to atoms
- Tried to do with mental thoughts

2

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Main Idea

- If we are trying to think about what is going on in someone's head we need to think of smallest subjective unit.
- This subjective unit for the Structuralists were the elementary elements of consciousness.
- To get at sub-units, they used the method of introspection (sit down and think).
- Basically you trained an observer to reflect on and analyze their mental experiences.

3

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Main Idea

- Required a highly trained observer.
- Person would sit down and think of a concept (table) and break it into its basic elements (legs, top, etc).

4

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Concepts to Note

1. Experience was important with a concept. With no experience you cannot break it down.
2. The mind is passive. One thought came and another followed (associationism).
3. You could break complex thoughts into simple thoughts and study these.
Each thought was the sum of other thoughts.
4. They were empiricists.
Information was gathered by observation and recording.

5

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Problem

- Which concept was right.
- Model had no reliability or validity.

6

Gestalt School (1912-1940)

- Kohler, Koffka, Wertheimer
- Developed as a reaction to the Structuralists and Behaviorists.
- Disagreed with Structuralists and that complex thoughts could be broken into simple thoughts.
- Disagreed with the Behaviorists that complex behavior could be broken into simple behavior.

7

Problem Described by Gestaltists

- The element of meaning is left out when you only look at the parts.
- For the Gestaltists, The whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

8

vs. the Structuralists

- Need naïve observers not trained observers.
- Tried to explain perception.
- Developed lots of clever experiments.
- Had major impacts on the fields of Sensation and Perception and Cognitive Psychology.

9

vs. Behaviorists

- Tried to knock learning by examining insite learning.
- Ultimately, had little impact on Behaviorism.

10

vs. Behaviorists

- Also influenced Social Psychology.
- Behavior of individuals or groups can be controlled by the whole situation.

11

Points to Note

- The whole is greater than the sum of the parts.
- As a school did not have much impact but did influence other areas.

12

Functionalism (1890-1930's)

- James
- Hall
- Cattell
- Angel

- Also developed as a reaction to the Structuralists.
- Was a US phenomenon

13

Weren't Concerned with Elementary Elements of Consciousness

- Were concerned with how the mind worked.
- How it mediated between the external world and internal events in the body.
- What is the function of things.
- How does an organism adapt and survive.
- Examined both humans and animals.

14

Points to Note

- What was the function of some behavior? Not, what components made up behavior.
- Studied real life events.
- Allowed psychology to be applied to industry, education, and medicine.

15

Behaviorism (1913-Present)

- Watson
- Rescorla
- Hull
- Many others
- Did not become a school until Watson's publication
- "Psychology as a Behaviorist Views it"

16

For Watson

- The only legitimate object of psychological study was objective behavior.
- Don't give me this stuff of the elementary units of consciousness.
- How do you know what it is?
- It's not objective
- Science cannot study the Mind, Consciousness, or images because they are not observable.
- Should study objective behavior.

17

Goal for Watson and Behaviorists

- Make Psychology an objective science.
- Discover the laws that could predict and control behavior.

18

Points to Note

- Could use animals to discover laws (evolution) then evaluate humans.
- Can break complex behaviors into simple behaviors but NOT subjective thoughts.

19

Instrumental Conditioning

- Thorndike
- Hull
- Spence
- Miller & Dollard

20

Focus

- Look at how stimuli influence responding.

21

Radical Behaviorism (Neo Behaviorism)

- Skinner
- Estes
- Premack
- Many others

22

Focus

- Focus is on the consequences of a behavior.
 - Rewards and punishers.
- Has made major impacts in many areas of psychology, education, and business.

23

Social / Observational Learning

- Bandura
- Focus is on learning through observable events.
- Modeling

24

Cognitive Learning

- Emphasized internal processes of behavior. What happens inside the person is important.
- Personality variables.
- Internal vs. external locus of control.
- Attributes
- Looks at how the mind influences behavior.

25

Problems

- Often uses correlational data to make causal inferences.
- Concentrating only on the mind and not behavior does not always work.
- Poor results in some areas
e.g., workplace performance

26

Points to Note

- Is the dominant field in Psychology today.

27

Cognition/Information Processing Models of Learning

- Chomsky
- Broadbent
- Craik and Lockhart,
- Craik and Tulving
- Many others

28

Cognition/Information Processing Models of Learning

- Comes out of the memory literature
- Emphasized internal processes of behavior. What happens inside the person is important.
- Focus was not on the function of a structure.

29

Cognition/Information Processing Models of Learning

- Has made major impacts in how the mind works.
- Has made major contributions in industry and design.

30