

# LEARNING

refers to changes that occur in behavior, attitudes, motives, etc. as a result of some experience.

# Other Definitions:

- High-involvement learning occurs when the individual is very interested in learning the material.
- Low-involvement learning occurs when an individual has little motivation to learn some material.
- The Behaviorist approach focuses on changes in behavior that occur when a connection is drawn between two stimuli. (Also called Associative Learning when applied to humans.)
- The Cognitivist approach focuses on mental processes that determine changes in memory and behavior.

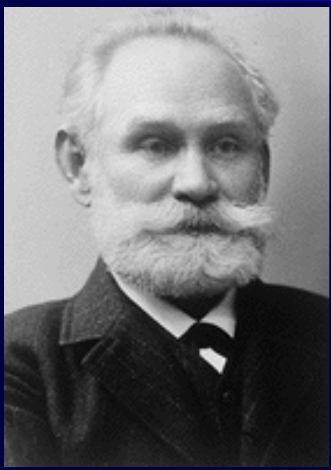
# *Theories of Learning:*

- **Classical Conditioning**
- **Operant Conditioning**
- **Cognitive Learning Theory**

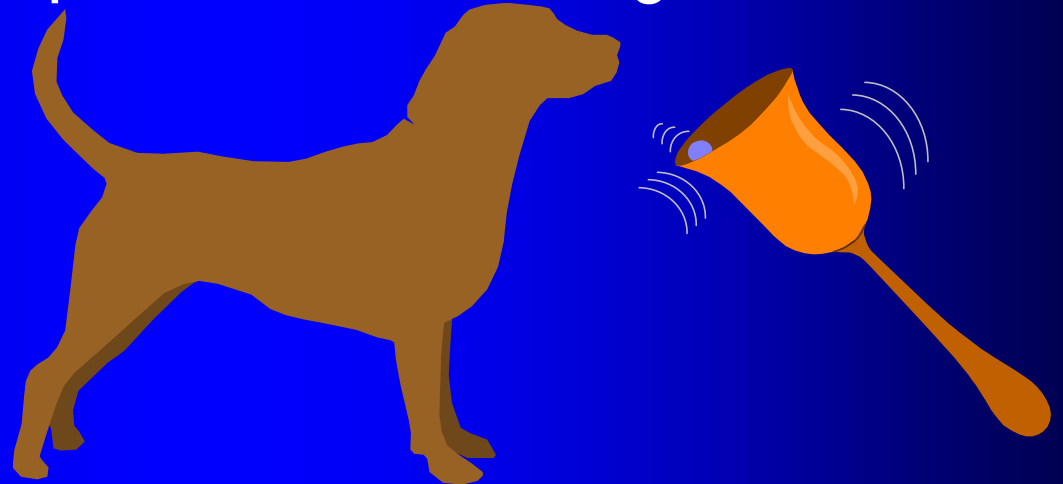


# Classical Conditioning

- This is also known as Stimulus-Response learning.
- The most famous example of this involves Pavlov and his experiments with dogs.



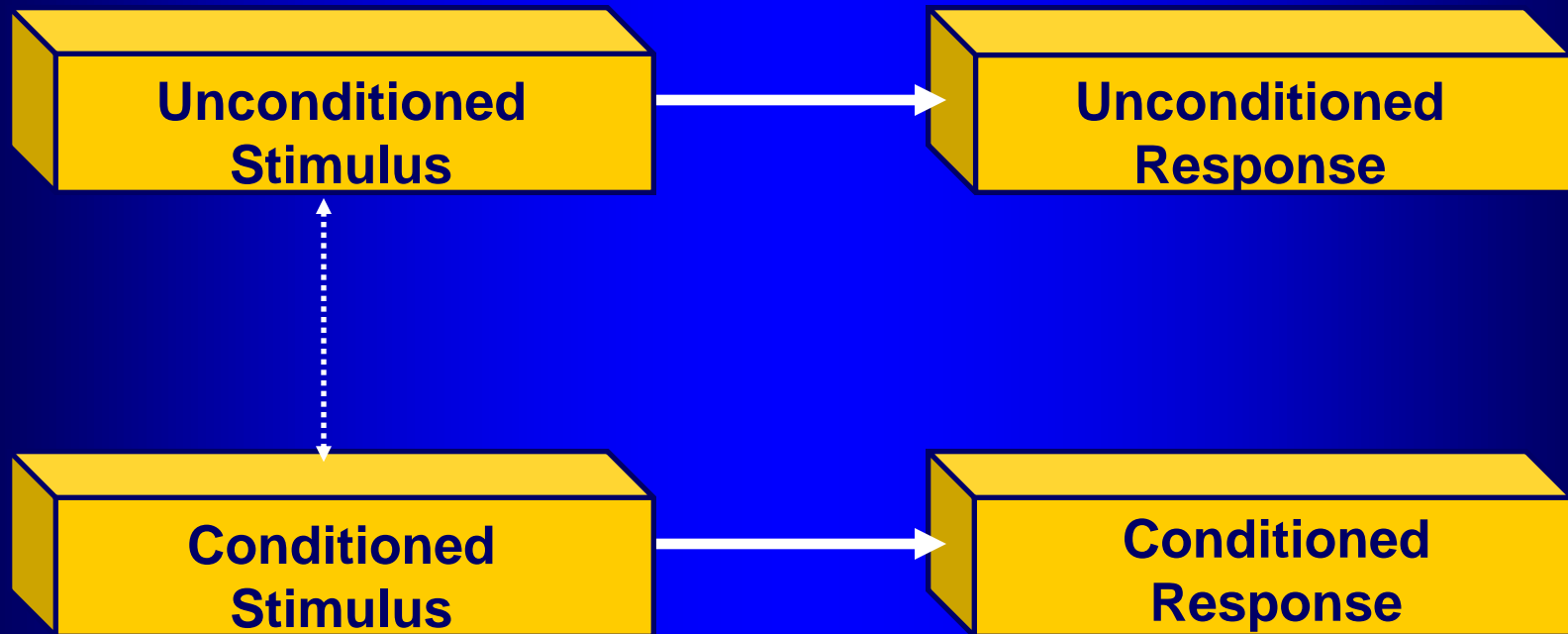
1849-1936



# Classical conditioning involves:

- A stimulus that produces an almost certain response in a subject, called **unconditioned stimulus** and **unconditioned response**, respectively.
- Then, some other stimulus (the **conditioned stimulus**) is associated with the unconditioned stimulus.
- After the two stimuli have been associated several times it may be possible to elicit the same response as earlier (now called the **conditioned response**) when only the conditioned stimulus is presented.

# Classical Conditioning



Emphasis is on association through repetition.

# Marketing Implications of Classical Conditioning

- This is used a lot in marketing, intentionally or otherwise.
- Works best with unfamiliar stimulus.
- Associate the name or logo with something that is well known and liked in hopes that the name or logo take on some of the meaning of the well-known stimulus.
- It is related to the proximity effect.

# Operant Conditioning

- This is also known as instrumental learning as well as reinforcement theory.
- This approach developed from experiments by psychologist B. F. Skinner.

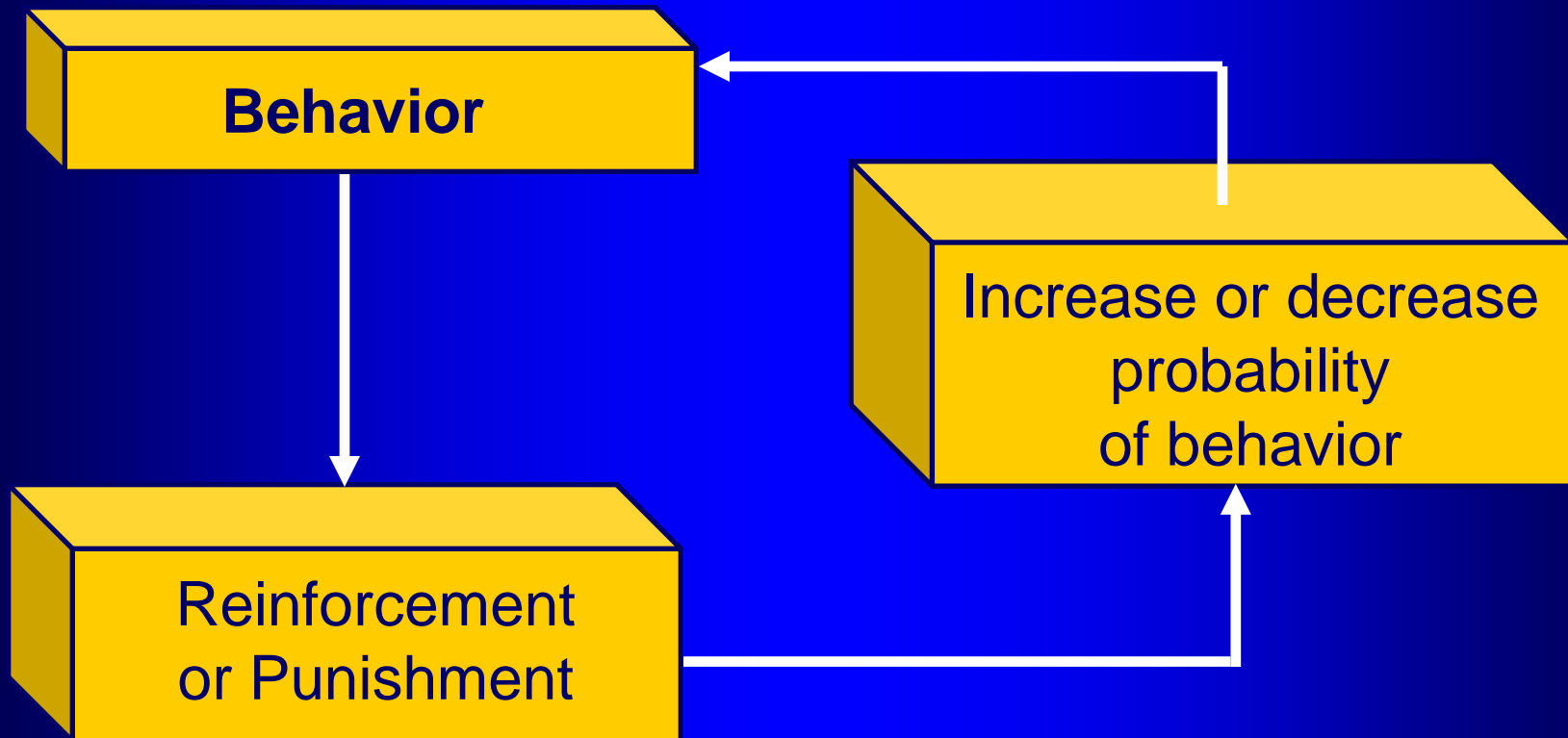


1904-1990

# Operant conditioning involves:

- No automatic stimulus-response relationship; by accident or by design the subject must engage in a particular behavior of interest to the researcher.
- Once the behavior is finally engaged in, it can then be either reinforced or punished.
- The theory is that when a person engages in a behavior that is reinforced it is more likely to repeat that behavior again in the future.
- But, a subject is less likely to repeat a behavior that is punished.

# Operant Conditioning



Emphasis is on whether behavior is reinforced or punished.

# Shaping

- More complex behaviors must be conditioned in more complex ways.
- Shaping is the reinforcement of successive approximations of a desired behavior.
- The behavior is divided into parts; as each part is learned a reward is given.

# Marketing Implications of Operant Conditioning

- The most basic implication is that product itself should reinforce the behavior.
- Additionally, further rewards can be offered to motivate a purchase.
- Brand loyalty is a complex behavior and may be “shaped” over time.

# Cognitive Learning

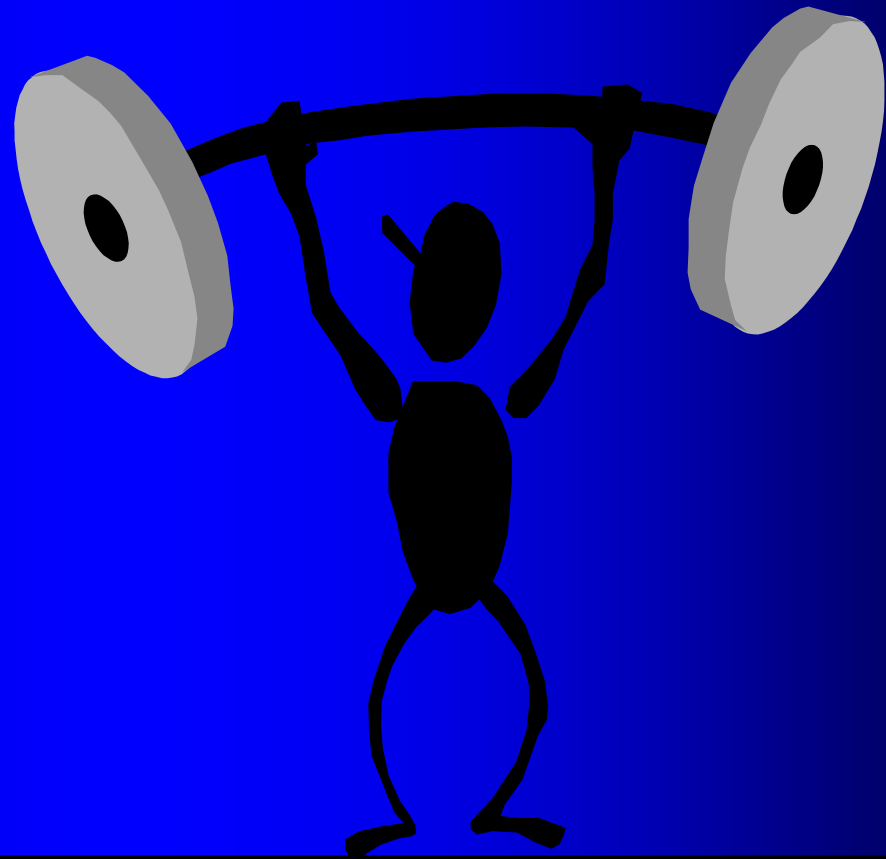
- Cognitive learning places major importance on mental activities used to solve problems.
- Cognitivists contend that humans do not simply respond to stimuli as do animals but, instead, act on beliefs, express attitudes, and strive toward goals.
- Types of learning in this theory:
  - ✓ Iconic Rote (associating concepts without conditioning)
  - ✓ Reasoning (restructuring info we already have)
  - ✓ Modeling (vicarious learning, learn by observation)
  - ✓ Insight (new ideas suddenly come to us)

# Marketing Implications of Cognitive Learning

- Consumers are problem solvers and their behavior has reason to it.
- They learn by rote, especially when ideas are repeated.
- They can use reasoning (inductive & deductive) to draw conclusions based upon information provided by the marketer.
- They can learn by modeling the behavior of those shown in ads, especially if those people are similar to themselves.

# Characteristics of Learning

- The strength of learning is based upon:
  - ✓ Importance
  - ✓ Reinforcement
  - ✓ Repetition
  - ✓ Mood
  - ✓ Miscellaneous



# Forgetting vs. Extinction

## ● Forgetting

- ✓ Occurs when information can't be retrieved.
- ✓ Sometimes we want consumers to “forget” something that is incorrect.
  - » A company might be forced to do corrective advertising by the FTC.
  - » The government or consumer group might challenge a misbelief held by many people.
- ✓ But, stating that a claim is false can actually lead consumers to misremember it overtime as being true.

# Forgetting vs. Extinction

## ● Extinction

- ✓ Occurs when a behavior stops happening.
- ✓ It is easier to replace a learned behavior with another one than to extinguish it.
- ✓ Implications
  - » Make products that are good for people (or less bad) than the ones currently being used which people are “addicted” to.
  - » Examples are low calorie foods, low-sodium salt, sugar substitutes, cigarette substitutes, alcohol substitutes.

# Stimulus Generalization

- This refers to the process that enables a person to respond to a new stimulus in the same way as learned with reference to a similar stimulus in the past.
- This is applied in marketing various ways.
  - ✓ Family Branding
  - ✓ Copycat packaging

# Stimulus Discrimination

- This is the process whereby a person learns to respond to a stimulus differently than to other similar stimuli.
- Marketing Implications
  - ✓ If all brands are perceived to be alike, why should consumers buy your brand?
  - ✓ **Product differentiation** should be used to promote uniqueness of brand.

# Summary & Conclusions

- Learning is one of the oldest areas of modern psychology.
- Yet, we still don't know which theory is "right;" maybe humans learn more than one way.
- If so, marketers need to understand each theory and know how to apply the one appropriate for a situation.