The theory of behaviorism was founded in the early 1900’s. This bibliography will outline some of the major issues of behaviorism and mention a couple of its founding fathers. This bibliography will also begin to give an idea about how behaviorism can be used in classes such as math, and it will show how behavior and learning can work together.


Many researchers in psychology and education believe behaviorism is becoming a thing of the past, or that it is dying out. This author intends to prove this statement is not correct. Malone believes that researchers today are making great improvements in the science of behavior and education. References to several articles which give their view to what has happened to behaviorism over the past years. It discusses the matching law, which believes behavior is a choice. The DTCH, which says that the completion of a task is a reinforcer in and of itself. Finally, it ended by discussing that a child’s behavior at school is largely influenced by home life and the teacher’s responsiveness.


This article is about the way psychology, technology, and instructional design work together. There are three areas of psychology that have influenced instructional design and technology. First, behavioral perspective is the role of the environment on behavior. Second, cognitive perspective, which is how a person understands information, determines their behavior. Third, affordances perspective, states that a person’s internal and external nature affects their behavior. These three states of psychology strongly influence instructional design and technology.

This article started out by explaining that the theory of behaviorism focuses on the behaviors of learning instead of how learning occurs. Many math teachers use principles of behaviorism such as drill – and – practice routines, and teach lessons in a five step pattern (check homework, present new material, work examples, check work, and assign homework). Teaching through behaviorism is sufficient for low – level concepts, but different level students tend to give or reflect the same results when given the same stimuli.


In this article, Schwartz discusses the overwhelming amount of technology in the world around us. He breaks technology down into the categories of “things” (microwaves, nuclear power) and “ideas” (concepts and understanding). Schwartz states there are two things about “idea” technology that make it different from “thing” technology. Ideas are not objects and ideas have profound effects on people. One part of this article discussed ideology according to Dweck. Dweck felt there were two ways in which children learn. One is performance goals and the other is mastery goals. Both of these goals deal with what the individual child’s idea of learning is.


Working within what some have called “the new social history of science,” O’Donnell focuses not simply on the narrow history of psychological concepts but on the interplay of individuals, ideas, and institutions all within the local culture, professional community and personal circumstances. He presents a portrait of “American Psychology, 1870-1920” that argues as to how and why behaviorism came (by the end of World War 1) to dominate American Psychological thoughts and practice. From around 1900, many psychologists could be defined as behaviorist in Watson’s sense. American psychologist began focusing on human behaviors long before Watson’s manifesto. Around this time, psychologist began to realize that school children and hospitalized patients could be studied as easy as other organisms–thus began behavioral psychology.

Staddon reviews Behaviorism’s history, criticizes its major failings, and offers us a behaviorist theory of mind. Staddon discounts many of Skinners theories and ideas such as his theory of animal behavior and his attempt to generate an atheoretical behavioral-technology. After writing about Skinner’s shortcomings, Staddon went on to mention his enduring contributions to psychology. He mentioned his invention of the Skinner Box, and his discovery of schedules of reinforcement.


In the past, the focus of the teacher education program has been based on the teachers and their learning. Mrs. Blackwell urges the school of education to shift their focus to producing teachers who understand how students learn. Everyone knows what teaching is, and teaching occurs when people get together. But, the fundamental purpose of education is to improve student learning. Blackwell came up with seven areas that teachers need to work on to help students be able to learn. First, knowledge and experience should be based on previous experiences. Second, teachers should present usable content knowledge. Third, teachers should work on the transfer of learning. Fourth, teachers should teach strategic thinking. Fifth, teachers should use motivation. Sixth, teachers should be aware of student’s developments and individual differences. Seventh, teachers should understand standards and assessments.


Through much of its early history behaviorism was unfortunately burdened by association with the philosophy of science known as “logical positivism.” Skinner founded not only the beginnings of an empirical science, “operant psychology”, but he also developed a philosophy of science, philosophy of the mind, and a social philosophy. Not all early behavioral psychologists agreed wholly with Skinner, but they all agreed that Skinner was their implicit starting point, and their baseline. From the beginnings of behaviorism, there have been discussions of the relation between a science of behaviorism and neurophysiology. In philosophical terms, this issue is
known as “reductionism”. Behaviorists have never denied the role of an underlying biology although they differ in their positions on the relations between the mental and the physical.


The modern behaviorism we are acquainted with today is refined from its early versions. The personal life of John Watson shows the social forces that led to his views of behaviorism. During the first half of the twentieth century, the majority of American Psychologists followed John Watson’s behavioristic movement. American psychology has been truly Watsonian as much as anything else. This article discussed the fact that Watson had a theory that humans have three fundamental emotions (fear, rage, and love), each one being a conditional reflex. Behaviorism was at least as much the product of a particular time, place, and society as it was of Watson’s personality. Watson just happened to be in the right place at precisely the right time. America, it seems, was ready for behaviorism around the time of World War 1 and in the 1920’s.