

# Learning Theories

In order to teach well, we must understand the different ways in which learning takes place and use appropriate pedagogical methods accordingly

## Learning Theory : Behaviorism

### What is it?

Behaviorism stems from the concept of operant conditioning. According to this learning theory- learning is simply the **process of acquiring new desired behavior or changing undesired behavior** .

The learner is considered like a blank slate. When the **learner gives a response (exhibits a certain behavior) in reaction to a stimulus** from the environment, the **teacher follows it with consequences** that **reinforce the desired behavior** and repeats it, until a significant change in the behavior of the learner can be observed.

### What it means for teachers?



This theory focuses on objectively observable behavior of learner and doesn't consider mental activities of learner( like analysis, processing etc.)



Simply put , correct behavioral responses are transmitted by the teacher & absorbed by the students through positive and negative reinforcement techniques



Positive reinforcement : Teachers are to reward any desired behavior in learning using different methods(Read examples in the section below)



Negative reinforcement : Teachers are to take away negative consequence after the learner shows desired behavior. Ex. A teacher can eliminate that night's homework(negative consequence) if kids study hard in the class in school itself.

### How it can look in a classroom:

1. In Mrs. Sunita's classroom, she is working with one of her students, Priya, to help her with some challenging attention-span issues. She gives her a sticker whenever she sees her focusing for more length of time (Positive reinforcement)
2. Students in Mrs. Pallavi's activity class are asked to paint the picture of a "Lion". But students are copying each other's colors. For each hour that goes without anybody copying, Mrs. Pallavi writes one letter of the word "ART" on the board, if the word is written completely, everybody won't have to do the same activity in next class (negative consequence) and can choose their own activity. Overtime, students will start copying lesser (Negative reinforcement)
3. Other applications of the theory can be- Drill/Rote learning, Repetitions, Bonus points(as an incentive to do more), Verbal reinforcement(saying " good job")