

SPENCER A. RATHUS

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HUMAN LIFESPAN DEVELOPMENT



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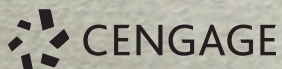




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Australia • Brazil • Mexico • Singapore • United Kingdom • United States

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1 | History, Theories, and Methods

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LEARNING OUTCOMES

After studying this chapter, you will be able to...

- 1-1 Relate the history of the study of human development
- 1-2 Compare and contrast theories of human development
- 1-3 Enumerate key controversies in human development
- 1-4 Describe ways in which researchers study human development

This book has a story to tell. An important, remarkable story—your story. It is about the amazing journey you have already taken through childhood, and about the unfolding of your adult

You are unique, and things will happen to you, and because of you, that have never happened before.

life. Billions of people have made this journey before. You have much in common with them. Yet you are unique, and things will happen to you, and because of you, that have never happened before.

1-1 THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE STUDY OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Developmental psychology studies the physical, cognitive, social, and emotional development of humans over time. It focuses on the effects of the person's physical, social, and cultural environment, and how these factors interact to influence the developments that occur over time.

Scientific inquiry into human development has existed for little more than a century. In ancient times and in the Middle Ages in Western society, children often were viewed as innately evil and discipline was harsh. Legally, medieval children were treated as property and servants. They could be sent to the monastery, married without consultation, or convicted of crimes. In many parts of Europe, children were nurtured until they were seven years old, which was considered the “age of reason.” Then they were expected to work alongside adults in the home and in the field.

In the west, the transition to modern thinking about children is marked by the writings of philosophers such as John Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Englishman John Locke (1632–1704) believed that the child came into the world as a *tabula rasa*—a “blank tablet” or clean slate—that was written on by experience. Locke did not believe that inborn predispositions toward good or evil played an important role in the conduct of the child. Instead, he focused on the role of the environment or of experience. Locke believed that social approval and disapproval are powerful shapers of behavior. But Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778), a Swiss-French philosopher, argued that children are inherently good and that, if allowed to express their natural impulses, they will develop into generous and moral individuals.

During the Industrial Revolution—a period from the late 18th century through the 19th century when

machine-based production replaced much manual labor—family life came to be defined in terms of the nuclear unit of mother, father, and children rather than the extended family. Children became more visible, fostering awareness of childhood as a special time of life. Still, children often labored in factories from dawn to dusk through the early years of the 20th century.

Later in the 20th century, laws were passed to protect children from strenuous labor, to require that they attend school until a certain age, and to prevent them from getting married or being sexually exploited. Whereas children were once considered the property of parents, laws now protect children from abuse by parents and other adults. Juvenile courts see that children who break the law receive age-appropriate treatment by the criminal justice system.

Various thoughts about human development coalesced into a field of scientific study in the

developmental psychology
the discipline that studies human physical, cognitive, social, and emotional development.

TRUTH OR FICTION?

WHAT DO YOU THINK? FOLKLORE, COMMON SENSE, OR NONSENSE? SELECT T FOR “TRUTH” OR F FOR “FICTION,” AND CHECK THE ACCURACY OF YOUR ANSWERS AS YOU READ THROUGH THE CHAPTER.

- T F** During the Middle Ages, children were often treated as miniature adults.
- T F** Nail biting and smoking cigarettes are signs of conflict experienced during early childhood.
- T F** Research with monkeys has helped psychologists understand the formation of attachment in humans.
- T F** To learn how a person develops over a lifetime, researchers have tracked some individuals for more than 50 years.

19th and early 20th centuries. G. Stanley Hall (1844–1924) is credited with founding child development as an academic discipline and bringing scientific attention to focus on the period of adolescence. French psychologist Alfred Binet (1857–1911), along with Theodore Simon (1872–1961), developed the first standardized intelligence test near the beginning of the 20th century. Binet’s purpose was to identify public school children who were at risk of falling behind their peers in academic achievement. By the start of the 20th century, child development had emerged as a scientific field of study. Soon major theories of the developing child were proposed by theorists such as Arnold Gesell, Sigmund Freud, John B. Watson, and Jean Piaget.

The traditional focus of developmental psychologists has been on childhood and adolescence because of the dramatic physical and cognitive changes that occur during those years. But in the 20th century, psychologists began to take on a **life-span perspective**, in which they viewed human development as occurring throughout the individual’s lifetime.

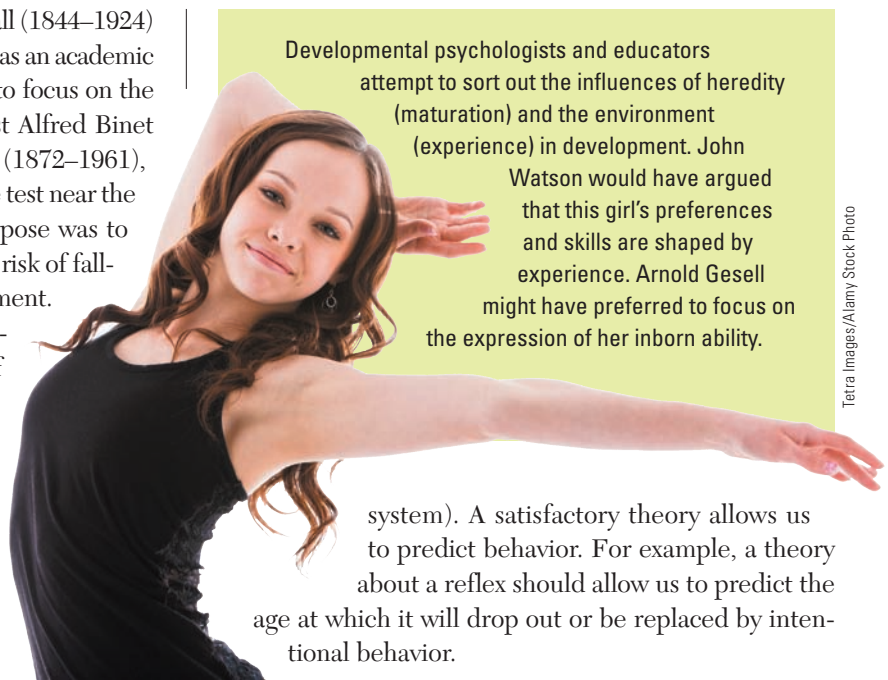
William Perry and Gisela Labouvie-Vief, for example, have studied the development of cognitive complexity from adolescence to late adulthood. K. W. Schaie and others have studied trends in various mental abilities throughout middle and late adulthood, showing that some abilities decline in middle and late adulthood, but others that represent the accumulation of decades of knowledge can advance into late adulthood. Researchers such as Robert Havighurst, Paul Baltes, and Margaret Baltes inspired the study of “successful aging.” Though young adulthood is the time of peak physical development, people perform at their best on some intellectual tasks during midlife, and many people are most well-adjusted during late adulthood.

1-2 THEORIES OF DEVELOPMENT

Theories are formulations of apparent relationships among observed events. They allow us to derive explanations and predictions. Many psychological theories combine statements about behavior (such as reflexes), mental processes (such as whether a reflex is intentional or not), and biological processes (such as maturation of the nervous

life-span perspective
perspective in which psychologists view human development as occurring throughout the individual’s lifetime.

behaviorism Watson’s view that science must study observable behavior only and investigate relationships between stimuli and responses.



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Developmental psychologists and educators attempt to sort out the influences of heredity (maturation) and the environment (experience) in development. John Watson would have argued that this girl’s preferences and skills are shaped by experience. Arnold Gesell might have preferred to focus on the expression of her inborn ability.

system). A satisfactory theory allows us to predict behavior. For example, a theory about a reflex should allow us to predict the age at which it will drop out or be replaced by intentional behavior.

TRUTH

T F During the Middle Ages, children were often treated as miniature adults.

It is true that during the Middle Ages, children were often treated as miniature adults. This does not mean that they were given more privileges, however. Instead, more was expected of them.

John B. Watson (1878–1958), the founder of American **behaviorism**, viewed development in terms of learning theory. He generally agreed with Locke that children’s ideas, preferences, and skills are shaped by experience. In the long-standing nature-nurture debate in the study of children, Watson came down on the side of nurture—the importance of the physical and social environments—as found, for example, in parental training and approval. In 1930, Watson sounded the behaviorist challenge:

Give me a dozen healthy infants, well-formed, and my own specified world to bring them up in, and I’ll guarantee to train them to become any type of specialist I might suggest—doctor, lawyer, merchant, chief, and, yes, even beggar and thief, regardless of their talents, penchants, tendencies, abilities, vocations, and the race of their ancestors. (p. 82)

Arnold Gesell expressed the opposing idea that biological **maturation** was the main principle of development: “All things considered, the inevitability and surety of maturation are the most impressive characteristics of early development. It is the hereditary ballast which conserves and stabilizes growth of each individual infant” (Gesell, 1928, p. 378). Watson was talking about the behavior patterns that children develop, whereas Gesell was focusing largely on the biological and physical aspects of growth and development.

Theories such as behavioral theory and maturational theory help developmentalists explain, predict, and influence the events they study. Let’s consider theories that are popular among developmentalists today. They fall within broad perspectives on development.

1-2a THE PSYCHOANALYTIC PERSPECTIVE

A number of theories fall within the psychoanalytic perspective. Each owes its origin to Sigmund Freud and views children—and adults—as caught in conflict. Early in development, the conflict is between the child and the world outside. The expression of basic drives, such as sex and aggression, conflict with parental expectations, social rules, moral codes, even laws. But the external limits—parental demands and social rules—are brought inside or *internalized*. Once internalization occurs, the conflict takes place between opposing *inner* forces. The child’s observable behavior, thoughts, and feelings reflect the outcomes of these hidden battles.

Freud’s theory of **psychosexual development** and Erik Erikson’s theory of psychosocial development are both **stage theories** that see children as developing through distinct periods of life. Each suggests that the



Courtesy of the Ferdinand-Hamburger Archives of The Johns Hopkins University

According to John B. Watson (1878–1958), the founder of American behaviorism, a theory about a reflex should allow us to predict the age at which it will drop out or be replaced by intentional behavior. Here Watson is demonstrating the grasp reflex of a newborn infant.

child’s experiences during early stages affect the child’s emotional and social life at the time and through the lifespan.

SIGMUND FREUD’S THEORY OF PSYCHOSEXUAL DEVELOPMENT

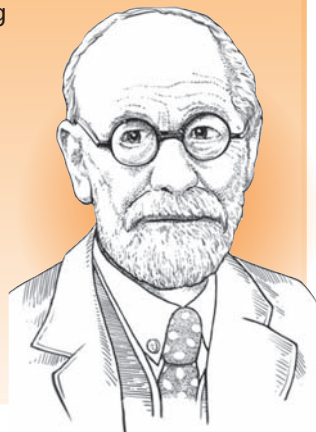
Sigmund Freud’s (1856–1939) theory of psychosexual development focused on emotional and social development and on the origins of psychological traits such as dependence, obsessive neatness, and vanity. Freud theorized three parts of the personality: the *id*, *ego*, and *superego*. The *id* is present at birth and is *unconscious*. It represents biological drives and demands instant gratification, as suggested by a baby’s wailing. The *ego*, or the conscious sense of self, begins to develop when children learn to obtain gratification consciously, without screaming or crying.

The *ego* curbs the appetites of the *id* and makes plans that are in keeping with social conventions so that a person can find gratification but avoid social disapproval. The *superego* develops throughout infancy and early childhood. It brings inward the wishes and morals of the child’s caregivers and other members of the community. Throughout the remainder of the child’s life, the *superego* will monitor the intentions and behavior of the *ego*, hand down judgments of right and wrong,

FREUD’S THEORY OF PSYCHOSEXUAL DEVELOPMENT

Sigmund Freud’s (1856–1939) theory of psychosexual development focused on emotional and social development and on the origins of psychological traits such as dependence, obsessive neatness, and vanity. According to Freud, there are five stages of psychosexual development:

- ▶ oral
- ▶ anal
- ▶ phallic
- ▶ latency
- ▶ genital



maturation the unfolding of genetically determined traits, structures, and functions.

psychosexual development the process by which libidinal energy is expressed through different erogenous zones during different stages of development.

stage theory a theory of development characterized by distinct periods of life.

and attempt to influence behavior through flooding the person with feelings of guilt and shame when the judgment is in the negative.

According to Freud, there are five stages of psychosexual development: *oral*, *anal*, *phallic*, *latency*, and *genital*. If a child receives too little or too much gratification during a stage, the child can become *fixated* in that stage. For example, during the first year of life, which Freud termed the *oral stage*, “oral” activities such as sucking and biting bring pleasure and gratification. If the child is weaned early or breast-fed too long, the child may become fixated on oral activities such as nail biting or smoking, or even show a “biting wit.”

FICTION

T F Nail biting and smoking cigarettes are signs of conflict experienced during early childhood.

Actually, there is no evidence that nail biting and smoking cigarettes are signs of conflict experienced during early childhood. The statement must therefore be considered “fiction.”

In the second, or *anal*, stage, gratification is obtained through control and elimination of waste products. Excessively strict or permissive toilet training can lead to the development of anal-retentive traits, such as perfectionism and neatness, or anal-expulsive traits, such as sloppiness and carelessness. In the third stage, the *phallic stage*, parent–child conflict may develop over masturbation, which many parents treat with punishment and threats. It is normal for children to develop strong sexual attachments to the parent of the other sex during the phallic stage and to begin to view the parent of the same sex as a rival in love.

By age five or six, Freud believed, children enter a *latency stage* during which sexual feelings remain unconscious, children turn to schoolwork, and they typically prefer playmates of their own sex. The final stage of psychosexual development, the *genital stage*, begins with the biological changes that usher in adolescence. Adolescents generally desire sexual gratification through intercourse with a member of the other sex. Freud believed that oral or anal stimulation, masturbation, and male–male or

psychosocial development

Erikson’s theory, which emphasizes the importance of social relationships and conscious choice throughout eight stages of development.

tion through intercourse with a member of the other sex. Freud believed that oral or anal stimulation, masturbation, and male–male or

female–female sexual activity are immature forms of sexual conduct that reflect fixations at early stages of development.

Evaluation Freud’s views about the anal stage have influenced child-care workers to recommend that toilet training not be started too early or handled punitively. His emphasis on the emotional needs of children has influenced educators to be more sensitive to the possible emotional reasons behind a child’s misbehavior. Freud’s work has also been criticized. For one thing, Freud developed his theory on the basis of contacts with adult patients (mostly women) (Henley, 2019), rather than observing children directly. Freud may also have inadvertently guided patients into expressing ideas that confirmed his views.

Some of Freud’s own disciples, including Erik Erikson, believe that Freud placed too much emphasis on basic instincts and unconscious motives. Erikson argues that people are motivated not only by drives such as sex and aggression but also by social relationships and conscious desires to achieve, to have aesthetic experiences, and to help others.

ERIK ERIKSON’S THEORY OF PSYCHOSOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Erik Erikson (1902–1994) modified Freud’s theory and extended it through the adult years. Erikson’s theory, like Freud’s, focuses on the development of the emotional life and psychological traits, but Erikson focuses on social relationships rather than sexual or aggressive instincts. Therefore, Erikson speaks of **psychosocial development** rather than of *psychosexual development*.

Furthermore, Erikson places greater emphasis on the ego, or the sense of self. Erikson (1963)



ERIKSON’S THEORY OF PSYCHOSOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Erik Erikson (1902–1994) modified Freud’s psychosexual theory and extended it through the adult years. Erikson’s theory, like Freud’s, focuses on the development of the emotional life and psychological traits, but Erikson focuses on social relationships rather than sexual or aggressive instincts. He expanded Freud’s five stages to eight, to include the stages of adult development.



Richard Ransier/Cardinal/Corbis

Erik Erikson was particularly concerned with the development of adolescents' sense of identity—how they discover or invent who they are and what they stand for.

extended Freud's five stages to eight to include the concerns of adulthood. Rather than label his stages after parts of the body, Erikson labeled them after the **life crisis** that people might encounter during that stage.

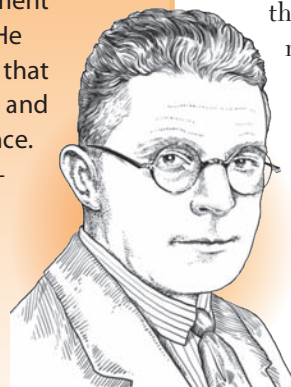
Erikson proposed that social relationships and physical maturation give each stage its character. For example, the parent–child relationship and the infant's dependence and helplessness are responsible for the nature of the earliest stages of development.

Early experiences affect future developments. With parental support, most children resolve early life crises productively. Successful resolution of each crisis bolsters their sense of identity—of who they are and what they stand for—and their expectation of future success.

Erikson's views, like Freud's, have influenced child rearing, early childhood education, and child therapy. For example, Erikson's views about an adolescent **identity crisis** have entered the popular culture and have affected the way many parents and teachers deal with teenagers. Some schools help students master the crisis by means of life-adjustment courses and study units on self-understanding in social studies and literature classes.

WATSON: THE FOUNDER OF AMERICAN BEHAVIORISM

John B. Watson (1878–1958) is considered the founder of American behaviorism. He was a major force in early 20th-century psychology, arguing that psychologists should study only observable behavior, not thoughts, fantasies, and other mental images. He viewed development in terms of learning theory. He generally agreed with Locke that children's ideas, preferences, and skills are shaped by experience. In the long-standing nature–nurture debate in the study of children, his theoretical approach to understanding children comes down on the side of nurture.



life crisis an internal conflict that attends each stage of psychosocial development.

identity crisis according to Erikson, a period of inner conflict during which one examines one's values and makes decisions about one's life roles.

Evaluation Erikson's views are appealing in that they emphasize the importance of human consciousness and choice. They are also appealing in that they portray us as prosocial and helpful, whereas Freud portrayed us as selfish and needing to be compelled to comply with social rules. There is empirical support for the Eriksonian view that positive outcomes of early life crises help put us on the path to positive development (Gfellner & Cordoba, 2017; Marcia, 2010).

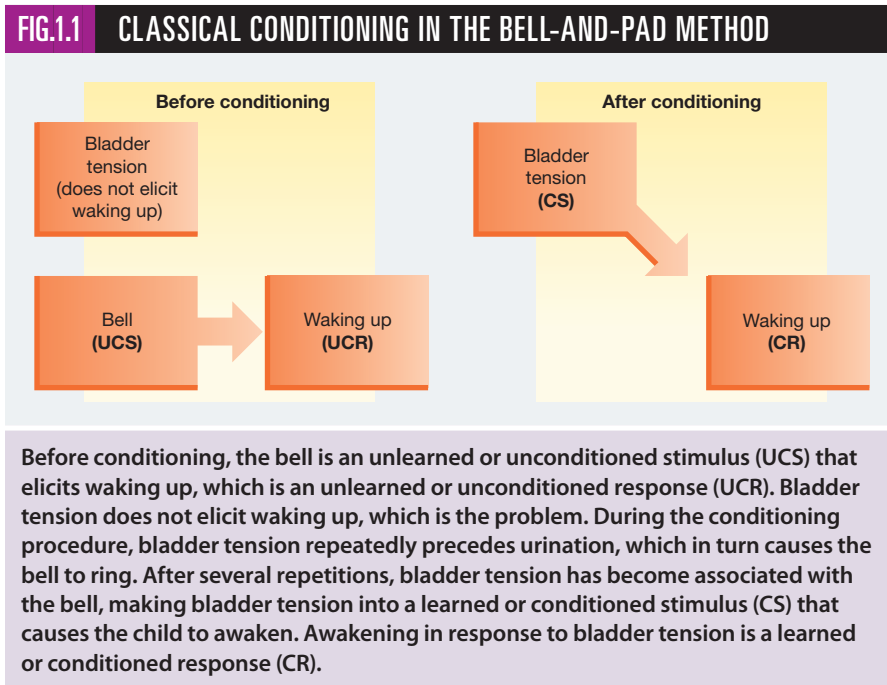
1-2b THE LEARNING PERSPECTIVE: BEHAVIORAL AND SOCIAL COGNITIVE THEORIES

During the 1930s, psychologists derived an ingenious method for helping five- and six-year-old children overcome bed-wetting from the behavioral perspective. Most children at this age wake up and go to the bathroom when their bladders are full. Bed wetters, though, sleep through bladder tension and reflexively urinate in bed. To address this problem, the psychologists placed a special pad beneath the sleeping child. Wetness in the pad closed an electrical circuit, causing a bell to ring and waking the sleeping child. After several repetitions, most children learned to wake up before they wet the pad. How? They learned through a technique called *classical conditioning*, which we explain in this section.

The so-called bell-and-pad method for bed-wetting is a more complicated example of learning theory being applied to human development. Most applications of learning theory to development are found in simpler, everyday events. In this section, we consider two theories of learning: behaviorism and social cognitive theory.

BEHAVIORISM John B. Watson argued that a scientific approach to development must focus on observable behavior only and not on things like thoughts, fantasies, and other mental images.

FIG.1.1 CLASSICAL CONDITIONING IN THE BELL-AND-PAD METHOD



Classical conditioning is a simple form of learning in which an originally neutral stimulus comes to bring forth, or elicit, the response usually brought forth by a second stimulus as a result of being paired repeatedly with the second stimulus. In the bell-and-pad method for bed-wetting, psychologists repeatedly pair tension in the children's bladders with a stimulus that awakens them (the bell). The children learn to respond to the bladder tension as if it were a bell; that is, they wake up (see Figure 1.1).

classical conditioning

a simple form of learning in which one stimulus comes to bring forth the response usually brought forth by a second stimulus by being paired repeatedly with the second stimulus.

operant conditioning

a simple form of learning in which an organism learns to engage in behavior that is reinforced.

reinforcement the process of providing stimuli following responses that increase the frequency of the responses.

positive reinforcer a reinforcer that, when applied, increases the frequency of a response.

negative reinforcer a reinforcer that, when removed, increases the frequency of a response.

extinction the cessation of a response that is performed in the absence of reinforcement.

Skinner distinguished between positive and negative reinforcers. **Positive reinforcers** increase the frequency of behaviors when they are *applied*. Food and approval usually serve as positive reinforcers. **Negative reinforcers** increase the frequency of behaviors when they are *removed*. Fear acts as a negative reinforcer in that its removal increases the frequency of the behaviors preceding it. Figure 1.2 compares positive and negative reinforcers.

Extinction results from repeated performance of operant behavior without reinforcement. After a number of trials, the operant behavior is no longer shown. Children's temper tantrums and crying at bedtime can often be extinguished by parents' remaining out of the bedroom after the children have been put to bed. Punishments are aversive events

that suppress or *decrease* the frequency of the behavior they follow. (Figure 1.3 compares negative reinforcers with punishments.) Many learning theorists agree that punishment is undesirable in rearing children for reasons such as the following punishment does not in itself suggest an alternative acceptable form of behavior; punishment

SKINNER AND BEHAVIORISM

B.F. Skinner (1904–1990) picked up the behaviorist mandate from John Watson. Behaviorists argue that much emotional learning is acquired through conditioning. Skinner introduced the key concept of positive and negative reinforcement in operant conditioning. He was interested in popularizing his views on psychology and wrote a novel, *Walden Two*, which supported his views and achieved a sort of cult following.

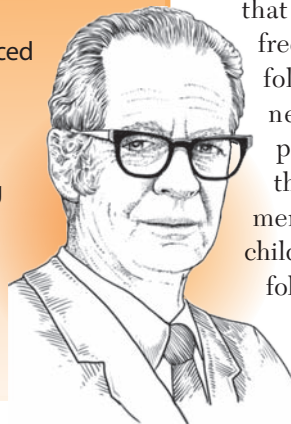
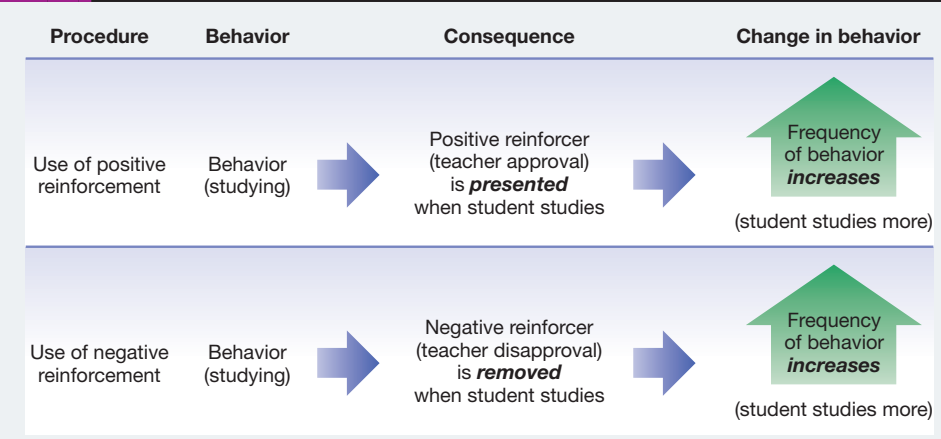


FIG.1.2 POSITIVE VERSUS NEGATIVE REINFORCERS



Reinforcers, by definition, increase the frequency of behavior. In this example, teacher approval is a positive reinforcer because it increases the frequency of behavior when it is *applied*. Teacher disapproval functions as a negative reinforcer because *removing* it increases behavior—in this case, studying. But teacher disapproval can backfire when other students show strong approval of a student disobeying the teacher.

tends to suppress behavior only when its delivery is guaranteed; and punishment can create feelings of anger and hostility.

Research suggests that when teachers praise and attend to appropriate behavior and ignore misbehavior, studying and classroom behavior improve while disruptive and aggressive behaviors decrease (Jenkins et al., 2015; Stefan, 2018). By ignoring misbehavior or by using *time out* from positive reinforcement, we can avoid reinforcing children for misbehavior. In using time out,

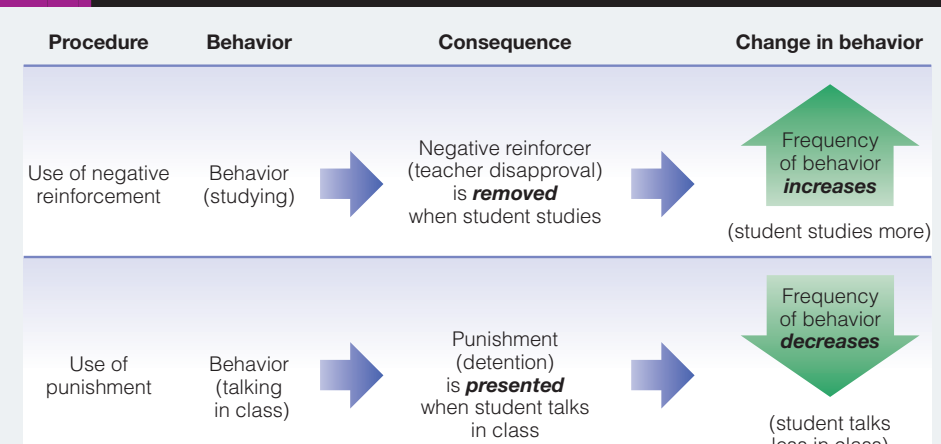
children are placed in drab, restrictive environments—which may be a quiet corner of a classroom—for a specified time period such as 10 minutes when they behave disruptively.

Operant conditioning is used every day in the *socialization* of young children. Parents and peers influence children to acquire behavior patterns they consider to be appropriate to their gender through the elaborate use of rewards and punishments. Thus, boys may ignore other boys when they play with dolls and housekeeping toys but play with boys when they use transportation toys. This type of conditioning is obviously restrictive and harmful when it counters the child's personal desires.

SOCIAL COGNITIVE THEORY Behaviorists tend to limit their view of learning to conditioning. **Social cognitive theorists** such as Albert Bandura (1986, 2011) have shown that much learning also occurs by observing other people, reading, and viewing characters in the media. People may need practice to refine their skills, but they can acquire the basic know-how through observation.

Observational learning occurs when children observe how parents cook, clean, or repair a broken appliance. It takes place when adults watch supervisors sketch out sales strategies on a blackboard or hear them speak a foreign language. In social cognitive theory, the people after whom we pattern our own behavior are termed *models*.

FIG.1.3 NEGATIVE REINFORCERS VERSUS PUNISHMENTS



Both negative reinforcers and punishments tend to be aversive stimuli. Reinforcers, however, increase the frequency of behavior. Punishments decrease the frequency of behavior. Negative reinforcers increase the frequency of behavior when they are removed.

social cognitive theory
a cognitively oriented learning theory that emphasizes observational learning.