

Thought Paper 1

After reflecting on this week's readings, I determined that although behaviourist principles can help to manage a class, they are not particularly conducive to learning. In a sense, learning and behaviorism are at opposite poles; learners learn through complex thought processes that cannot be observed quantitatively, while behaviorism relies on behaviors that are observable and measurable.

However, I feel certain principles of behaviourism, can foster learning if they are student-centered and learning-centered. For example, the practice of modeling can work if learners are active participants in discovering why certain practices can help them achieve a better learning experience. I also found that the behaviorist principles that were mirrored on the constructivist approach supported learning; for example segmenting learning into smaller steps, scaffolding activities, cuing, encouraging pair- and group-work.

On the other hand, I believe certain behaviorist practices can deter learning, such as 'shaping', which leads students into behaving well to get a physical reward, rather than for the joy and pride of learning. Similarly, I feel that the act of taking away or giving something to a learner according to behavior does not promote learning. Instead, a much more learner-centered strategy would be needed to show learners how to bank on their strengths while given strategies to overcome challenges.

Finally, I am of the opinion that punishment has absolutely no place in the classroom. I however believe in having learners deal with the consequences of their

actions, particularly when this concerns violent behavior. Most importantly, I think educators need to take the time to get to the bottom of issues, why is a student late or homework not handed in? These are usually symptoms that point to more complex learning issues involving many factors, which I feel a behaviorist approach cannot address.