



**POLITECNICO**  
MILANO 1863

DIPARTIMENTO  
DI MECCANICA



*11<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Machine Learning, Optimization and Data Science*

# *Deep Active Inference Agents for Delayed and Long-Horizon Environments*

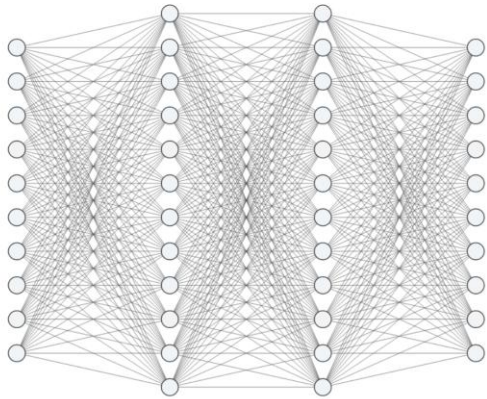
*Yavar Taheri Yeganeh<sup>1</sup>, Mohsen Jafari<sup>2</sup>, Andrea Matta<sup>1</sup>*

*yavar.taheri@polimi.it, jafari@soe.rutgers.edu, andrea.matta@polimi.it*

*<sup>1</sup> Politecnico di Milano, <sup>2</sup> Rutgers University*

# Neuroscience in Machine Learning and AI

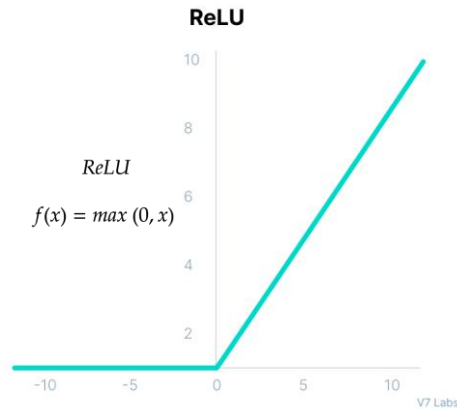
## Artificial Neural Networks



Modern Machine Learning  
Universal Function  
Approximators

Inspired by  
Biological Neural Networks

## ReLU Activation Function



Deep Learning

Inspired by neural firings in the brain "*Neurons either fire or do not fire (binary activation)*"

## Convolutional Neural Networks

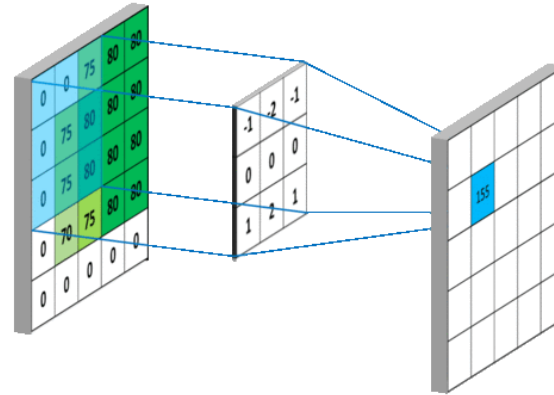
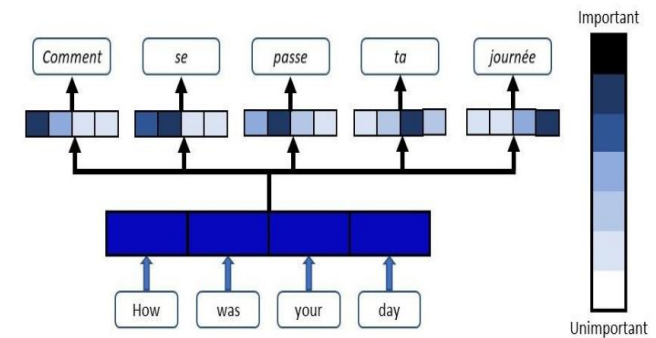


Image Processing  
Computer Vision

Inspired by the visual processing in the brain (the hierarchical structure of the visual cortex)

## Attention Mechanism

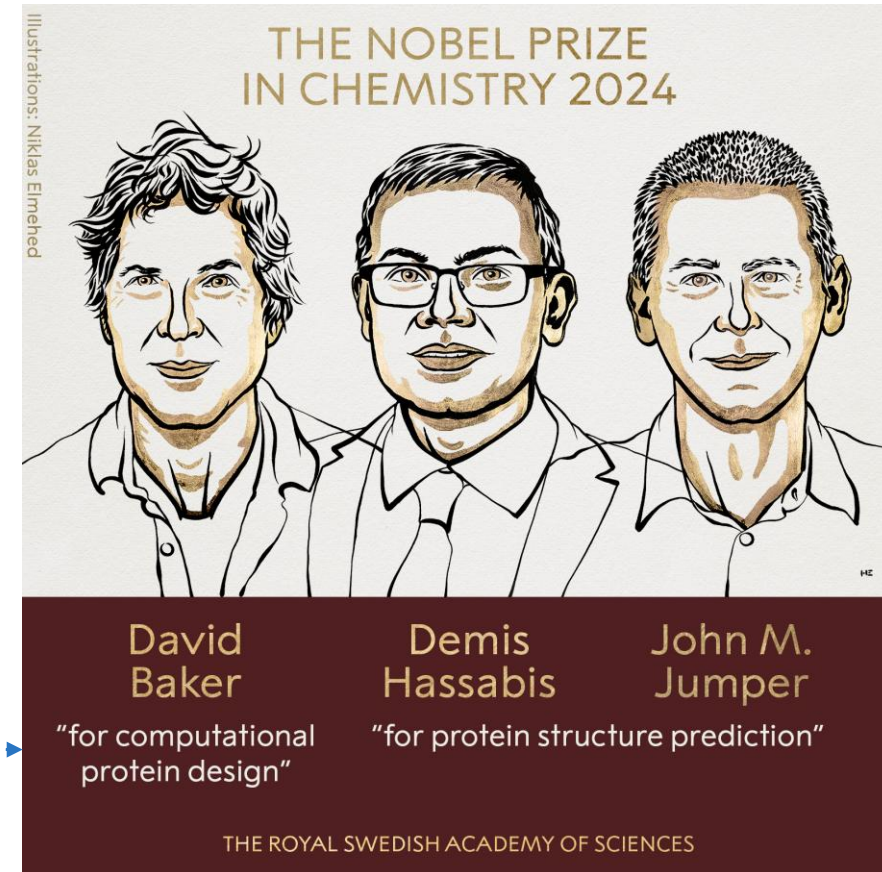
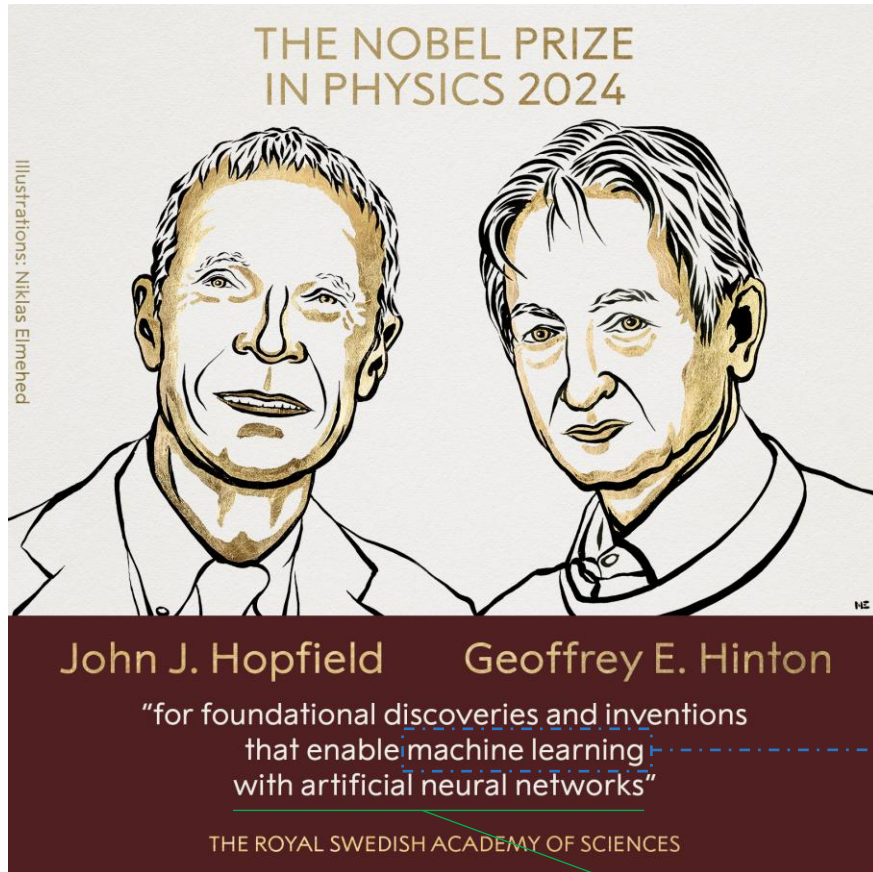


Transformers  
LLMs (e.g, ChatGPT)

Connections to modulations of neural activities in the brain (selectively focus on specific stimuli)



# Neuroscience in Machine Learning and AI



Notably impacted by concepts  
from Neuroscience (and with  
Mathematics and Physics)

# Neuroscience: Active Inference Trend

Google Scholar

active inference

Articles

About 3,570,000 results (0.10 sec)

Any time

Since 2024

Since 2023

Since 2020

Custom range...

HTML

Active inference and learning

[K Friston](#), [T FitzGerald](#), [F Rigoli](#)... - Neuroscience & ..., 2016 - Elsevier

... This paper offers an **active inference** account of choice behaviour ... In **active inference**, behaviour has explorative (epistemic) ... Finally, we show that **active inference** reduces to a classical (...)

[☆ Save](#) [🔗 Cite](#) [Cited by 644](#) [Related articles](#) [All 26 versions](#) [Web of Science: 286](#) [🔗](#)

Sort by relevance

Sort by date

Any type

Review articles

☐ include patents

☒ include citations

📧 Create alert

Active inference: demystified and compared

[N Sajid](#), [P J Ball](#), [T Parr](#), [K J Friston](#) - Neural computation, 2021 - direct.mit.edu

... the **active inference** literature, in particular viewing the various natural behaviors of **active inference** ... In short, we aim to demystify the behavior of **active inference** agents by presenting an ...

[☆ Save](#) [🔗 Cite](#) [Cited by 161](#) [Related articles](#) [All 17 versions](#) [Web of Science: 56](#) [🔗](#)

Active inference: a process theory

[K Friston](#), [T FitzGerald](#), [F Rigoli](#), [P Schwartenbeck](#)... - Neural ..., 2017 - direct.mit.edu

... 2 **Active Inference** and Learning This section provides a brief overview of **active inference** ...

**Active inference** is based on the premise that everything minimizes variational free energy (...)

[☆ Save](#) [🔗 Cite](#) [Cited by 1127](#) [Related articles](#) [All 25 versions](#) [Web of Science: 558](#) [🔗](#)

HTML

A step-by-step tutorial on active inference and its application to empirical data

[R Smith](#), [K J Friston](#), [C J Whyte](#) - Journal of mathematical psychology, 2022 - Elsevier


... In Part 4, we introduce the reader to learning processes in **active inference**. In Part 5, we introduce the reader to the neural process theory associated with **active inference** and walk the ...

[☆ Save](#) [🔗 Cite](#) [Cited by 212](#) [Related articles](#) [All 19 versions](#) [Web of Science: 75](#)

Google Scholar

label:neuroscience

Profiles


- 

Karl Friston

University College London

Verified email at ucl.ac.uk

Neuroscience


Cited by 357787
- 

Li Fei-Fei

Professor of Computer Science, Stanford University

Verified email at cs.stanford.edu

Artificial Intelligence Machine Learning Computer Vision Neuroscience


Cited by 271151
- 

RP Bagozzi

Professor of Behavioral Science in Management, University of Michigan

Verified email at umich.edu

Marketing Management social psychology statistics neuroscience

Cited by 237471
- 

Prof. TW Robbins


University of Cambridge

Verified email at cam.ac.uk

Neuroscience Psychology Psychopharmacology

Cited by 237296

Google Scholar



Karl Friston

University College London

Verified email at ucl.ac.uk - Homepage

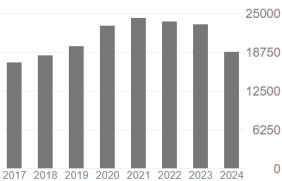
Neuroscience

[FOLLOW](#)

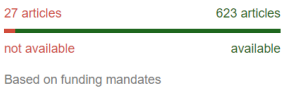
TITLE	CITED BY	YEAR
On the Minimal Theory of Consciousness Implicit in Active Inference	CJ Whyte, AW Corcoran, J Robinson, R Smith, RJ Moran, T Parr, ... arXiv preprint arXiv:2410.06633	2024
A cortical field theory—dynamics and symmetries	GK Cooray, V Cooray, K Friston Journal of Computational Neuroscience, 1-18	2024
A Mathematical Perspective on Neurophenomenology	L Da Costa, L Sandved-Smith, K Friston, MJD Ramstead, AK Seth arXiv preprint arXiv:2409.20318	2024
Possible principles for aligned structure learning agents	L Da Costa, T Gavenciak, D Hyland, M Samiei, C Dragos-Manta, ... arXiv preprint arXiv:2410.00258	2024
The Inherent Normativity of Concepts	WY So, KJ Friston, V Neacsu Minds and Machines 34 (4), 40	2024
A theory of generalised coordinates for stochastic differential equations	L Da Costa, N Da Costa, C Heins, J Medrano, GA Pavliotis, T Parr, ... arXiv preprint arXiv:2409.15532	2024
Associative Learning and Active Inference	P Anokhin, A Sorokin, M Burtsev, K Friston Neural Computation, 1-34	2024

Cited by [VIEW ALL](#)

	All	Since 2019
Citations	357787	133067
h-index	277	176
i10-index	1212	1025



Public access [VIEW ALL](#)



Karl Friston

# Active Inference: Concept

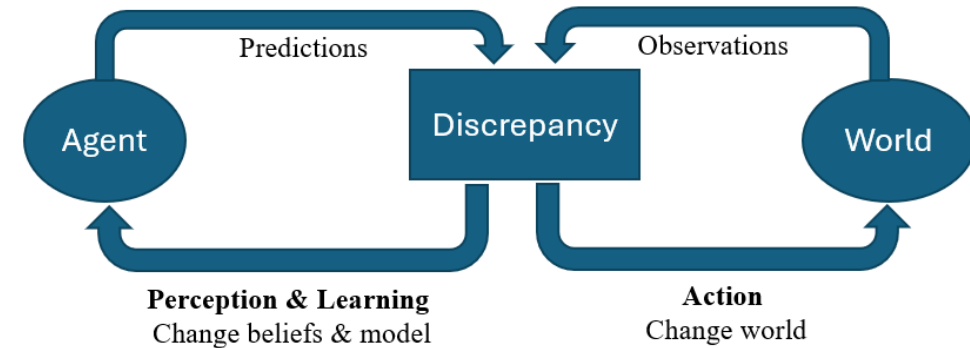
## Theory of Biological Brains

Based on Predictive Coding: Both are grounded on Generative Model and Predictions

Perception and Learning are driven by Prediction Errors.

Observations are influenced by actions: **Observation (action)**

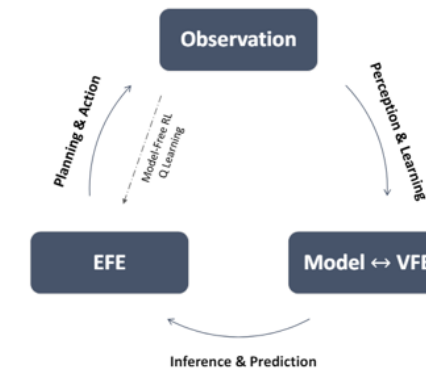
Predictive Coding → Active Inference



Free Energy Principle: Minimizing surprise ( $-\ln p(\text{observation}|\text{model})$  or *Free Energy*)

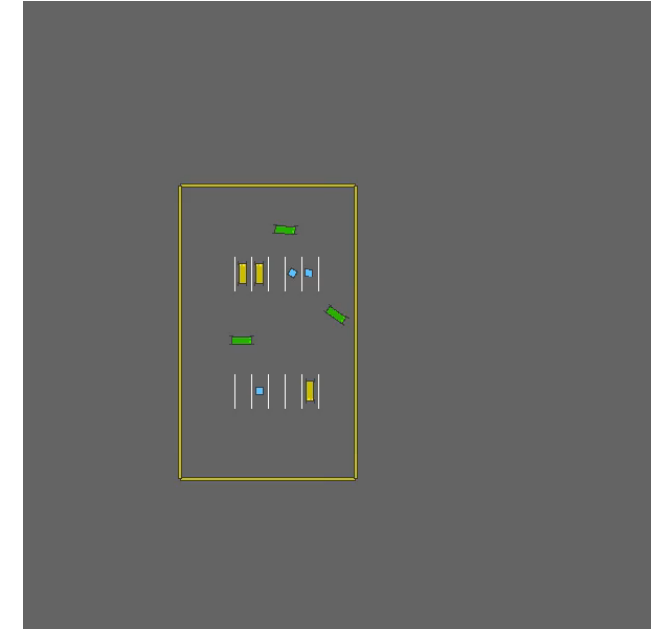
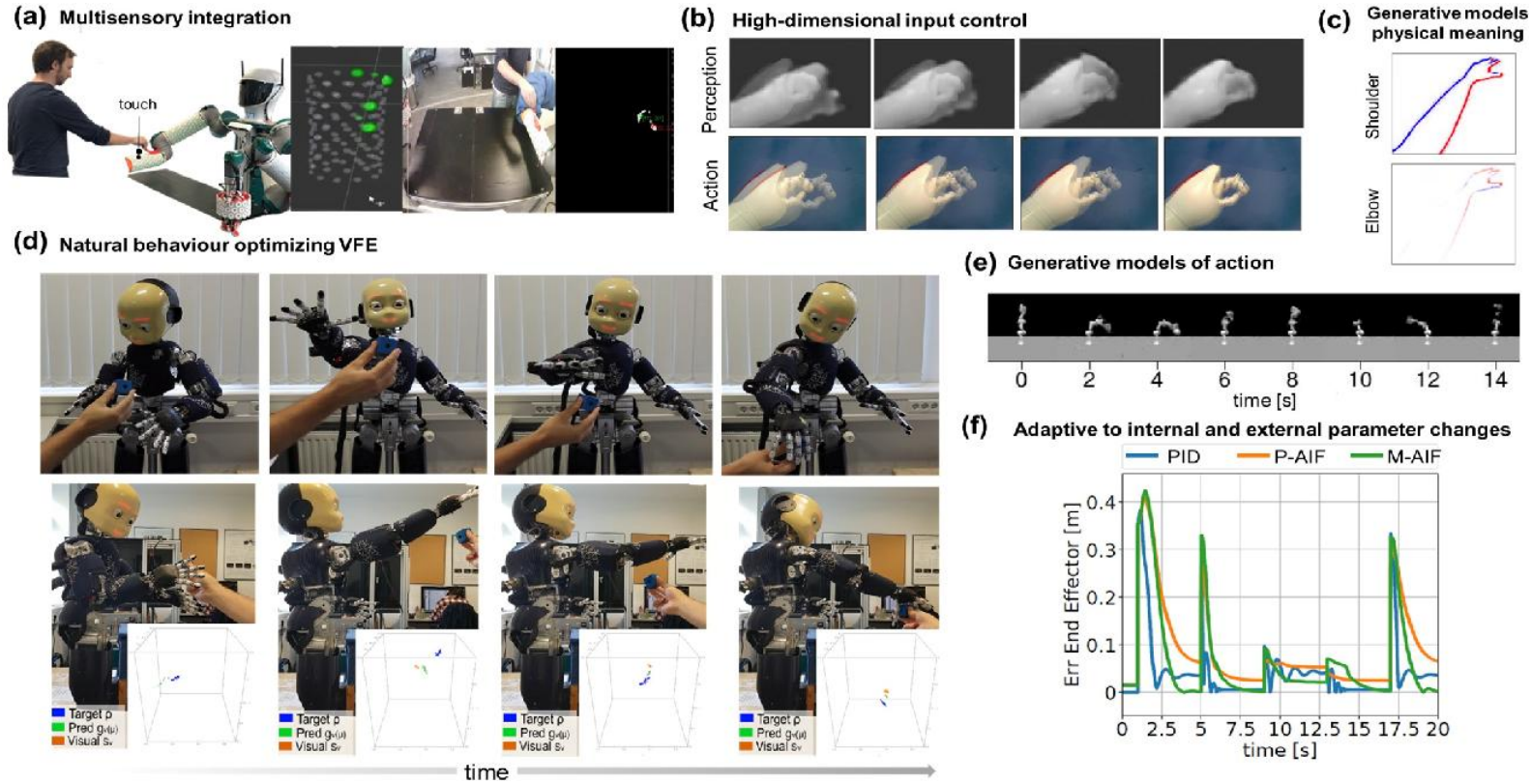
Active Inference unifies perception, learning, and action:

- Variational Free Energy: Perception & Learning Model
- Expected Free Energy: Action





# Active Inference: Robotics



Navigation of Autonomous Vehicles [3]

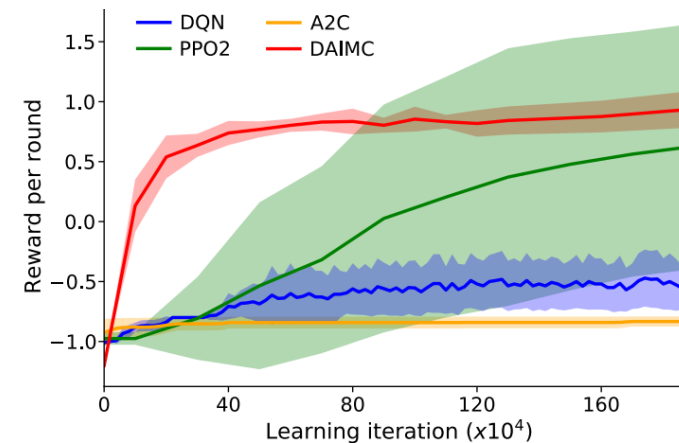
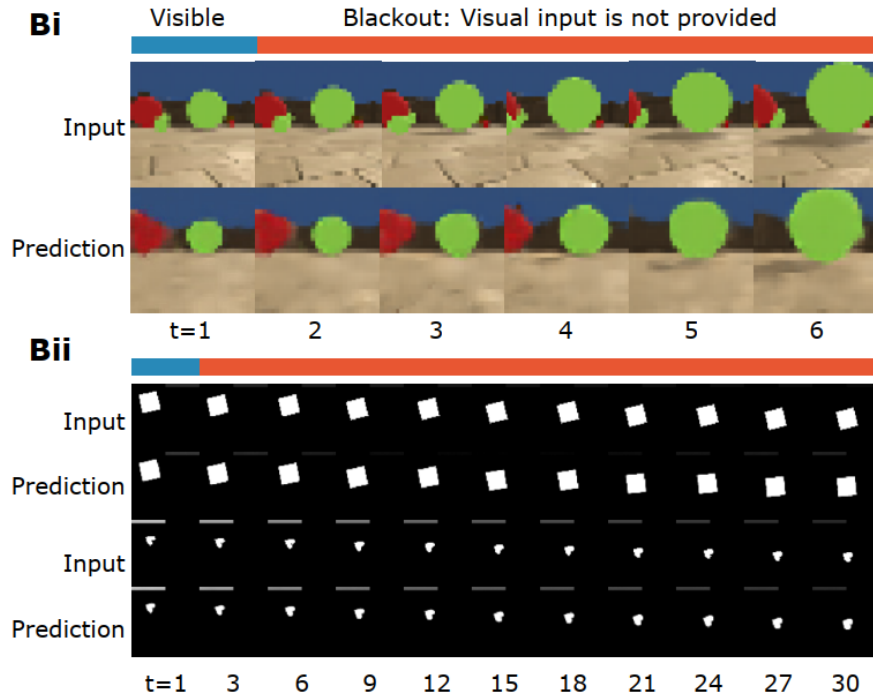
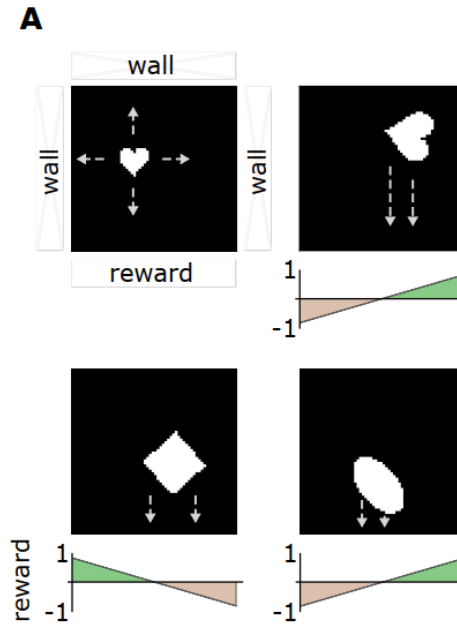
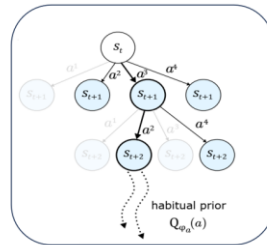
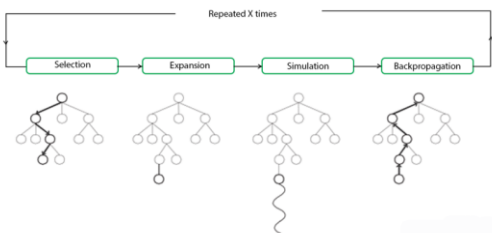
Robot Control [2]

# Active Inference: Against Model-Free (DAIMC [4])

## Algorithm 1 DAIMC on-policy training

- 1: **for**  $t = 1, 2, \dots$ , max iterations **do**
- 2: Randomize environment and sample a new observation  $\tilde{o}_t$ .
- 3: Run planner and compute prior policy  $P(a_t)$ .
- 4: Compute  $Q_{\phi_s}(s_t)$  using  $\tilde{o}_t$ .
- 5: Compute  $Q_{\phi_a}(a_t)$  using a sampled state  $\tilde{s}_t \sim Q_{\phi_s}(s_t)$ .
- 6: Compute  $D_t = D_{KL}[Q_{\phi_a}(a_t) \parallel P(a_t)]$ .
- 7: Apply a gradient step on  $\phi_a$  using  $D_t$  as loss.
- 8: Compute  $\omega_{t+1}$  from Eq. (10) using  $D_t$ .
- 9: Apply action  $\tilde{a}_t \sim P_{\theta_s}(s_{t+1}|\tilde{s}_t, \tilde{a}_t)$ .
- 10: Compute  $\mu, \sigma$  from  $P_{\theta_s}(s_{t+1}|\tilde{s}_t, \tilde{a}_t)$ .
- 11: Compute  $Q_{\phi_s}(s_{t+1})$  using  $\tilde{o}_{t+1}$ .
- 12: Apply a gradient step on  $\theta_s$  using  $D_{KL}[Q_{\phi_s}(s_{t+1}) \parallel \mathcal{N}(\mu, \sigma^2/\omega_t)]$ .
- 13: Apply a gradient step on  $\phi_s, \theta_o$  using  $-\mathbb{E}_{Q(s_{t+1})}[\log P_{\theta_o}(o_{t+1}|s_{t+1})] + D_{KL}[Q_{\phi_s}(s_{t+1}) \parallel \mathcal{N}(\tilde{\mu}, \tilde{\sigma}^2/\omega_t)]$ .
- 14: **end for**

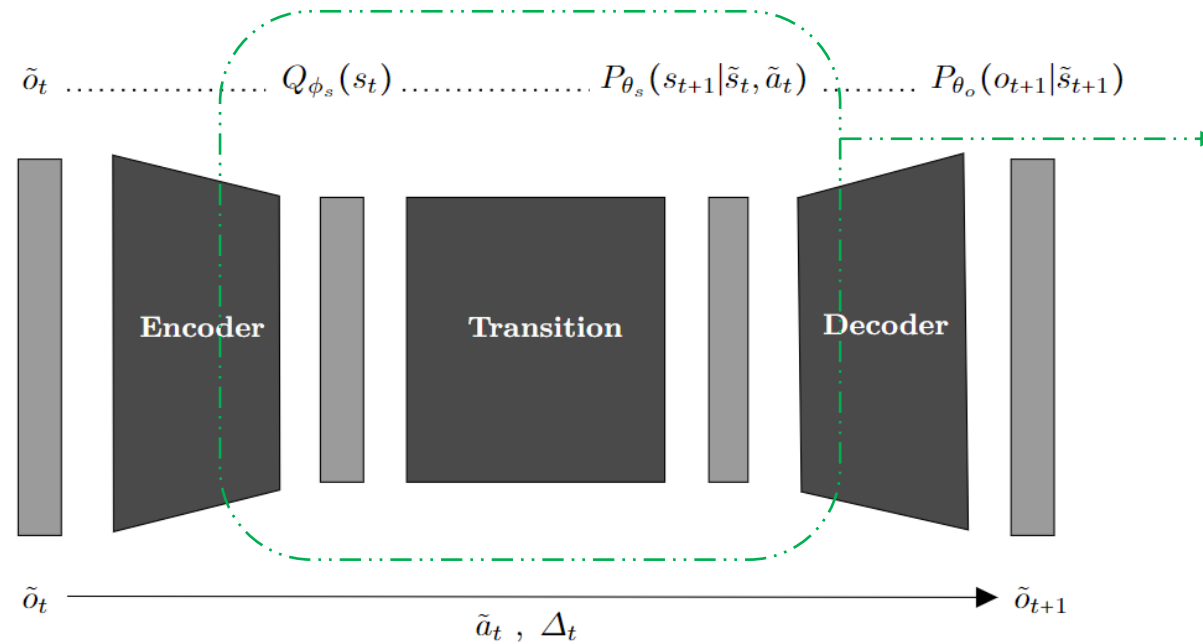
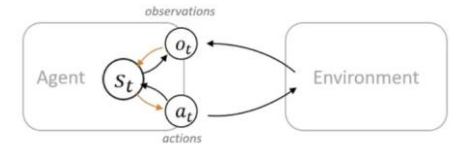
### Planning: Monte-Carlo Tree Search + Habit



# Active Inference: Core

The core of the formalism is the Generative Model.

Realization of this formalism is through Deep Learning: Generative Modeling and Inferences



State (i.e., representation) space of the model

Variational Auto Encoder



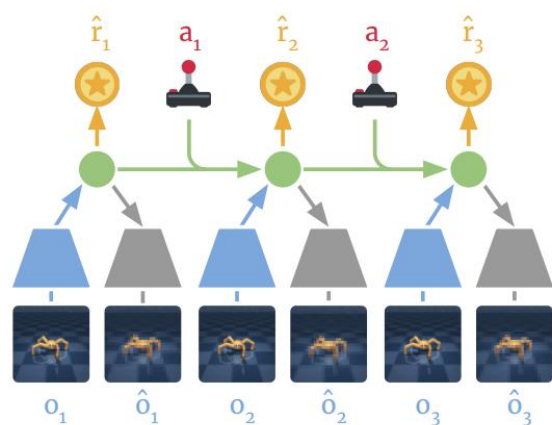
# World-Modelling and Model-Based RL

## Model-Based RL

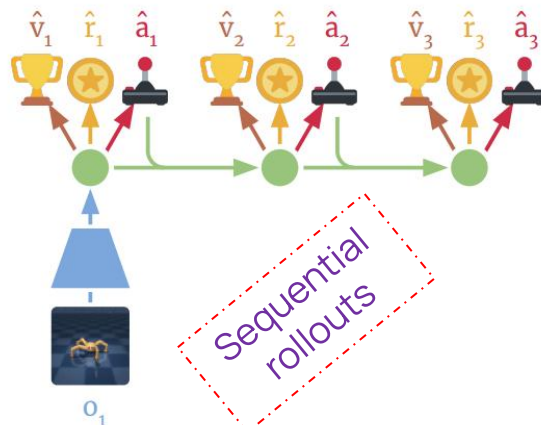
- Use a model for making decisions
- Engaging methods for policy improvement and planning

## World Models

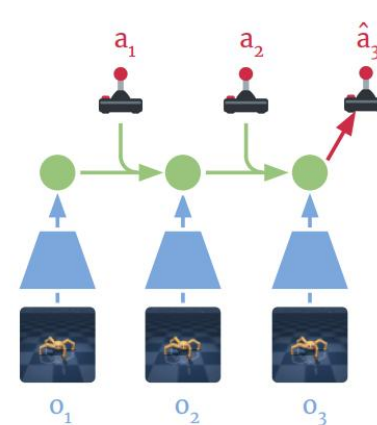
- Build an internal predictive/generative model of the world (often task agnostic)
- Focuses on modelling and representations, either latent or ambient
- Learning policy (or planning) in model imaginations (roll outs)



(a) Learn dynamics from experience



(b) Learn behavior in imagination



(c) Act in the environment

## General agents contain world models

Jonathan Richens<sup>1</sup> David Abel<sup>1</sup> Alexis Bellot<sup>1</sup> Tom Everitt<sup>1</sup>

### Abstract

Are world models a necessary ingredient for flexible, goal-directed behaviour, or is model-free learning sufficient? We provide a formal answer to this question, showing that any agent capable of generalizing to multi-step goal-directed tasks must have learned a predictive model of its environment. We show that this model can be extracted from the agent's policy, and that increasing the agents performance or the complexity of the goals it can achieve requires learning increasingly accurate world models. This has a number of consequences: from developing safe and general agents, to bounding agent capabilities in complex environments, and providing new algorithms for learning an agent's world model.

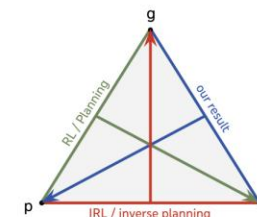


Figure 1: Our result complements previous insights from planning and inverse RL. While planning uses a world model and a goal to determine a policy, and IRL and inverse planning use an agent's policy and a world model to identify its goal, our result uses an agent's policy and its goal to identify a world model

$$\text{RSSM} \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{Sequence model:} \\ \text{Encoder:} \\ \text{Dynamics predictor:} \\ \text{Reward predictor:} \\ \text{Continue predictor:} \\ \text{Decoder:} \end{array} \right. \quad \begin{array}{l} h_t = f_\phi(h_{t-1}, z_{t-1}, a_{t-1}) \\ z_t \sim q_\phi(z_t | h_t, x_t) \\ \hat{z}_t \sim p_\phi(\hat{z}_t | h_t) \\ \hat{r}_t \sim p_\phi(\hat{r}_t | h_t, z_t) \\ \hat{c}_t \sim p_\phi(\hat{c}_t | h_t, z_t) \\ \hat{x}_t \sim p_\phi(\hat{x}_t | h_t, z_t) \end{array}$$

*Dreamer* learns policy with Actor-Critic in model imaginations [5]

# Motivation



## Promises of Deep Learning: Generative Models:

- *Bayesian and Probabilistic*
- *Representation Learning for both latent and ambient spaces*
- *Utilizes the observatory (cheap and raw) data*

## Promises of Active Inference (AIF):

- *Bayesian Framework: Integrates perception, learning, and action*
- *Model-Driven*
- *Adaptability*
- *Intrinsic Objectives: Exploration to resolve uncertainty*
- *End-to-End Action: Doesn't require high-quality reward signals*

## Promises of Word-Model RL Agents:

- *Planning via imagination*
- *Generalization & Sample-efficient*
- *Reduced reliance on rewards*

## Problem:

*AIF agents struggle in delayed and long-horizon environments due to reliance on:*

- *Immediate predictions.*
- *Exhaustive planning.*

Train a Policy within the Generative World-Model via Active Inference  
Conencting: DL, AIF, RL

# Overshooting Trick: Integrating Policy

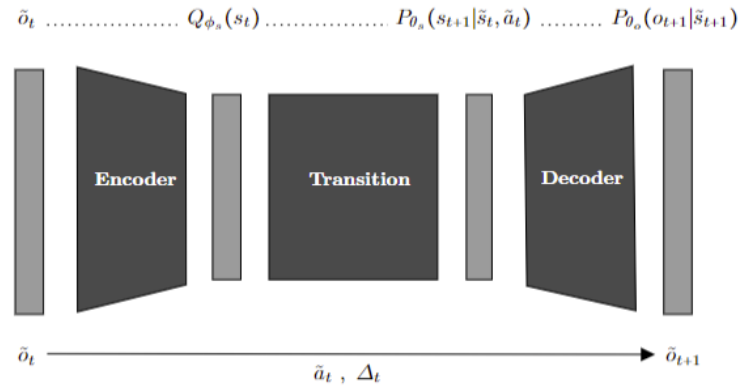


Figure 3: The agent's architecture and generative framework resemble that of a VAE. The line on top represents the agent simulating the future and making a prediction, while on the bottom, the agent receives a new observation after  $\Delta_t$  of taking an action,  $\tilde{a}_t$ .

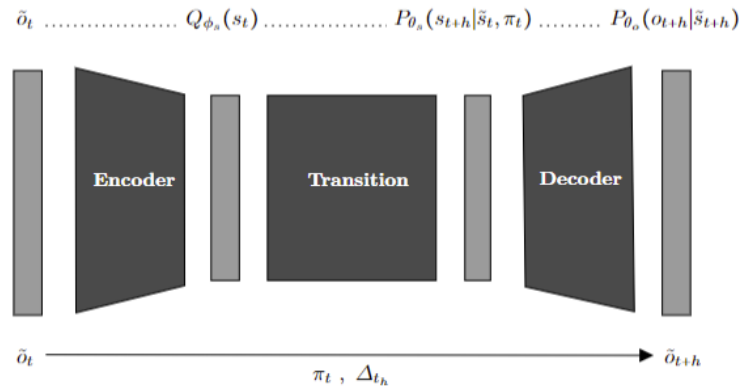
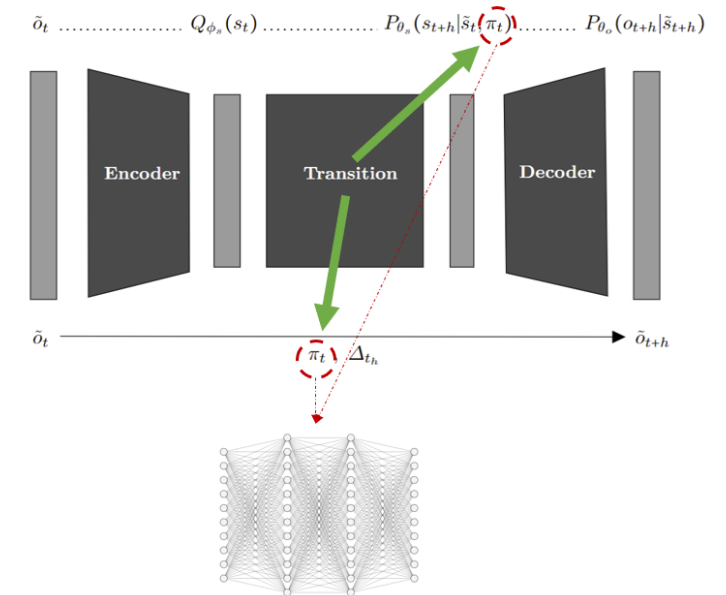


Figure 4: The agent's architecture and generative framework with an an impact/update/planning horizon,  $h$  (e.g., 100).



Selecting an impact/update/planning horizon:  $h$  (e.g., 300)



# Formalism: Deep Active Inference (DAIF)

Model Learning (Calibration): Variational Free Energy

$$\theta^* = \arg \min_{\theta} (\mathbb{E}_{Q_{\phi}(s_t, a_t)} [\log Q_{\phi}(s_t, a_t) - \log P_{\theta}(o_t, s_t, a_t)])$$

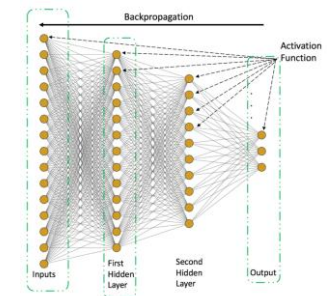
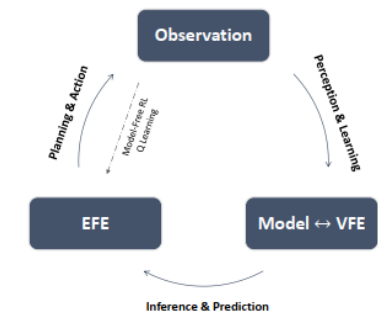
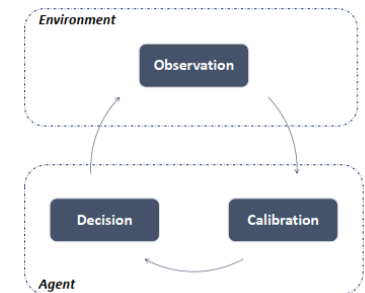
Decision (Planning & Action): Expected Free Energy

$$G(\pi, \tau) = \underbrace{-\mathbb{E}_{Q(\theta|\pi)Q(s_{\tau}|\theta, \pi)Q(o_{\tau}|s_{\tau}, \theta, \pi)} [\log P(o_{\tau}|\pi)]}_{1} + \underbrace{\mathbb{E}_{Q(\theta|\pi)} [\mathbb{E}_{Q(o_{\tau}|\theta, \pi)} H(s_{\tau}|o_{\tau}, \pi) - H(s_{\tau}|\pi)]}_{2} + \underbrace{\mathbb{E}_{Q(\theta|\pi)Q(s_{\tau}|\theta, \pi)} H(o_{\tau}|s_{\tau}, \theta, \pi) - \mathbb{E}_{Q(s_{\tau}|\pi)} H(o_{\tau}|s_{\tau}, \pi)}_{3}$$

1) Extrinsic Value 2) State Epistemic Uncertainty 3) Parameter Epistemic Uncertainty

## Policy Optimization via Gradients

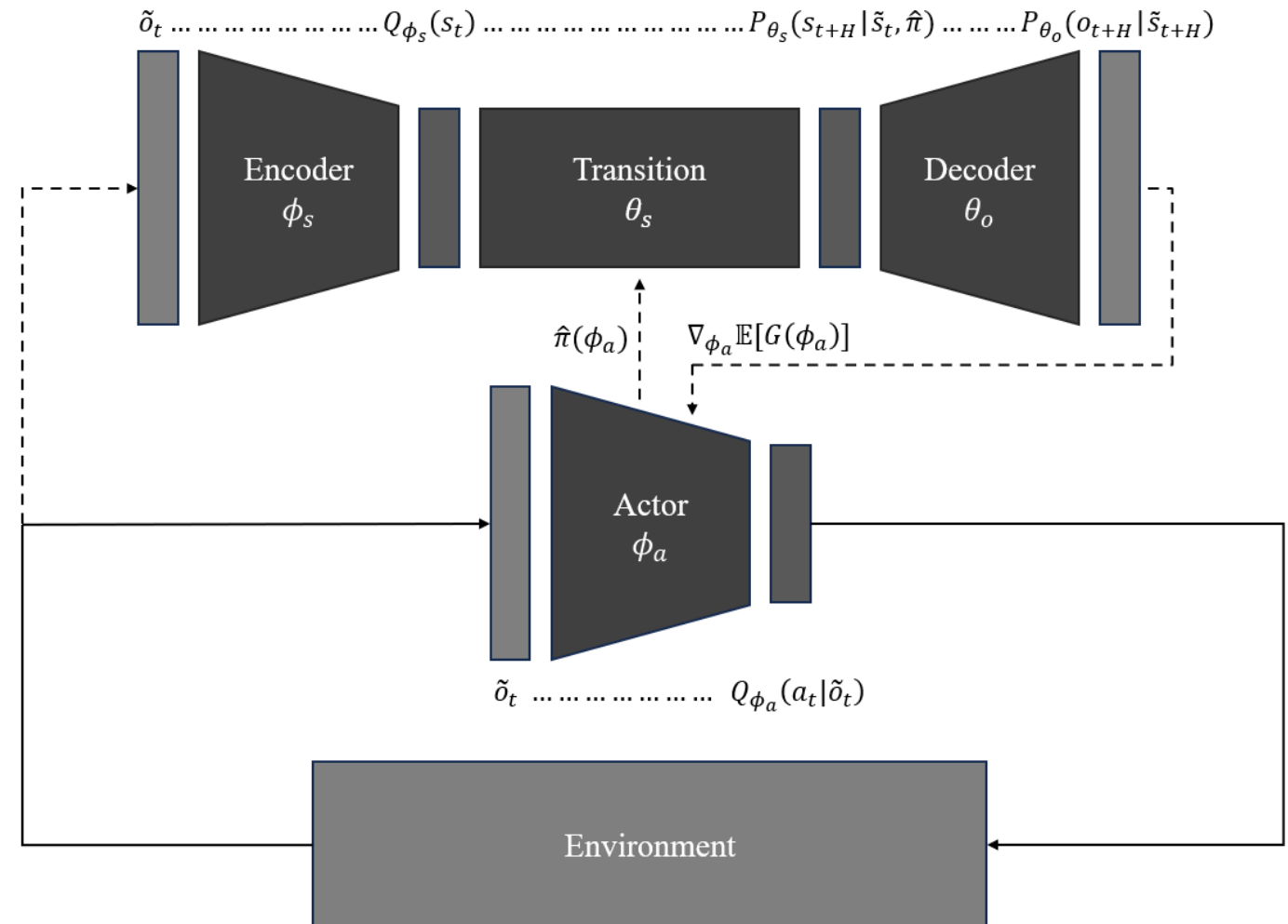
1. Integrate the encoded policy parameters  $\hat{\pi}(\phi_a)$  in the model and EFE:  $G_{\theta}(\tilde{o}, \phi_a)$
2. Take the gradient of EFE w.r.t parameters:  $\phi_a \leftarrow \phi_a - \alpha \nabla_{\phi_a} \mathbb{E}[G(\phi_a)]$



$$\Pi : \mathcal{Q}_{\phi_a} \rightarrow \hat{\pi}$$

# DAIF: Architecture

- Actor directly interact with the environment.
- Actor parameters are encoded and integrated into transition.
- Model predicts H steps into future in a single rollout.
- Gradient of policy parameters are taken via EFE of the prediction of the H steps into future.



# DAIF: Algorithm

- Actor directly interact with the environment.
- Actor parameters are encoded and integrated into transition.
- Model predicts H steps into future in a single rollout.
- Gradient of policy parameters are taken via EFE of the prediction of the H steps into future.

## Algorithm 1 Deep AIF Agent Training (per epoch)

```

1: Initialize  $\theta = \{\theta_s, \theta_o\}$ ,  $\phi = \{\phi_s, \phi_a\}$ ,  $\mathcal{M}$ 
2: Randomly initialize  $E$ 
3: for  $n = 1, 2, \dots, N$  do
    ▷ ENVIRONMENT INTERACTION
4:    $\hat{\pi}_t \leftarrow \Pi(\mathcal{Q}_{\phi_a})$ 
5:   for  $\tau = t + 1, t + 2, \dots, t + H$  do
6:     Sample a new observation  $\tilde{o}_\tau$  from  $E$ 
7:     Apply  $\tilde{a}_\tau \sim Q_{\phi_a}(a_\tau | \tilde{o}_\tau)$  to  $E$ 
8:     Sample a new observation  $\tilde{o}_{\tau+1}$  from  $E$ 
9:    $\mathcal{M} \leftarrow \mathcal{M} \cup \{(\tilde{o}_t, \hat{\pi}_t, \tilde{o}_{t+H})\}$ 
    ▷ MODEL LEARNING
10:   $\{(\tilde{o}_{t'}, \hat{\pi}_{t'}, \tilde{o}_{t'+H})\}^{B_1} \sim \mathcal{M}$ 
11:  for  $t' = 1, 2, \dots, B_1$  do
12:    run Model( $\tilde{o}_{t'}, \hat{\pi}_{t'}, \tilde{o}_{t'+H}$ )
13:     $\mathcal{L}_s \leftarrow \mathcal{L}_s + D_{\text{KL}}[Q_{\phi_s}(s_{t'+H}) || \mathcal{N}(\mu, \sigma^2)]$ 
14:     $\mathcal{L}_o \leftarrow \mathcal{L}_o - \mathbb{E}_{Q(s_{t'+H})} [\log P_{\theta_o}(o_{t'+H} | \tilde{s}_{t'+H})]$ 
15:     $\mathcal{L}_o \leftarrow \mathcal{L}_o + \beta * D_{\text{KL}}[Q_{\phi_s}(s_{t'+H}) || \mathcal{N}(\tilde{\mu}, \tilde{\sigma}^2)]$ 
16:   $\theta_s \leftarrow \theta_s - \xi \nabla_{\theta_s} \mathbb{E}[\mathcal{L}_s(\theta_s)]$ 
17:   $\phi_s \leftarrow \phi_s - \gamma \nabla_{\phi_s} \mathbb{E}[\mathcal{L}_s(\phi_s)]$ 
18:   $\theta_o \leftarrow \theta_o - \eta \nabla_{\theta_o} \mathbb{E}[\mathcal{L}_o(\theta_o)]$ 
    ▷ POLICY OPTIMIZATION
19:   $\{\tilde{o}_\tau\}^{B_2} \sim \mathcal{M}$ 
20:  for  $\tau = 1, 2, \dots, B_2$  do
21:    Compute  $Q_{\phi_s}(s_\tau)$  using  $\tilde{o}_\tau$ 
22:    Sample  $\tilde{s}_\tau \sim Q_{\phi_s}(s_\tau)$ 
23:    for  $s = 1, 2, \dots, S_1$  do
24:      Compute  $\mu, \sigma \leftarrow P_{\theta_s}(s_{\tau+H} | \tilde{s}_\tau, \hat{\pi}_t)$ 
25:      Sample  $\tilde{s}_{\tau+H} \sim \mathcal{N}(\mu, \sigma^2)$ 
26:      Compute  $P_{\theta_o}(o_{\tau+H} | \tilde{s}_{\tau+H})$ 
27:      Compute  $Q_{\phi_s}(\tilde{s}_{\tau+H})$  using  $\tilde{o}_{\tau+H}$ 
28:      Compute  $\mu', \sigma' \leftarrow Q_{\phi_s}(\tilde{s}_{\tau+H})$ 
29:       $G \leftarrow G - \log \Psi[P_{\theta_o}(o_{\tau+H} | \tilde{s}_{\tau+H})]$ 
30:       $G \leftarrow G + [H(\mu', \sigma') - H(\mu, \sigma)]$ 
31:      for  $s = 1, 2, \dots, S_2$  do
32:        Sample  $\tilde{s}_{\tau+H} \sim P_{\theta_s}(s_{\tau+H} | \tilde{s}_\tau, \hat{\pi}_\tau) \triangleright \text{Re-computed with dropout.}$ 
33:        Compute  $\mu'', \sigma'' \leftarrow P_{\theta_o}(o_{\tau+H} | \tilde{s}_{\tau+H})$ 
34:        Sample  $\tilde{s}_{\tau+H} \sim \mathcal{N}(\mu, \sigma^2)$ 
35:        Compute  $\mu''', \sigma''' \leftarrow P_{\theta_o}(o_{\tau+H} | \tilde{s}_{\tau+H})$ 
36:         $G \leftarrow G + [H(\mu'', \sigma'') - H(\mu''', \sigma''')]$ 
37:   $\phi_a \leftarrow \phi_a - \alpha \nabla_{\phi_a} \mathbb{E}[G(\phi_a)]$ 

```

### Agent components:

Model:  
 Encoder  $Q_{\phi_s}$ .  
 Transition  $P_{\theta_s}$ .  
 Decoder  $P_{\theta_o}$ .  
 Actor  $Q_{\phi_a}$ .  
 Actor mapping  $\Pi$ .  
 Preference mapping  $\Psi$ .

### Other components:

Environment  $E$ .  
 Experience Memory  $\mathcal{M}$ .

### Hyperparameters:

Iterations  $N$ .  
 Beta  $\beta$ .  
 Horizon  $H$ .  
 Batch size  $B_1, B_2$ .  
 Sample size  $S_1, S_2$ .  
 Learning rate  $\xi, \gamma, \eta, \alpha$ .

### Run Model( $\tilde{o}_i, \hat{\pi}, \tilde{o}_{i+H}$ ):

Compute  $Q_{\phi_s}(s_i)$  using  $\tilde{o}_i$   
 Sample  $\tilde{s}_i \sim Q_{\phi_s}(s_i)$   
 Compute  $\mu, \sigma \leftarrow P_{\theta_s}(s_{i+H} | \tilde{s}_i, \hat{\pi})$   
 Compute  $Q_{\phi_s}(\tilde{s}_{i+H})$  using  $\tilde{o}_{i+H}$   
 Compute  $\mu', \sigma' \leftarrow Q_{\phi_s}(\tilde{s}_{i+H})$   
 Sample  $\tilde{s}_{i+H} \sim \mathcal{N}(\mu, \sigma^2)$   
 Compute  $P_{\theta_o}(o_{i+H} | \tilde{s}_{i+H})$



# Benchmark: AIF vs Realistic Industrial Environment

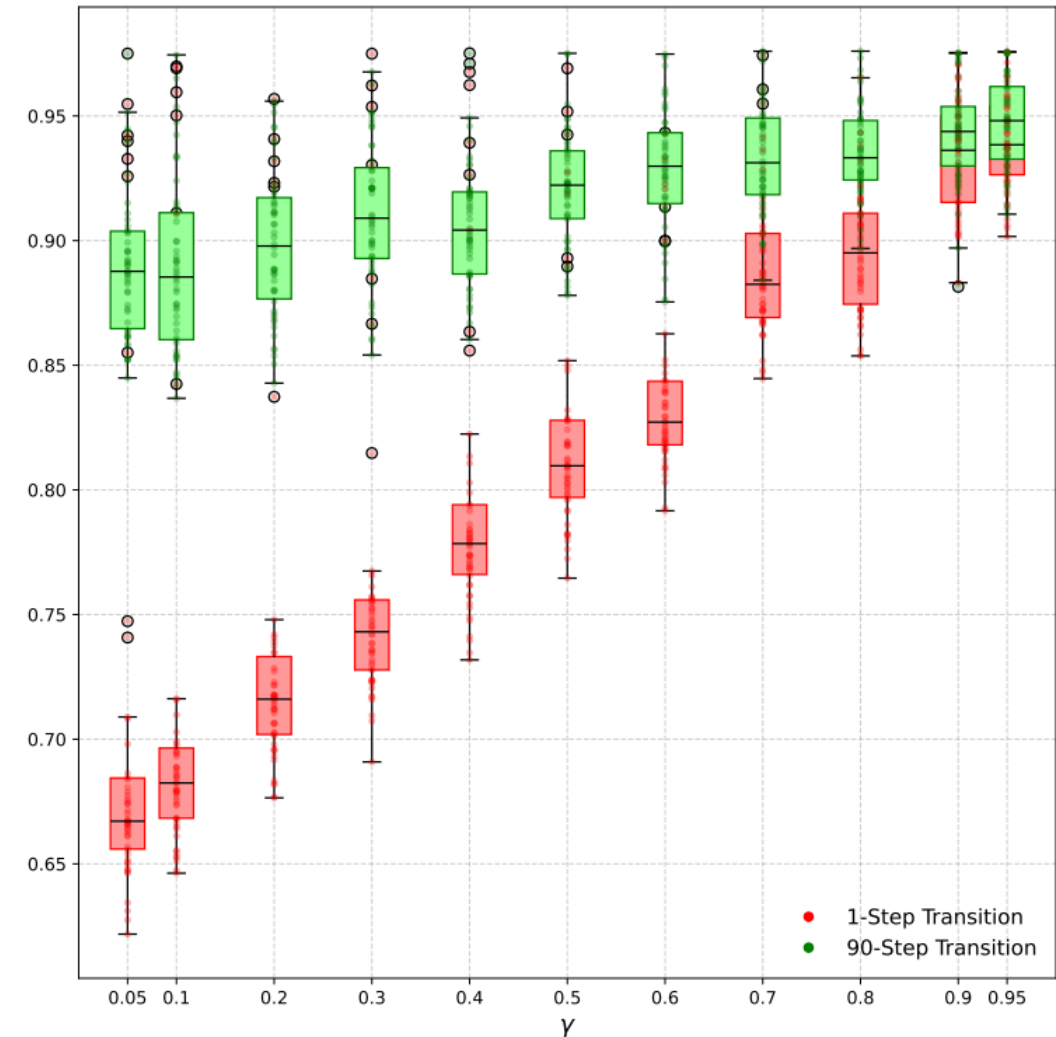
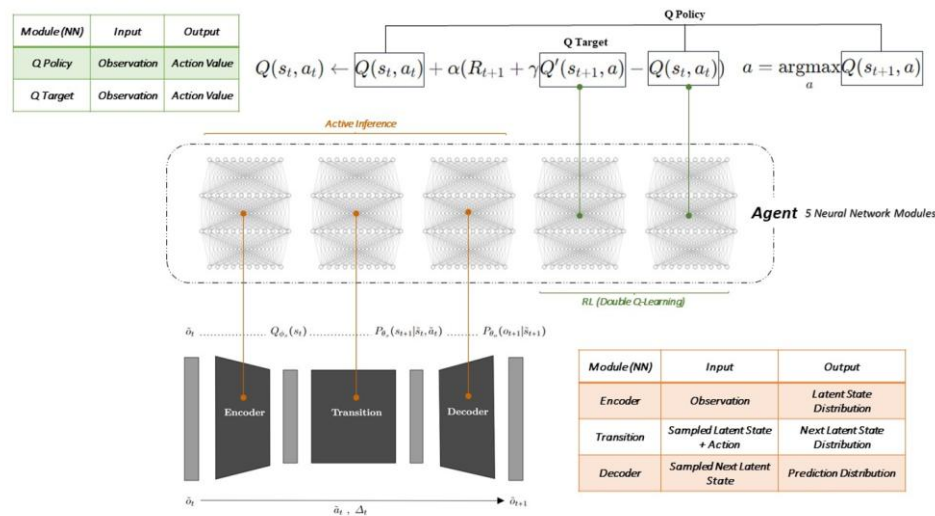
## Application

Energy-Efficient Control of simulated workstations within automotive manufacturing system composed of parallel, identical machines.

## Challenges

Stochastic - Delayed - Long-horizon - Multi-Modal Observation

Requires extensive planning with horizon of one-shift (~ 3000 actions).



Active Inference

Reinforcement Learning

# Results: DAIF vs Realistic Industrial Environment

## Application

Energy-Efficient Control of simulated workstations within automotive manufacturing system composed of parallel, identical machines.

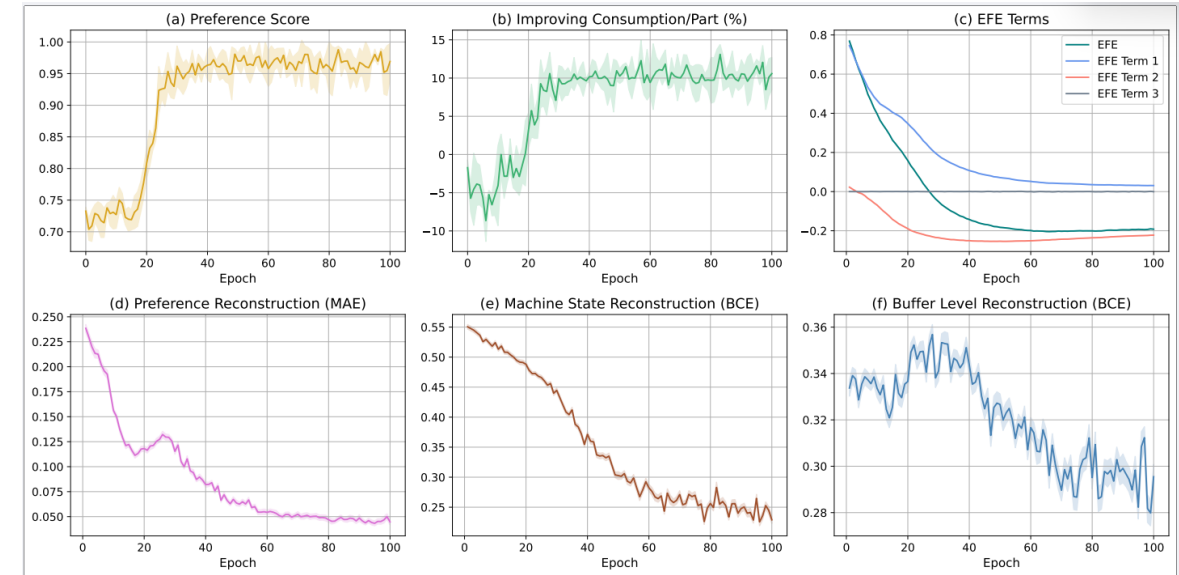
## Challenges

Stochastic - Delayed - Long-horizon - Multi-Modal Observation

Requires extensive planning with horizon of one-shift ( $\sim 3000$  actions).

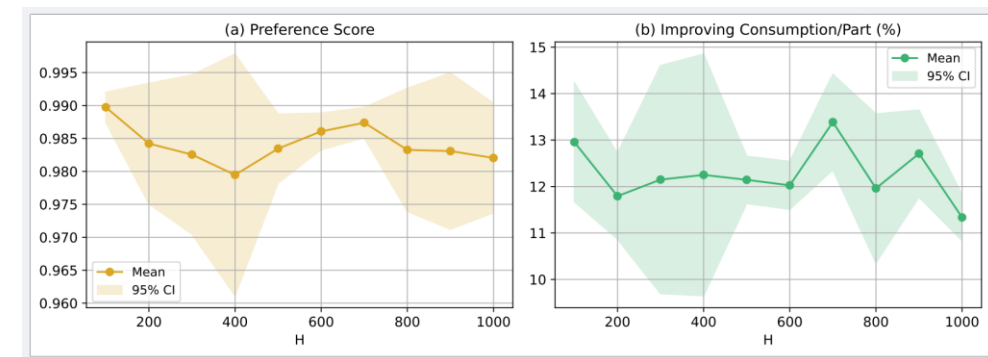
## Improving Energy-Efficiency:

Controlling the number of active machines to minimize idle time with negligible production loss.



Agent( $\phi$ )	Production Loss [%]	EN Saving [%]
DQN (0.93)	$4.82 \pm 0.34$	$10.87 \pm 0.76$
DQN (0.94)	$3.34 \pm 0.23$	$9.92 \pm 0.69$
<b>DAIF</b>	<b><math>2.59 \pm 0.16</math></b>	<b><math>12.49 \pm 0.04</math></b>
DQN (0.95)	$1.27 \pm 0.05$	$7.00 \pm 0.07$
DQN (0.96)	$1.27 \pm 0.09$	$7.62 \pm 0.12$
DQN (0.97)	$1.20 \pm 0.05$	$7.72 \pm 0.10$
DQN (0.98)	$0.54 \pm 0.04$	$2.72 \pm 0.19$
DQN (0.99)	$0.40 \pm 0.03$	$2.46 \pm 0.01$

Production loss versus energy-saving (EN) across reward parameters  $\phi$  of DQN agents (best model-free RL) against the DAIF agent.



Performance of the agents versus overshooting horizon  $H$ .

# DAIF: Promises

Derived from a Bayesian-grounded framework (heuristic-free)

Natively scalable to both discrete and continuous action spaces

A unified explore-exploit gradient

Effective encoding of long-horizon dynamics

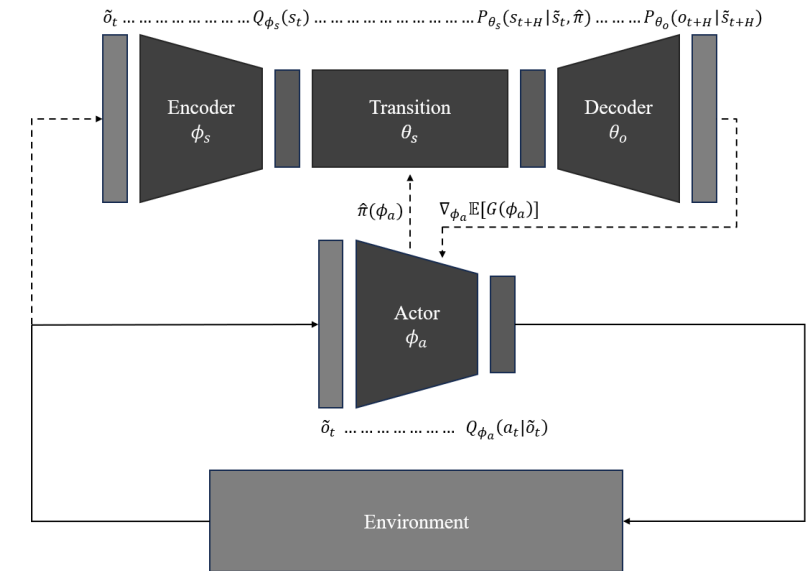
Capturing distinct forms of epistemic uncertainty, providing an intrinsic drive for model refinement

Reliance on observations (cheap, raw data), instead of often expensive, engineered reward signals

A degree of interpretability

Inherent adaptability in non-stationary settings via AIF

Minimal computational cost during both inference (model-free) and planning (EFE calculated in a single H-step forward pass)





# DAIF: Potential

Scope: Data-Driven Decision Making or Optimization:

Sequential decision making under uncertainty (POMDP)

- Control / Planning / Search
- Reasoning / Inference / Search
- Generation / Synthesis

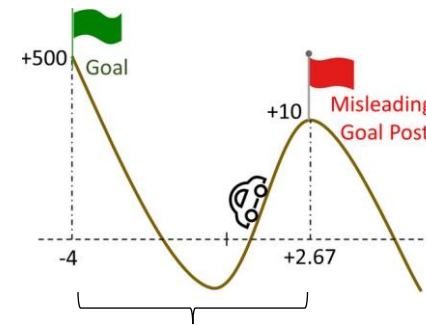
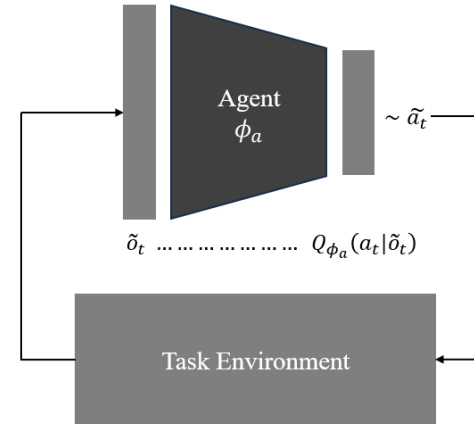
Domains:

- Robotics
- Production Control
- Healthcare
- Drug Discovery / Protein Design
- ...

Settings:

Delayed and Long-Horizon Environments

- Stochastic & Partial Observability
- Delayed/Sparse/Expensive Reward (i.e., Scarce high-quality data)
- Long Horizon



# Future Work

DAIF is a concept: Generative world model with multi-step latent transitions + differentiable policy; backpropagates EFE through long horizons without tree search; scales to all spaces while keeping the explore–exploit balance.

## Next steps

Generative Model (DL): Try diffusion/flow-matching world models instead of VAE.

Sample efficiency (DL): Still needs experience collection every  $H$  steps; aim to reduce data needs.

Sequence aggregation: Replace slow recurrent unrolling with set-based pooling of  $H$  embeddings (with simple positional encodings) or operator-learning for resolution-invariant aggregation.

Optimization (RL): Explore actor–critic training and add regularization to stabilize/variance-reduce EFE gradients.

EFE Methods (AIF): Improving distinct term estimations (e.g., sampling).

Adaptation (AIF): Focus on rapid learning in non-stationary environments.

Expanding Experimental: In addition to more domains, looking a range of settings.

Reasoning Model: Exploring potential for reasoning tasks.

Big picture: Bridges generative world-modelling with active inference and RL—compact, end-to-end probabilistic agents

# References

Yeganeh, Yavar Taheri, Mohsen Jafari, and Andrea Matta. "Deep Active Inference Agents for Delayed and Long-Horizon Environments." *arXiv preprint arXiv:2505.19867* (2025).



*Paper*



*Code*

- [1] Chakraborty, Souradip, et al. "Dealing with sparse rewards in continuous control robotics via heavy-tailed policies." *arXiv preprint arXiv:2206.05652* (2022).
- [2] Lanillos, P., Meo, C., Pezzato, C., Meera, A. A., Baïoumy, M., Ohata, W., ... & Tani, J. (2021). Active inference in robotics and artificial agents: Survey and challenges. *arXiv preprint arXiv:2112.01871*.
- [3] Huang, Y., Li, Y., Matta, A., & Jafari, M. (2024). Navigating Autonomous Vehicle on Unmarked Roads with Diffusion-Based Motion Prediction and Active Inference. *arXiv preprint arXiv:2406.00211*.
- [4] Fountas, Z., Sajid, N., Mediano, P., & Friston, K. (2020). Deep active inference agents using Monte-Carlo methods. *Advances in neural information processing systems*, 33, 11662-11675.
- [5] Hafner, D., Pasukonis, J., Ba, J., & Lillicrap, T. (2023). Mastering diverse domains through world models. *arXiv preprint arXiv:2301.04104*.