1e | Summary of History, Methods, and Paradigms

In summary, we began this module by noting how cognition plays a significant role in all aspects of our daily lives and noting how it underlies most of our behaviour and social interactions.

We then discussed the major influences of the study of cognition. Here, we began this section by talking about one popular dichotomy that continues to be hotly debated today. That is **empiricism**, the emphasis on experience and learning and **nativism**, the emphasis on what is innate.

We then covered five major schools of thought that served as precursors to cognitive psychology as a science and helped frame cognitive questions. We started of this section talking about **structuralism**, which seeks to discover the principles that explain our conscious experience and identify the simplest essential units of the mind. We then talked about **functionalism**, which aim is to understand the function of the mind—the ways in which mental functions let individuals adapt to their environment. We then talked about b**ehaviorism**, whose aim is the scientific study of behaviour, an observable consequence of psychological experience. We then talked about **Gestalt** psychology, which holds that psychological phenomena cannot be reduced to simple elements, but must be analyzed and studied in their entirety. And then we finished off this section talking about **individual differences**, the idea that individuals differ, even as adults, in their cognitive capacities and abilities.

We then talked about how the "Cognitive Revolution" grew out of (i) human factors engineering, (ii) a dissatisfaction of behaviorist accounts of language, (iii) neuropsychological work looking at localization of function, and finally (iv) the computer metaphor of the mind.

We then finished this module by covering four major approaches or paradigms to the modern study of cognitive phenomena. Here we talked about the **information processing framework** which emphasizes stage-like serial processing. We then moved on to talking about the **connectionist framework** which claims that the cognitive machinery or apparatus underlying cognition is based on a network of connections among simple, and usually numerous, processing units. We then talked about the **evolutionary approach** that talks about how a cognitive process has been shaped by pressures over generations. And then we ended by talking about the **ecological approach** which stresses the ways in which the environment and the context shape the way cognitive processing occurs.