

# Learning from the existence of models. On psychic machines, tortoises, and computer simulations

Schlimm, Dirk (2008) Learning from the existence of models. On psychic machines, tortoises, and computer simulations. In *[2006] Models and Simulations (Paris, 2006)*.

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## Abstract

Using four examples of models and computer simulations from the history of psychology, I discuss some of the methodological aspects involved in their construction and use, and I illustrate how the existence of a model can demonstrate the viability of a hypothesis that had previously been deemed impossible on a priori grounds. This shows a new way in which scientists can learn from models that extends the analysis of Morgan (1999), who has identified the construction and manipulation of models as those phases in which learning from models takes place.

**Keywords:** cognitive psychology, computer simulations, learning, models, history of psychology, scientific practice

**Subjects:** [General Issues: Models and Idealization](#)

**Conferences and Volumes:** [\[2006\] Models and Simulations \(Paris, 2006\)](#)

**ID Code:** 3898

**Deposited By:** [Schlimm, Dirk](#)

**Deposited On:** 18 February 2008