

Social Learning Theory

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Learning Goals

- › Explain how observational learning influences behavior
- › Describe the four elements necessary for observational learning to occur
- › Explain the three types of reinforcement according to social learning theory

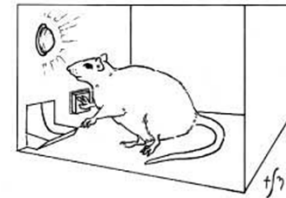
Shamini, 11 months, notices his great-grandfather snoring with an open mouth. Shamini makes a face with his jaws open wide but mouth pulled down to form a small *o* in imitation of the great-grandfather. The rest of the family finds this hilariously funny. Shamini responds directly to the laughing of the family, and repeats the face with great amusement several times.

Reddy, 1991, as cited in Miller, 2002



Social Learning Theory

- › **Declaration of Behaviorism:** The goal of psychology should be to predict and control overt behavior (Watson, 1913)
- › **Law of effect:** Responses followed by positive outcomes are repeated while those followed by negative outcomes are not
- › **Operant Conditioning:** People learn to behave in ways that result in reinforcement



Social Learning Theory

- ▶ **Observational Learning:** People learn by observing others' behavior and the outcomes of their behavior
- ▶ **Socialization:** Process by which society teaches children to behave like the ideal adults of the society
 - One of the most powerful socialization forces is observational learning
 - Children learn to behave like others in their culture because observed behaviors will likely be reinforced

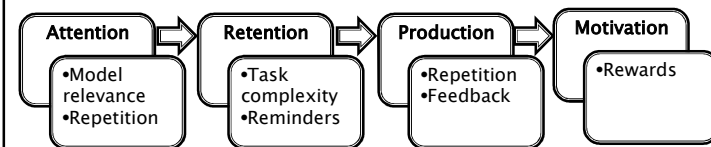
Social Learning vs. Behaviorism

- | <u>Behaviorism</u> | <u>Social Learning</u> |
|---|--|
| ▶ Learning occurs via reinforcement | ▶ Learning is affected by social influences |
| ▶ Learned behaviors must be demonstrated | ▶ Learning can also include acquired knowledge |
| ▶ Behaviors must be personally reinforced to be learned | ▶ People can learn through the reinforcement of others |

Observational Learning

- ▶ Four elements must be met to learn a behavior through observational learning:
 1. Pay attention to the model
 2. Retain information about the behavior
 3. Produce the behavior
 4. Be motivated to repeat the behavior

Observational Learning Process



Observational Learning

- ▶ Observing a model can lead to behavior change by:
 - Teaching new behaviors
 - Refining already-learned behaviors
 - Encouraging previously forbidden behaviors
 - Drawing attention to particular tools
 - Increasing emotional arousal

Observational Learning

- ▶ Applications of Observational Learning
 - Aggression
 - Peer relationships
 - Prosocial behavior
 - Influences of television and other media

Social Learning

- ▶ Types of reinforcement
 - **Direct:** Environment reinforces you
 - **Vicarious:** You observe the environment reinforcing another person
 - **Self:** You reinforce yourself

Observational Learning

- ▶ Observational learning is most common among novices
- ▶ People tend to learn more effectively from models who are:
 - Strong
 - Nurturing
 - Similar
 - Race
 - Gender
 - Personal characteristics

Social Learning in Education

- *When you follow in the path of your father, you learn to walk like him.*
- Educators and parents must model appropriate behaviors and avoid modeling inappropriate behaviors
- Consequences for inappropriate behaviors are important not only for the misbehaving student
- Describing the consequences of behavior can effectively increase appropriate behaviors and decrease inappropriate ones