

## 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

## 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

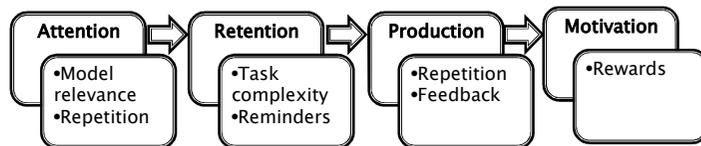
## Social Learning vs. Behaviorism

- | <u>Behaviorism</u>   | <u>Social Learning</u>  |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Learning occurs via reinforcement</li><li>▶ Learned behaviors must be demonstrated</li><li>▶ Behaviors must be personally reinforced to be learned</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Learning is affected by social influences</li><li>▶ Learning can also include acquired knowledge</li><li>▶ People can learn through the reinforcement of others</li></ul> |

## 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

- ▶ Domains of research in observational learning
  - Aggression
  - Gender development
  - 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