

List and describe
forms of learning:
classical, operant, obs
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cognitiv...



The paper "Classical, Operant, Observational, and Cognitive Forms of Learning" is a delightful example of a term paper on psychology. Ivan Pavlov's discovery of Classical Conditioning by accident has paved the way for many experiments and theoretic formulation related to learning. The association of reflexes to paired stimuli can have far-reaching effects. Learning is a process in which there is an enduring change in behaviors as a result of previous experience. Though learning occurs in the subconscious level without any deliberate effort, the situations that lead to learning is often related to repeated circumstances that facilitate new learning behavioral patterns. Classical Conditioning involves conditioned stimuli (CS) and responses (CR) which are associated with initial unconditioned stimuli (US) and responses (UR). In his experiment with dogs, Pavlov brought in the conditioned stimuli of a bell just before the unconditioned stimuli of bringing food, and the dogs started to respond to the bell by drooling after repeated associations. Likewise, the earlier learning experiences of students can often be associated with conditioned stimuli, like the learning hours demarcated with the sound of bells, and the experiences made memorable with the use of colors, sounds and smells. One needs to use prolonged associative conditioning to facilitate learning, and use methods that leads to the extinction of conditioned responses when there is a need for moving on to new conditioned stimuli and responses.

B. F. Skinner developed Operant Conditioning based on the consequences of conditioned stimuli and responses which Edward Thorndike emphasized in his research. Contrary to the passive, triggered response in classical conditioning, emitted, active behavior I given significance in operant conditioning. To necessitate this, a consequence, either positive or negative, <https://assignbuster.com/list-and-describe-forms-of-learning-classicaloperantobservationaland-cognitiveinsight-or-latent/>

is to be associated with the conditioned responses. To make the response patterns stronger, there are positive or negative reinforcements used. For instance, a desirable learning pattern is positively reinforced with food, freedom or some other pleasant consequence. In the case of students who exhibit positive responses, reinforcements can be in the form of rewards like good grades, praise in front of the peers or some gifts. Negative reinforcement involves the withdrawal of unpleasant consequences in the learning environment so as to reinforce the learning pattern. The avoidance of unpleasant associations like bad lighting and loud noises in the learning environment can be used as negative reinforcement for students who had difficulty to respond to conditioned stimuli in such conditions. There could be primary and secondary reinforcers that assist students through their responses. In operant conditioning, extreme care has to be taken to avoid unnecessary responses by removing every chance for that. The conditioning should be strictly monitored so as to avoid mistakes. Apart from reinforcements, there could also be effective punishments that discourage and stop undesirable responses. However punishment has to be swift, sufficient and continuous. Likewise, reinforcements have to be wisely patterned to bring out the best results.

Observational Learning or Modeling involves learning by observing the behavior of others and the consequences of that behavior. The learning process takes place by imitating others. Children learn the basic skills of life quite often through this method. Parents or other adults who appeal to children in some way or the other command them to imitate their behavior.

But learning takes place only when there is sufficient motivation. Younger people imitating elders are often attracted to the idea of pleasure associated

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with the specific behavioral patterns. The outcome may not always be a desirable one, especially when they get wrong messages regarding speeding cars or the use of drugs and alcohol, either in real life or through representations in the media. Desirable learning experiences occur when a student reaches the level where s/he is able to make an informed decision. This can lead them to specific learning experiences and even future career decisions.

Cognitive learning defines the active mental process involved in learning experiences. Quite contrary to the concepts of conditioning and possible responses or of learning through mere observation, cognitive learning involves the abstract aspects of learning. Anything which is impossible to observe and measure directly is learned through cognition, which is usually associated with the higher levels of learning. Edward Tolman emphasized on the cognitive aspect of learning and reiterated that learning is not always something that can be shown, it is latent. Gestalt theorist Koehler and Harry Harlow conducted experiments that proved the ability of animals to use their insight to solve the problems that were assigned to them. These experiments differed from those which provided restricted stimuli and responses and made use the instinctual elements that are latent in the animals. While students solve some the challenges in their learning process with the help of previous experience, there are instances where they could use their instincts to solve them as well. By positioning challenges where the emotional and intellectual propensities of the students are put to test, the natural responses may not be based on their previous experiences. They imbibe moral values like compassion and non-violence, and in some cases the

opposites of them through instinct, even in cases where they are not instructed specifically on these areas.