

Principles, theories, and practice of learning

Education



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Principles, theories, and practice of learning Undoubtedly, learning is a relatively permanent change in behavior. The process is as a result of practice, training, or experience. For behavior change to occur, the learner must be in a position to express the impact of learning when confronted with a condition that necessitates the expression of the acquired knowledge.

Learning must confer a change in behavior whether good or not. The changes gained through practice, training, or experience must be relatively permanent, and the change must be reinforced to provide an efficient environment. This paper discusses the principles, theories, and practice of learning. It takes a particular discussion of classical conditioning, operant conditioning, cognitive theory, social learning, and their implication in the process of learning.

Classical conditioning bases on the effectiveness of a physical event in triggering a behavior change. Pavlov first used the theory in the classical dogs, and the result showed its practicality. In classical learning, a stimulus is applied to arouse a reaction that when expressed for a longer time becomes a behavior (Council for exceptional children, 2005). However, this theory is limited to the reflexive behaviors. Classical theory postulates that when the trigger stimulus is withdrawn, learning ceases. In the learning environment, constant punishing of students for incomplete assignments molds their behaviors to relate the punishment with incomplete homework. Subsequently, the students customize the stimulus in the behavior hence learning is imparted. Learning, in this case, becomes evident in daily completion of assignments by formerly lazy students.

Operant conditioning theory expresses the behavior as a function of its consequences. In essence, an action that produces positive consequences is <https://assignbuster.com/principles-theories-and-practice-of-learning/>

easily repeated over a longer time. On the other hand, behaviors that yield negative consequences are shunned. Skinner demonstrated the application of the operant conditioning theory using rats in a box. In this case demonstration, whenever the rats pressed on a small bar in the box, food would come out. This positive feedback resulted in a constant pressing of the bar by the rats hence behavior change. This theory exonerates voluntary behaviors as a manifestation of learning (Council for Exceptional Children, 2005). The practicality of operant conditioning can be enhanced in a classroom environment through rewarding of exemplary performances. Awarding prizes to learners with different skills and abilities inclines them to uphold such behaviors. Award of prizes boosts the morale of the learners and compels them to exploit all avenues for good performance.

Cognitive learning theory assumes that everyone is conscious of his or her actions and behavior. It asserts that learning is achieved through pre-coded relationship between the stimuli and response. It assumes that the expression of knowledge is only manifest when the conditions leading to it are prevalent. In essence, cognition posits that expansion of knowledge is inherent; nonetheless, it is manifested depending on the situation at hand (Council for Exceptional Children, 2005, 41). The application of cognitive learning can be achieved in contemporary education by subjecting learners to varied assessments. Through the exposure of learners to the tests; they get the opportunity to exercise the already coded knowledge.

Social learning theory uses humans as agents of learning. Essentially, learning through the social learning theory is attained through emulating the behavior of actors in the environment. For instance, in a class with differential learners, fast learners can be effectively used to aid the learning

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of the third and fifth-grade students just by encouraging the emulation of character. In conclusion, the theories of learning do not operate in isolation. Each approach reinforces the other to express their implications in learning.

References

Council for Exceptional Children (2005). *Universal design for learning: a guide for teachers and education professionals*. Upper Saddle River, N. J., Pearson/Merrill Prentice Hall.