

Application of observational learning



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Go to www.funderstanding.com. This web site has about learning in both company and school (k-12) environments. Click on the “ About Learning” icon. Click on the “ How Learning Should be Designed” hyperlink. Several learning theories are listed. A definition and basic elements of each theory are provided. Choose any one of the learning theories shown. Be prepared in class to define the theory, describe its elements, and discuss how it could be used in the design of a training program. Introduction: Higher animals especially humans learn through observing and imitating others. Monkey reared in captivity with wild parents.

Neuroscientists have discovered (mirror)neurons in the brain of animals and humans that activate during learning. Learning theory: Learning theories make general statements about how people learn (at least for a given class of learning types). Therefore learning theories are mostly descriptive. In order to learn a concept in a useful way it must be learned in the culture in which it has been developed and is used. Activity and perception are prior to conceptualization. The teaching and learning situation is characterized as cognitive apprenticeship. From that follows that the activity of learning must take place in an authentic situation.

Learning theories also can be prescriptive (tell how people should learn), but prescription is rather the role of pedagogical theory. D.Schneider believes that it is mostly a bad idea to blend learning and teaching theory. E. g. If one believes that knowledge is constructed one does not necessarily have to adopt a “ constructivist” instructional design model. Different teaching strategies may have to combine. In any case, learning theories play explicitly or implicitly a major role in instructional design models and the educational

technology field. Conversely, we may argue that no instructional model and no technology is “innocent”.

They all view learning in certain way, i. e. from a very practical point of view they put constraints on what kinds of learning they support. Major schools of thought: In the literature related to education (in particular in educational technology, it is not always easy to separate learning theory from educational theory. Most introductory texts distinguish between three large families of thought. 1. Behaviorism is interested in looking at behavior and observable changes. Therefore behaviorism in instruction focuses on generating new behavior patterns. 2. Cognitivism is interested in looking at the thought processes behind the behavior.

Therefore cognitivist learning theory stresses acquisition of (including reorganization) of cognitive structures. 3. Constructivism claims that knowledge is constructed through the interplay of existing knowledge and individual (or social) experience. There are several variants, e. g. The difference between behaviorist views and cognitivist views is that Cognitivism makes explicit assumptions on how we store and manipulate information and that education should be concerned by analyzing and influencing thought processes.

The difference between Cognitivism and constructivism is that cognitivist like behaviorists are “objectivists”, knowledge and tasks to be learned can be identified and performance can be measured. Constructivists, on the other hand believe that both learning and teaching is a more open-ended process. History: Learning theory and instructional design: this section needs much

more work DSchneider argues that many components (or rather sub-theories) of learning theory are relevant:

- * One can not truly understand various instructional design models without understand its underlying assumptions on learning. Insights about types of learning and levels of learning leads to different views of what learning is and to adapt pedagogic strategy accordingly.

- * Studies on metacognition (reflection) and learning strategy allow to design better computer-enhanced pedagogical scenarios and associated technology, e. g. cognitive tools.

- * Insights on human information processing, cognitive load etc. lead to design recommendations, in particular for learning materials.

- * Insights about motivation will help to produce designs that improve student involvement.

In the 1930s, social learning theory was born at the Yale Institute of Human Relations under the direction of Mark May with the intellectual leadership of Clark Hull. They sought to provide learning explanations for key aspects of personality and social development discussed by Freud, such as dependency, aggression, identification, conscience formation, and defense mechanisms. Among the key collaborators with Hull at the institute were John Dollard, Neal Miller, and Robert Sears, who sought to reconcile Freudian and Hullian perspectives during their subsequent careers.

For example, to study the cause of children's identification with adults, Miller and Dollard conducted a series of experimental studies of social modeling,

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which they described as a form of instrumental conditioning in a book entitled *Social Learning and Imitation* (1941). Despite Spence's missionary zeal at Iowa, Bandura was not attracted to Hullian theory because of its emphasis on tedious trial-and-error learning.

He felt that cultures transmitted social mores and complex competencies primarily through vicarious experience and that Miller and Dollard's studies of modeling and imitation revealed an alternative way that humans acquired competences and knowledge. They sought to free explanations of social learning from theoretical dependence on Freudian assumptions about the role of identification and catharsis and from Hullian and Skinnerian assumptions about the need for direct reinforcement.

In all, Bandura's initial program of research at Stanford centered on the prominent role of social modeling in human motivation, thought, and action.

Albert Bandura: Albert Bandura was born on December 4, 1925, in Mundare, a small hamlet of some 400 inhabitants, largely immigrants from Poland and Ukraine, in northern Alberta, Canada, about 50 miles east of Edmonton. He was the youngest child and only boy among six children in a family of Eastern European descent. His parents had each migrated to Canada when they were adolescents—his father from Krakow, Poland, and his mother from the Ukraine.

Bandura's father worked laying track for the trans-Canada railroad, and his mother worked in the town's general store. They had no formal education but placed a high value on educational attainment. For example, his father taught himself to read three languages, Polish, Russian, and German, and he

also served as a member of the school board in the district where they lived. In 1918, the family suffered a tragic loss when the flu pandemic claimed a young daughter. Bandura's mother walked from home to home helping to nurse back to health those who were fortunate to survive.

Not long after, a son was killed in a hunting mishap with one of his friends. Young Bandura's elementary and high school years were spent at the one and only school in town, which being woefully short of teachers and resources left learning largely to the students' own initiative. For example, the entire curriculum of his high school mathematics class comprised a single textbook, which one beleaguered teacher endeavored to read ahead of her small but bright class of students. Bandura went westward to the University of British Columbia in

Vancouver. Bandura's choice of psychology as a career came about by chance. Because he worked in the woodwork plant during the afternoons to make ends meet, he was forced to take a heavy course load during the mornings. He commuted each morning to the university in a carpool of engineering and pre-med students who started each day very early. " One morning, I was wasting time in the library. Someone had forgotten to return a course catalog and I thumbed through it attempting to find a filler course to occupy the early time slot.

I noticed a course in psychology that would serve as excellent filler. It sparked my interest and I found my career. " Within three years (in 1949), he graduated with the Bolocan Award in psychology. Bandura decided to pursue graduate study at the University of Iowa. As he recalls, Clark Hull had passed

on his theoretical baton to his illustrious protege, Kenneth Spence, who presided masterfully over the psychology department at Iowa. As I was about to leave, my advisor explained that previous applicants had found the doctoral program at Iowa to be a taxing experience.

Virginia and Albert married in 1952 and became parents to two daughters, Mary, who was born in 1954, and Carol, born in 1958. In 1953, Bandura joined the faculty at Stanford University, where he has remained to pursue his career. In 1964, Bandura became a full professor at Stanford and was elected Fellow of the American Psychological Association. During the 1969/70 academic year he spent a year as Fellow at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences. In 1974 Stanford awarded him an endowed chair and he became David Starr Jordan Professor of Social Science in Psychology.

During 1976/77, he served as chairman of the Department of Psychology (1976/77). In 1977, Bandura published the ambitious Social Learning Theory, a book that dramatically altered the direction psychology was to take in the 1980s. By the mid-1980s Bandura had developed a social cognitive theory of human functioning. This theory accords a central role to cognitive, vicarious, self-regulatory and self-reflective processes in human adaptation and change. Social cognitive theory is rooted in an agented perspective.

It is not just reactive organisms shaped and shepherded by environmental forces or driven by concealed inner impulses. His book, Social Foundations of Thought and Action: A Social Cognitive Theory, provides the conceptual framework and analyzes the large body of knowledge bearing on this theory.

Bandura's decision to re-label his theoretical approach from social learning to social cognitive was due to his growing belief that the breadth of his theorizing and research had expanded beyond the scope of the social learning label.

A major focus of Bandura's theorizing addressed the extraordinary symbolizing capacity of humans. By drawing on their symbolic capabilities, people can comprehend their environment, construct guides for action, solve problems cognitively, support forethoughtful courses of action, gain new knowledge by reflective thought, and communicate with others at any distance in time and space. By symbolizing their experiences, people give structure, meaning, and continuity to their lives. Awards:

He was elected to the presidencies of the American Psychological Association (1974) and of the Western Psychological Association (1981), and he was appointed Honorary President of the Canadian Psychological Association. In August of 1999, Bandura received the Thorndike Award for Distinguished Contributions of Psychology to Education from the American Psychological Association. In 2001, he received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Association for the Advancement of Behavior Therapy. In April of 2004, he received an honorary degree from the University of Athens.

In October, he received one from the University of Catama. In May 2004 he received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Western Psychological Association as well as the coveted James McKeen Cattell Award from the American Psychological Society (he has promised to send us photographs of these events, so stay tuned. In August of 2004, Professor Bandura received

the Outstanding Lifetime Contribution to Psychology Award from the American Psychological Association during the APA Conference in Hawaii. And in 2005 he received the Distinguished Alumni Award from the University of Iowa.