

The Definitions of Learning Process (Types of Motivation and Theories)

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Learning is one of the major items dealt with psychology. Learning is typically defined as modification of behavior through practice and training. The process of learning is affected by such factors as environment, motivation, health, emotions, maturation and aging. A number of theories are found operative for the process of learning among which the prominent are:

Classical conditioning by I.P. Pavlov,

Operant conditioning by B.F. Skinner,

Trial and Error theory by E.L. Thorndike,

Gestalt or Insightful theory by F. D. Kohler and Kurt Koffka,

J. B. Watson's theory of learning and etc.

It is suggested that for the best transfer of learning the individual should discover interrelationships for himself. He should be exposed to the diverse and multifaceted interrelationships and principles that can help draw generalizations.

Key words: learning, behavior, motivation, conditioned response, trial and error, insight.

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Introduction.

All living is learning. The individual is in active relations with his environment. The modifications of behavior that result from this interaction, activity and experience, are what we understand by learning.

Learning is a change. It is a change of a behavior influenced by the previous behavior. It covers all those processes by which individuals acquire new forms of thinking, feeling and willing. It

is more than school learning. It means knowledge, skill, habits, virtues, beliefs, and attitudes, in brief all that makes up our character and personality. It is any activity that leaves a more or a less permanent effect on our later.

Learning is treated as the focal area of psychology as it deals with an individual's behavior. Our schools, colleges, academies etc. are meant for accomplishing this process by better and beneficial patterns of behavioral trends. Such learning is supposed to help children lead a meaningful and successful living style.

The Concept of Learning

The concept of learning is so vast that it defies all our attempts to confine it to a precise definition. First of all, the teacher needs to have profound knowledge about the concept and the process of learning as it is the main agenda of his profession. After having sufficient understanding of the process, he can effectively initiate, control and guide the behavior of learners in a proper manner.

The Nature of Learning

What elements are common to various types of learning? Learning may be defined as changing one's ways of perceiving; thinking and doing through experiences partially motor, partially perceptual, partially intellectual and partially emotional.

First, learning is always multiple involving perception, knowledge, thinking, feeling and doing. For the purposes of close study psychologists may divide learning into motor, emotional and intellectual, but these are only several aspects of one process of learning.

Learning comes only through experience. Knowledge cannot be given directly as a whole; it is the result of the learner's own perception and thinking. This is the basis of the common phrase "learning by doing". Learning cannot be imposed from outside, the teacher can control it to the extent of his control of experience. Such things as making decisions, cooperating or controlling the expression of strong emotions, can be learnt by the taughts only through facing situations in which they must take a decision, cooperate or control their emotions, certainly not by simple advice or reading.

Learning is always purposeful. It is only in the satisfaction of the needs and interests that young people learn. They have had certain experiences and on their basis they have acquired goals and purposes, ideas about their own abilities and proficiency, about what is expected of them by their parents, teachers and class-mates. In the several studies made of learning processes in the classroom and laboratories by psychologists there is no evidence for the common belief that the more bitter the medicine the better it is for the patient.

Characteristics of Learning

The following characteristic features isolate learning from the rest of the process in the universe:

- learning is goal oriented;
- prerogative art of the living beings;
- cumulative in nature;
- it is a continuous and relatively permanent process;
- it depends on the physical and mental maturity;
- the rate of it is irregular at various stages;
- it is indirectly observed from the displayed behaviour of the individual.

In learning, either the innate, inherited *modes of behavior are modified* or *new forms of behavior are acquired*. The most part of the process of pupils' learning consists of modifying, adapting and developing their original nature. Later the individuals acquire new forms of behavior. All this is done to meet new situations, to adjust to a changing environment. This is why learning is often described as adjustment. Learning is universal. Every creature that lives learns.

But of all creatures **man learns most**. Human children have the longest period of immaturity and helplessness and hence the longest period and opportunity for learning. The human nervous system is very complex, so are human reactions and human acquisitions.

Learning is a growth, but it is a never-ending growth. There is hardly anybody, a man or an animal, who has no more to learn. At each stage, the learner acquires new visions of his future growth and new ideals of achievement in the directions of his effort. Every achievement made becomes the basis of a fresh endeavor and thus the constant urge of his soul to newer and higher ideals of work and achievement is progressively fulfilled.

But should this learning be haphazard and aimless? Should there be no direction to the learning process? Young people may learn bad things as well as good ones; they may acquire vices as well as virtues, inefficient ways of acting and wrong modes of thought. It is the responsibility of education to direct them into desirable and efficient learning process.

Types of Learning

Learning covers a wide range. It is present in simple forms of animal behavior as also in the complex types of adult human behavior. The difference between the simple and the complex is not of kind but of degree. Let us describe the main types of learning.

Learning by Conditioned Response. The simplest and the most rudimentary type of learning is that of conditioned response. It is a process of substituting the original stimulus by a new one and connecting the response with it. The learned response is called a conditioned response because it is dependent upon condition and the process is referred to as conditioning.

In learning by a conditioned response, repetition of the association between the new stimuli with the response is necessary and much time should not pass between the presentation of the stimulus and the response. In course of time, the stimulus is generalized. Learning by conditioning is learning *by association*.

But in learning by conditioning there is neither choice nor freedom, not any consideration of the use or good of learning. Practice and repetition strengthens the bonds of conditioning and the lack of it weakens them.

Learning by Trial and Error. This is another simple form of learning. The random movements are not limited at once. At the first attempt, their number is very large, at the second one, the number of errors diminishes and the range of activity becomes narrower. Gradually the individual learns to proceed straight to the goal without any error. Improvement generally takes place through repetition.

Although this method is very common, it is not economical. It is slow, tiresome and aimless. It needs a greater energy than higher types of learning. Why?

At first, the essential nature of trial and error learning is that the learner is unable to foresee what movements are important and what is the right way of making them. It is learning by blundering, by trying something and succeeding or failing.

Secondly, at least among animals the element of deliberation is absent though there is a considerable trial and error activity in thinking itself. In the solution of problems, we often follow the *try out method* in reasoning.

Thirdly, the learner has *greater freedom* in this type of learning, he can move about at

will and go along his own pace; when he is unable to solve the problem, he is quiet and normal.

Fourthly, he learns *by doing*, through *activity* and *self-direction*. This is a very effective manner of learning, actually living through experiences.

Lastly, the presence of goals and purposes, drives and motives stimulates the process of learning.

We can sum up: in the trial and error learning the learner has a motive; the motive leads to varied types of activity in which the learner tries various types of responses, some of them later are rewarded. The success and the satisfaction of the motive and the responses not leading to success are discarded while those ones leading to success are established.

Learningby Insight. Some animals and all human beings learn in fewer trials. They use their sense along with motor activity. *Learningby Observation is learningby insight*, learning by perceiving the relationship on the scene and understanding the situation. After looking over the whole situation, the learner strives to make some sense out of it, and it gives him clues regarding the way he should proceed to solve the problem, the method he should pursue, and a general awareness of the consequences of performing an act. This type of learning is obviously more efficient for the learner consciously perceiving the relations, which this or that problem includes.

Theories of Learning

Woodworth does not favor its description as learning by observation, because insight implies some penetration into the true nature of things.

As to *J. B. Watson's theory of learning*, it is supposed to be a modification and an extension of the trial and error learning theory.

Law of frequency and the law of recency are the two added elements to *the theory of trial and error by E. L. Thorndike*. The theory holds that when the organism is subjected to a new situation, it resorts to random activities among which the right one is picked up and the rest are eliminated in successive times. The following laws like *law of readiness, law of exercise (use and disuse), the law of effectare* the major ones in this theory.

The mathematical equation $S - O - R = F (H \& D)$ is explained the stimulus (S), that affects the organism (O) and the response (R) depends upon (O) as well as (S). The $S - O - R$ relationship is a function of a habit (H) and a drive (D).

B. F. Skinner's operant conditioning is totally different from Pavlov's classical conditioning. The following things like *shaping (generalization, chaining and habit competition), extinction, spontaneous recovery, concept of reinforcement etc.* are prominent in this theory. Reinforcement can be of three types:

- a positive reinforcer,
- a negative reinforcer,
- and a punisher.

A negative reinforcer is an unpleasant stimulus but a punisher is an opposing stimulus.

Gestalttheory of learning or insightful theory is an improved one which pertains to cognition or perception. The intellect of an organism catches a specific configuration or a pattern on a particular contact and learning is affected by it. The various concepts in it are *figure and ground, similarity, proximity, transposition etc.* This theory has the following characteristic features – it is sudden, sharp and selective, it proceeds from helplessness to absolute mastery. The teaching-learning situation should be managed by the doctrines of the above theory. From the point of view of this theory, *introduction, presentation and evaluation of learning materials, motivation etc.* should be made highly appealing to the learners.

Kurt Lewin's topological or vector psychology deals with the field of learning. The new concept inherent in it is *life space* which in fact is the total sum of factors affecting the behavior

of the organism at any moment. Lewin's equation

$$B = F(P \& E)$$

states that a behavior (B) is the function (F) of a psychological person (P) and his psychological environment (E).

According to Lewin, learning involves four categories of change, namely:

- a change in cognitive structure;
- a change in motivation;
- a change in ideology;
- a change in voluntary control or acquiring skills.

Kurt Lewin emphasizes upon congeniality of the environment where teaching is tied for bells results.

Tolman's Sign Gestalt theory belongs to the purposive psychology which views that the act of behavior has its distinctive properties and distributed as irrespective of the underlying muscular, glandular and neural processes. He emphasizes that the purposive nature of *all the learnings* being governed by a number of variables.

The independent variables include *environmental stimuli (S)*, *psychological drive (P)*, *heredity (H)*, *previous training (T)* and *maturity of age (A)*. So, behavior (B) in a function of all the above mentioned variables:

$$B = F(S, P, H, T, A)$$

The dependent variables are all the observable behavioral changes that are caused by the independent variables.

There are also *varieties of theories* that are overlapping the concept of transfer of learning. The major theories are:

- the theory of formal discipline,
- the theory of identical or common elements,
- the theory of generalization,
- the theory of transposition.

The theory of **formal discipline** states that our view is composed of memory, imagination, reasoning, analysis, temperament etc. Learning is greatly affected by exercises of all these faculties of the mind. Transfer of skills and attributes is *automatic* when a particular faculty has been developed properly.

The theory of common elements suggests that transfer of learning takes place between one to another when some commonalities exist between the two tasks or situations. As to E.L. Thorndike, there are two very important factors that affect *transfer of learning* through common elements, one of which is the matter and the other is the *method*.

On the other hand, **the generalization theory** states that transfer of learning is possible only on the basis of generalization, not on identical elements. Generalization refers to the perception of the fact what is common in a number of situations.

Transposition theory upholds that learning becomes transferable when the learner is capable of comprehending the things properly and transposing the same in subsequent occasions. Transposition refers to the *reproduction* of things in the desired and deserved *contexts*.

Motivation in Learning

Motivation is the heart of learning, it is the condition, which increases the vigor of activity, it initiates and sustains behavior and it is the reason why we do what we do. A motive implies a need and the direction of behavior toward a goal. Without this desire to learn, no amount of inducement

will have any effect. So, teachers should make pupils want to learn for a desire to learn. There is almost no limit what the teacher and the class can accomplish.

Some teachers use the fear of punishment to make children learn others ignore them altogether. All these attitudes are fruitless. Successful teachers implant a desire in the minds of pupils to learn and accomplish what tasks they give them, they are able to create a motive for learning in them. Such teachers believe that in general, children like to learn and to be given the right kind of guidance and help will take to their work with zest.

Rewards and **punishments** are also used to motivate learning. Pressures of success and failure, promises of enjoyment and fear of disappointment are powerful motives. Rivalry and competition also provide the motivating power. But all of them may be over-employed to produce real anxiety. Every teacher knows how examinations cause tension and how fear of failure renders many pupils incapable of any effort. Every teacher will have his own device of achieving this.

But motivation is not only the teacher's responsibility. It also depends on his needs and desires, his interests and goals the pupil brings to the school and it is his work. A hungry, thirsty or half-sleepy child will not apply himself to any task. Grown-up boys and girls are often detracted by the opposite sex and cannot concentrate on their work. Apart from these drives the need for activity is urgent and has to be satisfied.

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Определение процесса обучения (типы мотивации и теории)

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Обучение является одним из основных вопросов, связанных с психологией. Обучение обычно определяется как модификация поведения посредством практики и обучения. На процесс обучения влияют такие факторы, как окружающая среда, мотивация, здоровье, эмоции, созревание и старение. Существует ряд теорий, действующих в процессе обучения, среди которых выделяются следующие:

Классическое кондиционирование И. П. Павлова,

Оперантное кондиционирование по Б. Ф. Скиннеру,

Теория проб и ошибок Э. Л. Торндайка,

Гештальт или проницательная теория Ф. Д. колера и Курта Коффки,

Теория обучения Дж. Б. Уотсона и др.

Предполагается, что для достижения наилучших результатов обучения индивид должен открыть для себя взаимосвязи. Он должен быть подвержен воздействию разнообразных и многогранных взаимосвязей и принципов, которые могут помочь сделать обобщения.

Keywords: обучение, поведение, мотивация, условная реакция, метод проб и ошибок, инсайт.

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