

Human Development and Learning

Maj/B.Eds-104



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B.Ed (Hons) Secondary
Semester II

Unit 9: Approaches to Learning



Approaches to Learning

- Behaviorism
- Cognitivism
- Social Learning Approach
- Humanistic Approach 

Behaviorism

- Proponents: John B. Watson, Thorndike, B. F. Skinner, and Ivan Pavlov
- Learning is change in behavior
- Focuses on observable  behaviors
- Learning is a mechanical process of associating the stimulus with response

Behaviorism

Individual learn to behave through conditioning

1. classical conditioning (a stimulus is presented in order to get a response)

The best known experiment in classical conditioning was performed by a Russian physiologist and Nobel prize winner, Ivan Pavlov, who accidentally discovered the conditioned response while performing a series of routine physiological experiments (Pavlov, 1927) Pavlov was studying digestion and salivation in dogs, using an apparatus which collected and measured the secretions of live animals by means of tubes implanted in the stomach or cheek. In these experiments, meat powder was placed in a dog's mouth and his salivary response to the food was observed. Pavlov's assistants reported that after a number of trials with any particular dog, the animal would begin to salivate when he saw the food, before it was actually placed in his mouth. Soon he would salivate at the sight of the food dish, and finally even at the sound of the assistant's approaching footsteps. Pavlov, realizing that his phenomenon was of great significance, changed the course of his investigations.

Behaviorism

2. Operant Conditioning (response is made first then reinforcement follows)

Examples: Establishing rules, Verbal reinforcement (saying “good job”)

In operant conditioning, coined by B.F. Skinner, we learn through reinforcement or punishment. We avoid touching a pot of boiling water, for example, because we will burn our fingertips. Skinner developed the operant conditioning chamber, later known as the Skinner Box, to study animal behavior.

Critiques of Behaviorism

- Does not account for processes taking place in the mind that cannot be observed.
- Advocates for passive students learning.
- Does not prepare the learner for problem solving and critical thinking.

Cognitivism

- Proponents: Piaget, Bloom, Bruner
- Based on the thought process behind the behavior
- Change in behavior is  observed but only as an indicator to what is going on in the learner's mind.
- Examples: linking concepts, problem solving, discussions

Critiques of Cognitivism

1. This theory is often criticized as being closer to psychology than to learning theory, so the application in the learning process is not easy.
2. This theory is also considered difficult to be practiced purely because we are impossible in understanding the cognitive structures that exist in the mind of every student, especially sorting out the cognitive structures into discrete parts or clear boundaries.

Social Learning Theory

- Proponent: Albert Bandura
- Learning takes place through observation, imitating others and sensorial experience.
- People learn by watching other people. We can learn from anyone—teachers, parents, siblings, peers, co-workers, YouTube influencers, athletes, and even celebrities. We observe their behavior and we mimic that behavior. In short, we do what they do. This theory is also known as social cognitive theory.
- Example: opportunities to observe experts in action

Critiques of Social Learning Theory

- Emotions and motivations not considered important or connected to learning.
- Does not take into account experience as meditating factors. 

Humanistic Approach

- Proponent: Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers
- Emphasizes the uniqueness and value of every person determined by his/her need for self actualization.
- Focuses on subjective qualities of human experience and the personal meaning of experiences to a person.
- All students are motivated to self actualize or learn.

Conti..

- Major purpose of education is to help to develop each student's individuality, to assist him in realizing the potential that already exists within him. 
- Teacher assists students
- Student teacher relationship are genuine, accepting and empathetic
- Classroom climate is safe.