

Module 2 Unit 2

This is a **REQUIRED READING**.

Abbot, L. (n.d.). Social learning theory: From notes on Ormond's Human Learning. Retrieved from http://teachnet.edb.utexas.edu/~Lynda_abbot/Social.html. [6 p.]

Social Learning Theory

from notes on Ormond's *Human Learning*

[ref: Ormrod, J.E. (1999). *Human learning* (3rd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall.]

Social learning theory focuses on the learning that occurs within a **social context**. It considers that people learn from one another, including such concepts as observational learning, imitation, and modeling. Among others **Albert Bandura** is considered the leading proponent of this theory.

General principles of social learning theory follows:

1. People can **learn by observing** the behavior of others and the outcomes of those behaviors.
2. Learning can occur **without a change** in behavior. Behaviorists say that learning has to be represented by a permanent change in behavior, in contrast social learning theorists say that because people can learn through **observation alone**, their learning may not necessarily be shown in their performance. Learning may or may not result in a behavior change.
3. Cognition plays a **role** in learning. Over the last 30 years social learning theory has become **increasingly cognitive** in its interpretation of human learning. Awareness and expectations of future reinforcements or punishments can have a major effect on the behaviors that people exhibit.
4. Social learning theory can be considered a bridge or a **transition** between behaviorist learning theories and cognitive learning theories.

How the environment reinforces and punishes modeling:

People are often reinforced for **modeling** the behavior of **others**. Bandura suggested that the **environment also reinforces** modeling. **This is in several possible ways:**

1. The observer is reinforced **by the model**. For example a student who changes dress to fit in with a certain group of students has a strong likelihood of being accepted and thus reinforced by that group.
2. The observer is reinforced by a **third person**. The observer might be modeling the actions of someone else, for example, an outstanding class leader or student. The teacher notices this and compliments and praises the observer for modeling such behavior thus reinforcing that behavior.

3. The imitated **behavior itself leads** to reinforcing consequences. Many behaviors that we learn from others **produce satisfying** or reinforcing results. For example, a student in my multimedia class could observe how the extra work a classmate does is fun. This student in turn would do the same extra work and also receive enjoyment.

4. Consequences of the model's behavior affect the observers behavior **vicariously**. This is known as vicarious reinforcement. This is where in the **model is reinforced** for a response and then the **observer shows an increase** in that same response. Bandura illustrated this by having students watch a film of a model **hitting a inflated clown doll**. One group of children saw the model being praised for such action. Without being reinforced, the group of children began to also hit the doll .

Contemporary social learning perspective of reinforcement and punishment:

1. Contemporary theory proposes that both reinforcement and punishment have **indirect effects** on learning. They are not the sole or main cause.

2. Reinforcement and punishment **influence** the extent to which an individual exhibits a behavior that has been learned.

3. The **expectation** of reinforcement **influences cognitive** processes that promote learning. Therefore attention plays a critical role in learning. And attention is influenced by the expectation of reinforcement. An example would be, where the teacher tells a group of students that what they **will study next** is not on the test. Students will not pay attention, because they do not expect to know the information for a test.

Cognitive factors in social learning:

Social learning theory has cognitive factors as well as behaviorist factors (actually operant factors).

1. Learning without performance: Bandura makes a distinction between learning through **observation** and the actual **imitation** of what has been learned.

2. Cognitive processing during learning: Social learning theorists contend that **attention** is a critical factor in learning.

3. Expectations: As a result of being reinforced, people form expectations **about the consequences** that future behaviors are likely to bring. They expect certain behaviors to bring reinforcements and others to bring punishment. The learner needs to **be aware** however, of the response reinforcements and response punishment. Reinforcement increases a response only when the learner is aware of that connection.

4. Reciprocal causation: Bandura proposed that behavior can influence both the environment and the person. In fact each of these **three variables**, the person, the behavior, and the environment can have an influence on each other.

5. Modeling: There are different **types** of models. There is the **live model**, and actual person demonstrating the behavior. There can also be a **symbolic model**, which can be a person or action portrayed in some other medium, , such as television, videotape, computer programs.

Behaviors that can be learned through modeling:

Many behaviors can be **learned**, at least **partly, through** modeling. Examples that can be cited are, students can watch parents **read**, students can watch the demonstrations of **mathematics** problems, or seen someone acting bravely and a fearful situation.

Aggression can be learned through models. Much research indicate that children become more aggressive when they observed aggressive or violent models. Moral thinking and **moral behavior** are influenced by observation and modeling. This includes **moral judgments** regarding right and wrong which can in part, develop through modeling.

Conditions necessary for effective modeling to occur:

Bandura mentions **four conditions** that are necessary before an individual can successfully model the behavior of someone else:

1. Attention: the person must first **pay attention** to the model.
2. Retention: the observer must be able to **remember** the behavior that has been observed. One way of increasing this is using the technique of rehearsal.
3. Motor reproduction: the third condition is the **ability to replicate** the behavior that the model has just demonstrated. This means that the observer has to be able to replicate the action, which could be a problem with a learner who is not ready developmentally to replicate the action. For example, **little children** have difficulty doing complex physical motion.
4. Motivation: the final necessary ingredient for modeling to occur is **motivation**, learners must want **to demonstrate** what they have learned. Remember that since these four conditions vary among individuals, different people will reproduce the same behavior differently.

Effects of modeling on behavior:

Modeling teaches **new** behaviors.

Modeling influences the **frequency** of previously learned behaviors.

Modeling may **encourage** previously **forbidden** behaviors.

Modeling increases the **frequency** of **similar** behaviors. For example a student might see a friend excel in basketball and he tries to excel in football because he is not tall enough for basketball.

Self efficacy:

People are **more likely** to engage in certain behaviors when they believe they are **capable** of executing those behaviors **successfully**. This means that they will have high self-efficacy. In layman's terms self-efficacy could be looked as self confidence towards learning.

How self-efficacy affects behavior:

Joy of activities: individuals typically **choose** activities they feel they will be successful in doing.

Effort and **persistence**: individuals will tend to put more effort and activities and behaviors they consider to be successful in achieving.

Learning and **achievement**: students with high self-efficacy tend to be better students and achieve more.

Factors in the development of self efficacy:

In general students typically have a good sense of what they can and cannot do, therefore they have fairly accurate opinions about their own self-efficacy. In **my multimedia** program, the **challenge** is to increase student self-efficacy. There are many factors which affect self efficacy. Some of these factors can be; previous successes and failures, messages received from others, and successes and failures of others. Note **example** of ACS and Cliff & Vanessa.

Self regulation:

Self-regulation has come to be more emphasized in social learning theory. Self-regulation is when the individual has his **own ideas** about what is **appropriate** or inappropriate behavior and **chooses** actions accordingly. There are several aspects of self regulation:

Setting standards and goals

Self observation

Self judge

Self reaction

Promoting self-regulation can be an important technique. This is usually done by **teaching** the individual to **reward himself** after doing the needed behavior. For example, a graduate student will tell himself to complete a certain chapter before taking a break and relaxing.

Self instructions:

An effective strategy is to teach learners to **give themselves instructions** that guide their behavior. There are five steps to achieve this goal:

Cognitive modeling:

Overt external guidance

Overt self guidance

Faded, overt self guidance

covert self instruction

Self monitoring and self reinforcement:

These are two ways that people can control their own behavior. First they monitor and observe their own behavior, sometimes even scoring behavior. Secondly, people are also able to change their behavior by reinforcing themselves, by giving or withholding reinforcement.

Educational implications of social learning theory:

Social learning theory has numerous implications for classroom use.

1. Students often **learn a great** deal simply by **observing** other people.
2. **Describing** the **consequences** of behavior is can effectively increase the appropriate behaviors and decrease inappropriate ones. This can involve discussing with learners about the rewards and consequences of various behaviors.
3. Modeling provides an **alternative to shaping** for teaching new behaviors. Instead of using shaping, which is operant conditioning, modeling can **provide a faster**, more **efficient** means for teaching new behavior. To promote effective modeling a teacher must make sure that the four essential conditions exist; attention, retention , motor reproduction, and motivation.

4. Teachers and parents must **model appropriate behaviors** and take care that they do not model inappropriate behaviors.

5. Teachers should **expose** students to a **variety** of other **models**. This technique is especially important to break down traditional stereotypes.

6. Students must **believe** that they are **capable** of accomplishing school tasks. Thus it is very important to develop a sense of **self-efficacy** for students. Teachers can promote such self-efficacy by having students receive confidence-building messages, watch others be successful, and experience success on their own. .

7. Teachers should help students set **realistic expectations** for their academic accomplishments. In general in **my class** that means making sure that expectations are not set **too low**. I want to realistically challenge my students. However, sometimes the task is beyond a student's ability, example would be the **cancer** group.

8. Self-regulation techniques provide an **effective** method for **improving** student **behavior**.