

Observational Learning

(Social-cognitive theory)

- humans acquire skills and behaviors by observing the behavior of others

Bandura (1973) – classic study

- 3 – 5 year old children
 - watched a film of an adult aggressively punching a Bobo doll and hitting it with a mallet
 - three conditions: adult rewarded, adult punished, no consequences
 - children left alone with the Bobo doll
 - children who saw reward condition: most aggressive
 - children who saw punishment condition: least aggressive
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- aggression learned through modeling
 - consequences for the model affect likelihood of aggressive behavior

Necessary Processes for Observational Learning

Attention:

- characteristics of the model
- characteristics of the observer
- nature of the behavior

Retention

- encoding in symbolic form
- rehearsal

Production

- adequate cognitive or motor skills
- informative feedback

Motivation

- direct reinforcement
- vicarious reinforcement
- self-reinforcement

Acquisition of a behavioral potential vs.

Performance of the behavior

"It's virtually impossible to prevent people from learning what they see"
(text, p. 363).

Performance depends on:

Outcome expectancies

- will the behavior lead to a particular outcome

Efficacy expectancy

- can I produce the behavior required to generate the outcome

Self-efficacy

- the expectation that one can, by personal effort, master a situation and bring about a desired outcome

- people fear and avoid situations they perceive as exceeding their skills
- they enter situations they believe they can master

"...efficacy expectations are a major determinant of people's *choice of activities*, how much *effort* they will expend, and of how *long* they will *sustain* effort..." (Bandura, 1977, p. 194). (italics mine)

Sources of Self-efficacy Expectations

Performance Accomplishments

- success experiences
- most effective
- important implications for teaching
 - provide a model
 - graded series of tasks
 - gradual phasing out of supports

Vicarious Experience

- observing someone achieving success
- e.g., being assertive
- less effective than success experiences

Verbal Persuasion

- encouraging the person
- popular, but less effective

Self-efficacy is *specific* to a particular domain. It is not a global trait.

I may have a strong sense of efficacy as a musician, but lack a sense of efficacy as an athlete.