

Session 11

Learning Theories: Edward Thorndikes' The Theory of Connectionism

A. Introduction

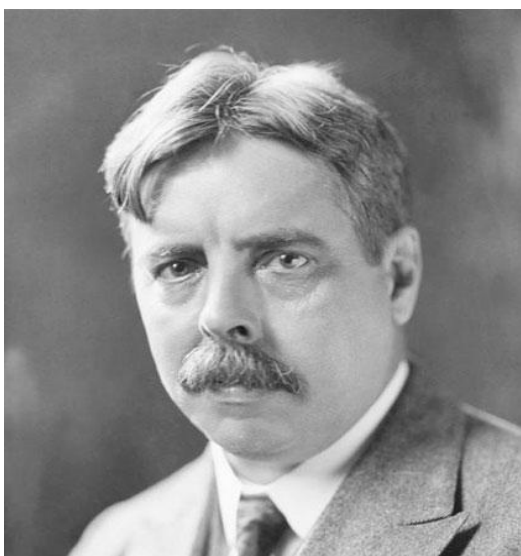


Image 1. Introduction to Thorndike's Theory. (Source: Main, P., 2023 (Online))

Edward Thorndike is an American psychologist that developed behavioral psychology applied to education particularly in teaching and learning. His study emphasized the connection of the stimulus-response which is also known as S-R connection that is commonly used in reinforcement-punishment in learning. His focus of study is on child behavior in connection to cognitive learning. He also studied the animal behavior

experimenting behavioral patterns related to human. Thorndike is well-known in his theory call "The Law s of Learning".

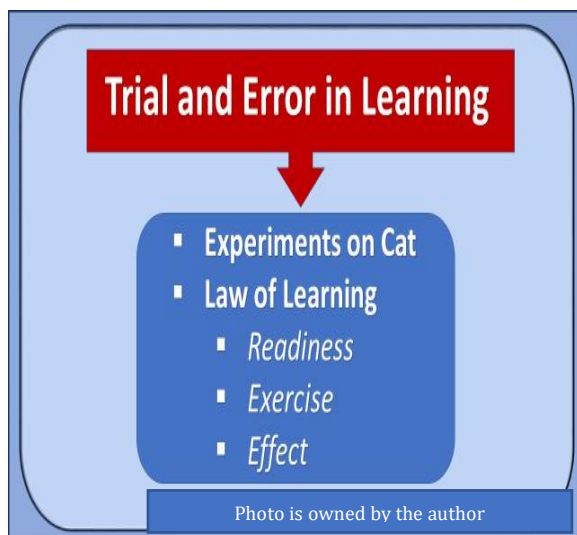
B. Session Objectives

- ✓ Discuss the connectionism theory (S-R) in various perspectives and its implications to facilitating learning;
- ✓ Address the connection of learning to classroom behavior and management.
- ✓ Determine classroom scenarios, community issues and / or events that concerns the different laws of learning.
- ✓ Elaborate the functions of multiple responses in in relation to teaching and learning .

C. Session Content

1. Topic 1

The Connectionism Approach in Learning



Edward Thorndike used the trial and error method on the experiment made with a cat. The cat was placed in a cage in which the cat had several attempts in order to escape and be able to grab the food which was placed just outside the cage. After several attempts to escape from the cage using different methods, the cat finally achieved the desired goal.

Through this experiment, Thorndike was able to come up with different laws of learning namely: The Law of readiness, law of exercise and the law of effects.

2. Topic 2

The Three (3) Laws of Learning

Law of Readiness

Preparation for an action

Conditions:

1. Preparedness
2. Inactivity
3. Forced / Coerced



Image 2. How Sprinting Helps you Improve your Health? (Source: Kovvali, K. 2017: Online)

The law of readiness states that if a person is prepared to act on a particular task, the result is rewarding, otherwise it will not give a satisfying result.

Be physically, emotionally, mentally, and psychology prepared

Law of Exercise

Law of use and disuse

Repetitions of activities allow knowledge and skills to be learned

Lack of practice weakens one's ability in memory and skills



Image 3. The Place to Challenge Ballet's Gender Stereotypes? In Daily Class
(Source: Mainwaring, M. 2019: Online)

LAW OF USE

When there is an equal connection strength in an observed situation and a response (S-R), the law of use is not maximized.

LAW OF DISUSED

An established modification of a connection which is not related to the S-R in a period of time weakens the connection.

The more frequently a stimulus and response are associated with each other, the more likely the particular response will follow the stimulus.

Law of Effect

- A repeated behavior that resulted from a pleasing result.
- **learning curve**
- A response that is followed by a satisfying result, the S-R connection strengthen.
- If a response is unsatisfying, the S-R connection is weakened

3. Topic 3

Secondary Laws of Learning

Law of Multiple Response

- A problem can be solved with naturally learned behavior.
- Different responses considered as an answers to existing problems.

Example: If a teacher uses a divergent approach in giving test to students, then the teacher receives a different output as a response or an answer to the task

The Law Attitude

- The response of a person in a given stimulus is dependent on the attitude towards the situation.
- Learning is conditioned or guided by the attitude of the person that determines the actions or behavior.
- Learning is guaranteed if one is set to learn more or to excel in a particular undertaking.

Prepotency of Elements (Perspective)

- Responses on the stimuli depends on the insight and capability of the person.
- The person reacts selectively to the important or essential features of the situation and disregard the other features that may be irrelevant or non-essential.

Law of Associative Shifting

The learner uses his or her previous experiences to connect in response to a current situation.

Law of Response by Analogy

The learner's response is shifted from one (associative) stimulus to another.

The Law of Supremacy

Preparation is a significant factor in Learning which yield a satisfying result.

D. Conclusion

Preparation is a significant factor in learning since this is the springboard to discover and be engaged in a particular scenario or task that aims a desirable result. Learning on the other hand should be high in intensity that brings life to the classroom interaction and it should be applicable to current level or situation of the learners. Learning can have its own pace which can be progressively develop from easy to difficult. Rewards and punishments are interesting to apply in teaching episodes because it can affect the learning positively or negatively depending on how the teacher processes the situation..

E. References

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