

LEARNING THEORY: INSIGHT LEARNING (Lecture Series-5)

B.A. 1st (Subsidiary)

(Fundamental/General Psychology)



BY

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Insight Learning



In the 1920s, German psychologist **Wolfgang Kohler** was studying the behavior of apes. He designed some simple experiments that led to the development of one of the first cognitive theories of learning, which he called **insight learning**.

Insight learning is the abrupt realization of a problem's solution. Insight learning is not the result of trial and error, responding to an environmental stimulus, or the result of observing someone else attempting the problem. It is a completely cognitive experience that requires the ability to visualize the problem and the solution internally - in the mind's eye, so to speak - before initiating a behavioral response.

Wolfgang Kohler's Experiment



In this experiment, Kohler hung a piece of fruit just out of reach of each chimp. He then provided the chimps with either two sticks or three boxes, then waited and watched. Kohler noticed that after the chimps realized they could not simply reach or jump up to retrieve the fruit, they stopped, had a seat, and thought about how they might solve the problem. Then after a few moments, the chimps stood up and proceeded to solve the problem.

In the first scenario, the problem was solved by placing the smaller sticks into the longer stick to create one very long stick that could be used to knock down the hanging fruit. In the second scenario, the chimps would solve the problem by stacking the boxes on top of each other, which allowed them to climb up to the top of the stack of boxes and reach the fruit.

Learning occurs in a variety of ways. Sometimes it is the result of direct observation; other times, it is the result of experience through personal interactions with the environment. Kohler called this newly observed type of learning insight learning. Based on these observations, Kohler's theory of insight learning became an early argument for the involvement of cognition, or thinking, in the process of learning.

(i) Kohler s experiment on Sultan (Experiment with box)



Kohlar kept a monkey (named Sultan) hungry for some time, and then shut him in a large cage. He hung bananas from the ceiling, and kept a box on the floor of the cage, fast beneath. The monkey could not reach the banana. Another box was put in a corner of the cage.

But Sultan could not get the idea of placing one box on the other and thus reaching the banana. Ultimately Kohlar gave demonstration of putting one box on the other. Sultan could now learn the whole situation. He used his intelligence and insight to put the two boxes one upon the other, stand on these and then reach the bananas.

(ii) Experiment with two sticks



In another experiment Kohler kept two sticks in the cage. One end of the shorter sticks could be fitted in the one end of the longer sticks, so as to make them longer. The monkey did not get the idea of forming the two sticks through trial and error. When Kohlar gave a hint through putting his finger in the whole of the bigger stick, the monkey viewed the whole situation and performed the right task through understanding the insight.

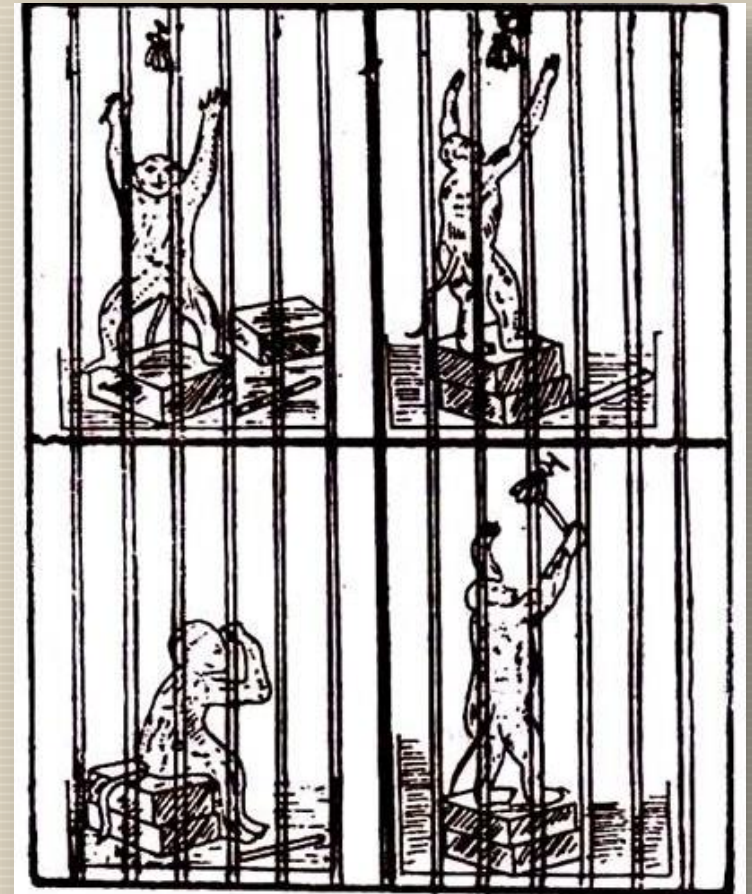


Fig. Kohler's experiment on chimpanzee.

Criterion or Essentials of Learning by Insight



1. Comprehension as a whole:

Learning by insight requires full comprehension of the situation as a whole.

2. Clear goal:

The goal must be quite clear to begin with.

3. Power of generalization:

The learner must possess power of generalization along with those of differentiation.

4. Suddenness of solution:

Suddenness of the solution is the hall mark of learning by insight i.e., the solution flashes suddenly to the learner. No lengthy reasoning is involved.

Conti...



5. New forms of objects:

As a result of insight into the problem or situation objects appear in new forms and patterns.

6. Transfer:

Transfer of learning occurs as a result of insight. The principles learnt in one situation are applied to the other situation.

7. Change in behaviour:

Insight changes our behaviour to the extent which we have learnt through insight.

Laws of Insight Formation



1. Capacities:

Insight depends upon the capacity of the organism. Individuals differ in their capacities. The more developed is the individual, the more will be the capacity to develop insight.

2. Previous experience:

Insight depends upon relevant previous experience and maturation. Some practice, trial and error and maturation upto the level is essential before insight develops. A child of five years cannot develop mathematical insight since he has not done sufficient practice in it.

3. Experimental arrangement:

Development of insight depends upon experimental arrangement also.

Conti...



4. Fumbling and search:

Insight follows a period of fumbling and search.

5. Readily repeated:

Insightful solutions can be readily repeated.

6. Use in new situation:

Insight once achieved can be used in new situation.

7. Wholesome experience:

Experience of insight is always wholesome. Whole is just not equal to its parts.



Reference:

- [https://www.psychologydiscussion.net/learning/learning-theory/theory-of-learning-by-insight psychology/2513](https://www.psychologydiscussion.net/learning/learning-theory/theory-of-learning-by-insight-psychology/2513)
- <https://study.com/academy/lesson/insight-learning-wolfgang-kohler-theory-definition-examples.html>

Thank You