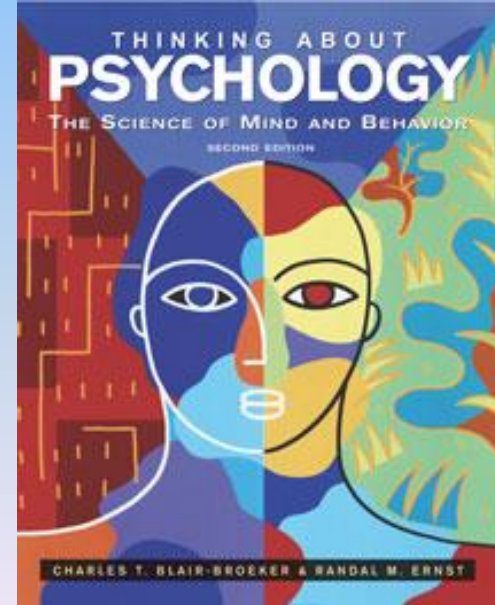# Thinking About Psychology: The Science of Mind and Behavior 2e

Charles T. Blair-Broeker

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# Cognitive Domain

# Learning Chapter

# Module 21

# Observational Learning

# Albert Bandura and Observational Learning

# Observational Learning

- Learning by observing others
- Also called *Social-Cognitive Learning* or Social Learning Theory

# Model

- Person observed in observational learning
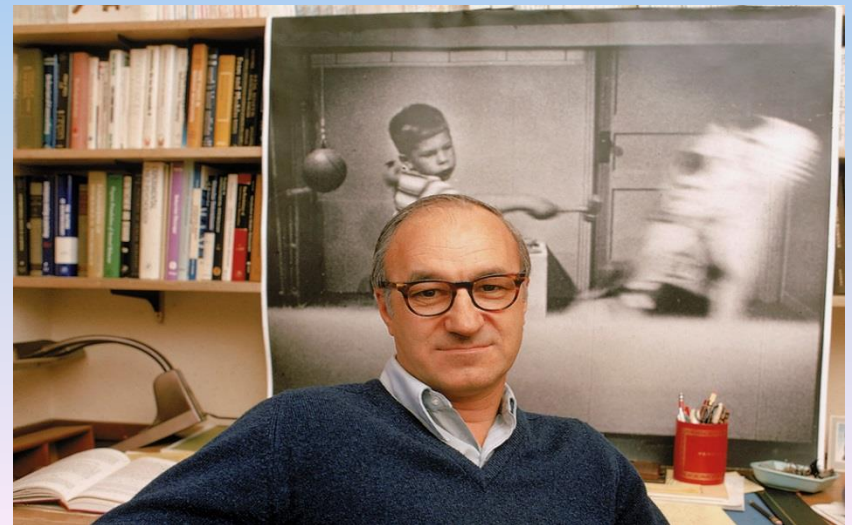
# Modeling

- Process of the learner observing and imitating a specific behavior that they see the model doing

# Albert Bandura (1925-     )

- American psychologist who has done major studies in observational learning

- Studies the consequences a model has on subjects

- Bobo Doll experiments

# Bobo Doll Experiments

- Children watched an adult model show aggressive behavior toward a bobo doll
- Three experimental conditions:
  - The model was praised.
  - The model was punished.
  - Or the model received no consequences for the aggressive behavior.

# Bobo Doll

- Child playing in a room watches adult in another part of the room hit, kick, and throw an inflatable Bobo doll.

- The tirade also included the adult shouting things like "Hit him down…kick him"



BOBO DOLL

EXPERIMENT

# Bobo Doll Experiments

# Stage 2

- In the next stage of the experiment the child was brought to a room full of toys and allowed to happily play with them.
- The child was then intentionally frustrated by being told he couldn't play with the "good" toys

# How did the Child React?



Children who had observed an attack on the Bobo doll were not only more aggressive, but also mimicked the exact behaviors and words they had seen.

# Bobo Doll Experiments

# Vicarious Learning

- Learning by seeing the *consequences* of another person's behavior
- If you see the person receive positive consequences/reward then you are likely to copy their behavior
- If you see the person punished for the behavior you are not likely to

# Modeling Requirements

- Bandura suggests four requirements for effective modeling to occur:

  - *Attention* – to learn, you must be aware of the behaviors of those around you

  - *Retention* – you must remember the behavior you witnessed

  - *Ability to reproduce the behavior* – have to physically be able to do it

- *Motivation* – more likely to feel motivated to learn if we like the model (I wanna be like Kanye) and if the model has been rewarded

# Biological Explanation?
# Mirror Neurons

- Brain cells located in the front of the brain that activate when performing certain actions *or* when observing another do so

- For example, in a monkey's brain these neurons function the *same way* when they are watching another monkey grasp an object as they do when the monkey grasps the object on its own.

# Observational Learning in Everyday Life

# Antisocial/Prosocial Behavior

- *Antisocial* behavior - negative, destructive unhelpful behavior

- *Prosocial* behavior – positive, constructive, helpful behavior

- Both types of behavior can be modeled effectively.

# Observational Learning of Violence From the Media

# Impact of the Media

- By the time you graduate high school you will have spent more time watching TV than you spent in school (this doesn't even include computers, phones, and social media!)

- The average US student has witnessed about 8,000 murders and well over 100,000 acts of violence by the end of elementary school (rarely portraying pain or harm to the victim in a realistic way)

# APA Commission on Violence and Youth

- Higher levels of violence on TV are associated with increased acceptance of aggressive attitudes and behavior
- Children's exposure to TV violence has harmful, lifelong consequences

# Violence and the Media

- Portrayals of women as victims and minorities in aggressive and violent roles worsen the violence experienced by women and ethnic minorities

- Viewing TV programming and commercials affects our concept of reality and how we believe others live.

# The End