

CHAPTER 1

PERSPECTIVES ON LEARNING

Multiple Choice Questions

1. Human beings undoubtedly learn more during the course of a lifetime than any other species on earth. The major result of this capacity to learn is that:
 - a. New instincts begin to emerge.
 - b. Human thought becomes less logical with each generation.
 - *c. Humans can benefit from their experiences.
 - d. Humans are the only species whose behavior cannot be analyzed in terms of stimuli and responses.

2. Three of the following are examples of *learning*. Which one is *not*?
 - *a. Abigail cries when she steps on a sharp pebble.
 - b. After many hours of heated debate, Brian begins to advocate political practices he has previously opposed.
 - c. Cara suddenly recognizes how the division fact " $24 \div 4 = 6$ " is related to the multiplication fact " $6 \times 4 = 24$."
 - d. David has been running away from German shepherds ever since he was bitten by a German shepherd two years ago.

3. Reynelda has trouble tracing a complex shape with a pencil when she is in kindergarten, but she can do it quite well by the time she is in second grade. Is this an instance of *learning*?
 - a. Yes, because her behavior has changed.
 - b. No, because the circumstances are too dissimilar.
 - *c. Maybe, although the change may simply be due to physiological maturation.
 - d. Maybe, but only if she is being reinforced for tracing accurately.

4. Three of the following characterize virtually all instances of human learning. Which one is *not* necessarily an aspect of human learning?
- a. Some sort of change occurs.
 - *b. Conscious thought is involved to some extent.
 - c. Whatever is acquired lasts longer than a few seconds.
 - d. Some sort of experience brings it about.

5. Three of the following illustrate various ways that learning might be reflected in a person's behavior. Which one of the following changes does *not* necessarily reflect learning?
- *a. Although it's a school night, Dean plays video games until well past his usual bedtime. As he becomes more tired, he finds it increasingly difficult to concentrate on what he's doing.
 - b. Even as a young child, Jerry could tell you that his grandparents immigrated to the United States from Ireland. But after a conversation with his grandmother, he can now describe the circumstances of the family's immigration in considerable detail.
 - c. Day after day, Martin practices his basketball skills (shooting, dribbling, etc.) on a basketball court at a local park. With each practice session, his movements become faster and smoother.
 - d. Lewis occasionally asks for help when he has difficulty with his classwork, but most of the time he just struggles quietly on his own. After his teacher assures him that asking for help is not a sign of weakness or inability, he begins asking for help much more frequently.
6. A *principle* of learning can best be characterized as:
- a. A description of the results of a particular research study
 - *b. A statement that describes how a particular factor affects learning
 - c. The measurement of how much learning has occurred in a particular situation
 - d. An explanation of the underlying processes through which learning occurs
7. A *theory* of learning can best be characterized as:
- a. A description of the results of a particular research study
 - b. A statement that describes how a particular factor affects learning
 - c. The measurement of how much learning has occurred in a particular situation
 - *d. An explanation of the underlying processes through which learning occurs
8. Three of the following are *principles* of learning. Which one is a *theory* of learning rather than a principle?
- a. A behavior that is followed by punishment decreases in frequency.
 - *b. People learn by making mental associations between new information and their existing knowledge.

- c. A response that is rewarded every time it occurs increases more rapidly than a response that is only occasionally rewarded.
- d. Students tend to remember more of a lecture if they take notes on the lecture's content.

9. Which one of the following common sayings best reflects the concept of *introspection*?
- a. "Where there's a will, there's a way."
 - b. "Nothing ventured, nothing gained."
 - *c. "A penny for your thoughts."
 - d. "Old habits die hard."
10. Which one of the following common sayings best reflects the basic premise underlying *social learning theory*?
- *a. "Monkey see, monkey do."
 - b. "Spare the rod and spoil the child."
 - c. "A friend in need is a friend indeed."
 - d. "A rolling stone gathers no moss."
11. Which one of the following statements provides the most credible explanation for the fact that human beings seem to surpass all other animal species in their thinking and learning capacities?
- a. Only human beings have the capability to make tools.
 - *b. Humans communicate regularly with one another and, in doing so, pass along what they've learned to future generations.
 - c. Human beings have a huge repertoire of instinctual behaviors from which they can draw when they encounter new experiences.
 - d. Human brains are smaller than those of other intelligent species (e.g., elephants, dolphins) and therefore can transmit messages more quickly and efficiently.
12. Behaviorists and cognitivists tend to focus on different aspects of learning. Which one of the following statements best describes this difference?
- a. Behaviorism focuses on temporary changes; cognitivism focuses on relatively permanent changes.
 - b. Behaviorism focuses on relatively permanent changes; cognitivism focuses on temporary changes.

- c. Behaviorism focuses on internal mental changes; cognitivism focuses on external behavioral changes.
- *d. Behaviorism focuses on external behavioral changes; cognitivism focuses on internal mental changes.

13. Theories are advantageous in several ways. Three of the following describe advantages of learning theories. Which one does *not*?
- *a. Theories enable objective, unbiased reporting of research findings.
 - b. Theories help to condense large bodies of information.
 - c. Theories help practitioners design interventions that facilitate learning.
 - d. Theories provide an impetus for new research.
14. Which one of the following statements is most accurate statement regarding *theories* of learning?
- a. They have been proven to be true.
 - b. They will eventually be replaced by physiological explanations of how learning occurs.
 - *c. They are often modified as new data emerge.
 - d. Any theory can be used to explain virtually every instance of learning.
15. The textbook's perspective regarding various theories of learning is that:
- a. Behaviorist theories are probably more accurate.
 - b. Cognitivist theories are probably more accurate.
 - c. There is currently no "right" theory, but one will eventually be developed.
 - *d. Different theories may be applicable in different situations.

Essay Questions

1. Sometimes we know learning has occurred because the learner engages in a new behavior—one that he or she has never before exhibited. But other kinds of behavior changes may also indicate that learning has taken place. Describe three additional ways in which behavior might change as a result of learning. Give a concrete example to illustrate each one.
2. Distinguish between *principles* and *theories* of learning, and give a specific example of each.

3. Theories of learning have both advantages and disadvantages. Describe at least two advantages and one disadvantage; in each case, explain the particular effect that the advantage or disadvantage has on the advancement of our understanding of human learning.