Learning

Learning is an important concept in the study of human behavior.

Concept:

It is the process by which changes in behaviour occurs, new behaviours are practiced and acquired and thereby establishing permanency in change.

Learning

Nature of learning:

- It involves a change in the behaviour, but this change is not necessarily an improvement over previous behaviour.
- Through learning, bad habits, prejudices, stereotypes and work restrictions are learned.
- The behavioural change is permanent in nature.
- The behavioural change must be based on some formal practice or experience.
- Any behavioural change because of physical maturation is not learning (ability to work based on physical maturation).
- The practice or experience must be reinforced in order for learning to occur, if no such reinforcement is there then the behaviour will disappear.

Learning and Maturation

- Any behavioural changes because of physical maturation is not learning as it is the outcome because of change in physical features.
- Maturity should exist before the learned action/behaviour. This development of physical abilities is called as Maturation.
- Any change in person's behaviour may be due to physical and mental maturation which occurs due to the age. But these changes are different due to learning.

Learning and Maturation

Changes in Behaviour due to maturation and learning

- Behavioural changes due to maturation are natural but during learning a person has to make efforts.
- Changes due to maturation are racial but changes due to learning occurs only to the person who learns.
- Practice of behavioural changes is necessary in learning but it is not so in maturation.
- Maturation takes place at the age of 25 but a person can go on learning throughout the life.
- Maturation takes place in favourable/unfavourable conditions but leraning is possible in favourable conditions only.
- Since maturation is a natural process so it does not require motivation to change behaviour , but learning is cognitive process which needs motivation in some form.

Components of learning Process

The various components of learning are :Drive, Cue stimuli, response, reinforcement and retention.

Drive: Learning occurs only when in the presence of a drive (any strong stimulus which forces a action).Drives are two types: Primary/physiological drive and secondary or psychological drive.

Cue stimuli: These are objects existing in the environment as perceived by individual.

It refers to the conditions under which a stimulus will increase the probability of a response.

The stimulus based on the results are: Generalization and Discrimination.

Components of learning Process

- Generalisation: Generalisation occurs when the a response is elicited by a similar but a new stimulus.
- The principle of Generalisation makes a person stability in actions across time. Because of generalization, a person does not have to completely relearn each of the new tasks which is constantly confronting him.
- This makes to adapt to overall changing conditions or modified new job. The individuals will borrow from past learning experiences to adjust more smoothly to new learning situations.

Components of learning Process

- Discrimination: It is opposite to Generalisation. It is a process by which an organism learns to emit a response to stimulus by avoiding to make the same response to somewhat similar/different stimulus.
- Eg. In organisations a supervisor can discriminate between two equally high producing workers(Low quality and High quality). The supervisor discriminates between two workers and positively responds to only high quality worker. As there is no positive response, the low quality worker may stop his learning process.

Components of learning Process

Responses:

The stimulus results in response.

Response may in the form of physical form or in terms of attitudes, familiarity and perception.

Reinforcement:

It is the fundamental conditioning in learning.

Without reinforcement, no measurable modification of behaviour occurs.

Reinforcement may be defined as environmental events affecting the probability of occurrences or responses with which they are associated.

Of several responses made to the same situation, those which are accompanied by satisfaction (positive reinforcement) will be more likely to recur.

Those responses which are accompanied or closely followed by discomfort (Negative reinforcement or punishment) will less likely to occur.