

Kohler theory of insightful learning | Gestalt Theory

Wolfgang Kohler

Kohler was born in 1887 and grew up in Germany.

Wolfgang Kohler, psychologist and philosopher, was one of the founders of the gestalt school of psychology.

In the 1920s, German psychologist **Wolfgang Kohler** was studying the behavior of apes. On the basis of his experiments he gave the cognitive theories of learning, which he called **insight learning**.

Insight or Gestalt Theory

This theory is also called Gestalt Theory of Learning. The word Gestalt in German language means 'whole', 'total pattern' or 'configuration'.

They believe that the whole is more important than the parts. So learning also takes place as a whole'.

The organism learns from the whole as a unit and after seeing the whole it views its parts.

In this respect Kohler performed a number of experiments on monkeys, and arrived at the result that highest types of learning is through insight.

Kohler criticized the theory of Trial and Error and proved on the basis of experimental conclusion that an organism learns through insight. # Insight or sense is a mental capability that is found in the higher species of organisms.

The organism finds a sudden solution to a problem through insight.

Kohler observed that an organism perceives the situation in totality and finds a solution to the problem all of a sudden.

kohler's experiment

Experiment No. 1

Kohler in his 1st experiment kept a chimpanzee (named Sultan) hungry for some time, and then locked him in a large cage.

Kohler kept a bunch of bananas outside the cage at a distance. Sultan could see the bananas but couldn't reach there.

He kept a stick inside the cage that could be used by the chimpanzee to draw the bunch of bananas close to the cage.

Sultan tried for sometime to reach out for the bananas with his hands,

Then tired Sultan sat down and glanced around in the cage and saw the stick lying inside.

All of a sudden he had an insight, he drew the bunch of bananas inside the cage with the help of the stick

Experiment No. 2

In 2nd experiment the bananas were kept at a longer distance and could not be reached by Sultan with one stick. # Kohler had now kept two sticks in the cage that could be joined together.

Firstly Sultan tried to draw the bananas with each of the sticks. He failed in his attempt and gave up.

He then began to play with the sticks.

Incidentally the two sticks got joined together.

Sultan then drew the bananas inside the cage with the help of the longer stick and ate them.

Experiment no. 3

In his 3rd experiment Kohler made few changes in his situation.

Kohler hung the banana from the roof of the cage.

A box was also placed inside the cage.

Sultan tried to get the bananas but did not succeed.

He saw a wooden box and suddenly he got an insight.

He picked up the box and kept it under the bananas.

Standing on this box he reached out for the bananas and ate them.

Experiment no. 4

In his last experiment Kohler once again made changes in the situation.

- # He hung the bananas from the roof higher than in his third experiment.
- # Now instead of one box he kept two boxes inside the cage.
- # Now the hungry Sultan knew that the bananas could not be reached with hands.
- # He picked up one box and kept it under the bananas as shown in experiment no. 3
- # Standing on it he tried to get at the bananas but did not succeed.
- # He looked around and found another box lying in the cage.
- # Suddenly an idea came into his mind.
- # He picked up the other box and perched it over the first box.
- # Thus he was able to get at the bananas.

Educational implications

- # Presenting the subject matter as a whole
- # Learning purposeful & goal oriented
- # Motivation to the learner
- # Encourages reasoning, develops thinking & trains imagination & creative activity.
- # Development of problem solving attitudes
- # Development of intelligence and not on mechanical learning.
- # The theory takes into consideration the individual differences in learning.

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