Observational Learning: Monkey See, Monkey May Choose to Do

• How many things have you learned from watching other people in real life?
Observational Learning

• Observational Learning
  – Learning new behavior by watching a model perform that behavior
• Accounts for most human learning
• Occurs when we, as children, watch our parents cook or clean
Bandura: Observational Learning

- Preschool children (one at a time) were left alone in a room with an experimenter and a model (another child) who interacted with toys in the room in front of the preschool child.
Bandura: Observational Learning

• In one condition:
  – The model played with the toys in a nonaggressive manner, completely ignoring “Bobo;” the punching bag clown doll.
Bandura: Observational Learning

• In another condition:
  – The model became very aggressive with the doll, kicking it and yelling at it, throwing it in the air and hitting it with a hammer
Bandura: Observational Learning

• Each child was left alone in the room
  – Camera filming through one way mirror caught the action....
  – Children who were exposed to the aggressive model acted in exact imitation
  – Children who were exposed to the nonaggressive model did not act negatively toward the doll
Bandura: Observational Learning

• Bandura’s experiments show that we can acquire operants (behaviors) by observing the behavior of others without actually performing the behavior
  – Called Learning Performance Distinction
Four Elements of Observational Learning

• Attention
  – Learner must pay attention to the model
  – Example: If you don’t know what silverware to use at a fancy dinner party; .....watch someone else
Four Elements of Observational Learning

• Memory
  – Learner must be able to retain the memory of what was done
  – Example: Watching someone else cook....you still must remember the steps to follow, ingredients, etc.
Four Elements of Observational Learning

• Imitation
  – Learner must be capable of reproducing, or imitating, the actions of the model
  – Example: A person with weak knees or ankles can watch (attention) and remember (memory) how some ballet move was accomplished, but will not be able to reproduce it
Four Elements of Observational Learning

• Motivation
  – Learner must have the desire, or motivation, to perform the action
  – Example: The individual at the dinner party has to care which “fork” or “knife” is the proper one to use
Observational Learning

• Effects of Media Violence
  – Television is one of our major sources of informal observational learning
  – Children are exposed to scenes of murder, beating, and sexual assault

• Average child in the United States will have seen 8,000 murders and 100,000 acts of violence on television before he or she has started elementary school