

Observational Learning

Part A.

Answer the following questions.

1. What are some things you have learned to do over the years, things that some other students in the room may not know how to do?
2. How did you learn to do those things?

Part B.

Read the two examples of observational learning, and answer the questions.

Example 1

The manager of a nearby country club hired Joe to teach swimming lessons and coach the swim team there. Joe's mother told him that he could take the job if he continued to watch his six-year-old sister, Sarah, by taking her to the swimming practices with him. Joe was a little irritated about having to watch his sister at his new job but understood that his family did not have extra money to hire a babysitter for her. Joe told her to stay away from the pool while he worked, since she didn't know how to swim, and to play with the toys in the bag he brought for her. However, she often sat on a bench with the swimmers and enjoyed watching the fast-paced lessons and practices.

On one particularly hot day, after watching about twenty one-hour lessons and practices, Sarah decided to jump into the pool to cool off. As she headed for the pool, Joe yelled to her to stay back from the water, then watched in amazement as Sarah performed a perfect dive from the side of the pool and swam all the way across with a perfect stroke! As he pulled her up from the water on the other side of the pool, she gasped for air and said, "Whew! It's really hard to hold your breath long enough to make it all the way across!" The other swimmers laughed. They asked her if Joe had taught her the perfect stroke and forgotten to teach her to breathe, but Sarah said that Joe hadn't given her a single swimming lesson.

1. How had Sarah learned to swim?
2. Why didn't Sarah know when to breathe?
3. If Sarah had been reading a book about how to swim or listening to verbal directions only, how many hours would you predict it would have taken for her to learn to swim (compared to the twenty hours of watching swim practices)?
4. If Sarah had been taking the swimming lessons herself, how many hours would you predict it would have taken for her to learn to swim (compared to the twenty hours of merely watching the swim practices)?