

LEARNING THEORY

Learning means a relatively permanent change in behaviour. Pavlov had identified a fundamental associative **learning** process called **classical conditioning**. Conditioning is a form of [learning](#) in which either (1) a given stimulus (or signal) becomes increasingly effective in evoking a response or (2) a response occurs with increasing regularity in a well-specified and stable environment. The type of [reinforcement](#) used will determine the outcome. When two stimuli are presented in an appropriate time and intensity relationship, one of them will eventually induce a response resembling that of the other. The process can be described as one of stimulus substitution. This procedure is called [classical](#) (or respondent) conditioning.

Classical conditioning refers to **learning** that occurs when a neutral stimulus (e.g., a tone) becomes associated with a stimulus (e.g., food) that naturally produces a behaviour. **Behaviorism**: An approach to psychology focusing on behaviour, denying any independent significance for the mind and assuming that behaviour is determined by the environment. This theory is a product of behaviourism.

The theory occurred in the following way:

Food (Unconditioned Stimulus)----Salivation(Unconditioned Response)

Bell+ Food (CS+UCS)----- Salivation

Bell (Conditioned Stimulus)----- Salivation (Conditioned Response)

Principles of learning:

Extinction is the decrease in the conditioned response when the unconditioned stimulus is no longer presented with the conditioned stimulus. When presented with the conditioned stimulus alone, the individual would show a weaker and weaker response, and finally no response. In classical-conditioning terms, there is a gradual weakening and disappearance of the conditioned response.

Spontaneous recovery refers to the return of a previously extinguished conditioned response following a rest period. Research has found that with repeated extinction/recovery cycles, the conditioned response tends to be less intense with each period of recovery.

Stimulus generalization is identification of a stimulus or stimuli as similar to one another. In this case the conditioned stimulus assumes the same properties as the unconditioned stimulus which elicits the same response.

Stimulus Discrimination is the ability to distinguish between the appropriate stimuli for which the desired response is elicited. In this case, the subject could relate that only a particular button/light would signal the coming of food.

Educational Implications:

Habit formation is the direct consequence of conditioning. Reading , writing and spelling are formed through conditioning. Often fear and love related responses can be manifested with conditioning. It starts through adjustment of students in school. It continues while studying a subject and is fostered through the environment. Discipline can be effectively taught through conditioning.