



Behaviourism: classical conditioning

You are learning how to...	In the context of...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyse examples of behaviour using psychological concepts Apply approaches to produce psychological explanations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Behaviourism Classical conditioning

For each of these examples of classical conditioning, identify the unconditioned stimulus (**UCS**) the unconditioned response (**UCR**), the neutral (later conditioned) stimulus (**NS/CS**) and the conditioned response (**CR**). Draw a classical conditioning diagram to illustrate each example.

- Watson & Rayner (1920) wanted to see if they could condition a young boy to respond to something in a phobic way. They presented the boy (known as 'Little Albert') with a series of objects in order to find one he did not respond to. They chose a white rat. They then investigated what they could use to provoke a fear/anxiety response in the boy. They found that the sound of a hammer hitting a steel bar just behind him would reliably make him upset. They then paired these two things on a number of occasions. First, the rat would be placed near Albert. Then the metal bar would be struck. After this had been done a few times, the rat was presented on its own. Watson & Rayner found that Albert became upset and anxious without the noise being made. He had learned to respond to the rat with fear and anxiety. Albert also responded with anxiety to a rabbit, a fur coat and some cotton wool.
- Yesterday, Jack's mother took him to the doctors' surgery to have his inoculations. Jack didn't like the injection at all and screamed for a considerable length of time, not stopping until the nurse that gave the injection left the room. This morning, Jack's mother is wearing a white shirt that she has just bought. As soon as Jack catches sight of her he starts screaming and won't be comforted. He doesn't calm down until his mother changes into a different top.
- Every time the school bell rings for break or lunch, Mrs McHale (a teacher) finds that her mouth starts watering.
- Every week Sarah has two psychology lectures with Professor Fakedata, one first thing on Monday morning and one on Wednesday afternoon. Every Sunday Sarah goes out late with her friends; consequently she is often tired on Monday morning and has even occasionally fallen asleep during her psychology lectures. Then one week she finds herself falling asleep during Fakedata's lecture on a Wednesday afternoon even though she has been wide awake all day.

Once you have had your diagrams checked, write an explanation of each conditioning example. Make sure you use the technical terminology in your explanations.

A phenomenon related to classical conditioning is called **stimulus generalization**. This is where a conditioned response is produced by a new stimulus that is similar but not identical to an existing conditioned stimulus. Write a brief explanation of how stimulus generalization is evident in the descriptions of Little Albert and Jack.

If a CS is presented repeatedly in the absence of its corresponding UCS, then the CR starts to disappear. This process is called **extinction**. Suggest how Little Albert's fear response could be extinguished. Which treatment for anxiety disorders would your approach most closely resemble?