

3 Learning: three ways behaviour changes

– Part 1

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

Vocabulary

Write each word three times.

English	Write it 3 times (English)
classical conditioning	_____
operant conditioning	_____
Reinforcement	_____
punishment	_____
Observational learning	_____

Recall

- You know a dog can learn to come when a tin is opened.
- You have kept doing something because it worked last time.
- You have learned a skill by copying someone before trying it yourself.

New ideas

Read these first. Each idea has a short worked example. Then do the Practice below.

■ 1 Learning by association

In **classical conditioning** a neutral signal comes to produce a response because it reliably precedes something that already produces it. The learner does nothing; the association is between two events in the world.

Worked example. A tin opener sounds just before food arrives; after enough repetitions the dog salivates at the sound alone.

■ 2 Learning by consequence

In **operant conditioning** behaviour changes because of what follows it. **Reinforcement** makes a behaviour more likely and **punishment** makes it less likely - defined by their effect, not by whether they are pleasant.

Worked example. A child tidies up and is praised; the tidying becomes more frequent. Praise counts as reinforcement because the behaviour rose.

■ 3 Learning by watching

Observational learning means acquiring a behaviour by watching someone else, without performing it or being reinforced. This is why a behaviour can appear fully formed the first time it is tried.

Worked example. A learner who has watched an experienced cook chop an onion holds the knife correctly on the first attempt.

Watch out: Reinforcement and punishment are defined by what happens to the *behaviour*, not by whether the consequence feels good. A scolding that increases the behaviour is reinforcement, not punishment.

Practice

2.1 Define classical conditioning. [2]

2.2 Define operant conditioning. [2]

2.3 State how reinforcement and punishment are distinguished. [2]

2.4 A child is scolded for interrupting and interrupts more often. State which term applies and why. [2]

2.5 Define observational learning.

[1]

2.6 Explain why observational learning is difficult to explain with reinforcement alone. [2]