

Learning Lab

Activity #1: Your experiences

1. Punishment. How was punishment used in your home? Were your parents more likely to give you something bad (e.g., spanking) or take away something good (e.g., removing privileges)? What factors might explain your parent's choices?

2. Learning. Name a skill that you learned easily and quickly. How did you learn this skill? Why do you think it was easy to learn? Now think of a skill that was difficult to learn. Why was this skill difficult to learn?

3. Reinforcers. Identify some of the primary and secondary reinforcers in your life. What rewards motivate you most?

4. Phobias. Do you have any phobias? How has classical conditioning played a role in these phobias? Can you think of a way to use classical conditioning to reverse your phobia?

5. Learned Helplessness. Everyone has experienced it at some time? Explain what it is and give an example.

Activity 2: "Rats" in real life

Purpose: To demonstrate the technique of operant conditioning

Time: Approximately 15 minutes

Description: This activity is done with the help of a human subject volunteer. The volunteer will be the "rat". You are the "scientists." The goal of the assignment is for the

“scientist” to shape the “rat’s” behavior. Start by deciding what behavior you would like your rat to learn. It should not be something that the person is already doing. It should also be a rather easy task. Here are some examples that you could choose: select a particular location in the room that the “rat” must go to, and a particular behavior. For example, you might decide that the “rat” must go to the couch and sit down, or those they must go to their room and pick up their dirty socks. Once a behavior has been selected, the “rats” are told that you will be trying to show them without words what you want them to do. The object for each you is to get your “rat” to complete the behavior by rewarding successive steps. Each “rat” must listen to their trainer for rewards and punishments. You can decide if you want to say something like good/bad hot/cold. You could decide to clap or to boo. It’s really up to you how you want to train your “rat”. When you say “go,” the “rats” should begin to move about the room. When the “rat” makes movements towards the desired behavior the trainer rewards the rat by saying “good.” If the rat makes movements away from the desired behavior the team can punish the rat by saying “bad.” This activity is similar to the children’s game “hotter and colder” that many students are familiar with. When you have successfully trained your “rat” trade places so that you have the opportunity to be a “rat.”

Write a summary of what happened in your attempt to train your rat:

Activity 3: Classical conditioning

Watch the video clip from the office:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LSHWzOXJDSs>

Preview the following webpage:

<http://psychologized.org/funny-everyday-experiment-ideas-for-classical-conditioning/>

CLASSICAL CONDITIONING LESSON:

1. Miranda notices that her cat scurries into the kitchen as soon as Miranda opens a can of cat food with an electric can opener.

Complete the diagram

_____ (NS) + _____ (US) → _____ (UR)

_____ (CS) → _____ (CR)

Label each of the parts for the above diagram

2. You eat a new food and then get sick because of a flu virus. However, you develop a dislike for the food and feel nauseated whenever you smell it. Fill in the diagram and complete the rest.

_____ (NS) + _____ (US) → _____ (UR)

_____ (CS) → _____ (CR)

3. Every time someone flushes a toilet in the apartment building, the shower becomes very hot and causes the person to jump back. Over time, the person begins to jump back automatically after hearing the flush, before the water temperature changes. Complete the diagram.

_____ (NS) + _____ (US) → _____ (UR)

_____ (CS) → _____ (CR)

4. Your romantic partner always uses the same shampoo. Soon, the smell of that shampoo makes you feel happy. Draw the diagram on your own.

5. You watch a commercial that shows a giant golden star and a picture of a big juicy hamburger. Draw the diagram on your own.

Activity 4: Operant Conditioning: Reinforcement or Punishment?

1. Jamie spansks his child for playing in the street.

2. An "A" on exam that you studied real hard for.
3. Brie cleans her room to keep her parents off her back.
4. Getting a pay check.
5. Reducing anxiety by smoking a cigarette.
6. Embarrassing a student for giving a wrong answer.

Activity 5: Complete a Learning Experiment

<https://www.psychologydiscussion.net/learning/top-9-experiments-on-learning-experimental-psychology/13337>

Explain your experiment and what results you got.