

Psychology 101

Psychology



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Psychology 101: Conditioning An example of classical (Pavlovian) conditioning that I have experienced throughout life is the feeling of nervousness that I get when getting ready to take an exam or quiz. In this case, the unconditioned stimulus is being informed by the professor that the class is about to take a test. The unconditioned response is the feeling of nervousness and nausea that I get in the pit of my stomach after I have been told about the impending test. The conditioned stimulus is the professor walking to the front of the room, stack of test papers in hand. This is a telltale sign that the test is about to begin, which leads to the conditioned response, the nervousness of seeing the professor walk to the front of the room.

An example of operant (Skinnerian) conditioning that I have experienced in my life is my rewarding myself for doing well in school, which prompts me to do my best on homework assignments and tests. The operant, the behavior that is being reinforced, is my doing well in school, which involves doing homework, passing tests, and showing up for all of my classes and other school-related appointments. The reinforcement is the reward I get for accomplishing these goals on a regular basis. In this case, the reinforcement is a night out with friends to enjoy a movie. The reinforcement strengthens my response to do well in school. This is an example of positive reinforcement because a particular behavior strengthens in the hopes of experiencing a positive behavior. I will continue to do well in school because it means that I will get to enjoy free time with my friends to see a movie.