

# Frq 9

Psychology



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FRQ EO 9 Psychologists define learning as the relatively permanent change in knowledge or behavior due to experience. Different psychologists infer that phobias are learnt fear responses resulting from aversive experiences. J. B. Watson, a renowned psychologist conducted his experiment on little Albert with the aim of identifying whether it was possible to classically condition fear responses in an individual. The subject, little Albert was classically conditioned to fear a white mouse after its consistent pairing with a loud sound, which he did not fear initially. In the same way, individuals develop phobias after associating an emotionally neutral object with unpleasantness. For example, Kaylee's past interactions with spiders might have been unpleasant making her associate spiders with fearful thoughts and feelings. Conversely, from a biological perspective, humans are innately hardwired to exhibit fear responses due to the "fright or flight mechanism" controlled by the pituitary gland. During an encounter with a fearful object, the pituitary gland directs the adrenal gland to secrete adrenaline, a hormone that regulates physiological reactions to the particular situation. For example, instinctively, Kaylee might have instinctively fled during her first encounter with a spider, which predetermined her future reactions to spiders.

Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD) is a form of anxiety disorder characterized by an individual's preoccupation with obsessive thoughts, and the display of compulsive behaviors triggered by anxiety provoking stimuli. Obsessive compulsions can be learnt in the same way phobias are learnt (through classical conditioning). Conversely, from a biological perspective, OCD might result from chemical imbalances in the brain. Brain damage during accidents or intra-uterine genetic anomalies might cause these

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imbalances. Individuals afflicted with such a condition struggle to control their impulses. Finally, from a psychoanalytic perspective, past experiences during childhood might trigger OCD in an individual. More often than not, these experiences trigger aversive thoughts and feelings in an individual, which result in pent up frustration. In an attempt to deal with the recurrent thoughts, an individual engages in repetitive, awkward behaviors. For example, Cecil might have had a bad experience when relating to women during childhood (such as rejection or bullying) triggering his preoccupation with cleaning before his girlfriend's visit.

#### Work Cited

Koran, L M. Obsessive-Compulsive and Related Disorders in Adults: A Comprehensive Clinical Guide. Cambridge University Press, 1999. Print.