



SOCIAL LEARNING THEORY

Cindy Deng

Martha Donkor

OUTLINE

- What is Social Learning Theory
- Types of Social Learning Theory
 - Observational Learning
 - Respondent Learning/Classical Learning
 - Operant Learning
- Person-In-Environment
- Group Activities
- Application in Social Learning Theory
- Benefits/Critiques
- Q & A



SOCIAL LEARNING THEORY & BEHAVIORAL SOCIAL WORK

- Social learning theory has its roots in behaviourism
- Behaviourism is the primary paradigm in psychology between 1920s to 1950
- Behaviorism is primarily concerned with observable behavior, as opposed to internal events like thinking and emotion.
- Much of human behavior is learned through **life experiences/environment**
- Believes both overt actions and attitudes (or feelings, opinions, etc.) are similarly brought about largely by one's **learning history**



THE HISTORY OF BEHAVIORISM

- Pavlov (1897) published the results of an experiment on conditioning after originally studying digestion in dogs
- * Watson (1913) launches the behavioral school of psychology (classical conditioning), publishing an article, "Psychology as the Behaviorist Views It".
- * Watson and Rayner (1920) conditioned an orphan called Albert B (aka Little Albert) to fear a white rat.
- * Thorndike (1905) formalized the "Law of Effect".
- * Skinner (1936) wrote "The Behavior of Organisms" and introduced the concepts of operant conditioning and shaping.
- * * B.F. Skinner (1948) published Walden Two in which he described a utopian society founded upon behaviorist principles.
- * Bandura (1963) publishes a book called the "Social Learning Theory and Personality development" which combines both cognitive and behavioral frameworks.
- * Journal of the Experimental Analysis of Behavior (begun in 1958)
- * B.F. Skinner (1971) published his book Beyond Freedom and Dignity, where he argues that free will is an illusion.



THREE MAJOR TYPES OF SOCIAL LEARNING THEORY

- Observational Learning
- Respondent Learning(also called classical learning)
- Operant Learning



OBSERVATIONAL LEARNING



DEFINITION OF OBSERVATIONAL LEARNING

- Known as modeling
- “A form of learning in which an individual acquires behaviors by imitating the actions of one or more other people” (Barker, 2003, p.276).



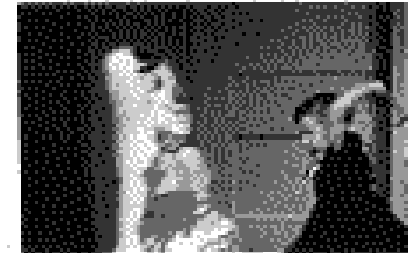
THREE BASIC MODELS OF OBSERVATIONAL LEARNING

- Live model – an actual person demonstrating and acting out the desired behavior
- Verbal instructional model – the individual describes the desired behavior in detail and instructs the participant in how to engage in the behavior.
- A symbolic model – this involves a real or fictional characters who display the behavior by means of the media -in books, films, movies, internet, radio, television etc.



BANDURA'S BOBO DOLL EXPERIMENT

Photons from Bandura's experiment in learned aggressive behavior. After watching an adult behave aggressively toward an inflated doll, the children in Bandura's study imitated many of the aggressive acts of the adult model.



<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xfG55uY2NSU>

FINDINGS OF THE BOBO DOLL EXPERIMENT

- Learning is a function of observation
- We learn to imitate by receiving reinforcement (from others and from ourselves)



FOUR PROCESSES GOVERNING OBSERVATIONAL LEARNING

- Attention: in order for individuals to learn something, they must pay attention to the features of the modeled behavior
- Retaining: Individuals ability to store information is an important aspect of the learning process
- Producing behaviors: this involves actual performance of the observed behavior. Practice makes perfect
- Motivation: An incentive that drives the individual to reproduce the behavior



SUGGESTIONS WHEN USING OBSERVATIONAL LEARNING

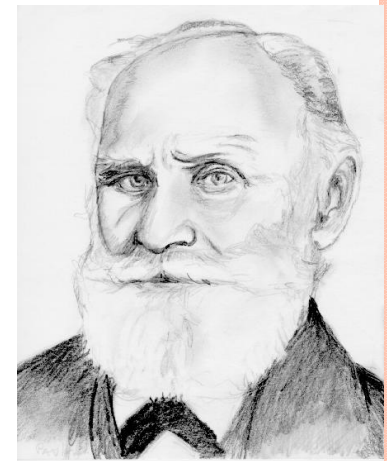
- Use models who are important to the observer
- Reinforce the observer for imitating the model's behavior
- Use multiple models
- Use repeated modeling experiences
- Graduate practice exercises (from less to more difficult)
- Arrange for reinforcement from the natural environment as soon as possible

(Fischer & Gochros, 1975)



RESPONDENT LEARNING/CLASSICAL LEARNING

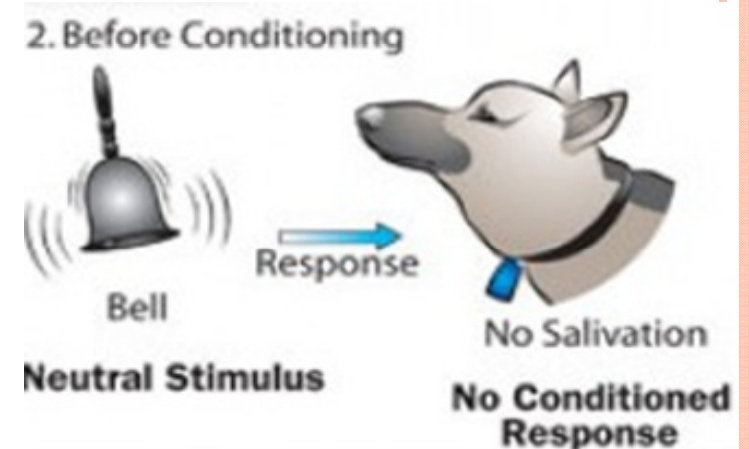
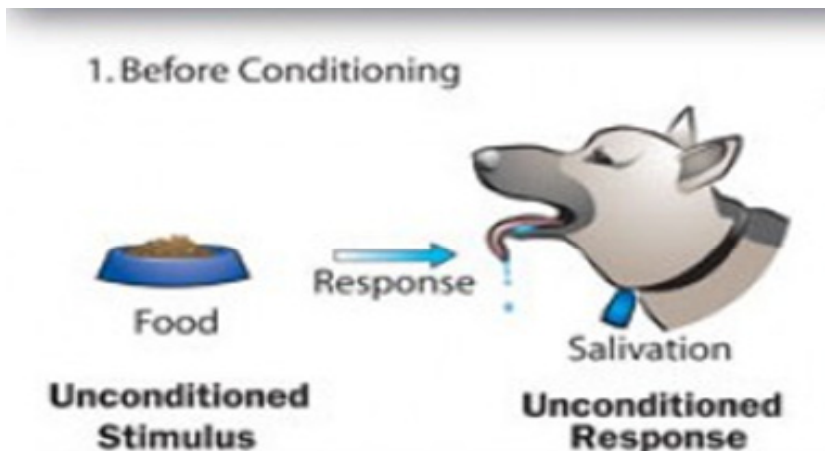
- Also known as Pavlovian conditioning or classical conditioning
- It involves learning a new behavior via the process of **association**
- Two stimuli are linked together to produce a new learned response in a person or animal



THREE STAGES OF RESPONDENT CONDITIONING

○ Stage 1: Before Conditioning:

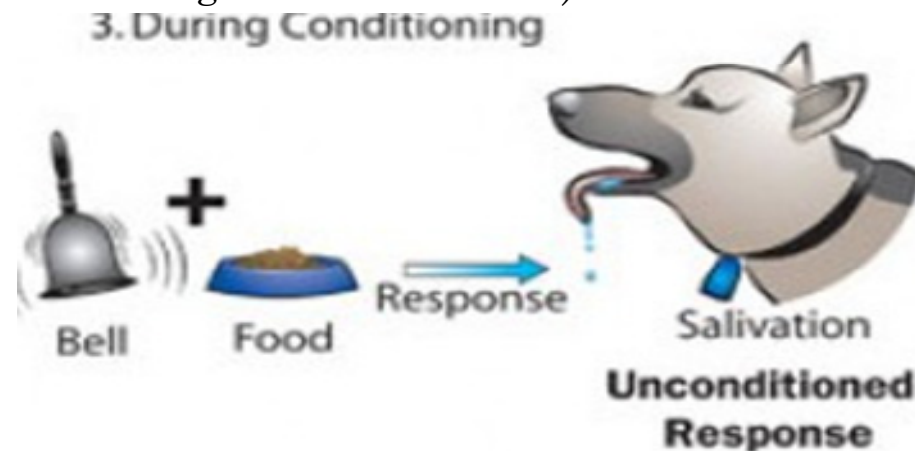
- the **unconditioned stimulus (UCS)** produces an **unconditioned response (UCR)** in an organism. In basic terms this means that a stimulus in the environment has produced a behavior / response which is unlearned (i.e. unconditioned) and therefore is a natural response which has not been taught. In this respect no new behavior has been learned yet.



THREE STAGES OF RESPONDENT CONDITIONING

○ Stage 2: During Conditioning:

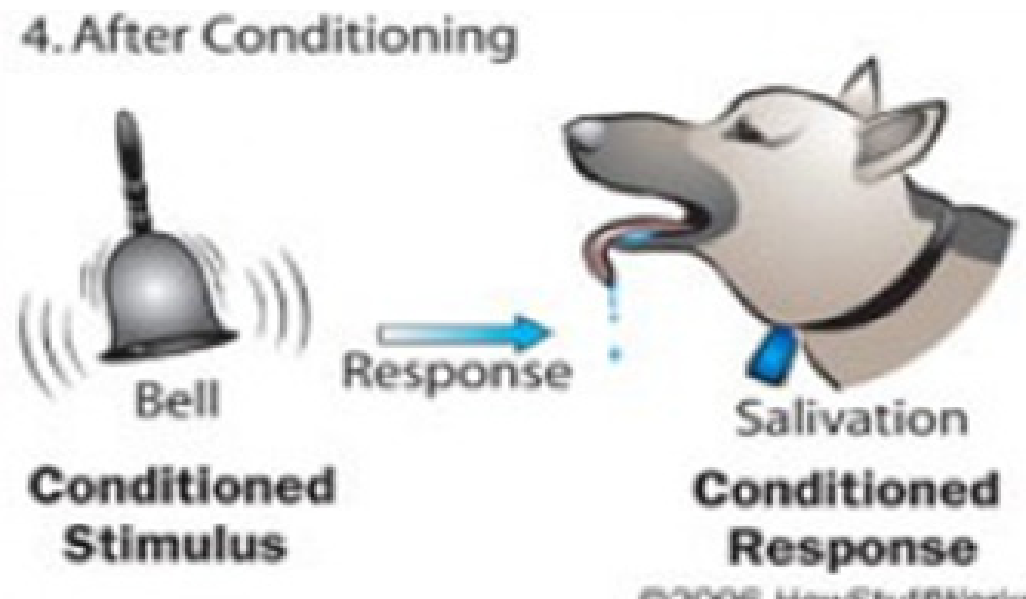
- During this stage a stimulus which produces no response (i.e. neutral) is associated with the unconditioned stimulus at which point it now becomes known as the **conditioned**
- Often during this stage the UCS must be associated with the CS on a number of occasions, or trials, for learning to take place. However, one trial learning can happen on certain occasions when it is not necessary for an association to be strengthened over time (such as being sick after food poisoning or drinking too much alcohol).
- **stimulus (CS).**



THREE STAGES OF RESPONDENT CONDITIONING

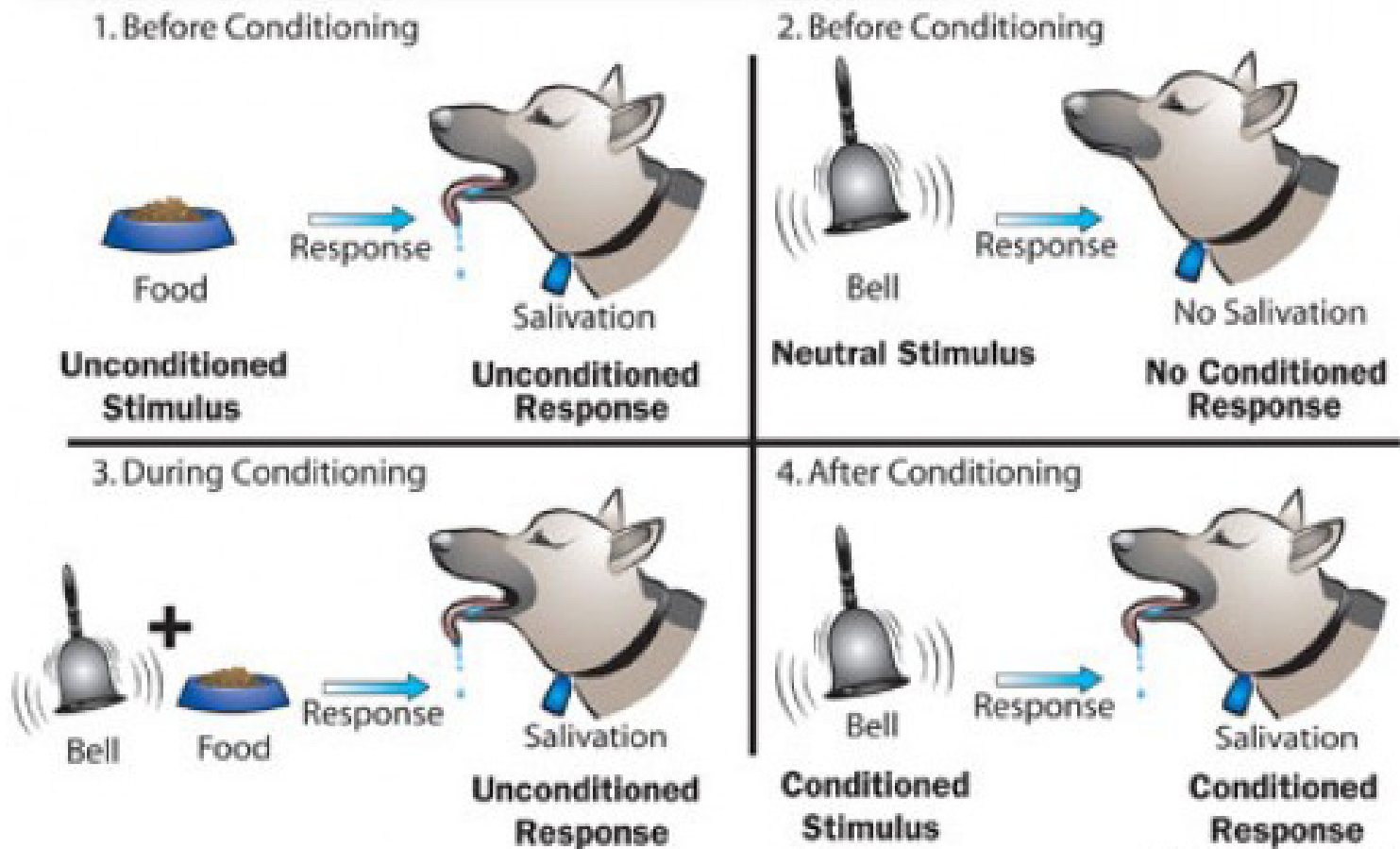
○ Stage 3: After Conditioning:

- Now the conditioned stimulus (CS) has been associated with the unconditioned stimulus (UCS) to create a new conditioned response (CR).



RESPONDENT LEARNING CONTINUED

How Dog Training Works

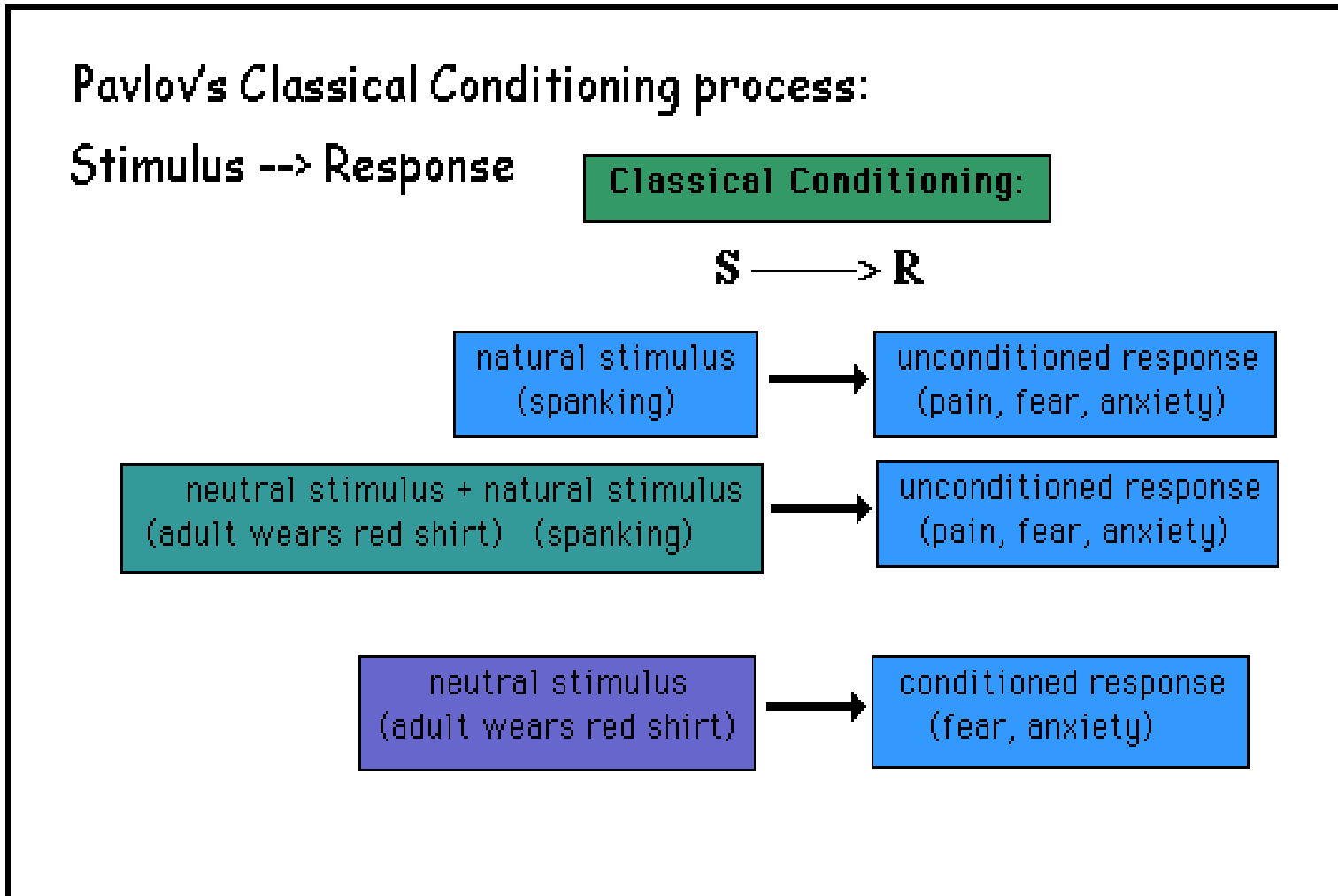


KEY STIMULUS & RESPONSE ELEMENTS

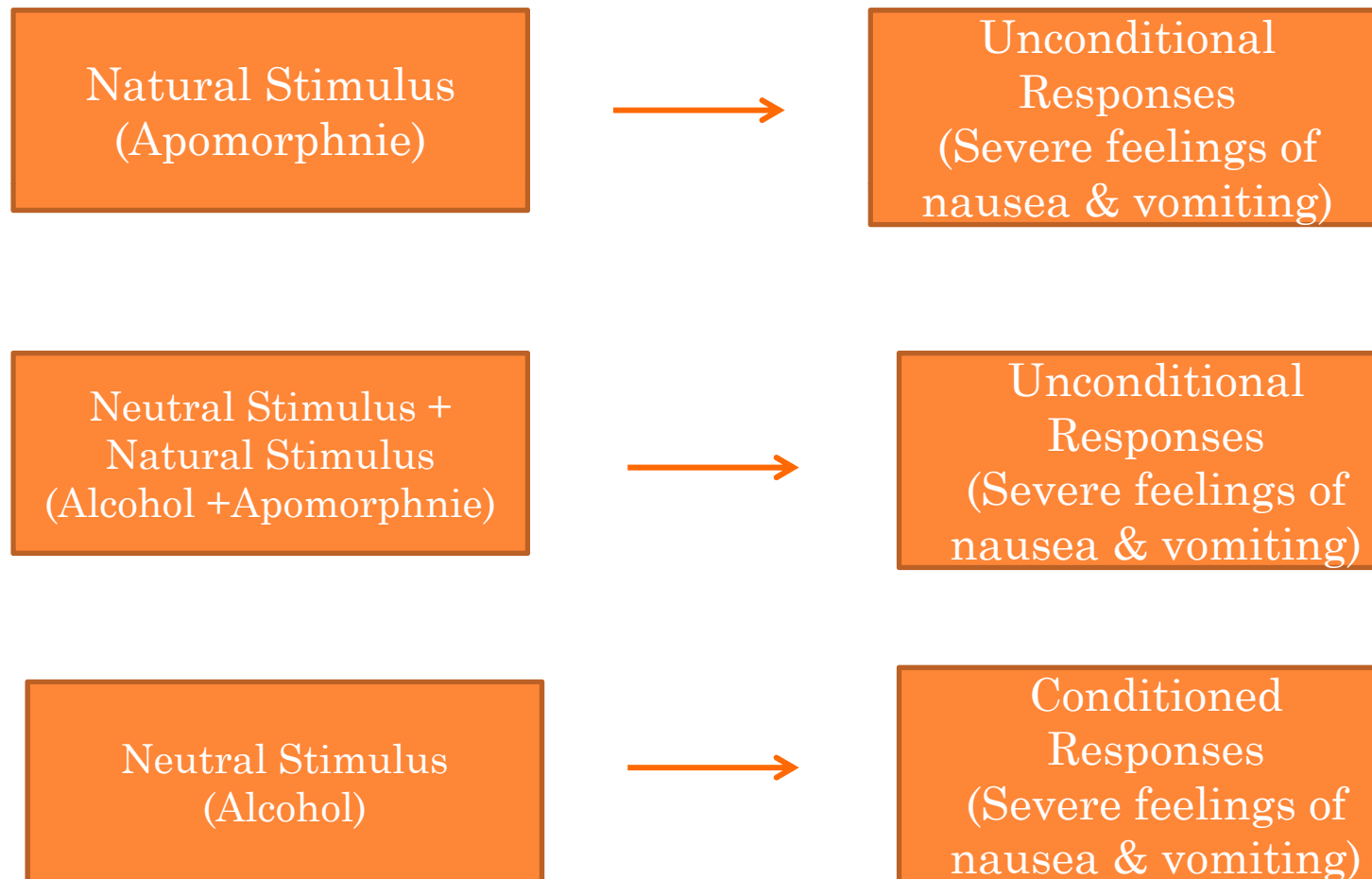
- **Unconditioned stimulus**
- This type of stimulus unconditionally elicits a response, also referred to as a **respondent**. For example, a puff of air to the cornea of the eye is an unconditioned stimulus that produces a blinking response.
- **Unconditioned response**
- This type of response occurs to an unconditioned stimulus without prior conditioning. The blinking response after a puff of air to the cornea of the eye is an example of an unconditioned response.
- **Conditioned stimulus**
- A conditioned stimulus in Pavlovian conditioning is an initially neutral stimulus that is paired with the unconditioned stimulus. For example, a tone sounded just prior to the puff of air being delivered to the cornea of the eye. Without prior training, the tone does not elicit an eye blink: however, after a number of tone-puff pairings, the tone alone comes to elicit the blinking response.
- **Conditioned response**
- Is the response that the conditioned stimulus elicits after it has been repeatedly paired with an unconditioned stimulus. The conditioned response may be similar in form to the unconditioned response. For example, the eye blink to the tone conditioned stimulus may involve the same bodily musculature as the eye blink to the puff of air to the cornea.



EXAMPLE THREE



EXAMPLE: HOW TO TREAT ADDICTION



OPERANT LEARNING



- “Everything we do is determined by our history of **rewards** and **punishments**” - B.F. Skinner
- ‘A type of learning in which behaviors are strengthened or weakened by altering the **consequences** that following them” (Barker, 2003, p. 306)
- Skinner believed that internal thoughts and motivations could not be used to explain behavior. Instead, he suggested, we should look only at the external, observable causes of human behavior

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I_ctJqjlrHA



OPERANT LEARNING CONTINUED

	Punishment (decreasing behavior)	Reinforcement (increasing behavior)
Positive (adding)	adding something to decrease behavior	adding something to increase behavior
Negative (subtracting)	subtracting something to decrease behavior	subtracting something to increase behavior



DIFFERENCES BETWEEN OPERANT LEARNING & RESPONDENT LEARNING

Classical Conditioning

First described by Ivan Pavlov, a Russian physiologist

Involves placing a neutral signal

Focuses on automatic behaviors

Operant Conditioning

First described by B. F. Skinner, an American psychologist

Involves applying reinforcement or punishment after a behavior

Focuses on strengthening or weakening behaviors



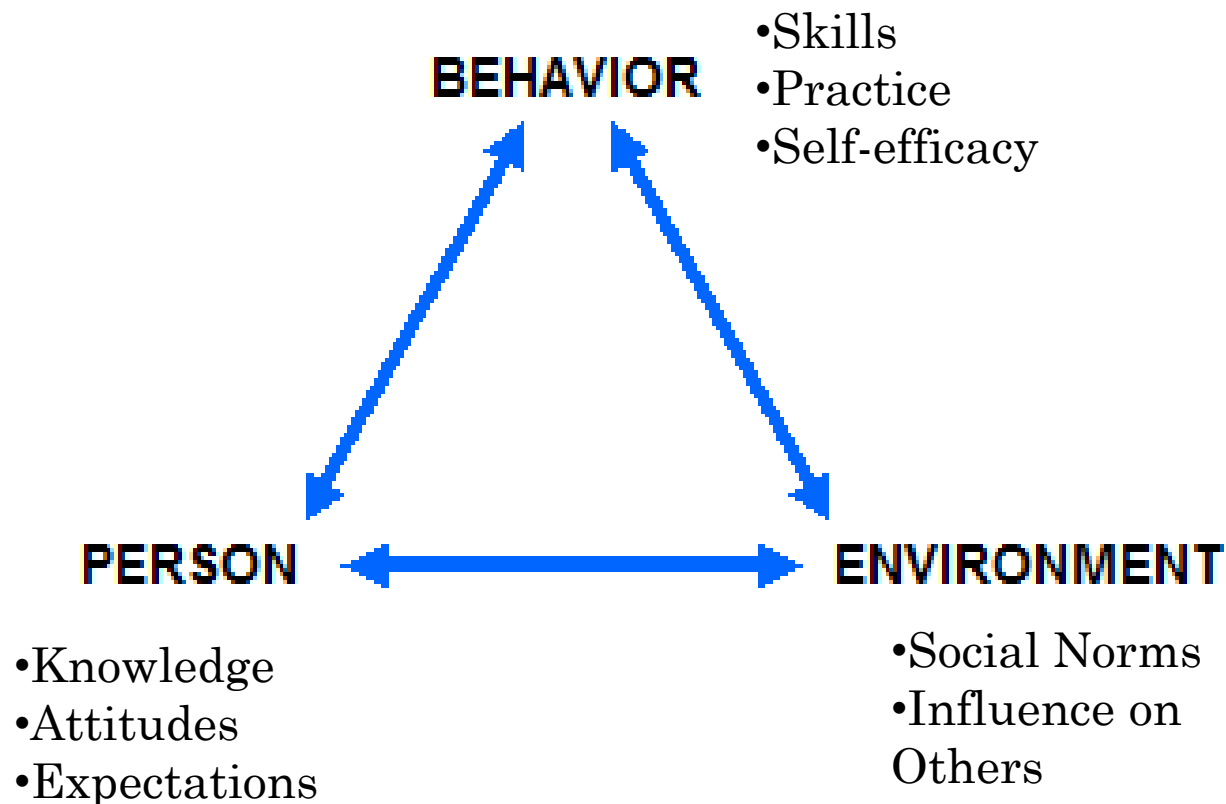
LEARNING THEORY & THE PERSON-IN-ENVIRONMENT PERSPECTIVE OF SOCIAL WORK

- “People are neither driven by inner forces nor buffeted by environmental stimuli”
(Bandura, 1976, p. 11)
- “Social learning theory approaches the explanation of human behavior in terms of a **continuous reciprocal interaction** between cognitive, behavioral, and environmental determinants.” (Bandura, 1976, p. 11)



Cognitive Theory: Social Learning

Reciprocal Determinism



CASE STUDY 1

You are a school social worker. A mom is approaching you because her 15 years old teenage boy has aggressive behaviours at home and at school. He doesn't follow the rules and he goes out with his peers. He tends to listen to his peers rather than his teachers and parents. How would you apply social learning theory into this case.

CASE STUDY 2

- Mary is a 20 years old girl with a phobia of cars. She has a hard time crossing the street or even walking around town. For some reason, Mary has developed the belief that all cars are dangerous and need to be avoided.
- As a behavioural social worker, how would you help this patient to cope with phobia?



SUMMARY

- Observational Learning: Modeling
- Classical Learning: Two stimuli are linked together to produce a new learned response
- Operant Learning: rewards and punishments



CASE STUDY TWO

- Respondent Learning:
 - Flooding technique
 - Put a person in a situation where they would face their phobia as its worst
 - Under controlled conditions and using psychologically-proven relaxation techniques
 - The subject attempts to replace their fear with relaxation
 - In this case
 - Take the girl who is scared of cars
 - Drive her around for hours
 - Help her to use relaxation techniques in order to calm herself
 - Eventually calm herself down and realized her situation was safe
 - Associated a sense of ease with cars



APPLICATIONS IN SOCIAL LEARNING THEORY

- School psychology-create more effective school environment
- Psychological disorders, particularly in the context of behavior modification, eg. anxiety treatment
- Modeling therapy
- Commercials
- Work place
- Criminal Justice System
- Group Marital Therapy
- Alcohol & Addition



BENEFITS IN UTILIZING OBSERVATIONAL LEARNING

- Modeling can provide a faster, more efficient means for teaching new behavior
- Learning can occur without change in behavior
- Describing the consequences of behavior increases appropriate behavior and decreases inappropriate ones



CRITIQUES IN UTILIZING OBSERVATIONAL LEARNING

- Biological theorists argue that the social learning theory completely ignores individual's biological state
- In the Bobo doll experiment, critics have argued that the children were manipulated into responded to the aggressive movie
- There have been many debates over whether or not violence on television causes aggressive behavior in children. Many studies have indicated that television does not lead to aggressive behavior



BENEFITS OF UTILIZING OPERANT LEARNING & RESPONDENT LEARNING

- Have numerous practical applications in everyday training and education
 - Eg. Animal training routinely uses conditioning, with food treats as a form of positive reinforcement for good behavior
- Without a reward, or positive reinforcement, the targeted object would have no motivation to continue the good behavior



CRITICISM IN UTILIZING OPERANT LEARNING & RESPONDENT LEARNING

- Only focus on external, observable causes of human behavior, ignore the internal thoughts and motivations could impact personal behaviors
- It seems to deal strictly with distinct behavior: good, and bad. It seems as if there may be no in between
- Failure to show adequate generalizability in human behavior (Boulding, 1984).



RESOURCES

- Bandura, A. (1977). *Social Learning Theory*. General Learning Press.
- Kumpulainen, K., Wray, D. (2002). *Classroom Interaction and Social Learning: From Theory to Practice*. New York, NY: RoutledgeFalmer.
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- Ost, L.G., & Hugdahl, K. (1981). Acquisition of phobias and anxiety response patterns in clinical patients. *Behaviour Research and Therapy*, 19, 439-447.

