BEH Learning Theory
By Katie Pelkey

Definition of Learning: a ***behavior has changed*** as the result of environmental occurrences /experience.

Mechanism of Learning:
Classical conditioning - unconditioned stimulus → unconditioned stimulus that causes a conditioned response
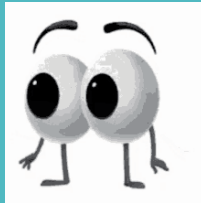
Operant conditioning - reinforcement when presentation of stimulus is followed by correct response

Ex: Giving a child a lollipop each time they go to the bathroom on the toilet is an example of operant conditioning.

Ex: Training a dog to associate a bell with the presentation of food is an example of classical conditioning.

UCS= unconditioned stimulus; NS=neutral stimulus; CS= conditioned resposne

Assumptions
1. Principles of learning should apply equally to different behaviors and to a variety of animal species
2. Learning processes studied most objectively when they focus on stimuli/responses
3. Internal processes excluded/minimalized
4. Learning involves a **observable** change
5. Organisms are born as blank slates
6. Learning is largely the result of environmental events

Vocabulary and Key Principles
1. **Stimulus:** event/object that prompts behavior
2. **Response**: observable behavior
3. **Reinforcement**: leads to an increase in response (ex: a treat/reward)
4. **Punishment**: leads to a decrease in response (ex: removal of a treat)
5. **Chaining**: teaching a sequence of behaviors
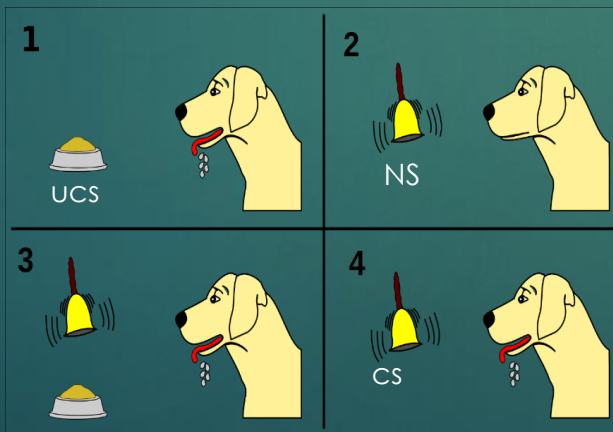6. **Shaping**: successively moving the learner closer to desired behavior

Theorists & Key Contributions

Ivan Pavlov: invented theory of Classical Conditioning

B.F. Skinner: invented theory of Operant Conditioning

J. B Watson: popularized Behaviorism, but thought mental processes could not be ignored

Thorndike: posited that responses to a situation that are followed by satisfaction are strengthened; responses that are followed by discomfort are weakened.