

Learning Approach - Mark Scheme

Q1.

[AO1 = 3]

3 marks: reinforcement is outlined accurately, with clarity and coherence.

2 marks: reinforcement is outlined with some detail, clarity and/or coherence.

1 mark: there is some relevant outline of Skinner's research into reinforcement.

Possible Content:

- detail of procedures of Skinner's research using the Skinner box and the conditioning of lever pressing in rats. Credit alternative research such as conditioning of pigeons to play ping pong
- knowledge of Skinnerian concepts in the context of operant conditioning experiments: reinforcement (positive and negative), extinction, spontaneous recovery, generalisation, discrimination, schedules of reinforcement and behaviour-shaping
- detail of operant conditioning theory – voluntary responses, consequences of actions.

Credit other relevant information.

Q2.

[AO2 = 4]

Up to two marks each for knowledge and explanation of each relevant strength.

Maximum of one mark for knowledge of one or two strength(s) / feature(s) that are not explained or elaborated appropriately.

Likely answers: focus on experimental methodology; scientific aspect of the approach; universal laws of learning; provides explanations for a range of behaviours eg development; provides explanations for a specified behaviour eg phobias; contributes to the nature-nurture debate; approach can be applied to behavioural problems eg token economy etc.

Q3.

Please note that the AOs for the new AQA Specification (Sept 2015 onwards) have changed. Under the new Specification the following system of AOs applies:

- AO1 knowledge and understanding
- AO2 application (of psychological knowledge)
- AO3 evaluation, analysis, interpretation.

[AO1 = 2, AO2 = 3]

AO1

Up to two marks for knowledge of assumptions of the behaviourist approach, behaviourist research and concepts. Content might include: behaviour learned from experience / blank slate; classical and / or operant conditioning; unconditioned stimulus; unconditioned response; conditioned stimulus and response; pairing / association between the two stimuli; focus on stimulus-response associations; consequences of behaviour; reinforcement (positive and negative); punishment; repetition of response; scientific approach / experimental approach.

These may be embedded in the discussion.

AO2

Up to three marks to be awarded for discussion based on detail.

Has value because: success of behaviour therapy, including aversion therapy, systematic desensitization; behaviour modification; scientific approach to understanding human behaviour, etc.

Limited value because: human behaviour is more complex than animal behaviour; consciousness, reflective thought and / or emotions affect how humans think and behave; mechanically responding to a stimulus, effects of reinforcement and punishment on behaviour may be more characteristic of animals than humans; references to reductionism and determinism.

Credit use of relevant evidence / examples of behaviours / topic areas.

The question does not ask for reference to the stem. Full AO2 marks can be awarded without reference to the stem and research using animals.

Q4.

[AO1 = 1]

One mark for knowledge of the term.

Imitation means copying behaviour (of a role model). Do not credit 'copying' alone.

Credit use of an example to describe imitation.

Q5.

[AO3 = 6]

Level	Marks	Description
3	5 – 6	Discussion of two limitations is clear and effective. The answer is coherent and well organised with effective use of specialist terminology.
2	3 – 4	Discussion of two limitations is mostly effective although one or both lack explanation. The answer is mostly clear and organised, with appropriate use of specialist terminology. OR One limitation is discussed at top of Level 3.
1	1 – 2	At least one limitation is presented. Discussion lacks detail

		/ explanation. Specialist terminology is either absent or inappropriately used. OR One limitation is discussed at Level 2.
	0	No relevant content.

Limitations – possible content:

- difficulty demonstrating cause and effect – although Bandura research controlled variables and demonstrated behaviour was imitated it is difficult to show cause and effect in real life
- sees behaviour as environmentally determined whereas some behaviours may be innate
- mediating cognitive factors have to be inferred so cannot measure extent of their influence
- SLT does not explain cognitive processes, leaving this to cognitive psychologists
- can explain learning of outward behaviours, SLT is not so able to explain the learning of abstract notions, eg fairness, justice etc which cannot be observed directly
- credit comparison with other theories where presented in terms of a limitation.

Credit other relevant limitations.

Q6.

[AO2 = 3]

Up to 3 marks for application of classical conditioning to the scenario.

Credit reference to the following points:

- one mark for reference to balloon as a neutral stimulus when ‘unburst’
- one mark for the reflex: normally a loud noise / bang causes fear
- one mark for the association between the balloon and bang / bursting
- one mark for the ‘new learning’ that balloons alone now elicit a fear response.

Example of a correct diagram:

Neutral stimulus	=	no response
Ball oon		
UCS		UCR
Loud noise	=	Fear
CS + UCS		UCR
Balloon Loud noise	=	Fear
CS		CR
Balloon	=	Fear

Allow a maximum of 2 marks for a correct diagram with no explanation.

Q7.**[AO2 = 3]**

One mark for a suggestion. Answers must include a role model and the opportunity of seeing:

- positive consequences for the model(s) for performing the desired behaviour, eg allowing the children in the queue to exit first and / or praising them / giving them privileges / stars / edible rewards, in front of all the class, for their orderly conduct.
- negative consequences for undesired behaviour eg show the class a video of children being punished for pushing to the front of the queue.

Two marks for explaining the suggestion in the context of social learning theory. Behaviour seen to be rewarded / reinforced will be repeated; or behavior seen to be punished will be avoided; child learns by observing a model and consequences for the model; child thinks that the consequences will apply to him / her on a future occasion; role of cognitive processes, eg perception of a reward and expectation of similar.

Q8.**[AO1 = 3 AO2 = 5]**

Level	Marks	Description
4	7 – 8	Outline of Pavlov's research is generally accurate. Application to fear of school is thorough and effective. The answer is clear, coherent and well focused. Specialist terminology is used effectively. Minor detail and/or expansion sometimes lacking.
3	5 – 6	Outline of Pavlov's research is evident. Application to fear of school is apparent and mostly effective. The answer is mostly clear and organised. Specialist terminology mostly used effectively. Lacks focus in places.
2	3 – 4	Outline of Pavlov's research is present. Any application to fear of school is only partly effective. The answer lacks clarity, accuracy and organisation in places. Specialist terminology used inappropriately on occasions.
1	1 – 2	Outline of Pavlov's research is very limited. Application to fear of school is limited, poorly focused or absent. The answer as a whole lacks clarity, has many inaccuracies and is poorly organised. Specialist terminology is either absent or inappropriately used.
	0	No relevant content.

Possible content:

- Detail of Pavlov's classical conditioning experiments into salivation reflex in dogs

- Knowledge of Pavlovian concepts in the context of Pavlov's experiments: unconditioned stimulus; conditioned stimulus; unconditioned response; conditioned response
- Detail of Pavlovian theory – learning by association; temporal association/contiguity

Possible Application:

- School is initially a neutral stimulus
- A fear-arousing event (the unconditioned stimulus) occurs whilst the child is at school eg being bullied in the playground
- Initially the child experiences fear which is an unconditioned response to the fear-arousing event (eg bullying)
- The fear-arousing event and school are paired together in time (are contiguous)
- Eventually the school becomes a conditioned stimulus which will elicit fear (now a conditioned response) even when the original fear-arousing event is not present

Credit any sensible application explaining fear of school in Pavlovian terms.

Full credit may be given for an appropriately labelled diagram with some verbal description of the process.

Q9.

[AO1 = 6 AO2 = 2 AO3 = 4]

Level	Marks	Description
4	10 – 12	Knowledge of social learning theory is accurate and generally well detailed. Application is appropriate. Evaluation is effective. Minor detail and/or expansion is sometimes lacking. The answer is clear and coherent. Specialist terminology is used effectively.
3	7 – 9	Knowledge of social learning theory is evident but there are occasional inaccuracies/omissions. There is some attempt at application. There is some effective evaluation. The answer is mostly clear and organised. Specialist terminology is mostly used appropriately.
2	4 – 6	Limited knowledge of social learning theory is present. Focus is mainly on description. Any evaluation is of limited effectiveness. The answer lacks clarity, accuracy and organisation in places. Specialist terminology is used inappropriately on occasions. OR knowledge at level 4 can be awarded 6 marks.
1	1 – 3	Knowledge of social learning theory is very limited. Evaluation is limited, poorly focused or absent. The answer as a whole lacks clarity, has many inaccuracies and is

		poorly organised. Specialist terminology is either absent or inappropriately used.
	0	No relevant content.

Possible content:

- learning takes place in a social context
- learning occurs via observation of the behaviour of others and the rewards or punishments received for the behaviour – vicarious reinforcement
- other people act as models and the characteristics of models influence the likelihood of imitation of the behaviour
- learning and performance are not the same activity
- mediational processes, eg attention, retention, motivation, reproduction, affect production of behaviour
- reciprocal determinism and the concept of free will
- concept of identification.

Possible application:

- Samira is commenting on how John's little sister has copied how John uses a mobile phone. This illustrates any number of possible SLT behaviours: observational learning, imitation, modelling, identification and even internalisation
- John is commenting on how behaviour can be learned by indirect reinforcement/vicarious reinforcement – seeing someone punished for a behaviour decreases the likelihood of that behaviour being imitated.

Possible evaluation:

- use of evidence to support social learning theory, eg Bobo doll study
- benefits of the experimental approach to investigate social learning theory and issues with experimental evidence that might affect the validity of the results and therefore the conclusions drawn
- focus on human traits of consciousness and rationality which cannot be demonstrated with animal research, addresses the influence of mediational processes on learning – neglected by behaviourists
- provides explanations that relate to behaviours such as aggression and intellectual development
- does not pay much attention to the impact of biological, heredity or maturational factors on behaviour, evidence from these areas of research does show they do have an impact.
- credit valid comparison with other approaches.

Credit other relevant information.

Note: evaluation of evidence is only credit-worthy if linked back to social learning theory.

Q10.**[AO1 = 6 AO3 = 10]**

Level	Mark	Description
4	13-16	Knowledge of the behaviourist approach is accurate and generally well detailed. Comparison with the biological approach is thorough and effective. Minor detail and / or expansion of argument is sometimes lacking. The answer is clear, coherent and focused. Specialist terminology is used effectively.
3	9-12	Knowledge of the behaviourist approach is evident but there are occasional inaccuracies / omissions. Comparison with the biological approach is mostly effective. The answer is mostly clear and organised but occasionally lacks focus. Specialist terminology is used appropriately.
2	5-8	Limited knowledge of the behaviourist approach is present. Focus is mainly on description. Any comparison with the biological approach is of limited effectiveness. The answer lacks clarity, accuracy and organisation in places. Specialist terminology is used inappropriately on occasions.
1	1-4	Knowledge of the behaviourist approach is very limited. Comparison with the biological approach is limited, poorly focused or absent. The answer as a whole lacks clarity, has many inaccuracies and is poorly organised. Specialist terminology is either absent or inappropriately used.
	0	No relevant content.

Possible content - outline:

- basic assumptions of the behaviourist approach
- the concept / theory of classical conditioning
- Pavlov's research
- the concept / theory of operant conditioning
- Skinner's research.

Possible comparisons:

- focus on environmental causes and experience vs focus on internal influences (nature vs nurture). Discussion of the interactionist approach
- approaches to treatment (e.g. flooding vs drug therapy)
- use of scientific methods
- the issue of determinism
- the issue of reductionism
- use of animal experiments and extrapolation
- contrasting implications (e.g. blame, responsibility and social stigma).

Note - Use of topic examples to illustrate and elaborate on comparison points should be credited.

Credit other relevant information.

[16]

Q11.

[AO1 = 6 AO3 = 10]

Level	Marks	Description
4	13 – 16	Knowledge of contribution / s is accurate and generally well detailed. Discussion is thorough and effective. Answer is clear, coherent and focused on contributions to understanding human behaviour. Specialist terminology is used effectively. Minor detail and / or expansion of argument sometimes lacking.
3	9 – 12	Knowledge of contribution / s is evident and there is some reference to the understanding of human behaviour. There are occasional inaccuracies. Discussion is apparent and mostly effective. The answer is mostly clear and organised. Specialist terminology mostly used effectively. Lacks focus in places.
2	5 – 8	Knowledge of contribution / s is present. Focus is mainly on description. Any discussion is only partly effective. The answer lacks clarity, accuracy and organisation in places. Specialist terminology used inappropriately on occasions.
1	1 – 4	Knowledge of contribution / s is limited. Discussion is limited, poorly focused or absent. The answer as a whole lacks clarity, has many inaccuracies and is poorly organised. Specialist terminology either absent or inappropriately used.
	0	No relevant content.

Content, possible contributions:

- gave appreciation of how behaviour is learnt and environmentally determined
- large scale data gathering and generalisation allowed for development of laws and principles
- gave us theories of learning and laws of learning – classical and operant conditioning theories
- emphasised importance of consequences, ie behaviour that is rewarded likely to be repeated
- emphasised role of reinforcement and punishment – strengthens or weakens learning
- insistence on objectivity and study of overt behaviour – raising psychology's scientific status.

Credit other relevant contributions.

Discussion of possible contributions:

- strict scientific methods, objectivity, controlled research, verifiable findings led to raised status of psychology but meant that many aspects of human behaviour could not be studied
- implications, eg development of laws and principles enabled prediction and control of behaviour and how these apply to human behaviour
- usefulness for aspects of human behaviour, eg therapy, classroom management etc
- reductionist approach focusing on lower level of explanation, eg S-R links / associations therefore lacks meaning when it comes to complex human behaviours
- focus just on behaviour neglected the whole person, eg in treatment using conditioning only
- strongly deterministic – human behaviour is environmentally determined – what of free will?
- research mainly with animals therefore generalisation to human behaviour could be limited
- discussion about the balance between reliability and validity in behaviourist research
- ethical issues, eg as applied to control of human behaviour
- comparison with what other approaches offer in explanations of human behaviour.

Credit other relevant strengths and limitations.