

Tapescripts

These materials have been designed to complement *Teaching Communication, Skills and Competencies for the International Workplace*, [Routledge](#).

Introductory Unit

Extension Task E-IU.1 = Behaviourism

Pavlovian conditioning, also known as classical conditioning, was discovered by physiologist Ivan Pavlov during the 1890s.

Pavlov was interested in salivation in dogs as they were being fed. He predicted that dogs would salivate in response to the food placed in front of them.

However, he noticed that the dogs in his experiment would begin to salivate as they heard the footsteps of his assistant when he was bringing them the food.

Pavlov thus discovered that a stimulus represented by a particular object (e.g., a bell) or event (e.g., his assistant's footsteps), which the dogs learned to associate with food, would trigger the same response, that is an increase in the amount of salivation. This formed the basis of what we now call "Pavlovian Conditioning".

But what is Pavlovian Conditioning? Well, in Pavlov's experiments, the dogs salivated when they were presented with the food. The food was the **unconditioned stimulus** and salivation was an **unconditioned response**.

Once this link between the unconditioned stimulus and the **unconditioned response** had been established, Pavlov sounded a bell (a **neutral stimulus**) before giving the food. After a few times the neutral stimulus was used, the dogs salivated when they heard the bell even when no food was presented to them. The bell had become the **conditioned stimulus** and salivation had become the **conditioned response**.

In behaviourist terms and in relation to learning, Pavlovian conditioning translated into "learning by association" which takes place after enough repetition of the stimulus-response sequence.

If a student's response to a particular stimulus is the right or expected response, then he or she is praised. This is known as **positive reinforcement**.

But if the response is wrong or not what the teacher expected, then the student is corrected. This is called **negative reinforcement**.

Repetition by drilling and substitution drills are typical exercises based on Pavlovian conditioning and they are often found in behaviourist teaching approaches.