**Q1.**

Annie feeds her newborn baby regularly and they have formed a strong bond. According to the learning theory of attachment, before any attachment had been formed, the milk Annie gives her baby is best described as:

Shade **one** box only.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **A** | a conditioned stimulus. |  |
| **B** | a neutral stimulus. |  |
| **C** | an unconditioned response. |  |
| **D** | an unconditioned stimulus. |  |

**(Total 1 mark)**

**Q2.**

Annie feeds her newborn baby regularly and they have formed a strong bond. According to the learning theory of attachment, now she has formed an attachment with her baby, Annie is best described as:

Shade **one** box only.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **A** | a conditioned stimulus. |  |
| **B** | a neutral stimulus. |  |
| **C** | an unconditioned response. |  |
| **D** | an unconditioned stimulus. |  |

**(Total 1 mark)**

**Q3.**

Outline the learning theory of attachment.

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**(Total 4 marks)**

**Q4.**

Briefly evaluate learning theory as an explanation of attachment.

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**(Total 4 marks)**

**Q5.**

Learning theory provides one explanation of attachment. It suggests that attachment will be between an infant and the person who feeds it. However, the findings of some research studies do not support this explanation.

Outline research findings that challenge the learning theory of attachment.

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**(Total 4 marks)**

Mark schemes

**Q1.**

**[AO2 = 1]**

**D** – an unconditioned stimulus.

**[1]**

**Q2.**

**[AO2 = 1]**

**A** – a conditioned stimulus.

**[1]**

**Q3.**

**[AO1 = 4]**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Level** | **Marks** | **Description** |
| 2 | 3-4 | Knowledge of the learning theory of attachment is clear and detailed. The answer is generally coherent with effective use of specialist terminology. |
| 1 | 1-2 | Knowledge of the learning theory of attachment is limited or muddled. There may be limited reference to how it accounts for attachment. Specialist terminology is not always used appropriately or is absent. |
|  | 0 | No relevant content. |

**Possible content:**

•   emphasises the importance of food in attachment – ‘cupboard love’

•   the role of classical conditioning – the caregiver (eg mother) starts as a neutral stimulus (NS), over time becomes associated with ‘food’ and produces the conditioned response (CR) of pleasure

•   role of operant conditioning – crying leads to a response from the caregiver (eg feeding), the caregiver receives negative reinforcement when the crying stops

•   hunger is a primary drive, attachment is a secondary drive – learned by an association between the caregiver and satisfaction

•   credit reference to stimulus generalisation (eg. multiple attachments) if used to help explain learning theory of attachment.

•   credit reference to other learning theories, eg SLT.

Credit other valid points.

Note

•   Response can gain full credit for just outlining classical OR operant theory of attachment.

•   Learning theory per se is **not creditworthy**, answers must be shaped towards explaining attachment.

**[4]**

**Q4.**

**[AO3 = 4]**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Level** | **Marks** | **Description** |
| 2 | 3 – 4 | Evaluation is relevant, well explained and focused on attachment, rather than generic criticism of learning theory. The answer is generally coherent with effective use of specialist terminology. |
| 1 | 1 – 2 | Evaluation is relevant although there is limited explanation and / or limited focus on attachment. Specialist terminology is not always used appropriately.  Award one mark for answers consisting of a single point briefly stated or muddled. |
|  | 0 | No relevant content. |

**Possible evaluation points:**

•        strengths: plausible and scientific as founded in established theory, ie likely that association between the provision of needs and the person providing those needs can lead to strong attachments; reinforcers clearly delineated

•        limitations: reductionist – the focus on basic processes (S-R links, reinforcement) too simplistic to explain complex attachment behaviours; environmentally deterministic such that early learning determines later attachment behaviours; theory founded in animal research and problems of inferring on the basis of animal studies

•        evidence used to support or refute the explanation: Schaffer and Emerson – more than half of infants were not attached to the person primarily involved in their physical care; Harlow – rhesus monkeys attach for contact comfort rather than food; sensitive responsiveness may be more influential in forming attachments (Ainsworth); infants are active seekers of stimulation, not passive responders (Schaffer)

•        comparison with alternative explanations, eg Bowlby’s theory.

Credit other relevant evaluation points.

Methodological evaluation of evidence must be linked to the explanation to gain credit.

**Q5.**

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.

**AO2 = 4**

Schaffer and Emerson found less than half of infants had a primary attachment to the person who usually fed them. Harlow’s research suggested monkeys became attached to the soft surrogate mother rather than the one who fed it. Lorenz found goslings imprinted on the first moving object they saw.  
Credit any relevant research findings.  
Maximum 1 mark for identifying relevant research eg imprinting, Harlow’s monkeys.  
Further marks for accurate outline of relevant research findings.