

Summer Winrotte
EDCI 531: Discussion Questions – Week 2

Week 2 – Part 1

Prompt:

To begin this week, let's shift our focus to a behavioral viewpoint. Let's begin by dividing the various topics into teams, so we can cover this huge area of study collaboratively!

1. Read and study the chapter (and any related material that you may have access to).

2. I have divided the Part I content into **four broad categories**. _

****Strengthening a response (pgs. 36-40) - Group A**

Weakening a response (pgs. 40-44) - Group B

Shaping, chaining, & fading (pgs. 44-49) - Group C

Schedules of reinforcement (pgs. 49-52) – Group D

3. In the category group forum you picked, reflect on what this principle(s) means. Think about questions such as "**Why is this important?**"; "**Of what value does this principle have for me?**".

Response:

When a behavior (response) is not occurring as desired it is either not exhibited as often as one would like or it is exhibited more than one would like. In the instance of the behavior not being exhibited as often as desired, the intended outcome would be to strengthen the response, meaning to cause the desired behavior to occur more often. In the instance of the behavior being exhibited more than one would like, the intended outcome would be to weaken the response, meaning to cause the desired behavior to occur less often. Positive and negative reinforcers are foundational to the principle of strengthening a response, or the desired behavior occurring more often. **Positive reinforcement** takes place when a good (satisfying) **stimulus is added** upon a specific/desired behavior **to increase the frequency of the specific/desired behavior**. Standridge (2017) offers some K-12 related positive reinforcement examples. They are: smiling at students after a correct response, commending students for their work, selecting them for a special project, and praising students' ability to parents. Driscoll (2005) offers some other examples, such as receiving email as reinforcement of the office manager's use of the intranet and receiving bonus pay as positive reinforcement to going above a stated quota on an assembly line. **Negative reinforcement** takes place when a *bad* (aversive) **stimulus is subtracted** upon a specific/desired behavior **to increase the frequency of the specific/desired behavior**. Standridge (2017) offers some K-12 related negative reinforcement examples. They are: obtaining a score of 80% or higher makes the final exam optional, submitting all assignments on time results in the lowest grade being dropped, and perfect attendance is rewarded with a "homework pass." Some other examples include a parent who stops nagging their child about body odor because the child starts showering regularly (the nagging is the stimulus that is subtracted) and a parent who stops making their child attend an after school homework club because the child starts completing their homework (the forced attendance of the homework club is subtracted).

According to Driscoll (2005), the principles that Skinner formulated "to account for the strengthening or weakening of existing behaviors" are "often applied to the management of learning and behavior" (p.35). It is often necessary to help focus the behavior/responses of the people within a work environment or sphere of influence. In order to garner the desired increase or decrease in recognized behaviors/responses it is necessary to use positive or negative reinforcers. It is important to ask questions in order to gauge the most appropriate and effective reinforcers to strengthen the behaviors/responses. The questions might include: What precisely may serve as reinforcers? Or How does one determine which reinforcer to choose for a given situation? Reinforcements are either define as primary, biologically determined, or conditioned, through association with a primary reinforcer.

For me specifically, I began thinking about homework completion. My classroom is set up in a pseudo-flipped style. For about two-thirds of the year's units the students watch an 8-10 minute lesson videos at home while following along with a note-guide (this is doable without internet access thanks to Microsoft OneNote and Office365 video). The flipped model is a necessity since I must teach two sets of standards, grade 7 math and Pre-Algebra standards, to my students in one academic year (I am skipping them a grade level in math). If the students do not watch an introductory video at home, we will never have enough class time to learn **and practice** the material. The problem occurs when I have four to six students who do not watch the videos as they are instructed. I need to strengthen the response of completing their video notes. I have tried many types of reinforcement and consequences which have failed; however, one positive reinforcement strategy worked. Larry is one of my students who was not completing his video/notes as assigned. Some of the classroom behavior I noted included having trouble staying on task for more than 5 minutes at a time, turning around in his seat to talk to the people behind him or across the room, and general misbehavior (not due to being defiant, rather being ignorant to his actions). I made several calls home to his mom, and additionally his mom came in for a face-to-face conference. It did not mater the intervention or the consequence, Larry's video/notes completion did not improve. Finally, after weeks of trial and error, I stumbled upon the type of reinforcement that mattered to Larry. Larry needed public approval by his peers. Larry was far less concerned about adult approval. Larry's response was strengthened when I encouraged his peers to give him a high-five or say 'great job' for completing the video/notes. Larry looks forward to this moment of peer approval and continues to complete assigned videos/notes. (The student name was changed for privacy.)

This chapter took me twice as long to read as I expected. I kept pausing and pondering various work/school environments and situations I have experienced or have heard about through a family member's experience. In one instance specifically, I had an overwhelming desire to speak to the owner of the business where my dad works to have a conversation about his company's morale and why his staff might not be responding as he desires. How many companies would benefit from this chapter?...

Driscoll, Marcy P. (2005). *Psychology of Learning for Instruction*. Boston: Pearson.

Standridge, M. (2017). Behaviorism. In *Emerging Perspectives on Learning, Teaching, and Technology*. Retrieved from <http://epltt.coe.uga.edu/index.php?title=Behaviorism>

Week 2 – Part 2

Prompt:

1. Please read the Mager/Pipe booklet (especially focus on section III pgs., 41-89).
2. Discuss whether you think the principles and examples given within that booklet are closely associated with the **key principles of the behavioral viewpoint?** Why or why not?
3. Highlight your response with **examples** from the booklet or your own experience. Compare the Mager/Pipe work with the examples given by Driscoll (see pages 57-64). It appears that many of the principles of behaviorism are alive and well today – would you agree? Why or why not?
4. Finally, take a look online and see what you can find for **examples** of training/education using these same principles. Here are some examples that I found:

[Dog training](#)

[Human training](#) (ala "The Big Bang Theory")

See what you can find and share with the class. The goal here is to show that key behavioral principles still have an impact even in our day!

Response:

The Mager and Pipe selection begins with a quote that I plan to share with my students. "Actions produce consequences; those consequences, favorable or unfavorable, shape how we will act in the future." (Mager & Pipe, 1997, p. 43) Mager and Pipe applied Newton's Law to human behavior, for every action there is a reaction. The reaction is the effect or result of the action. Consequence can be defined as "the effect, result, or outcome of something occurring earlier" (Consequence). The Mager and Pipe selection spoke of consequences or lack of consequences. I likened Mager and Pipes references of consequences to Driscoll's (2005) principle of strengthening or weakening operant behaviors by adding or removing contingents. The table below shows the comparison between added/subtracted stimulus and consequences:

	Driscoll	Mager & Pipe
Response Strengthened	Positive Reinforcement: adding a satisfying stimulus upon response	Favorable Consequence: adding a satisfying consequence upon response
	Negative Reinforcement: subtracting an aversive stimulus upon response	Lack of an Unfavorable Consequence: subtracting an aversive consequence upon response
Response Weakened	Punishment: adding an aversive stimulus upon response	Unfavorable Consequence: adding an aversive consequence upon response
	Reinforcement Removal: subtracting a satisfying stimulus upon response	Lack of Favorable Consequence: subtracting a satisfying consequence upon response

While the theory of Behaviorism and the principles of Behavior Management were laid out by Driscoll, the reading selection by Mager and Pipe used real-life situations to exemplify which aspects of Behavior Management solicit the best results. The comparison table above references consequences that are unfavorable. Mager and Pipe referred to these as punishing consequences, which make people lives "dimmer, less pleasant, or less interesting" (Mager & Pipe, 1997, p. 48). It follows that people do not want to feel punished. Instead desirable consequences must follow desirable performances. Much of behavior management is about how the responder (performer) perceives the situation, actions, and consequences. Mager and Pipe (1997) point out that people often will not have a desired response, and will continue doing what they have done in the past, "because there is no real reason, no favorable consequence to them, for doing it the new way" (p. 76-77). Just today, I was able to apply the principles of Behavior Management to a problem that was being discussed in a School Improvement Group meeting. There was a piece of data presented that stated: 78% of teachers self-reported that they had completed a requested task. This percentage had not increased from the last meeting. The principal asked the group for thoughts as to possible reasons teachers did not comply. Not a single person mentioned any ideas having to do with reinforcement/consequences. It struck me as odd. My first thought was to ask if we are doing anything to strengthen the response. Did we in any way add a satisfying stimulus or subtract a negative stimulus? No. In fact, absolutely nothing was done, nothing was said between the first time the data was gathered to the second time the data was gathered. If not actions of reinforcement/consequence were taken, why should we expect change? We are humans and choose to behave/respond to any presented situation. Some behaviors/responses subconscious or a matter of habit. So, it follows that Behaviorism is alive and well, and will continue to be till the end of time.

Education Example: A popular student behavior system is call PBIS (Positive Behavior Intervention System). This video shows examples of positive behavior intervention (positive reinforcement). The stars in the video are teachers acting like students...it is hilarious to see grown men act as 2nd graders!
<https://youtu.be/hSDji6Rd5MM>

Funny Example: Who likes Doritos?!?
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3hh1YFJUAXg>

Consequence. (N.D.). In *Dictionary.com*. Retrieved from <http://www.dictionary.com/browse/theory>

Driscoll, Marcy P. (2005). *Psychology of Learning for Instruction*. Boston: Pearson.

Mager, Robert F., & Pipe, Peter (1997). *Analyzing performance problems: or You Really Oughta Wanna* (3rd edition). Atlanta, GA: CEP Press.