



Operant Conditioning

Psychology 390
Psychology of Learning

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Operant Conditioning

In CC, the focus is on the two stimuli.

In Instrumental Conditioning, the focus is on the S and how it affects the response.

In Operant conditioning, what follows the response is the most important. That is, the consequent stimulus.

R – S

Thus, you have a Stimulus that causes a Response, which is in turn followed, by a consequent stimulus.

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Differences Between Instrumental and Operant Conditioning

- Instrumental
 - The environment constrains the opportunity for reward.
 - A specific behavior is required for the reward.
- Operant
 - A specific response is required for reinforcement.
 - The frequency of responding determines the amount of reinforcement given.

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Skinner Radical Behaviorism

- Probably the most important applied psychologist.
- Principles have been used in everything
 - Medicine
 - Education
 - Therapy
 - Business

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Distinguished Between Two Types of Responses.

- Respondents
- Operants

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Respondents

- Are elicited by a UCS
 - Are innate
 - Are regulated by the autonomic NS
HR, BP, etc.
 - Are involuntary
 - Are classically conditioned.

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Operants

- Are emitted
- Are skeletal
- Are voluntary
- Get lots of feedback

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Systematically Demonstrated Several Things

If something occurs after the response (consequent stimulus) and the behavior increases,

The procedure is called reinforcement, and the thing that caused the increase is called a reinforcer.

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Systematically Demonstrated Several Things

If something occurs after the response (consequent stimulus) and the behavior decreases,

The procedure is called punishment, and the thing that caused a decrease is called a punisher.

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Systematically Demonstrated Several Things

SO REINFORCERS ALWAYS INCREASE A BEHAVIOR

AND PUNISHERS ALWAYS DECREASE A BEHAVIOR.

THERE ARE NO EXCEPTIONS.

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Two types of Reinforcers and Punishers.

- The difference occurs due to whether you add or remove something.
 - If you add something following a response = positive
 - If you remove something following a response = negative
- Positive does not mean good:
- Negative does not mean bad.

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