

The effectiveness of behavior modification



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The Effectiveness of Behavior Modification Shontell White PSY 101 Hai

Nguyen Meriam Webster's dictionary defines behavior as the manner of conducting oneself. There are different types of behavior, but the most common two are good and bad behavior. There are different consequences associated with the different types of behavior. Most of the time when good behavior is presented, it is rewarded with positive reinforcements, and when negative behavior is presented negative reinforcements are given. Most people look down on those that behave in a negative manner, and most of the time there are punishments given to those who present negative or bad behavior. Punishment is derived from the word punish. The word punish is defined as: to impose a penalty on for fault, offense, or violation. Through the years there has been controversy over whether or not different forms of punishment are acceptable and effective, especially with today's youth. Lefrancois suggests that systematic reinforcement programs should be used rather than negative reinforcements. In my opinion, the punishment should depend on the incident that occurred (Lefrancois, 2011). I base my opinion on many different life experiences. " The systematic application of learning principles to change behavior is labeled behavior modification. Behavior modification is widely used in schools and institutions for children with behavioral and emotional problems, as well as in the treatment of mental disorders. Essentially, it involves the deliberate and systematic use of reinforcement, and sometimes punishment, to modify behavior" (Lefrancois, 2011). Behavior modification basically suggests various alternatives using positive reinforcement to try to turn the negative behavior completely into positive behavior. Some of the methods used are: " Try to maximize pleasant unconditioned stimuli in their classrooms. This might involve making sure

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learners are comfortable, that surroundings are colorful and upbeat, and that no individual is faced with overwhelming demands. At the same time, teachers need to minimize the unpleasant aspects of being a student to reduce the number and potency of negative unconditioned stimuli in the classroom. Use punishment—especially corporal punishment—sparingly as it is not very effective for eliminating undesirable behavior and even less effective for teaching desirable behavior. Be aware of what is being paired with what in the classroom, so as not to inadvertently condition undesirable behaviors. If the teacher smiles when Johnny does something outrageous—or if his classmates all laugh—doing outrageous things may well be what Johnny learns. Limit the use of repetition without reinforcement; it does little to improve learning. Emphasize positive rather than aversive methods of control" (Lefrancois, 2011). These approaches may work for some children, but from experience I have learned that these techniques do not work for all children. After ten years of teaching Pre-K and Head Start, I have seen many types of behaviors that required many types of reinforcements but never negative reinforcement. Our staff would even suggest the positive reinforcement methods to be used at home. Some parents stated that redirecting their child to a different activity actually worked, while others stated that they had to place the child in time out, or even give the child a spanking. Even though we were not allowed to use negative reinforcement in the classroom, it was quite obvious that some form of negative reinforcement would have been the better option for certain children. I have learned that some children automatically want to respect authority, and they don't like to feel as if they are in trouble with an adult. There are also children that I would call strong willed, and no form of positive reinforcement

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worked for them because they needed a firmer approach and more of a punishment than a positive reinforcement. I would suggest a child's punishment should be based on the how severe the negative behavior is. If the child is repeatedly violent, I would suggest taking away fieldtrips, or extra play time after positive reinforcement has failed. For children that are not constantly hurting but may have a problem sitting still or getting quiet, I would try a form of positive reinforcement first. Rewarding the child with extra play time, of a sticker or medal stating how super their behavior is may gain their interest and give them something to look forward to triggering positive behavior. Providing words of praise may work for some children and encourage them to want to behave appropriately during class time, but for those who do not care about words of praise or any other incentive, teachers have to take a psychological approach and found out what that particular child really likes. After finding out what the child presenting the negative behavior likes, the teacher could offer these types of incentives that that child likes to other members in the classroom as an eye opener for that particular child. Behaviors range from good to bad, and behavior has positive and negative consequences that follow the behavior. People have the choice of using either positive or negative behavior. Some people are affected by the reinforcements used on them when they are being punished for their wrong doings, while others have to be given a more firm approach before they decide to change their negative behavior. There are many methods to using positive reinforcement that work effectively and give children the chance to change their behavior called behavior modification. Behavior modification techniques are used mainly in classrooms or in school systems. Even though these techniques prove to be effective, it is known that these

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techniques do not work on all children. It is my belief that all people are different, therefore different methods or reinforcement and punishment has to be used modify negative behavior. References LeFrancois, G. (2011). Psychology: The Human Puzzle. San Diego, Bridgepoint Education, Inc. <https://content.ashford.edu>