Conditioning: psychology

Science

Learning is an important skill that all organisms must acquire in order to survive or fall prey to Darwinism’s main idea of survival of the fittest. Learning is the long lasting effect of a change in behavior. This would constrict the application of learning conditioning to a few applications. The three most recognizable applications are classical conditioning, operant conditioning, and learning byobservation. Each type of learning is different, but uses similar ideas such as an unconditioned stimulus, which is usuallyfood, and an unconditioned response, which food is associated with salivation and hunger.

There are several ways that an individual can condition an organism to learn skills through three different applications of learning: classical, operant, and observation. The idea of classical condition is one of the most notable learning techniques because it involves a stimulus rewarded for a certain response. Naturally, animals and human have unconditioned stimulus that triggers an unconditioned response. The most common connection is the correlation between food and salivation.

Food naturally draws organism to it in order to satisfy a drive created by hunger to acquire homeostasis. A response is created because of the organism’s reaction to food, which is usually salivation. Classical conditioning is considered an effective way to train an organism to learn habits not naturally associated with certain unconditioned stimulus. This creates a conditioned stimulus. The once unconditioned response is now conditioned to respond to the conditioned stimulus, which is called a conditioned stimulus.

An example of conditioned stimulus and response is the example of associating the school bell with food. Children are hungry by nature, but when the school bell is added, the children are reinforced to associate the school bell with lunchtime. Classical conditioning is effective when trying the teach an organism a skills by rewarding the organism with a unconditioned stimulus. An individual could use classical conditioning to teach an organism to learn skills that could aid in their own survival such as teaching human to avert certain food because of taste.

If one were being taught to avert away from sour tastes, the teachers would first use a food that was extremely sour. By using the person’s innate instinct of hunger, they would give the person a lemon to eat. This sour extremity would cause the person to avoid lemons. Theteacherwould continuously use this tactic until the person has acquired the skill of aversion of lemons. The learner would have an acquisition of the skill. The teacher would then condition the learner in a variable interval to constantly reinforce the skill.

The learner would then avoid all lemons. This may cause the learner to generalize the concept of lemon, for example, the learner may generalize the yellow color to symbolize all sour products, such as generalizing bananas as being sour. The teacher would then have the obligation of teaching the person how to discriminate items, so that his aversion is just towards lemons. While classical conditioning involves the stimulus being rewarded to incur a response, operant conditioning deals with changing the occurrence and forms of behavior.

The main different between operant conditioning and classical conditioning is the operant conditioning deals with modifying the learner’s voluntary behavior. Operant conditioning involve consequences to teach desired skills. There are two ways that operant conditioning works, through reinforcement and punishment. Reinforcement comes in two flavors: positive reinforcement and negative reinforcement. Positive reinforcement is the teacher adds something of pleasure to the learner’s behavior in order to get a certain skill.

An example would be a mom allowing her child to play video games if the child put the trash outside. The mom uses the favorable stimulus, which is the video games, in order to achieve a behavior, which is taking out the trash, out of the child. There is also negative reinforcement, in which negative reinforcement is the teacher removing an aversive stimulus, which is usually seen as unpleasant, in order to increase the frequency of a certain behavior. For example, when someone wakes up early in the morning, they use an alarm clock to tell them when to wake up.

When the alarm clock is activated, it sends a signal, which is usually an annoying buzzing noise, to the learner that it is time to wake up. To reinforce the behavior of waking up, the learner must get up from bed to turn off the aversive stimulus. Reinforcements are consequences of reinforcing favorable behaviors. Punishments, on the other hand, are consequences in which the teacher tries to reduce the frequency of unfavorable behaviors. As with reinforcements, there are also positive and negative punishments. Positive punishment refers to occurred behavior followed by aversive stimulation, such as shock.

An example of positive punishment would be if a child had talked negative to the mom, and the mom would respond with a slap on the wrist in order to lessen the frequency of such behavior. Negative punishment, on the other hand, is the removal of a pleasurable stimulus after the occurrence of an undesirable behavior. As with the example of the mom, and the child taking out the trash, if the children had not taken out the trash, the mom would instead take away the video games to lessen the frequency of not taking out the trash.

The problem with punishment is that it may cause the learner to demonstrate bad behavior in response to the punishment through responses of fear or anger, rather than lessen the occurrence of the aversive behavior. Operant conditioning is more effective using reinforcements than punishment. However, using both facets successfully is the most effective way. An individual could teach another through operant conditioning if one would like to change a voluntary behavior in another. The teacher would have to use reinforcements to reinforce the desired behavior from the learner.

For example, if the individual wanted the learner to wash the dishes after eating, the individual would have to give an incentive to the learner in order for the behavior to continue, such as letting a child play video games after completing his chores. The continuous stimulation by the positive reinforcement would allow the learner to associate good behavior with pleasurable activities. Once the learner has acquired the behavior, the learner may generalize the behavior to include doing all his chores in order to gain the positive reinforcement.

The teacher would use punishment sparingly to lessen the frequency of aversive behavior such a taking away the video games. The way that an individual could instruct an organism to acquire a skill is through observable learning. Observable learning is the observations made by the learner through the actions of the teacher in order to create a skill, or change a behavior. Observational learning is the most commonly used tactic. It allows the learner to learn a skill without reward or consequences. The learner learns through observing the teacher and then imitating the actions of the teacher.

This is a more common tactic to teach child skills that are learned and reinforced throughout their adulthood, such as table manners. The individual could teach an organism how to do a skill through observational learning. The individual would do an act that is observed by the learner, and they would have the learner imitate the actions. For example, a mother would like to teach her child table manners. She would demonstrate proper table manners to the child. She would then have the child repeat and imitate her actions. Once the child has acquired that knowledge, the mom would continuously reinforce the behavior.

The child would learn table manners without much need for punishment or reinforcers. The way that observational learning works, some may categorized observational learning as operant conditioning because it usually involves changing behaviors. The individual could use these three conditioning techniques in conjunction with each other, in combination with them, or separately. Either way, these techniques, classical conditioning,

operant conditioning, and observational leanring, are the effective way to show an organism how to learn skills.