

Operant conditioning terms



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Law of EffectThorndike's general theory of learning: Any behavior that leads to a "satisfying state of affairs" will likely occur again, and any behavior that leads to an "annoying state of affairs". **Reinforcer**A stimulus that follows a response and increases the likelihood that the response will be repeated.

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90/PAGEOrder Now**Shaping**A process of operant conditioning; it involves reinforcing behaviors that are increasingly similar to desired behavior.

Positive ReinforcementThe increase in the probability of a behavior's being repeated following the administration of a stimulus. **Negative**

ReinforcementThe increase in the probability of a behavior's being repeated through the removal of a stimulus. **Positive Punishment**Punishment that

occurs with the administration of a stimulus and thus decreases the

probability of a behavior recurring. **Negative Punishment**Punishment that

occurs with the removal of a stimulus and thus decreases the probability of a behavior's recurring. **Continuous Reinforcement**A type of learning in which

the desired behavior is reinforced each time it occurs. **Partial**

ReinforcementA type of learning in which behavior is reinforced

intermittently. **Ratio Schedule**A schedule in which reinforcement is based on

the number of times the behavior occurs. **Interval schedule**A schedule in

which reinforcement is available after a specific unit of time. **Fixed**

ScheduleA schedule in which reinforcement is consistently provided upon

each occurrence. **Variable Schedule**A schedule in which reinforcement is applied at different rates or at different times. **Partial-reinforcement**

extinction effectThe greater persistence of behavior under partial

reinforcement than under continuous reinforcement. **Behavior**

modificationThe use of operant-conditioning techniques to eliminate

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unwanted behaviors and replace them with desirable ones. Cognitive Map A visual/spatial mental representation of an environment. [Rats & Goal Box Within Maze] Latent Learning Learning that takes place in the absence of reinforcement. (Insight learning) Meme A unit of knowledge transferred within culture. [Monkey washing off sweet potatoes.] Observational Learning Learning that occurs when behaviors are acquired or modified following exposure to others performing the behavior. [The Bobo Dolls]. Modeling The imitation of behavior through observational learning. Vicarious Learning Learning that occurs when people learn the consequences of an action by observing others being rewarded or punished for performing the action. Mirror Neurons Neurons that are activated during observation of others performing an action. Intercranial Self-Stimulation Self administered shocks to pleasure centers located within brain. Nucleus Accumbens Subcortical brain region part of the limbic system and the experience of pleasure usually results from activation of dopamine neurons in this area. Engram Storage of learned material. Habituation A decrease in behavioral response following repeated exposure to nonthreatening stimuli. Sensitization An increase in behavioral response following exposure to a threatening stimulus. Long-Term Potentiation The strengthening of a synaptic connection so that postsynaptic neurons are more easily activated.