



Getting Started With Learning Theory



Antecedents. They come before the behavior.

1. **Proximate antecedents** usually referred to as discriminative stimuli (S^D). Discriminative Stimulus reliably evoke the behavior.

Distant antecedents are commonly referred to as setting events and motivating operations.

A

2. **Setting events** are general conditions that set the occasion for the behavior (but are not the immediate S^D) These might include medical conditions, nutritional issues or lack of exercise. Things that can make the behavior in question more likely to occur. They do not directly evoke the behavior but they provide the context in which the behavior is more likely to be evoked by the S^D

3. **Motivating operations** are stimuli that make the reinforcer involved more or less valuable, thus making the behavior more or less likely. Satiation and deprivation are good examples. Fear or any problematic conditioned emotional response is a motivating operation, they increase the value of the reinforcement due to escape and avoidance necessity.

Respondent Conditioning - One stimulus reliably predicts another. $A \rightarrow A$, it is contingent upon the first stimulus.

The Neutral Stimulus (NS) paired with a Unconditioned Stimulus (US) creates a Conditioned Stimulus (CS) that elicits a Conditioned Response (CR). Respondent conditioning involves involuntary reflexive behaviors. Problematic emotional responses are changed or modified through respondent conditioning protocols such as *Counter Conditioning, Relaxation Protocols & Systematic Desensitizations*. You must change the underlying emotional response by changing the $A \rightarrow A$ association from one of fear to joy and as a result you can change the observable operant behavior.

Behavior. Anything that can be observed and measured.

To change a problematic behavior you MUST develop a **Behavior Change Program**. This program should be constructed based on a contingency statement derived from your **Functional Assessment**.

This Applied Behavior Approach systematically identifies the functional relationship the behavior has with the environment. When these important relationships have been identified then efficient and effective solutions can be developed and implemented.

This is an efficient and effective strategy for explaining, describing and controlling behavior.

No guess work. No trial and error tactics. No pre-packaged solutions.

B

When **Teaching a New Behavior** you must:

- Determine the individual dogs motivation.
- Establish what the dog's current skill level is.
- Choose how you will acquire the new behavior.
- Use skill criteria ladders.
- Train-Test-Train- Build competence at each criteria level
- Use appropriate reinforcements

Will You Shape, Capture, Lure, Target?

Consequences. Behavior is the function of its consequences

(Operant conditioning) + R - R + P - P

Anything that happens after the behavior is called a postcedent. Relevant postcedents are referred to as consequences.

C

Operant Conditioning relies on the three-term contingency, S-R-S

1. The antecedent stimulus
2. The response behavior
3. The consequence stimulus.

The behavior is voluntary, measurable and observable.

Reinforcement?

- What type is available?
- Criteria - what are we reinforcing?
- Schedule - which type are we using?
- Differential Reinforcement - which one is most suitable?
- Extinction - no reinforcement.