

Instructional Control

Chapter Summary

Key elements in this chapter include an overview of strategies and procedures proven to increase teaching effectiveness through gaining and maintaining instructional control. Variables impacting high levels of learner responding are presented that address interventions from both the antecedent and consequence sides of behavior. Video examples clearly demonstrate how teachers, caregivers and therapists can learn to establish themselves as conditioned reinforcers when first interacting with a learner through the pairing process. Strategies to identify and effectively use reinforcers are illustrated followed by multiple examples of procedures to alter the presentation of teaching demands and the environment to prolong learner engagement.

Learner Objectives

Students will be able to...

1. Demonstrate an understanding of characteristics and variables of reinforcement as they relate to the motivation of the learner to respond.
2. Explain the importance of motivation when teaching language to children with developmental disabilities.
3. List and describe components of matching law using the mnemonic acronym VERMI: value, effort, rate, magnitude, and immediacy.
4. Describe the importance of pairing and establishing instructional control in the teaching process.
5. Identify how to use non-contingent reinforcement as part of the pairing process.
6. Describe the use of stimulus demand fading procedures for effective teaching maintenance.
7. Delineate guidelines for the effective use of reinforcement.
8. Demonstrate an understanding of how to identify reinforcers using inventories and preference assessments.
9. Identify considerations for errorless teaching.
10. Explain the importance of implementing mixed and varied presentation, fast paced instruction, and appropriate schedules of reinforcement in an intensive teaching circumstance.

Key Terms and Concepts

- Motivating operations
- Value of reinforcement
- Response effort
- Rate of reinforcement
- Magnitude of reinforcement
- Immediacy
- Pairing
- Non-contingent reinforcement
- Demand fading
- Errorless Teaching
- Reinforcer Inventories

Pairing

What Is Pairing?

Pairing refers to the process of pairing yourself with reinforcement.

Pairing should be the first step an instructor goes through before working with a child. Demands should not be placed until the instructor is sufficiently paired and has approach behavior.

How do I use Pairing?

- Start pairing by delivering non-contingent reinforcement. This means give freebies—let the child know that you are the gatekeeper to all that is fun.
- The only contingency should be that the child is not engaging in problem behavior (e.g., if the child is crying, don't hand them a cookie, because you may inadvertently strengthen the crying behavior, by following it with reinforcement).
- The child should have to go through you to access all reinforcers.

Examples:

1. You keep access to all edibles.
2. You are in charge of the TV remote.
3. You have all the DVDs, video games, etc.
4. You have all the toy cars, and when they play cars with you, it should be more exciting than playing them alone—they crash louder, drive faster, and are all around better.
5. Toys are placed on high shelves that only you can reach or in containers that only you can open.
6. You should deliver the best tickles, airplane rides, and anything else silly and fun.
7. The child's world should be LESS fun when you are NOT around.

By “pairing” yourself with all of these reinforcers you will become a conditioned reinforcer.

How do I know if it's working?

Keep giving non-contingent reinforcement until you have a consistent approach behavior. This means that the child readily approaches you, versus escaping from you.

You can test this by walking in the room and observing. Does the child run up to you and appear to enjoy seeing you? Or do they run, cry, or get as far away from you as possible?

If they run from you, keep delivering non-contingent reinforcement. Download and use the Pairing Data Sheet to measure approach vs. escape behaviors.

Reinforcement is anything that follows a behavior and increases the likelihood that behavior will occur again in the future.

If the child does something you like (responds correctly, sits nicely, gives great eye contact, walks next to you nicely), REINFORCE! And continue giving freebies now and then.

Instructional Control Guided Notes

Instructional Control

Instructional Control is a positive working relationship. It means that your learner responds consistently when presented with any task or demand, and the task or demand that is being presented is in their best interest.

Many times, these learners have figured out that engaging in problem behavior or escaping/avoiding the situation, results in getting more immediate or higher value reinforcement than cooperative behavior. To gain instructional control is to reverse this situation.

The Matching Law

Relative rates of _____ tend to equal the relative rates of _____ that they produce.

VERMI

Characteristics and variables of reinforcement that are components of the matching law can be remembered with the acronym VERMI.

V= _____ of reinforcement. This term refers to the strength of the motivational operation (MO) for a reinforcer. It is how badly the learner “wants” the item. A learner is more likely to engage in behaviors that produce activities and become more motivated to obtain items as reinforcers.

E= _____ of the response. This term refers to how hard or how much the learner needs to work in order to obtain the reinforcer.

R= _____ of reinforcement. Behaviors that are reinforced more often than others will be more likely to occur again in the future. When reinforcement is delivered too infrequently, the learner’s responses may decrease or end all together.



M= _____ of reinforcement. A learner will be more likely to perform behaviors that earn him more reinforcement than he would a behavior that produces less reinforcement.

I= _____ of reinforcement. This means that responses that contact more immediate delivery of reinforcement are going to be more likely to occur than a response that results in delayed reinforcement. Providing immediate reinforcement for behaviors you want to see increase is an important part of any instructional program.

PAIRING- First Step to Instructional Control

Pairing means providing reinforcement in the presence of yourself and the teaching environment. When this is done consistently, the instructors, teaching materials, and instructional settings acquire reinforcing properties.

Like classical conditioning, this stimulus-stimulus pairing technique turns the teacher and the teaching environment into a conditioned _____.

When you start pairing you will see the child approach you instead of avoid you. The first thing that should be done with any learner is _____.

Reinforcer Assessments

The first step in pairing is to become keenly aware of which items and activities function as reinforcers for your learner and which ones do not.

Reinforcer inventories and preference _____ come in handy to determine these valuable items and activities.

Reinforcer Qualities

Here are some tips for qualities in items that will make them easy to help establish instructional control. They should be:

- Easily delivered



- Quickly consumed or naturally terminated
- Given in small quantities to avoid satiation
- Repeatable and able to reinforce multiple times
- Controllable and deliverable by the teacher
- Do not require the teacher to remove them
- Are more fun when you are around to do it with them than when you are not around

Sanitize The Environment

If the learner has free access to the items they want, they have no need to interact with us and there is no MO to mand. This can make pairing impossible. To sanitize the environment means to arrange these items so that our learners cannot freely access them.

Some easy steps to removing free access are putting toys up on shelves (out of reach), putting things in locked cabinets, or putting things in containers that cannot be opened by the child.

When you have done this, you can require the child to approach and communicate with you to get the reinforcers. This has two positive benefits:

1. It pairs you with the reinforcer, because you are the only way they can have access to it- you are the giver of good things.
2. It increases their verbal behavior by providing a situation where they must mand (request) the item. This allows you to capitalize on every opportunity for learning!

In some situations, before you can pair, you must _____.

Pair The Learning Environment

After you have paired yourself, you can start pairing the table or learning environment.

A common mistake in teaching is to have your learner work for a _____ from the learning environment; your learner shouldn't want to leave it!

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Fading In Demands

After your learner is _____ you, you can start thinking about how to fade in demands.

_____ is probably the first type of demand you will want to fade in, and you might get them without requiring them.

Mix And Vary

When you have faded in several demands before the reinforcer, you will need to mix and vary the types of tasks you are asking the child to do.

Mixing and varying can help prevent _____ responding.

80/20

We want to reinforce correct responding, so if we keep placing difficult demands, the opportunities to contact reinforcement become sparse and the appeal of escape may grow. Make your learner _____ at least _____% and _____ no more than _____%.

Fast Paced Instruction And Fluency

In your sessions, keep responses between _____ per _____, and keep your inter-trial interval or pause between trials, around half a second.

Fluency is important and should be considered when implementing mastery criteria for a task. When someone can respond quickly that usually means they are confident in the skill.



Extinction

When problem behavior happens, you must use _____. But always think back and ask yourself, “_____?”

Usually when we get problematic behaviors after we are already paired, it is our teaching _____.

When pairing, ask yourself the following:

“Did I mix and vary?”

“Was it errorless?”

“Was my schedule of reinforcement too thin?”

“Was I not using the MOs of the child to guided reinforcement?”

“Was I presenting too many hard demands, making the effort outweigh the payoff?”

And remember, pairing is never over!