

Strategies for Effective Teaching and Learning

Representative Behavioral Principles

Principles for Strengthening (or Increasing) Existing Behavior

Response increment principles include the following:

Principle 1: Positive Reinforcement Principle

Provide positive reinforcement immediately after desired behavior occurs.

Example: Praise the individual following task completion.

Principle 2: Premack Principle (First you work, then you play.)

Allow the student to engage in a favored activity immediately following the occurrence of the desired behavior.

Example: After completion of a disliked math assignment, permit the pupil to complete a favored activity such as putting a puzzle together.

Principle 3: Contingency Contracting Principle

Specify in writing the desired behavior and the positive consequences that will follow if the individual engages in the desired behavior.

Example: Allow the student to listen to preferred music following the observance of the desired behavior.

Principles for Developing New Behavior

Response acquisition principles include the following:

Principle 1: Successive Approximations Principle

Reward successive steps to the desired behavior.

Example: For problematic off-task behavior, first reward the student for staying on task for five minutes, then ten minutes, then fifteen minutes, and so on.

Principle 2: Modeling Principle

Allow the pupil to observe a prestigious person engaging in the desired behavior.

Example: For problematic handwriting behavior, have a peer demonstrate the correct letter formation and have the student model the formation.

Principle 3: Cueing Principle

To teach a student to engage in a particular behavior at a certain time, provide a cue or prompt just before the desired behavior is expected.

Example: Teacher and pupil mutually develop a signal to cue the student to begin a task.

Principle 4: Discrimination Principle

To teach the pupil to engage in a specific behavior under one set of circumstances but not another, help the individual only when his or her behavior is appropriate to the cue.

Example: Reinforce the use of an "inside" voice when the student is in the classroom but not on the playground.

Principles for Decreasing or Extinguishing Undesired Behavior

Response decrement principles include the following:

Principle 1: Extinction

Arrange conditions so that the pupil receives no reinforcement following the undesired behavior.

Example: Ignore talking-out behavior.

Principle 2: Reinforcement of Incompatible Behavior

Reinforce an alternative or desired behavior that is inconsistent with the undesired behavior.

Example: Reinforce on-task behavior to decrease the student's out-of-seat behavior.

Principle 3: Response Cost

Arrange conditions so that something the individual considers reinforcing is taken away when the undesired behavior occurs.

Example: Take away iPad privileges when a student hits another child.