

MORE ELEMENTS OF INSTRUMENTAL/OPERANT CONDITIONING

Thorndike's "Law of Effect"	Behaviors followed by positive outcomes are strengthened, whereas those followed by negative outcomes are weakened; consequences control behavior.
Acquisition	The process of increasing the strength and rate of occurrence of a behavior by positive or negative reinforcement.
Extinction	The reduction of strength of a response when reinforcement is withheld.
Punishment	By directly applying an aversive stimulus or denying access to a positive reinforcer behavior is weakened or eliminated.
Shaping	Process of rewarding closer & closer approximations of some goal behavior.
Chaining	A complex behavior is taught by "chaining" together smaller conditioned components of the end behavior.
Negative Reinforcement	In the ESCAPE situation, a behavior that allows a subject to get away from or stop an ongoing aversive event is learned, <i>i.e.</i> , strengthened. In the AVOIDANCE situation, a behavior that allows a subject to prevent an imminent aversive experience from happening is learned.
Primary vs. Secondary Reinforcer	Primary reinforcers fulfill biological needs; secondary reinforcers have acquired their ability to reinforce through learning.

Aversive stimulus or consequence

A stimulus or consequence an organism will work to avoid, e.g., electric shock is a primary aversive consequence, criticism is a secondary aversive consequence. Both are negative reinforcers.

Stimulus generalization

The tendency of a response learned in the presence of one stimulus to occur in the presence of others that are similar.

Stimulus discrimination

A learned ability to distinguish which signaling stimulus requires a behavior to either receive a positive reinforcer or avoid or escape from a negative reinforcer and to behave as expected only when the precise stimulus is present.