

Tingstrom

Scenarios -- Set 2

PSY 374

14. John and Jim are in the TV room arguing over a program. Their mother comes in and immediately turns the TV off and says that she will turn it on again when they have played nicely for 10 minutes. What two processes has she used in order to achieve the results she wanted? Why would it be better to use the two contingencies together rather than to use one alone?

Removal Punishment & Positive Reinforcement - Together the two procedures give alternative substitute behavior which is incompatible with the fighting.

15. Paul is being sent to time-out for hitting his sister. "That's okay, I like it there" he says. His mother, in exasperation, does not send him to time-out but merely yells at him for hitting. Why didn't the mother send Paul to time-out? Was this a good decision? How could she be sure? What process is probably operating on Paul's future likelihood of trying to avoid time-out in this way?

She probably thought Time-Out was reinforcing (based on what the child said). It probably wasn't a good decision. She should probably go ahead and use Time-Out and look at its effects on the child's behavior. Paul's behavior of trying to get out of Time-Out is negatively reinforced because Time-Out is "taken away" when Paul protests.

16. What type of contingency would be operating when a school-phobic child gets suspended for fighting at school? Would fighting be expected to increase or decrease? What might be a better penalty for someone who finds school aversive?

Negative Reinforcement because school is essentially "removed" following the fighting. Fighting would be expected to increase. Some kind of punishment procedure (perhaps Presentation Punishment) that does not involve removal from school (i.e., after school detention).

17. After having some trouble in spelling, Sam studied very hard for a spelling test. As the next test approaches, he has not yet gotten his grade from the earlier test. How might this lack of feedback affect the chances that he will study for the next test? What process would be operating?

His studying may be extinguished, assuming that getting feedback is reinforcing (it is for many children, unless getting his grade is punishing). It's important to provide feedback as soon as possible.

18. A teacher offered a prize to every student who finished his or her work for the day. After the students' performance improved, she decided to give awards only to students who finished their work for the whole week. After the first 3 days, she noticed that the students' performance had deteriorated. What process was operating for these days? How might the teacher have avoided the decrease in performance?

She may have inadvertently given 3 days of extinction. She should take more gradual steps. Also, she could give verbal reinforcers to "tide them over."

19. Mr. Jones asked for a volunteer to go to the blackboard to work a math problem. After several seconds of silence, he finally said, "Well then, I'll do it myself." The class was then more likely to respond with silence to requests for volunteers. What process was operating?

Negative Reinforcement of sitting there without responding - removal of a difficult task.

20. Sarah wakes up 90 minutes after going to bed and tells her parents that she can't sleep. They invite her to sit between them on the couch and watch TV for a while until she gets sleepy. They begin to notice over the next few weeks that she gets up during the night more frequently. Why? What might her parents have done to avoid this occurrence?

She has been positively reinforced with attention and TV for getting out of bed. Her parents might extinguish the behavior by making her stay in bed when she wakes up and certainly avoid giving her Positive Reinforcement.

21. Lisa's parents place her in time-out every time she swears at home with the result that she ceases swearing around her parents. Why does she continue to swear around her friends who think that swearing makes people seem "grown up"?

She experiences Presentation Punishment (or maybe even Removal Punishment) for swearing around her parents, but rewarded when she is with her friends. Thus, swearing increases or decreases according to whom she is with.

22. Before rolling the dice in Monopoly, Charlie blew on them. He landed on Free Parking and collected a \$1,000 bonus. What effect, if any, might this likely to have on his behavior the next time he rolls the dice? If this occurrence had an effect, what process would be operating, and what would be likely to happen to the effect over time?

He will likely blow on dice again because he was positively reinforced (although accidentally) for doing so (even though reinforcement was random and did not depend on his behavior, he may come to behave as though it did). Eventually, this will probably be extinguished.

23. Genie came in from playing one day and said, "That Becky is such a bully; I've decided that when she threatens to hit the littler kids, I will tell them to come over and play with me, and we'll leave her alone." If Becky stops bullying the little kids, what type of contingency has Genie applied?

Removal Punishment because she basically follows Becky's bullying by "taking away" her playmates.

24. After being told repeatedly by his mother not to climb trees, Warren climbs a tree at his friend's house and falls and breaks his arm. What effect might this accident have on his tree-climbing in the future? Why might this natural consequence have more of an effect on his behavior than actions taken by his parents?

This behavior should decrease because of Presentation Punishment. Natural consequences of behavior apply when parents aren't around. This consequence tends to provide a rationale for the parents warnings and may be more closely linked to the tree climbing than the parents' warning.

25. The orthodontist tells Anne that she will be able to get her braces off much sooner if she wears her rubber bands every night. What kind of contingency is the orthodontist describing?

Negative Reinforcement - "taking away" the braces following her regular use of the rubber bands.