

Learning Lesson Plan

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OVERVIEW & PURPOSE

This two-day lesson plan emphasizes the different types of reinforcement and punishment within operant conditioning, as well as provides opportunities for students to identify these and social learning principles within situations.

NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR HIGH SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY CURRICULA (FEB 2022)

Pillar: Development and Learning

Standard Area: Learning

Content Standard 2: Operant Conditioning

2.1 Describe the processes of operant conditioning

2.2 Describe clinical and experimental examples of operant conditioning

Content Standard 3: Observational learning, social learning theory, and mental processes in learning

3.1 Describe observational learning and social learning theory

BEFORE THE LESSON

Print [these slides](#) as 6 slides per page on cardstock and cut out. Make as many sets as you have groups/pairs. The answers are listed for each slide in the speaker notes.

SUPPLIES One set of cards printed for each group/pair

PRIOR KNOWLEDGE

Students have learned about classical conditioning principles and social/observational learning concepts.

DAY ONE

Principles of operant conditioning instruction: Go through [these](#) slides providing students with the definitions and a few examples of the types of reinforcement and punishment. The final two slides include information about shaping and a video of a person teaching their dog to limp on command using shaping principles.

Activity: In pairs or small groups, students use an EXPO marker (test to make sure they will wipe off of your desks. If not, sticky notes would work, too) to divide one of the desks into quadrants. The upper left quadrant should be labeled with "+R" the upper right with "-R", lower left with "+P" and the lower right as "-P" You can also have the students write out "positive reinforcement", "negative reinforcement", etc. See diagram.

+R	-R
+P	-P

Distribute one set of cards that you printed earlier (see Before the Lesson) and instruct the students to place the cards in the appropriate quadrant. When they struggle, encourage them to ask themselves the following questions:

1. Are we trying to continue or end the behavior? (continue is reinforcement, end is punishment)
2. Are we adding something or taking something away? (adding is positive, taking away is negative)
3. Is what we are taking away something desirable or undesirable?

These questions typically help clarify. You can also list these for the students to use during the activity.

Allow students about 10 minutes to sort; teacher circulates around the room to answer questions and check for understanding.

Assessment: Formative: check answers as a class and ask students to explain why they put the cards in the specific quadrant

For online classes or a digital option you can use [this drag and drop](#). The answers are on the 3rd slide.

Outside resources:

"How to teach your dog to limp." Uploaded by Jess Bell, 6 October 2010,

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qrtww7CPf0c&t=10s>

DAY TWO:

This day is all about applying operant conditioning and social learning theories.

Instruction: The class will watch an episode of Super Nanny (found on YouTube) and identify the various learning principles at play in the episode. Students will want to keep their notes from Day One at hand so they can refer back as they watch.

Activity: Students should fold their paper in thirds, then in half, creating 6 boxes. Have them put their paper in portrait orientation and label the first 4 boxes like they did on the desk in Day One, and the bottom box on the left should be labeled "Observational Learning" and the bottom box on the right should be labeled "Not Sure" See chart below:

+R	-R
+P	-P
Observational Learning	Not Sure

As students watch, they should put the different behaviors in the appropriate box on their paper. A few times if I notice a behavior that students aren't noticing, I will pause and ask them what they just saw and process in the moment.

Note: Super Nanny involves families who are having difficulty with their children following rules and behaving. A British nanny comes to save the day by teaching the parents how to create structure, rules, and consequences. Expect to see examples of modeling and observational learning, positive reinforcement of the wrong behaviors, punishments that don't actually stop a behavior, and the right way to utilize these operant principles. Really, any episode works, but I prefer episodes with 3+ children or 2 children if the children are very young. Episodes are approximately 38 minutes long. Always preview before showing to students.

Episode suggestions:

"It's about who bites and hits the hardest." Uploaded by Supernanny, 12 June 2021,

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BmxPlj-PX04>

"Smart-mouthing boy mimics parents." Uploaded by Supernanny, 30 April 2022,

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B4Xcep2g1hA>

"Nanny fears for children's safety and calls in Jo | The Swift Family | ." Uploaded by

Supernanny, 1 January 2022. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FWqMYwlbD6s>

"3 y.o gets kicked out of two preschools." Uploaded by Supernanny, 16 October 2021, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C10ZKImIPW4>

"Family of 6 is OUT OF CONTROL- Supernanny (S8, E1)." Uploaded by Lifetime, 7 September 2021, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yh_f5kKA0oE

Assessment: On the back of the paper, students explain how the behaviors changed from the beginning of the episode to the end of the episode using unit specific vocabulary. Teacher checks for understanding.