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Skinner Essay Questions

1. Define and explain the differences between positive and negative reinforcement and positive and negative punishment.

Positive reinforcement is when a specific behavior is increased because there is a pleasant stimulus following. Negative reinforcement is the removal of the causing effect of the behavior which will increase the rate of occurrence for the response. The difference between the two is that positive reinforcement is more effective and allows students to feel empowered. They can begin to only mostly focus on the reward rather than caring about doing the right thing. Negative reinforcement can increase the same behavior when it's under the same circumstances. Students can realize quickly what it takes to still get what they want and will do so.

Positive punishment is an aversive stimulus following a behavior. This can make the behavior happen less frequently. Negative punishment is the removal of a desirable stimulus following a behavior. This can also decrease the behavior from happening. Response cont. is the penalty for a behavior that is unacceptable. Positive punishment has two types of stimuli- primary (unconditioned) and secondary (conditioned). They both use an aversive stimulus or properties to influence behavior which can either be pleasant or unpleasant.

2. Distinguish between discrimination and generalization.

Discrimination is when an individual responds differently to different stimuli and Generalization is when the organism has the same reaction to the similar stimuli but still

different. To discriminate the person can notice the difference between two objects and be able to respond quickly. Generalization is when the person lumps things together without regards to the differences.

3. Discuss the various techniques that people use to control their behavior.

People can control their behavior by using physical restraints. Some people will put a rubber band around their wrist and when they feel tempted to do something they smack the band to the wrist. Another is physical aids which is when someone takes energy vitamins to feel more awake. Next is changing the stimulus conditions. In theory it's out of sight out of mind, if I can't see it then it should be easier to cut it off. Manipulating emotional conditions which means the person works out or meditates to change their mood and release stress. Performing alternative responses is like when someone gives up drinking so they avoid the party scene all together and try more wholesome activities. Positive reinforcement is a popular one which is basically rewarding yourself for retraining yourself. Self punishment is when someone will punish themselves for not succeeding. Like giving away something that's valuable to them or not giving themselves something that they would love.