Unit 6

Chapter 15

Question #1

Positive reinforcement increases the frequency of a behavior when presented with positive reinforcers, while negative reinforcers remove an aversive stimulus to increase the probability of that behavior occurring in the future. The principle of punishment refers to a decrease in response frequency when that response is followed immediately by inevitable consequences. Aversive events, or punishers, can be applied to behavior to make its occurrence less probable. The presentation of an aversive stimulus following a behavior is called positive punishment. Removing a desirable or pleasant incentive (positive reinforcer) following a behavior also decreases its occurrence and is called negative punishment.

Question #2

The stimuli preceding the behavior are essential because they provide the occasion under which reinforcement is likely to occur if the behavior is performed. Thus, people learn discrimination. They learn that their behavior is likely to be reinforced in the presence of certain stimuli or situations. In contrast, the same behavior in the presence of other stimuli or other situations is not likely to be reinforced. Or they learn the discrimination that their behavior is likely to be punished in certain situations, whereas the same conduct under different circumstances is unlikely to be punished.

In generalization, a response repeatedly reinforced in a particular situation will likely be repeated. Generalization is the opposite of discrimination, as when people discriminate between

two situations, their response fails to generalize. When their response does generalize, they have been unable to discriminate and make the same response in both cases.

Question #6

A fixed-ratio schedule requires an absolute number of behaviors before reinforcement is applied. An example of a fixed ratio in my everyday life has to do with my dog Bob. When I leave for work, Bob must stay in a particular area of the house until I come home. When he does this, I give him a treat. I reinforce this behavior every third day of the week.

Fixed-interval-ratio schedule is an intermittent reinforcement schedule where the organism is reinforced for its first response following a designated period. An example of a fixed-interval ratio in my life would be the bonuses I receive after my job has ended.