**Colleague Lee BResponse to Discussion 1 Week 1**

**Traditional Learning Theories**.

            After watching the video and reading though the articles and textbook for this week I am going to focus primarily on Skinners theory of operant conditioning. Skinners theory of operant conditioning suggests “behavior is the learned result of consequences” (Rholetter, 2019). Positive and negative reinforcement are both examples of operant conditioning. If you are a parent think about it like this, if your child does something that you do not want them to do and you put them in time out for that behavior that is operant conditioning. You are attempting to change the behavior by punishment. There is a difference between negative reinforcement and punishment. “Punishment is defined as the opposite of reinforcement since it is designed to weaken or eliminate a response rather than increase it. It is an aversive event that decreases the behavior that it follows” (McLeod, 2018). One of the examples in the video of negative reinforcement was with the rats in the skinner box, there was a grate on the bottom that provided a low electric shock and in order to turn the electricity off the rat had to push a lever, the rat was driven to do that to stop the shock. Afterwards a light or a sound would come on or sound moments before the electricity turned on and the rat learned that when they saw that light or heard that sound to go push the lever to keep the electricity from being turned on. This is negative reinforcement, all though yes, it got the job done and the rat learned there were better options that could have been used. The other side of this is positive reinforcement when a child does well and follows instructions and you give them a treat for good behavior (positive reinforcement) this is also operant conditioning. Skinners theories were very popular for a long time but they fell out of favor in the 1960’s because people felt that rewarding good behavior was teaching children the wrong thing, it was teaching them they should behave so that they would get said reward instead of behaving because it was the appropriate thing to do. There are four parts to positively reinforcing a behavior, however. Continuous means that you give a reward every single time the action occurs. Fixed Interval means that you give a reward at a specific time interval for example once every seven days. Variable interval means that you give the reward an average of a set number of days for example 4 times a month which would be on average every 7 days but not always exactly. Fixed ratio is when you give the reward after a set number of the desired behavior like every 10thtime the behavior occurs. I have used this kind of behavior modification with my own children because positive reinforcement works and it works best when there is variation in the reinforcement.

            Pavlovian conditioning which is a form of classical conditioning is “most clearly defined and constrained by its method, which involves maintaining strict control over the presentation of stimuli”. (McSweeney& Murphy, 2014). In this theory there must be a stimuli present and it has to be controlled all the time. There are four parts to it unconditioned stimuli (us), unconditioned response (ur), conditioned stimuli (cs) and conditioned response (cr). Pavlov often used dogs to test his theories and see if he could provide them with a conditioned stimuli and receive a conditioned response.

The greatest theory that Skinner contributed to psychology was the theory of operant conditioning**“**Operant conditioning is a method of learning that occurs through rewards and punishments for behavior. Through operant conditioning, an individual makes an association between a particular behavior and a consequence” (McLeod, 2018).

There have been many changes to the ethical guidelines regarding the experimentation on animals since the time that skinner was doing his testing on rats. Before all of the regulations were placed on animal experimentation it was not uncommon for animals to be treated badly and not taken care of. They were thought of as just animals instead of another living creature that has feelings and needs like anyone else. The changes that have been made to the ethical guidelines has been a huge win for animal rights and the care and treatment of those animals.

According to the APA (2017) 8.09 Humane Care and Use of Animals in Research
(a) Psychologists acquire, care for, use, and dispose of animals in compliance with current federal, state, and local laws and regulations, and with professional standards.

(b) Psychologists trained in research methods and experienced in the care of laboratory animals supervise all procedures involving animals and are responsible for ensuring appropriate consideration of their comfort, health, and humane treatment.

(c) Psychologists ensure that all individuals under their supervision who are using animals have received instruction in research methods and in the care, maintenance, and handling of the species being used, to the extent appropriate to their role.

(d) Psychologists make reasonable efforts to minimize the discomfort, infection, illness, and pain of animal subjects.

(e) Psychologists use a procedure subjecting animal to pain, stress, or privation only when an alternative procedure is unavailable and the goal is justified by its prospective scientific, educational, or applied value.

(f) Psychologists perform surgical procedures under appropriate anesthesia and follow techniques to avoid infection and minimize pain during and after surgery.

(g) When it is appropriate that an animal's life be terminated, psychologists proceed rapidly, with an effort to minimize pain and in accordance with accepted procedures.

References

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