ABSTRACT
                This learning module, which is intended for use in
in-service training for vocational rehabilitation counselors, deals
with methods of increasing client behaviors that do not occur often
or fast enough. The following topics are discussed: basic approaches
to increasing the extent and frequency of desired behaviors; ways of
changing environment; and reinforcement, including determining
reinforcers, using different categories of reinforcers (activities,
tangibles, and social reinforcers), selecting and delivering
reinforcers, and using negative reinforcement. The text reviews basic
strategies and provides an opportunity for supervised application of
the techniques described. Two self-tests are also included. (MN)

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ELLSWORTH COMMUNITY COLLEGE
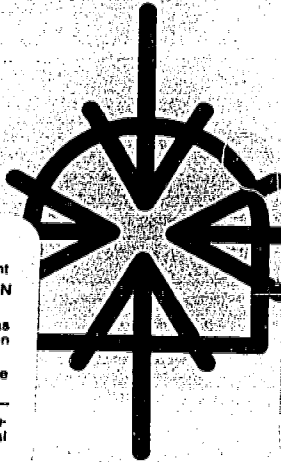
REHABILITATION ASSOCIATE
TRAINING FOR EMPLOYED STAFF

Increasing Existing Behavior

(RA-6)

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Stout Vocational Rehabilitation Institute

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INCREASING EXISTING BEHAVIOR

by

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Produced by
R.A.T.E.S.

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REHABILITATION ASSOCIATE TRAINING
FOR EMPLOYED STAFF

MODULE: RA-6 Increasing Existing Behaviors

DESCRIPTORS: *changing environments, reinforcement,
               client conditions, instructor conditions,
environmental conditions, social reinforcement, activi-
ties, tangibles, schedules*

OVERVIEW: The purpose of this module is to acquaint
               the staff person with methods of increas-
ing behaviors in clients which do not occur often enough
or fast enough. Basic strategies will be reviewed in
the text. Supervised application of the techniques will
be provided by the instructor.

5

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

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BEHAVIOR

1 Write a program for increasing a behavior in a client.

2 Determine specific environmental changes needed to increase given target behaviors.

3 Identify procedures being used to increase specific target behaviors.

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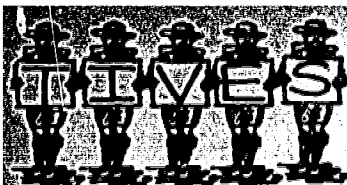
EVALUATION

1 Written test. Will be given a description of a low frequency behavior and enough information to determine problems with conditions surrounding the behavior. Must resolve these problems and include other appropriate considerations for increasing the behavior.

2 Written test. Will be given a description of target behaviors and respective environmental conditions which need changed in some respect.

3 Written test. Will be given descriptions of behaviors/procedures; must identify procedures illustrated in the situations.

9

The following material contains questions throughout. You will be much more likely to remember the information if you will write the answers in your student work-book as you read. If you can't remember the answer, go back and re-read the preced-ing section. You can check your answers by reviewing the material.

Good Luck !

INTRODUCTION
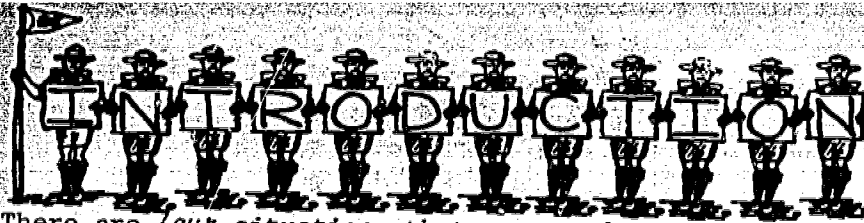
There are four situations that you may be confronted with as a staff person:

1 A client may do a behavior too often (the behavior needs to be *reduced or eliminated*).

★2 A client may not do a behavior often enough (the behavior needs to be *increased*).

3 A client may not do a behavior at all (the behavior needs to be *taught*).

4 A client may do a behavior appropriately (the behavior needs to be *maintained*).

> *If you have a client who sometimes brushes his hair, or sometimes sweeps the floor, or who has good and bad days on the job; this module is for you!*

★ This module deals with the second of these situations . . a client sometimes does a behavior (so you know s/he has the skill), but the behavior does not occur often enough.

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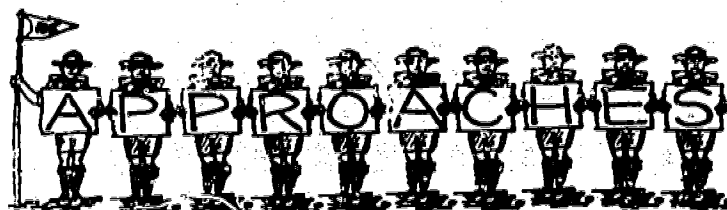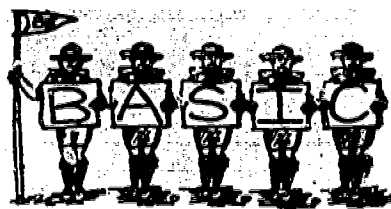
There are basically two approaches you can take to increase a behavior (*you'll want to do both*):

A One approach occurs <u>before</u> the behavior (*an antecedent*); you <u>*change the environment*</u> to make the behavior more likely to occur.
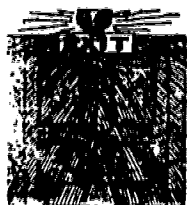
B One approach occurs <u>after</u> the behavior (*a consequence*): you <u>*reinforce*</u> the behavior to make it more likely to occur in the future.

10

Behavior

GIVEN TIME
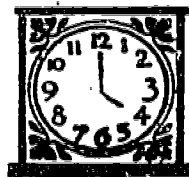
before **after**

Arrange the environment
to optimize the occurrence
of the behavior.

Reinforce the behavior
to increase its like-
lihood.

The behavior
will increase.

13   1 1

CHANGING THE ENVIRONMENT
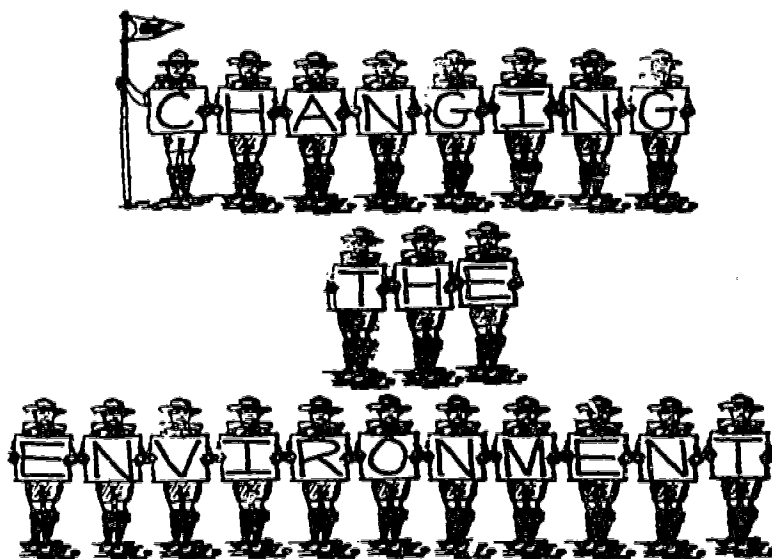
The first approach has to do with looking at the environment in which the behavior is to occur. Rather than searching for complex solutions, behaviors frequently do not occur often enough simply because the environment interferes with them. *For example,* there can be many distractions in any environment that make it difficult to perform a given behavior.

Environmental conditions can actually be broken down into three areas:

1 Client conditions

2 Instructor conditions

3 Specific environmental conditions.

1 2

Some clients are easily distracted and do not work well
around other people or noise. A very simple solution
to this problem might be to MOVE THE CLIENT TO A QUIETER,
LESS CROWDED PLACE. This could be the first step in a
behavior change program. It might work like this:

1 Move Lynn to an individual room to complete her
circuit board.

2 Move Lynn to a quiet corner of the regular work
room until criteria are met.

3 Move Lynn to within ten feet of the regular sta-
tion and meet criteria.

4 Return Lynn to her regular place.

*There could, of course, be more or fewer
steps in the program depending on Lynn's
needs. The key is to move slowly, meet-
ing the criteria in each environment and
going back to add intermediate steps if
necessary.*

1 3
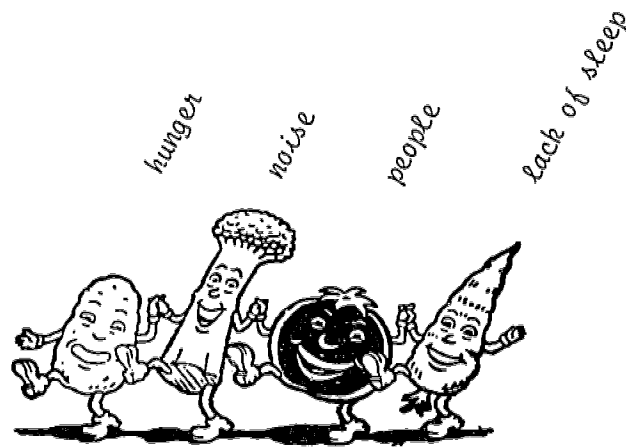
HUNGER is another common competing stimulus in addition
to NOISE and PEOPLE that may interfere with work. It is
difficult to work when your stomach is growling. It is
also difficult to work when your eyes keep falling shut.
So, LACK OF SLEEP may interfere with performance. If
you suspect one of these problems, perhaps mealtimes
can be altered or snacks arranged. An earlier bed time,
or getting up later, may be the answer.

1 4   16

List 4
competing stimuli that may interfere with work

1

2

3

4

17   1 5

Sometimes a behavior is difficult because the setting is not organized as well as it could be. Sweeping the kitchen is more difficult and less likely to happen if the broom is in the garage and the dust pan on the porch, than if all the equipment is in one place in the kitchen. A client who has to use tools from several different locations will probably have trouble. The client who packs boxes with items from several different locations will probably do it slowly. Therefore, another aspect of the environment to look at is the organization of the materials.

It's time to   *get organized!*

ORGANIZING THE ENVIRONMENT is a simple change that can be made to increase behavior when ELIMINATING COMPETING STIMULI doesn't seem appropriate.

16   18

What are 2 ways to make behavior more likely to happen ?

19

17

Sometimes clients really don't know what you want them
to do. *Perhaps* the instructions are unclear. *Perhaps*
you have fallen into the trap of expecting the client to
know what to do, when in fact he does not know. It may
be that all you have to do is tell the client what to
do. People with any sort of language skills need to be
INFORMED OF THE CONTINGENCIES IN CLEAR, CONCISE, AND
CONSISTENT LANGUAGE. That is, they need to know what
you want them to do and what they will get for doing it.

IF One staff says, *"Joe, get to work,"*

AND IF another says, *"Joe, get busy,"*

AND IF a third says, *"Joe, time to start,"*

the client may not understand what is expec-
ted. A standard cue must be chosen and used
consistently (at least in the beginning) for
each client.

This is another simple environmental change, in addition
to ELIMINATING COMPETING STIMULI and ORGANIZING THE
MATERIALS that can make a difference in the rate of be-
havior.

18

These antecedent solutions are often the easiest. . . and yet frequently are not considered. Quite often, these changes alone will have the desired effect on the behavior.

Do you understand changing the environment?

19

Does this occur before or after the desired behavior ?

22

2 0

What 3 general categories of conditions should be looked at ?

23

21

The four aspects of the environment we have discussed, ORGANIZING THE MATERIALS, ELIMINATING COMPETING STIMULI, INFORMING THE CLIENT OF THE CONTINGENCIES IN CLEAR AND CONSISTENT LANGUAGE, and SCHEDULING may seem very simplistic. They are. But what is wrong with solving a problem with an easy answer? Since these solutions are so easy and cheap to implement, they must be considered before the heavy artillery: REINFORCEMENT is brought into the picture.

See Self-Test #1
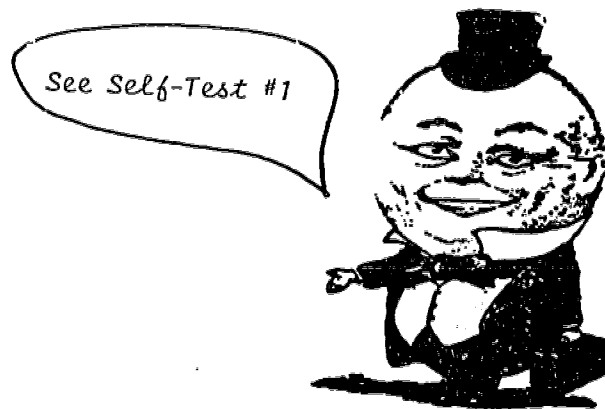
2 2

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If a client does a behavior, but not often enough, and environmental changes either don't work or weren't possible, *what can you do?* Use a reinforcer, that's what!

What is a reinforcer?

A reinforcer is a <u>STIMULUS</u> (a thing or activity) that <u>FOLLOWS</u> a response and <u>INCREASES THE OCCURRENCE OF THAT RESPONSE IN THE FUTURE</u>.

Simply stated, this means people are more likely to do something if that something is followed by a good thing.

SR^+

Good job!
Reinforce that
behavior!

Behavior increases.

25

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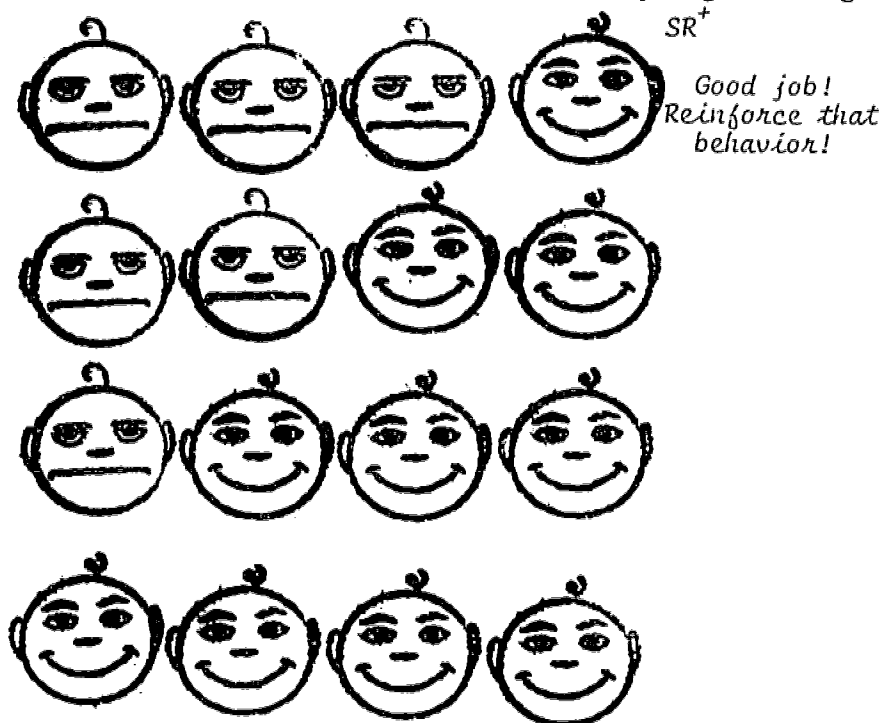
Define
reinforcer

26

2 4

This <u>definition</u> means that if we can find something that
is reinforcing to a given client, and follow the client's
behavior by giving him/her that *thing*, the frequency of
the behavior will increase.

Guess What?! This is what
actually happens!

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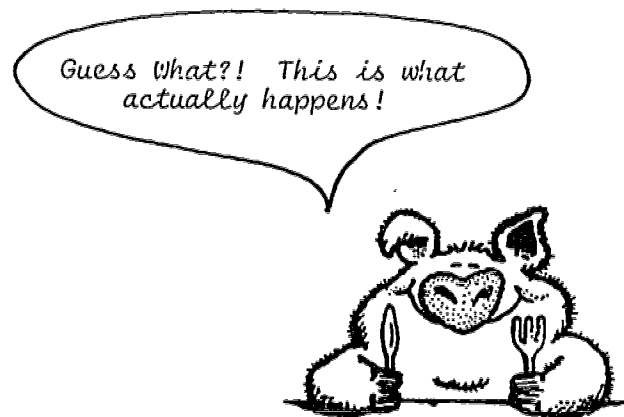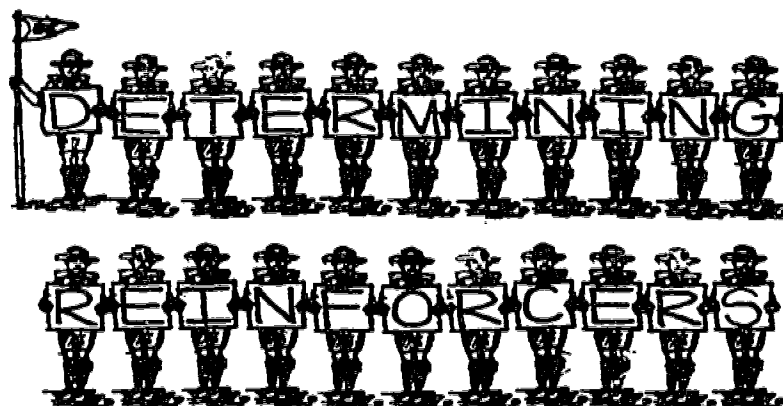
The trick (plus a few other things to be explained
later) is basically to find out for each client what is
reinforcing to *them* (since different things are rein-
forcing to different people).

I, for one, love
pistachio nuts!

Strategies for doing this include:

1 Ask the client (*that's simple*--but only if what they choose <u>does</u> function as a reinforcer.)

2 Ask someone who knows the client (*that's also simple!*)

3 See what the client chooses when given options.

4 *Most importantly,* try some things (including 1, 2, & 3 above) and see what happens: A stimulus is only reinforcing if the behavior increases!
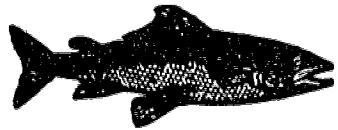
Is he working for peanuts for another staff member on some other behavior?
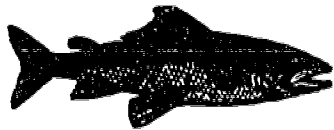
Does he always follow the directions of one staff member, but not yours?

How do you know if a stimulus is a reinforcer ?

28

30

★ No matter how much you like chocolate or praise, if it doesn't increase your client's behavior, it is not a reinforcer for her!

★ No matter how much your client says he wants to watch TV, if access to the TV doesn't increase his behavior, it is not a reinforcer for him in that particular instance!

stimulus that is a reinforcer for one program may not function as a reinforcer in some other setting. A stimulus that you want to serve as a reinforcer always has to be tried in every new situation.

If you try a potential reinforcer and it does not increase the behavior, that does not mean reinforcement doesn't work. It simply means you haven't tried the right stimulus!

31   2 9

CATEGORIES

OF
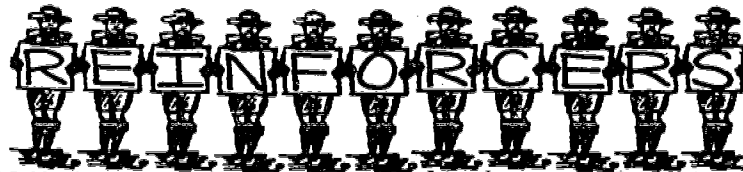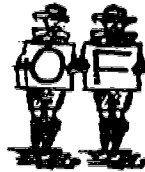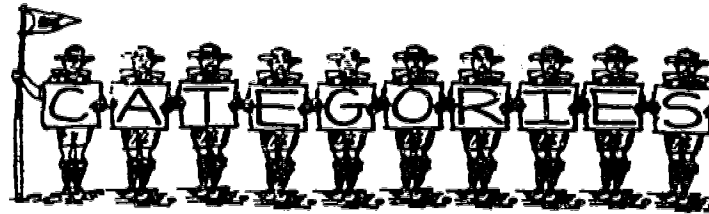
REINFORCERS

There are many types of stimuli that may function as
reinforcers. Among these are three basic categories:

1 *activities*

2 *tangible objects*

3 *social*

3 0

Activities that may function as reinforcers can be any-
thing the client wishes to do. Some common activities
are

★ watching TV   ★ extra free time

★ crafts

★ listening to the radio or records

★ games
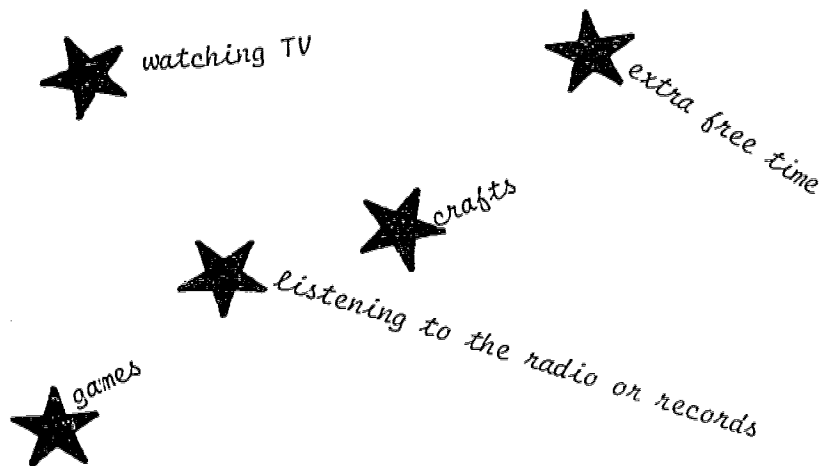
Sometimes things such as *being alone* or *being with a par-
ticular person* can function as a reinforcer. Do not
overlook the possibility that *the chance to work* can be
a reinforcer (especially if the client gets paid). Also,
helping staff could be a reinforcing activity for some
people.

ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITIES are usually easy to use and most require
little effort on the part of the staff to implement.
They are usually activities already available to the
client. They just need to be rearranged so he does
what you want before he gets to do what he wants. They
are very normal. We all operate on this kind of system.
You go to work before you play on weekends. You do
your dishes before you go to the movie.

TANGIBLE ITEMS that may be reinforcers include

games

someone's time card

craft materials

books

records

cosmetic items

M & M's
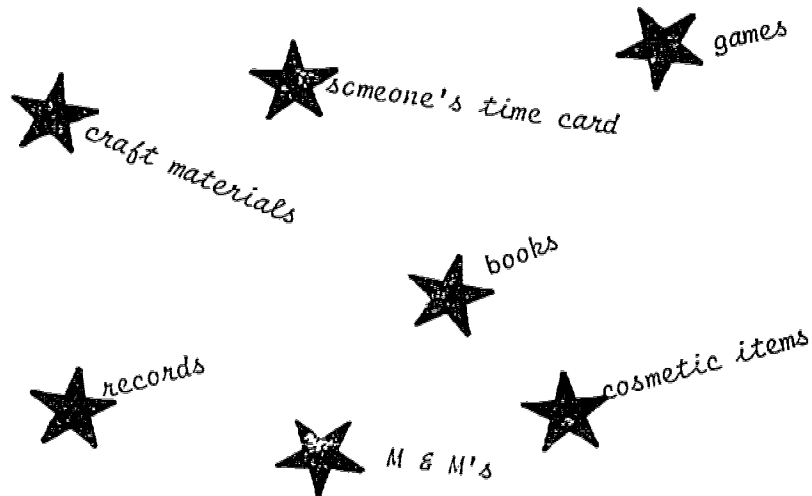
or perhaps the *material to do a certain job*. If they
are items the client already is getting, it is a simple
matter to rearrange the situation so she gets what she
wants after she does what you want.

TANGIBLE
ITEMS

The last category we are going to talk about is SOCIAL REINFORCEMENT. This is the cheapest, easiest to deliver, most normal, and least intrusive reinforcer available; and for many clients, the most powerful.

Attention is a reinforcer if it increases a behavior!

This attention can be verbal, like praise statements, or even critical statements. It can be physical like a touch on the shoulder or a pat on the back; or, in rare cases, physical abuse. It can also be more subtle like

a smile   frown   a glance   or a wink

This attention can come from you, the staff member, or from the client's peers.

When using praise statements as reinforcers, you can facilitate learning by being specific. *"You got the bolt in the right hole,"* gives the client much more information about what you want than, *"Good job!"* There are lots of ways to say "Good job!" (see p. 36-7). By making different statements, you may be able to relieve some of the boredom in doing repetitive tasks.

Be specific when using praise!

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3 4

Praise may increase behavior. . .

but so may criticism!

The biggest problem with social reinforcement is often
any type of attention works. Thus, so-called negative
attention may be just as effective at increasing a beha-
vior as positive attention. Criticizing a client for
getting out of her seat may very well increase getting
out of the seat behavior. Explaining why it is wrong to
argue or fight may increase fighting. Long explanations
of why any particular behavior is wrong and shouldn't be
done, are very likely to increase the undesired behavior.
Remember, *intent doesn't count!* Just because you want
to decrease getting out of seat does not mean it will
happen. If you attend to the behavior and it increases,
then you have reinforced the behavior in spite of what
you set out to do.

3 5

62. I'm proud of the way you worked today.

37. Nice going.

28. That's really nice.

86. You did that very well

76. You remembered!

74. That's IT!

78. I think you've got it now.

83. I like that.

5. That's RIGHT!!!

2. You're doing a good job!

56. You're learning fast.

61. I'm happy to see you working like that.

82. OUTSTANDING!

85. Now that's what I call a fine job!

88. Congratulations, you got (number of behaviors) right!

38. You make it look easy.

32. Good for you!

7. That's the way!

36. SUPER!

4. Now you've figured it out.

50. That's the way to do it!

72. FINE!

79. Well look at you go!

13. That's great!

99 ways

66. That's quite an improvement.

95. You really make my job fun.

17. TERRIFIC!

98. One more time and you'll have it.

31. Much better!

64. You are really learning a lot.

26. Good going!

23. That's a good (boy/girl).

59. You've just about got it.

10. Now you have it!

75. You figured that out fast.

90. SENSATIONAL!

16. FANTASTIC!

77. You're really improving.

20. GOOD WORK!

60. That's good.

68. MARVELOUS!

44. You're getting better everyday.

53. Nothing can stop you now!

73. You'v got your brain in gear today.

89. Right on!

67. That kind of work makes me very happy.

33. That's very much better!

97. You've just about mastered that!

14. You did it that time!

41. Way to go!

47. Keep working on it, you're getting better.

43. SUPERB!

81. TREMENDOUS!

80. You've got that down pat.

25. That's the best you've ever done!

39. I've never seen anyone do it better.

55. You are very good at that.

45. WONDERFUL!

57. That's what I like to see!

6. Congratulations!

24. Good job, (name of student)!

8. You're really going to town!

93. You haven't missed a thing.

21. That's better.

70. PERFECT!

49. You're really working hard today.

35. Exactly right!

96. I'm very proud of you.

92. Good remembering!

27. Keep it up!

29. WOW!!

to say "very good"

1. You're on the right track now!

91. That's the best ever.

42. O.K!

46.

54. You've got it made.

34. I knew you could do it.

19. You outdid yourself today.

4. Good thinking!

69. Muy Bien!

40. You're doing that much better today.

15. GREAT!

58. You certainly did well today.

22. EXCELLENT!

71. Far OUT!

11. Nice going.

84. Couldn't have done it better myself.

63. That's the right way to do it.

94. It's a pleasure to teach when you work like that.

12. That's coming along nicely.

48. You're doing beautifully.

78. Good for you!

65. That's better than ever!

52. THAT'S it!

3. You did a lot of work today.

88. That was first class work.

9. You're doing fine!

30. Keep up the good work.

99. You must have been practicing!

51. Keep on trying!

39

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR REINFORCEMENT
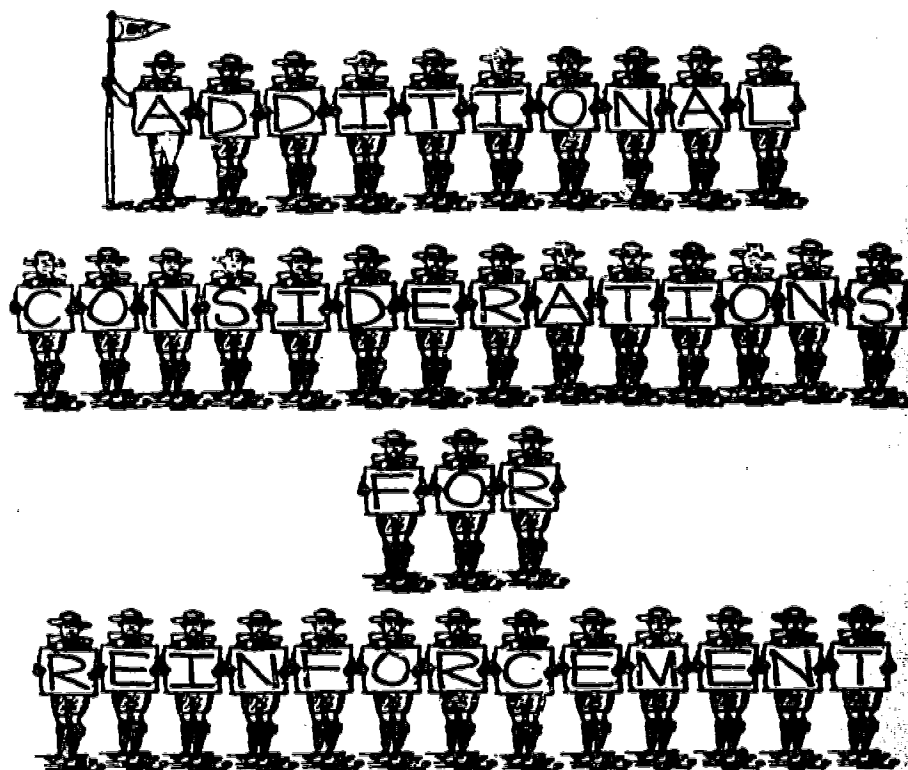
Once you have come up with a list of reinforcers for a client, you then must consider:

WHICH to use: consideration for selection of reinforcers.

WHEN & HOW OFTEN to use them.

which   when   and   how often!
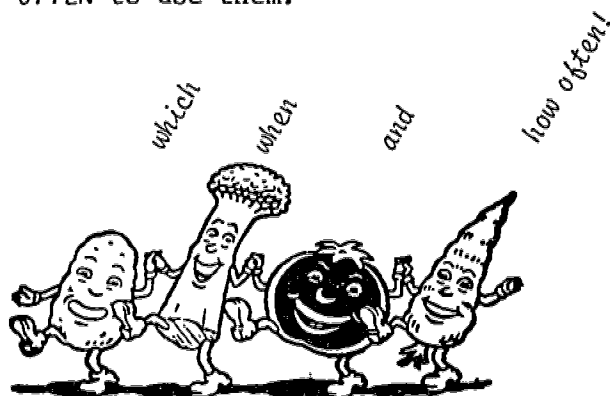
Things to consider

WHICH TO USE

$$$
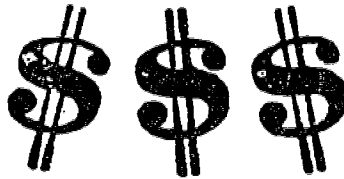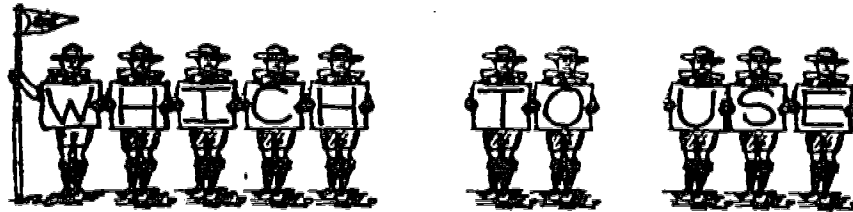
Cost is important to all administrators so it has to be
a factor. Crafts may be effective, but can get expensive
So can movies, bowling or trips to town. Cost can also
mean cost in terms of staff time. Any special events or
outings usually have to be chaperoned, and may be costly.

EASE

A trip home may be a powerful reinforcer, but perhaps
you can't deliver it because the family doesn't want the
client home now. Sex undoubtedly would be a powerful
reinforcer, but the law usually makes this impossible.
Some things may be possible, but just more difficult to
deliver.

For example, food is more difficult to deliver than
praise.

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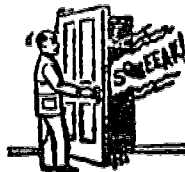
Intrusiveness refers to how much the reinforcer inter-
rupts the ongoing behavior. Food, for example, has to be
eaten before the behavior can continue; therefore, it is
intrusive. A long verbal praise statement may interrupt
not only the target client, but others nearby.
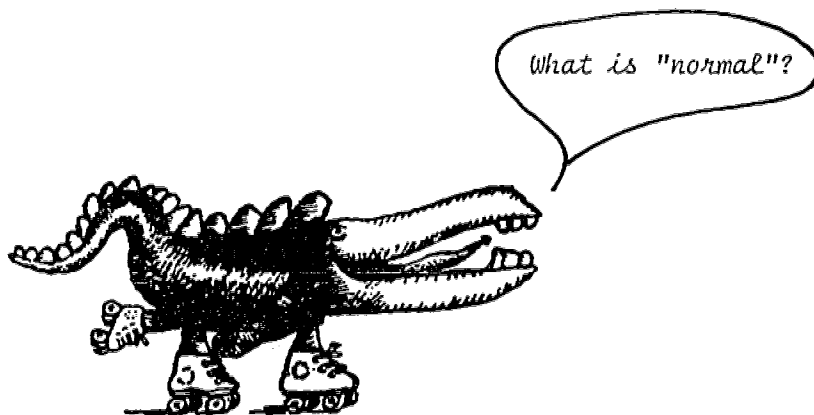
What is "normal"?

Finally, the concept of *normalization* has to be consider-
ed. The word "normal" means "common." What do people
in the real world usually receive for the response that
is being increased? It is not normal for adults to re-
ceive bits of food for doing something right. A lot of
praise is also not normal. A pay check is normal.

There is only one reason to choose a reinforcer that is intrusive, expensive, difficult to deliver, or not normal. This reason is that it is the only stimulus that's been found to work. For example, a *token economy* meets none of the four considerations. In terms of staff time and administration money, it is costly. It is very intrusive and not normal. However, it may be the only way to solve a collection of problems with a group of clients. Therefore, it may be the legitimate method of choice. This is acceptable as long as it is viewed as an intermediate step, and not as the final solution. The token needs to be *phased out* to another reinforcement system as soon as possible.

If you use an expensive, intrusive, difficult to deliver or abnormal reinforcer, you must plan to phase it out ASAP!

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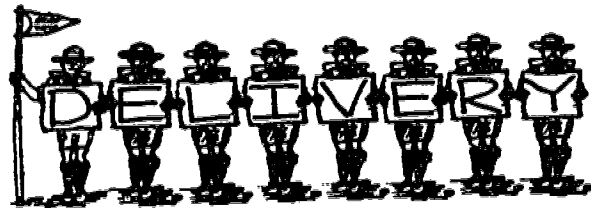
The second consideration is *how and when* to reinforce.
There are several things to keep in mind when delivering
the reinforcers you have selected: -

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1 DELIVER IT FAST: If it is food, it may need to be
put directly into the mouth, the faster the better.
The more immediately the reinforcer is delivered,
the more direct the association between the correct
behavior and the consequence. The general rule is,
*"the lower functioning the person, the more immedi-
ate the reinforcer has to be."* The space can be
bridged by language for the higher functioning
people.

Reinforce immediately!

2 THIN OUT REINFORCEMENT GRADUALLY: Start by giving
the reinforcer after every correct response. Then
for every 2 or 3 correct, then for every 6 or 8, as
the client gets more and more responses correct.
*It is not normal to receive a reinforcer for every
correct response.* Therefore, thinning is a neces-
sary step to normalcy. This must be done gradually,
however, because if too much is expected for too
little too soon, the behavior may decrease or stop.
As the reinforcers you deliver are faded out, the
reinforcers in the natural environment will start
to maintain the behavior.

And thin out gradually!

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3 PAIR IT WITH PRAISE: Since social reinforcement is the easiest to deliver, most normal, least intrusive reinforcement, the final goal should be for the client to respond for socials (except for legitimate paychecks, of course). The best way to facilitate this is to *always give a social along with whatever other stimulus you are using*. As you start to thin out the other reinforcer, you still have the social to maintain the behavior.

4 WATCH FOR SATIATION: Sometimes a stimulus that was working fine as a reinforcer seems to be losing its effectiveness because the client has become tired of it. We all could get tired of ice cream or latch hook or TV after long enough exposure to it. *If a program has been working well and progress suddenly drops off, or the client begins to have good and bad days, you probably need to try some new stimulus as a reinforcer or to vary what you use.*
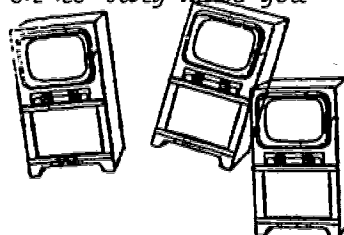
**5** BE CONSISTENT: This is especially important in the beginning phases of a program and is extremely difficult with a large and/or rotating staff. *The same behavior has to be reinforced in all settings for significant behavior change to occur.* This means all staff have to be aware of written programs and all procedures have to be written.

BE CONSISTENT!

4 4

46

What are 5 things to remember when delivering reinforcers ?

45

SCHEDULES

OF
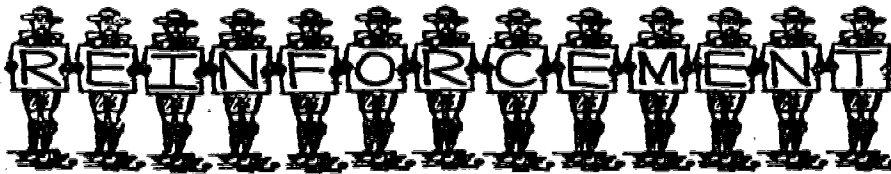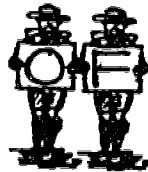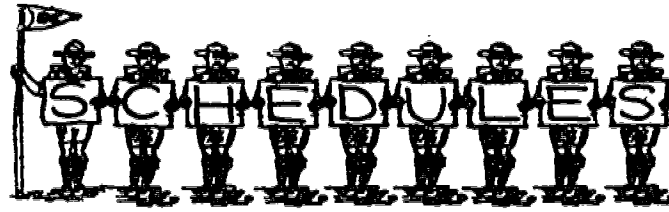
REINFORCEMENT

In point #2 above on thinning out reinforcement, we are actually talking about _schedules_ of _reinforcement_ (setting up a schedule, or plan, on when you will give the reinforcement).

CRF

There are two schedules or patterns of reinforcement that are useful to increase rates of behavior. They are CONTINUOUS (CRF) and DIFFERENTIAL REINFORCEMENT OF HIGH RATES OF BEHAVIOR (DRH).

DRH

4 6

What are 2 schedules for programming reinforcement to increase existing behaviors ?

49

Continuous reinforcement is easy. It means *every time a correct response occurs, it is reinforced*. This type of scheduling requires the constant attention of a teacher.
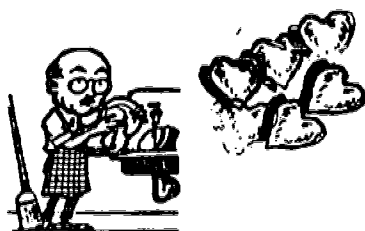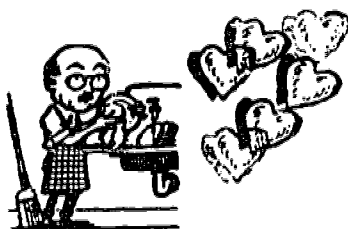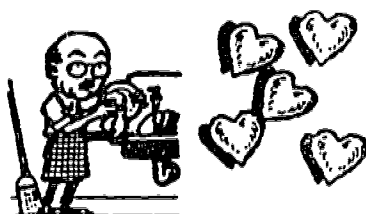
An example of continuous reinforcement!

48

Define
CRF

51

DRH may be somewhat easier to use because it does not require the total attention of a teacher. It means *reinforcement is given at the end of a specified time period of an adequate number of responses have been made.* For example, if Joe assembles 10 widgets in an hour, he may earn a reinforcer.
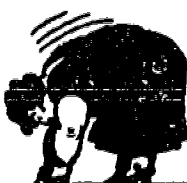
An example of DRH!

Define DRH

53

DRH is a good choice if there is a _permanent product_
that can be counted and if the _client does the behavior,_
but not fast enough.

Use DRH when there is a permanent
product that can be counted. . .

or if the client does the behavior,
but not fast enough!

54

5 2

When is DRH appropriate ?

5 3

Once the behavior has been increased, there are other kinds of schedules to help _maintain_ it. This topic is covered in a separate module.

You'll want to maintain

your client's purr-fect behavior!

5 4

56
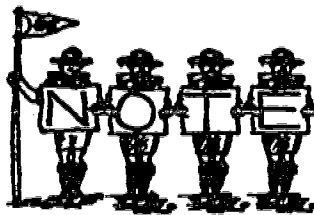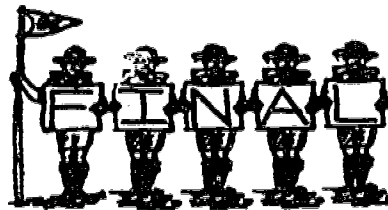
No material on reinforcement is complete without a state-
ment about negative reinforcement: Negative reinforcement
is NOT punishment. *NO, it is not punishment!*

57

Is negative reinforcement punishment ?

58

5 6

Negative reinforcement _increases_ behavior just as positive reinforcement (the kind we have been talking about so far) does.

59

Does negative reinforcement increase or decrease behavior ?

5 8

Positive means "plus!"

Here is a breakdown of the words that may help differ-
entiate between these two terms:

Positive means PLUS. *In positive reinforcement some-
thing is added or given to the client* (i.e., praise or
food). Reinforcement means *the behavior increases.* In
order to increase a behavior, a REINFORCING STIMULUS or
something good has to be given.

61   5 9

Define
positive
reinforcer

62

What kind of a stimulus has to be presented to increase a behavior ?

63

6 1

In negative reinforcement, the word reinforcement still means the behavior will increase, but negative means *something is taken away* to cause the increase. Therefore, the removal of an AVERSIVE STIMULUS or something bad can function as a reinforcer.
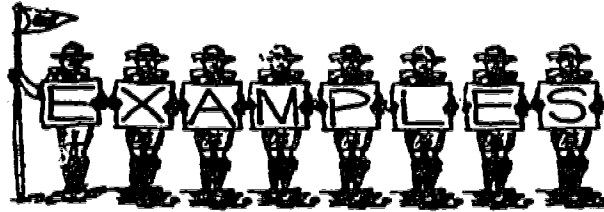
"Negative" means something is taken away!

THE BEHAVIOR INCREASES

Define
negative
reinforcer

65

63

What kind of a stimulus has to be removed to function as a reinforcer ?

This is not a kind of reinforcement that usually is pro-
grammed. It is important, however, when trying to de-
termine what is maintaining a present inappropriate
behavior.

For example,

1 *The avoidance of work may function as a
reinforcer for tired or sick behavior!*

2 *Saying, "I'm busy," may be reinforcement
by the avoidance of some aversive task,
like reading this material!*

3 *Escaping from a meeting with your super-
visor may function as a reinforcer for
agreeing with her!*

4 *Escaping from the presence of an obnoxious
client may maintain your behavior of isola-
ting him when it is not specifically nec-
essary according to the written programs!*

These are all examples of behavior being maintained by
negative reinforcement. Be on the look-out for this
phenomenon in your facility.

65

See self-test #2

Now you are
ready to start
...

Go ahead!

66

Reinforcement feels good...

to you and your client...

So have fun !

67

UNCLEAR INSTRUCTIONS

ENVIRONMENTAL DISTRACTIONS

behavior

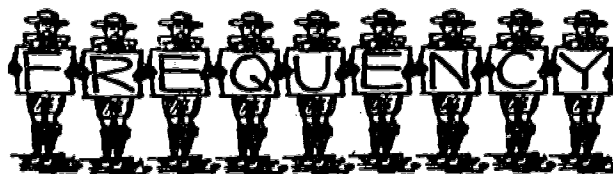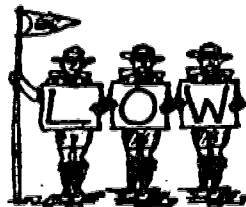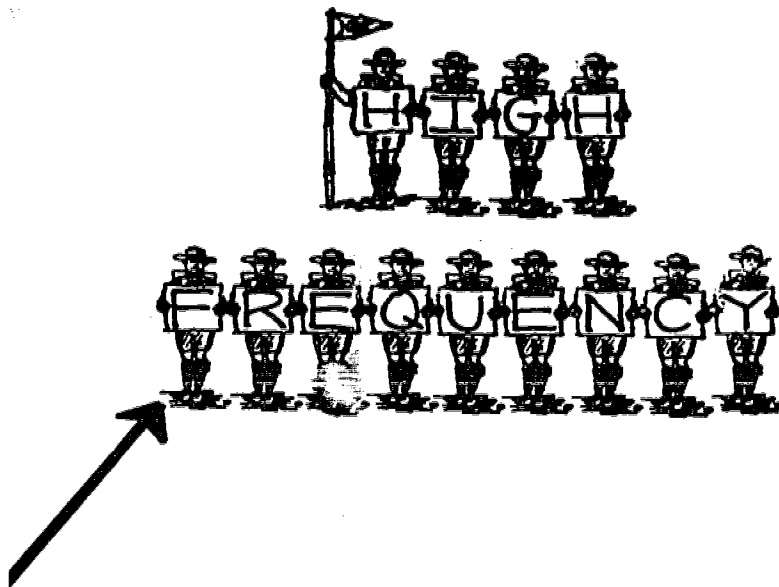LACK OF REINFORCEMENT

SICK, TIRED, SLEEPY CLIENT

becomes

LOW

FREQUENCY

6 8

HIGH

FREQUENCY

MINIMAL ENVIRONMENTAL DISTRACTIONS

HEALTHY CLIENT

BEHAVIOR

CLEAR INSTRUCTIONS

APPROPRIATE REINFORCEMENT

71

6 9

SUGGESTED READING

72

7 0
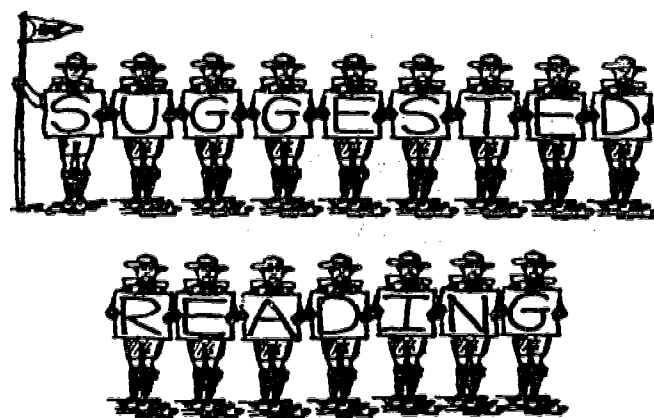
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Tape-Slide Show:

Behavior Modification Skills, Unit 2--Increasing Behavior
    Research Training. Slides Research Media Inc.,
    4 Midland Ave., Hicksville, New York 11801

73

7 1

Self-Test #1

1. List three examples of environmental conditions which might make it difficult for clients to do the desired behavior.

2. List solutions to those examples you provided in #1 above.

74

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Self-Test #2

1. List three ways to determine what is reinforcing
   to a client.

2. How can you tell if a stimulus really is a rein-
   forcer for a client?

3. Give an example of each of three different kinds
   of reinforcers.

4. What general considerations should be made in
   choosing reinforcers?

5. What are the rules for delivering reinforcers?

6. What does negative reinforcement do to the be-
   havior that is reinforced?

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Self-Test #2 (Con't.)

7. How can the environment be changed to make the
    target (underlined) behavior more likely to
    happen?

    a) Alan is very slow at <u>packing the materials</u> in
        the first aid kits. He has to pack items from
        three different tables and off the floor.

    b) Todd is constantly looking out the window at
        work. He gets up every time a car goes by or
        he hears a noise. He's supposed to be <u>packing</u>
        <u>boxes</u>.

    c) Norman sometimes <u>wears socks</u> with his shoes
        but often doesn't. You have never told him
        you consider this appropriate for work but
        you do praise him when he wears socks.

    d) Terry is just starting to <u>disassemble meters</u>.
        You have scheduled this session for 3:30 p.m.
        and he is having a lot of trouble.

Self-Test #2 (Con't.)

8. Choose the best answer after each situation.

A. DRH   C. Not a reinforcement procedure
B. CRF   D. Not enough information to identify
                     procedure

   a) Doug is going to work at a restaurant and you
        want him to wash dishes faster. You have
        started giving him 50¢ if he has 20 glasses
        washed correctly in 30 minutes.

   b) Aaron earns five minutes in the rec room for
        every handle he puts on a broom. The data are:

        M--22   T-29   W--34   Th--39   F--50

   c) Every day Gary comes to work on time he gets to
        take the supervisor the lunch count. He was on
        time Monday but was late every other day last
        week.

   d) June calls people names a lot. You have been
        explaining to her why she shouldn't do this.
        You think she is doing it less and so does her
        favorite victim.

   e) Justin is working on time telling. You think
        he knows how, so every time he gets one wrong
        you explain what he did wrong in great detail.
        You praise right answers. Data: M--8 right
        2 wrong   T--7 right   3 wrong   W--5 right
        5 wrong   Th--4 right 6 wrong
        F--1 right   9 wrong

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