

# Behavior Modification Project

## Overview

For this project you will attempt to modify your own behavior using operant conditioning and the principles of behavior modification. You will choose a target behavior you want to change, observe the behavior, propose a program for changing the behavior, implement your intervention for at least one week, and then report on the results. Your final paper will be about ~3-4 pages double-spaced. Include a recording of all tracked data.

## Student Learning Outcomes

1. Students will understand how principles of psychology relate to real-world behavior by being able to:
  - identify how context shapes individual behavior
  - correctly identify antecedents and consequences of behavior
  - describe practical applications of psychological principles
2. Students will design an operant conditioning program to modify a behavior
3. Students will evaluate the effectiveness of their program in modifying a behavior

## Detailed Instructions

### **Assignment #1: Identifying Target Behavior**

*Identify the Target Behavior:* **Identify** a target behavior to be modified, either an undesirable behavior that you would like to eliminate or a desirable behavior that you would like to strengthen. The target behavior should be an action that is observable and measurable. Include in your description how you will **measure** your behavior (e.g. numbers of hours on social media, going to the gym at least 3 days/week). You should also describe **why** you want to change the behavior and what benefits the change will bring. Behaviors could be things like study habits, sporting skills, or health habits. Make sure to pick a behavior that you're comfortable sharing with me and the class!

Here are some specific examples of behaviors to try to change:

- Reduce smoking/vaping
- Increase vegetable intake
- Reduce amount of time bingeing TV/Youtube/Streaming
- Reduce amount of time playing video games/on social media
- Increase amount of exercise
- Increase water intake
- Increase getting assignment submitted ahead of due date
- Reduce cramming night before a test

# Behavior Modification Project

## Assignment #2: Behavior Modification Report

\*\*This project will take 10 days for data collection.

See the template google doc in this week's module that you can use for your paper.

1. *Collect Baseline Data:* After identifying the target behavior and receiving approval from the instructor, you will monitor your behavior and try to generate a plausible explanation for why the problem exists. Monitor your behavior for **five days**. Keep a record of the target behavior and if it occurred. You should also record antecedents (what do you think led to the behavior?) and consequences (how did you feel after engaging or not engaging in the behavior?) See the example table below. Yours might include different information depending on your target behavior.

Example Target Behavior Baseline: Eating Junk Food

Date	Time	Location	Target Behavior	Additional Notes
9/15	3:00pm	Dorm room	Ate bag of chips	Was bored and didn't eat enough at lunch; felt overstuffed and fatigued afterward
9/16	8:00pm	Yogo Factory	Had large soft serve ice cream	Hanging out with friends; had fun hanging out with friends, but crashed due to sugar overload
9/17	9:00pm	Dorm Room	No junk food all day!	Planned out healthy meals for whole day that did not include junk food, ate every 2 hours; slept better
9/18	12:00pm	Cafeteria	Cheeseburger, french fries, soda, ice cream	Didn't eat breakfast and was starving, had to take a nap in afternoon
9/19	5:00pm	Cafeteria	Chicken fingers, french fries, cake	Salad didn't look good, wanted something quick and easy, no energy rest of night

2. *Evaluation of Antecedents and Consequences:* Discuss the conditions that seemed to increase/decrease your target behavior. Based on your baseline data can you determine what stimuli may be present that affects your behavior? Is there a pattern of antecedents and consequences that

## Behavior Modification Project

increase/decrease the behavior? In the example above, an antecedent could be hanging out with friends increases your likelihood of eating junk food. Or not planning your meals out. A consequence could be feeling blah or getting better sleep.

3. *Design a Program:* Now that you better understand your behavior, identify either a punishment or reinforcer (or both) to increase/decrease your target behavior. For example, you could reward yourself with extra time on social media and punish yourself by limiting your use of social media. You want to identify reinforcers/punishers that will motivate you to change your target behavior. Once you've identified appropriate punishers/reinforcers, explain how you will use these to change your target behavior with operant conditioning.
4. *Implementation:* Implement your program for **5 days** and record your results in a table.

Example Table of Program Implementation

Date	Time	Location	Target Behavior	Punisher/Reinforcer	Comments
9/22	9:00pm	Dorm room	No junk food all day	Get to spend 1 hour on social media	Planned out all meals for day; slept great and exercised next morning
9/22	8:00pm	Yogo Factory	Had large soft serve ice cream	No social media time tonight	Had fun with friends, but didn't feel good after eating ice cream; Pick different activity to do with friends next time
9/23	9:00pm	Dorm Room	No junk food all day	Get to spend 1 hour on social media	Planned out all meals and didn't let myself get too hungry; felt good and enjoyed my social media time
<b>Collect for 2 more days</b>					

# Behavior Modification Project

5. *Program Evaluation:* After comparing your baseline and program data, discuss and evaluate your results. The following questions should guide your evaluation:
  - a. Did you observe any changes in behavior while implementing your intervention compared to your baseline data? Be specific and discuss your tracking data here.
  - b. What was the overall effect on behavior? Did your program work?
  - c. Did you make any adjustments to your plan because of what you saw working or not working?
  - d. Would you have done anything differently? If so, please include changes you would have made.
  - e. How do you see yourself using Operant Conditioning in the future? In what contexts?
6. *Paper Formatting & Submission*
  - a. Should be written in paper format - using complete sentences in paragraphs.
  - b. No title page is needed.
  - c. Use 11 or 12-point font and double-space. Use 1" margins.
  - d. Proofread your paper for any grammatical, spelling, and formatting errors.
  - f. Submit your paper to Canvas (word doc or pdf) by the due date.
  - g. **Please note:** I will give you feedback and allow a revise/resubmit for a higher grade if needed.

## Grading Rubrics

Assignment #1				
Criteria	Beginning	Approaching	Meeting	Exceeding
<b>Identification of Target of Behavior</b>	Student failed to identify a target behavior	Student attempted to identify a target behavior but was missing information and/or was not observable/ measurable	Student identified a target behavior that is measurable and observable	Student expertly and clearly identified a target behavior and clearly defined how it would be measured
<b>Description of why that behavior was chosen</b>	Student expertly and clearly describes why they chose that behavior	Student students describes how they chose behavior but missing some information or needs more elaboration	Student attempted to describe why they chose behavior but was missing many aspects and/or included significant error	Student failed to describe why they chose that behavior
Assignment #2				
Criteria	Beginning	Approaching	Meeting	Exceeding

# Behavior Modification Project

<b>Identification of Target of Behavior</b>	Student failed to identify a target behavior	Student attempted to identify a target behavior but was missing information and/or was not observable/ measurable)	Student identified a target behavior that is measurable and observable	Student expertly and clearly identified a target behavior and clearly defined how it would be measured
<b>Description of why that behavior was chosen</b>	Student expertly and clearly describes why they chose that behavior	Student students describes how they chose behavior but missing some information or needs more elaboration	Student attempted to describe why they chose behavior but was missing many aspects and/or included significant error	Student failed to describe why they chose that behavior
<b>Tracking Baseline Data</b>	Student failed to include their baseline	Student included their baseline data, but was unclear, missing information, or inaccurate	Student included their baseline data but some info was unclear or inaccurate	Student included their baseline data, it was clearly presented and accurate
<b>Evaluation of Antecedents and Consequences</b>	Student failed to evaluate their antecedents and consequences of their target behavior	Student attempted to evaluate their antecedents and consequences of their target behavior but was missing many aspects and/or included significant errors	Student accurately evaluate their antecedents and consequences of their target behavior but did not address all aspects or included some errors	Student expertly and clearly evaluate their antecedents and consequences of their target behavior and addressed all aspects
<b>Program Design</b>	Student failed to accurately summarize their program	Student attempted to summarize their program but was missing many aspects and/or included significant errors	Student accurately summarized their program but did not address all aspects or included some errors	Student expertly and clearly summarized their program and addressed all aspects
<b>Tracking Program Data</b>	Student failed to include their program data	Student included their program data, but was unclear, missing information, or inaccurate	Student included their program data but some info was unclear or inaccurate	Student included their program data, it was clearly presented and accurate
<b>Program Evaluation</b>	Student failed to critically evaluate their program	Student attempted to evaluate their program but was missing many aspects and/or included significant errors	Student accurately evaluated their program but did not address all aspects or contained some inaccuracies	Student expertly and clearly evaluated their program and addressed all aspects
<b>Overall Writing</b> spelling, grammar, formatting	Many errors and poor organization that impede understanding	Several writing errors and/or poor organization that impedes understanding	Well written for the most part, some spelling/grammatical issues	Very well written and organized; minimal to no errors in spelling/grammar/forma tting