Behaviour Modification: Learning Principles Applied (PSYC314)

Unit Guide
First Trimester, 2014

Unit Coordinator: John Malouff, PhD, JD

Introduction to the Unit Coordinator

John Malouff, PhD, JD, Psychology North Building S07, 02 6773-3776, jmalouff@une.edu.au

I am glad that you are taking this unit. I hope that you will find it useful now and throughout the rest of your life. Feel free to contact me if you have any questions or comments relating to the unit. If you send me an email, please use your UNE email account and make sure your return box isn't blocked in some way. If you leave a phone message for me, please give your name and phone number at the *start* of the message. Say each slowly and clearly and repeat the phone number at one number per second. I may respond to phone messages with an email to your UNE email address.

Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this unit, students will be able to:

1. apply the most commonly used behaviour assessment and change strategies;
2. plan and execute a behaviour change project;
3. apply advanced level communications skills via the written form, including graph presentation;
4. discuss the uses, limitations and common criticisms of behaviour modification;
5. describe and explain the use of basic counselling skills with behaviour modification methods; and
6. present orally clear information about how to apply specific behaviour modification principles.

Requirements and Related Learning Objectives

Task	Percentage of grade	Learning Objectives
Written assignment (1,000-1,250 words):	30%	1, 2, 3
Oral Presentation	5%	6

Midterm Quiz:	10%	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
Final Exam	55%	1, 2, 3, 4, 5

Important dates

Project proposal due: **March 18**

Online quiz: **Opens 9 AM, Apr 8, and closes 11:59 PM Apr 15**; this quiz will cover assigned content through Apr 7

Written assignment due: **May 6**

Oral Presentation due: **May 13**

Final exam: **June; check UNE web site for specific date and time**

Textbook

Miltenberger, R. G. (2011). *Behavior modification: Principles and procedures* (5th ed.). Belmont, CA: Thomson.

Other Assigned Readings & Videos

Alexander Street Counseling (1993) in Video #1778785 *Basic listening sequence & issues of trauma* [1st 10 minutes]. Accessible at Dixson Library at: http://ctiv.alexanderstreet.com.ezproxy.une.edu.au/View/1778785/.

Malouff, J. (2011). *Over fifty problem-solving strategies explained*. Retrieved Jan 17, 2012, from http://www.une.edu.au/bcss/psychology/john-malouff/problem-solving.php. Online at this URL.

Malouff, J., & Schutte, N. (2004). Strategies for increasing client completion of treatment assignments. *The Behavior Therapist, 27,* 118-121. Online at Dixson Library eReserve at http://www.une.edu.au/ereserve/?biblioID=R11449.

Seligman, L. (2006). *Theories of counseling and psychotherapy: Systems, strategies, and skills* (2nd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson. Read pages 22-24. Online at Dixson Library eReserve at http://www.une.edu.au/ereserve/?biblioID=R52287.

Cited But Not-Assigned Readings

American Psychological Association (2009). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.). Washington, D.C.: author.

Andrews, G., Creamer, M., Crino, R., Hunt, C., Lampe, L., & Page, A. (2003). *The treatment of anxiety disorders: Clinician guides and patient manuals* (2nd ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bandura, A. (1986). *Social foundations of thought and action.* Englewood Cliffs, CA: Prentice-Hall.

Blanchard, K. H., & Johnson, S. (1982). *The one-minute manager*. New York: Morrow.

Carnegie, D. (1991). *How to win friends and influence people*. London: Cedar.

D'Zurilla, T. J., & Nezu, A. M. (2006). *Problem solving therapy: A positive approach to clinical intervention* (3rd ed.). New York: Springer.

Hill, C. E. (2004). *Helping skills: Facilitating exploration, insight, and action*. Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association.

Martin, G., & Pear, J. (2003). *Behavior modification: What it is and how to do it* (7th ed.). Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall (or see prior editions).

Osborn, M., Osborn, S., & Osborn, R. (2012). *Public speaking.* Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Roediger, H. L., & Karpicke, J. D. (2006). Test-enhanced learning: Taking memory tests improves long-term retention. *Psychological Science, 17*, 249-255.

Schutte, N., & Malouff, J. (1995). *Sourcebook of adult assessment strategies*. New York: Plenum.

Dates/Topics/Reading Assignments

Week of	Topic	Reading Assignment
Feb 24	BMod characteristics and applications; establishing rapport; assessment	Chs 1-3; Seligman (2006); Alexander Street Counseling (1993) first 10 minutes
Mar 3	Assessment continued; ethics	Chs 2-3
Mar 10	Applying reinforcement, shaping	Chs 4, 9
Mar 17	Applying antecedent control & prompting	Chs 7, 10, 16
Mar 24	Chaining & skills training	Chs 11, 12
Mar 31	Functional assessment	Ch 13
Apr 7	Applying differential reinforcement; applying extinction	Chs 15, 5, 14
Break		
Apr 28	Applying punishment	Chs 6, 17, 18
May 5	Effectively giving assignments & promoting	Ch 19; Malouff &

	generalization	Schutte (2004)
May 12	Self-management, habit reversal procedures	Chs 20, 21
May 19	Fear and anxiety reduction	Chs 8, 24
May 26	Cognitive methods; criticisms of behaviour modification	Ch 25; Malouff (2011)

Requirements of Application Project and Written Assignment

Project Requirements

The application project will provide you with practical experience in applying behaviour modification principles, describing your work in writing, presenting information in a graph, and reflecting on your work. For the project you will need a person who could benefit from behavioural intervention to overcome a significant psychological problem or to accomplish something significant. For instance, the person could be someone who wants to quit smoking (here's a chance to save a life!); stop chewing nails, pulling hair, or cursing; or overcome a phobia. Alternatively, the person might be a parent who wants to get his or her children to act more outgoing or obedient, or to fight less or to have fewer tantrums. The person must be competent to consent (e.g., at least 18 with at least ordinary intelligence) and actually consent or the person's parent/guardian must consent (e.g., in the case of a minor).

I won't approve (a) projects with goals that tend to lead to only temporary or trivial benefits, e.g., weight loss, eating changes, calorie reduction, exercise increase, tidying, school-related stress reduction, studying improvement, decreased game or Internet activity, or eliminating knuckle cracking; (b) projects where clients might harm themselves or harm another, deteriorate sharply, or die, e.g., cases of self-injury, domestic violence, psychosis, or anorexia, or (c) any use of punishment or aversion therapy, with the exceptions that you may propose use of a safe but foul tasting substance on fingernails to try to decrease nail biting and you may propose the use of time-out or response cost by parents for serious misbehaviour.

It is best to choose someone who is highly motivated to achieve the intervention goal, e.g., someone who is determined to quit smoking and who expresses a willingness to quit with help in the next few weeks. It is also wise to choose someone who is not a close family member. That is because the existing relationship is likely to conflict with the intervention relationship. Classmates and friends are often the best bet.

Be sure to (a) explain that you want to do the project for a class, (b) say that you will write up a description of the intervention and outcome without that person's name, and (c) obtain that person's oral or written consent. You need *not* give me a consent form.

You may try to change behaviour in yourself rather than in another person. There is no difference in marking for taking this option. If you do the intervention on yourself, you will need to apply several self-control procedures, which are described in detail in the self-management chapter.

Proposal

Once you have identified the person to be helped, you will prepare a proposal describing in detail how you will **repeatedly** assess the person and what techniques you will use to help the person change. Assessment will usually involve at least two methods or sources of information. The intervention will involve the application of several behaviour modification procedures, almost always including reinforcement and self-management methods. This proposal will be in your own words, in paragraph form, 250-500 words long.

Submit the proposal (but not the final paper) to jmalouff@une.edu.au **in the body of an email** (*not* as an attachment). The date you send a properly addressed email that I receive is the date submitted (for deadline purposes).

As quickly as possible (usually within a few days) I will make comments on the proposal and return it to you. Once I approve your proposal, you may begin the assessment and intervention. I will not score the proposal, except that if the proposal is grossly inadequate (e.g., having few or no appropriate BMod principles), I will deduct up to 5% from your assignment mark. I want to see the proposal to make sure that students use appropriate techniques for an appropriate problem, etc., and I usually will make suggestions.

You are required to obtain approval of your proposal before you begin the intervention. Also, you must attach a copy of my approval note and your proposal to your final paper when you submit it. You may copy and paste as needed. I may make my comments in brackets to make them conspicuous.

If you do not submit a proposal that I approve, you will receive a 0 for the project. If you complete a project without prior approval, you will receive a 0. If you submit your proposal late, you will lose points (2% a working day) on your project paper. If you submit your proposal more than 15 days late, you will receive a 0 for the project. I will reject poor proposals (e.g., proposals with few or no behaviour modification principles in them).

You may change your intervention slightly after I have approved it. You must obtain approval before making substantial changes. If you do not, you will receive a 0 for the project.

Obtaining Information for the Project

Depending on the problems to be addressed in the intervention and the methods to be used, you may have to read ahead in order to plan your assessment and intervention strategies. For instance, many projects will benefit from the strategies for promoting assignment adherence (Malouff & Schutte, 2004) and generalization and durability of change (ch. 19). Please read the ethics material below before you begin. Psychologists dealing with a client problem of a new type would read about assessment and treatment of the problem. Similarly, you may also read articles or parts of books on modification of the behaviour. You may search for books using a library database and entering as the subject terms that describe the problem and an intervention, e.g., nail biting and treatment. For Dixon Library, go to http://www.une.edu.au/library, change search box to catalog, and change search type to subject. You may search the library for articles using the PsycINFO database (under Journal Articles and Databases) and entering the same subject terms. Look for procedures related to those mentioned in the textbook. Two other valuable sources of information that I often use are google.com (for web sites) and scholar.google.com (for scholarly articles). Once you complete your education, you may not have access to a university library or to PsycINFO, so become familiar with the Google search engines. If you are trying to help a person overcome a psychological problem, you may also find it useful to look for treatment ideas in a very good text on behaviour modification by Martin and Pear (2003), in the Dixson library or in treatment handbooks in the Dixson Library such as those of Andrews, Creamer, Crino, Hunt, Lampe, and Page (2003). You

might find useful assessment measures in Schutte and Malouff (1995). All of the books mentioned in this paragraph are in the Dixson Library. You can download online articles of many psychology journals thru the Dixson Library online.

Project Paper Requirements

The final paper should have a **Title page** with an accurate word count on the lower left (in the range of **1,000-1,250 words** -- excluding references and appendix). Give the paper a title that describes the problem or goal. In the **Introduction**, describe the person and the problem or goal, including the duration, severity and effects of the problem, what the person has tried before to overcome the problem or achieve the goal, and the effects of these efforts. In the **Assessment** section, describe in detail the assessment methods used. In the **Intervention** section describe in detail what you did to help the person change. Describe problems encountered, and adjustments you made.   In the **Outcome** section, describe what changes occurred concurrent with your intervention. Show the changes in a graph of at least baseline and intervention levels of the condition of interest. Also, describe to what extent the changes extended to different situations and over time. In the **Discussion** section, discuss what seemed to work, what seemed not to work, what you learned, and what remains for you or the person to do to reach the goal or to maintain gains. In the **References** section, use APA format (American Psychological Association, 2009). The references need not be extensive. Just put in the references that contributed to your assessment strategies and intervention techniques. For model references, see the references under Cited But Not Assigned Materials. Attach to your paper as **Appendices** the proposal with my entire approval note (saying "Go ahead" near the end), my note (if any) approving substantial changes in the intervention, and a single copy of each type of professional scale or professional rating form used (most of you will not have one of these). Do not attach any scales you created or anything else not mentioned above in appendices. Label all sections, except the introduction. Do not repeat the paper title at the start of the introduction. Follow APA style for the entire paper, including indenting paragraphs, double-spacing everywhere, using a header with page numbers, using proper type of section headings, etc. Do not include an abstract.

The visual display in the **Outcome** section should include a title, clear labels for the X and Y axes, and for the baseline and intervention periods, and all other information needed to understand the outcome. Time should appear on the X (horizontal) axis. The display may be drawn (neatly) by hand (with no deduction in points).

Books and web sites that provide tips on using APA style may help you. However, keep in mind that this is *not* a research paper; it is an intervention report.

Use the **past tense** throughout the paper when referring to past events, and don't call the intervention a study or experiment. Refer to the person being helped by a first name that you make up (to protect anonymity), not as the "subject." Put the made-up name in quotes the first time you use it in the paper. Use "I" if you try to change your own behaviour. Throughout the paper use **active voice.**

Active Voice

Many students write using passive voice. Passive-voice examples include "It was suggested…," and "The number of cigarettes smoked was recorded…." Active forms of these sentences include "I suggested…," and "Fiona recorded the number of cigarettes…."

Only amateur writers regularly use or teach others to use passive voice. If you read a newspaper, magazine, or book – anything a professional writer produces -- you will see active voice. The APA Publication Manual requires active voice. Why? Active voice has the advantages of being

(1) more interesting to read (because we like action), (2) clearer (because we can easily determine **who** does the action described), and (3) faster to read (because the verb tends to come right after the subject).

Now read the same content in passive voice:

*Passive voice is regularly used or taught only by amateur writers. Active voice will be seen if a newspaper, magazine, or book – anything that is produced by a professional writer -- is read by you. Active voice is required by the APA Publication Manual. Why is that? The advantages of active voice are that it is (1) more interesting to read (because action is what we like), (2) clearer (because it can easily be determined **who** it is who does the action described), and (3) faster to read (because the tendency is for the verb to come right after the subject).*

How can you make your writing more active? Write sentences with definite subjects and active verbs; include few if any "was," "were" and "is" words. How can you assess your writing regarding level of active voice? If you use Word, click on Tools/Spelling and Grammar/Ignore until you get into Reading Statistics. Look at the Passive Sentences percentage. You want that near 0.

Improving your Writing

Writing is a very important skill, especially for university-educated individuals. There are different styles of writing for different purposes, e.g., newspaper articles, scientific articles, and blogs. All good writing tends to have certain core elements though, such as an introduction (often a problem statement), action, results, and a conclusion. The technical elements are the same across types of good writing: Good grammar and word choice, a logical flow of sentences and paragraphs, etc. I highly recommend that you use some of your university time to make your writing as good as possible.

1. Look at the errors marked in your most recent Psychology writing assignment. Try to learn at least one writing rule that will permanently improve your writing. For instance, you could search Google for "run-on sentences" or "semicolons" and find the relevant rule and examples.
2. As you read your textbook in this unit, pay attention to grammar, the structure of paragraphs and sentences, and the punctuation.
3. Go to http://www.une.edu.au/library/eskillsune/putting/writing.php and try to improve your writing.
4. Take a Tertiary Literary Assessment. See:

http://www.une.edu.au/tlc/aso/students/programs/tla.php.
5. Work on your own with this book:
Scarry, S. (2002). The writer's workplace (6th ed.). Boston: Heinle & Heinle.
6. Consult a professional at the Academic Skills Office -- see http://www.une.edu.au/tlc/aso/.
7. Complete ENCO100.

Ethical Writing

The rules of ethical writing, such as telling the truth and giving credit where it is due, are the same for students as for psychologists. You owe your classmates and society compliance with these rules.

Suggested Process for Writing the Paper

1. Start working on the project early in the semester. Read the assignment requirements carefully.

2. At least several days before the paper is due carefully read the unit-guide requirements and the UNE plagiarism declaration form.

3. Create a detailed outline of your paper.

4. Word-process a draft.

5. Use software to check grammar and spelling.

6. Proofread and revise.

7. Have a good writer read the paper and look hard for writing errors or unclear parts.

8. Check draft against the unit guide (above) and the scoring criteria (below), make final revisions, proofread, spell-check again, and do a word count.

9. Submit the paper on time.

Assignment submission process

You will submit the assignment electronically via Moodle. You **must submit your assignment as a Word document.** Your submitting a Word document will allow us to add comments to your paper and return it to you electronically (by email to your UNE address).

Scoring the Project Paper

Markers will help me score the papers. They will receive written instructions and sample scored papers before they begin.

Please write clearly and succinctly. We will **not** consider outcome in scoring. We will do our best to return papers within three weeks of when we receive them. **Scoring criteria**, in addition to the timeliness of the proposal and final paper and following the rules of ethical writing and the rules stated above regarding approval and changes:

1. Worthiness of project (to what extent did the problem warrant change efforts) and appropriateness of introduction

2. Appropriateness and comprehensiveness of assessment methods and section

3. Appropriateness and comprehensiveness of intervention methods and section

4. Appropriateness of outcome section and clarity of visual display of outcome

5. Appropriateness of discussion

6. Presence of an accurate word count and all required headings, sections, and appendix items (including a copy of forms and professional scales used, and the proposal and approval note), writing within the word limits and overall appearance of paper, including double spacing throughout, indenting paragraphs, providing appropriate references, and following APA style

7. Clarity and quality of writing, including grammar, diction, spelling, and writing style (e.g., using active voice and using a singular pronoun to refer to a single client: "he" – not "they")

Oral Presentation

This activity gives you a chance to (a) hone your oral-presentation skills, (b) increase your confidence in those skills, (c) help you learn more about a specific type of behaviour modification intervention, (d) learn how to create and upload an instruction video, and (e) provide useful information to others worldwide through an instructional video you create. You may find the video useful in later obtaining employment in mental health.

You will give a video-recorded presentation on behaviour modification methods to use to help a person change a specific type of behaviour. The presentation must include at least three minutes of content. The methods may be the same ones you use for your project or they may be other methods for other goals. The presentation must be posted on YouTube.com, with the link provided to me through Moodle "Submit oral presentation" by the due date, along with the following **Information to Submit as Your Oral Presentation** (for purposes of guiding your efforts and aiding your learning). Giving a non-read presentation of the required length and content and submitting the self-rating are necessary in order to earn credit. You may describe yourself as a psychology student if you want. I suggest not describing yourself as a psychologist in training -- this term is reserved by law for more advanced students. If for your own personal safety or as a requirement of your work you need to avoid uploading a video of yourself to YouTube public, please contact me before the due date. Do **not** wait until the due date to try to record and upload the video. Submitting the link well in advance of the due date would be wise because you may encounter technical problems in recording or uploading. You must leave your video up until you receive a grade. You can then take it down, but I hope that you will leave it up perpetually so that individuals with the problem about which you speak can benefit. I intend to commend students who submit outstanding videos. Here is a link to instructions about how to upload a video to YouTube:

http://support.google.com/youtube/bin/topic.py?hl=en&topic=2888648&parent=16547&ctx=topic.

You may need to borrow a camera or other device to do the recording; uploading to YouTube is usually easy, but it might help you to gain assistance from someone such as another student who has already uploaded a video to YouTube. Make sure that you set the video to public on YouTube and that you test the link before you submit it. I suggest following these general oral presentation preparation guidelines:

1. Create notes

2. Practice and time the presentation

3. Take notes with you for the presentation

4. Do not read – that usually is boring

If you want to improve your public speaking skills (which are very valuable – take it from someone who speaks publicly for a living!), you can (1) read Osborn, Osborn, and Osborn (2012), in Dixson Library, (2) carefully observe good speakers and try to emulate them, complete THEA234 Speaking in Public, and (4) explore the local chapter of Toastmasters, an organization dedicated to helping individuals improve their public speaking.

If you want to reduce your anxiety about public speaking, follow the suggestions in these web sites:

http://www.roch.edu/dept/spchcom/anxiety_handout.htm

http://www.school-for-champions.com/speaking/fear.htm

http://www.ljlseminars.com/anxiety.htm

        If you avoid public speaking, consider focusing your unit behaviour-change project on eliminating that avoidance.

Information to Submit as Your Oral Presentation:

1. Your name:

2. URL on YouTube.com for your video presentation:

3. Did you:

a. test the link to make sure that it leads to your video?

b. set the video to be public rather than private?

c. provide valuable information about how to apply BMod principles to overcome some problem or accomplish something important?

d. speak for at least three minutes?

e. speak without reading?

f. speak loud enough and clearly enough to be understood easily?

g. speak with an enthusiastic tone of voice?

h. smile occasionally?

i. speak at an appropriate speed?

j. speak with few if any filler sounds such as "um" and "ah"?

i. look at the camera most of the time?

j. dress appropriately?

k. have a suitable background?

l. have good lighting?

m. speak *without* describing yourself as a psychologist in training?

Oral Presentation Video Scoring Criteria

1. "Information to Submit as Your Oral Presentation" submitted
2. URL provided leads to the student's video, which is open to the public
3. Video shows the student talking about how to apply BMod principles to change a specific type of behaviour
4. Student talks for at least three minutes
5. Student speaks without reading or appearing to read

Quiz and Exam

The quiz and final exam will give you chances to show your knowledge of behaviour modification, including how to apply behaviour modification principles. The midterm quiz and exam will also provide you with an interesting opportunity to learn more about behaviour modification. Please complete the practice quiz, covering the first three weeks of the unit, before you complete the quiz that counts toward your grade. The practice quiz will give you valuable practice, as well as feedback on how your learning is progressing. Completing the practice quiz will also give you time to solve any technical problems relating to your computer or Internet access prior to completing the graded quiz. The **practice quiz will open Mar 15**.

The **graded midterm online quiz, which opens Apr 8 and closes Apr 15**, will consist of 15 multiple choice items on content covered in these notes, class sessions, and assigned readings *through* April 7. Students who fail to complete a quiz by the end of its open period will receive a 0 for the quiz but can continue with the unit. Please put the quiz open periods in your schedule book. The final exam will consist of 70-80 multiple choice items and a few short-answer questions based on everything covered in these notes, class meetings, and assigned readings over the entire unit. Answers to the short-answer questions amount to about 10% of the exam points.

Sample exam items:

"1. Which strategy is *least* likely to be used to reduce the rate of an undesirable behaviour?

   a. Extinction

   b. Differential reinforcement of alternative behaviour

   c. Response cost

   d. Negative reinforcement

2. Please print or write legibly: Describe eight problem solving methods mentioned in your readings (worth a total of 4 points)."

To do your best on the quiz and the exam, follow the suggestions in the Maximizing Your Learning section after this one. Prior to each test:

1. Put all your notes from readings and class into an outline and memorize it just before the test.

2. Make up exam questions for yourself and swap with others as exam time approaches.

3. Develop and rehearse a relaxation method and then apply it just before the start of the exam and as needed during the test.

4. Start the test with the goal of doing your best under the circumstances.

You will have 15 minutes to complete the midterm quiz. You may use written materials but no consultants! Moodle will score your midterm online quiz answers, give you your score as soon as you finish, and give you item-by-item feedback at the end of the quiz open period. For the final exam, an electronic scanner will score the multiple choice items, and I will score the short-answer items.

Maximizing Your Learning

No one will ever pay you for what you know – you will get paid for what you do. So learn how to do things that someone will pay you to do. These actions might include helping others, writing reports, interacting in a pleasant manner with another person, etc. To learn as much as possible in the unit, read assigned material before the related class session, take notes in your own words, answer as many questions and complete as many exercises at the end of the chapter as possible. The best use of study time after reading the material is answering the questions about the material – not going over the material again (Roediger & Karpicke, 2006). Attend or listen to every class session, take extensive notes, and participate actively in discussions on Moodle and/or in class sessions. Answer the questions I ask and ask your own questions about anything you do not understand. Look for opportunities to tell others what you have learned – explaining a concept to another person is an excellent way to improve your own understanding. Think of ways you could apply each BMod principle in your own life, and apply principles at every opportunity. Use the online learning resources that come with the text. You can find these "study tools" at http://www.cengagebrain.com.au/shop/isbn/9781111306113

Supplementing Your Learning

If you plan to apply behaviour modification principles as part of your career, I strongly recommend that you obtain paid or unpaid work experience where you can apply the principles. This experience may help you (1) improve your ability to find a job, (2) improve your skills in helping others, (3) learn about training and career paths that might suit you, (4) learn about job openings, (5) improve your ability to function in a professional setting, (6) determine whether you like certain types of work or clients, (7) find out whether you are good at helping others, and (8) develop a mentor relationship. You may be able to earn academic credit for your work thru UNE's Workready scheme.

To learn more about using interpersonal skills effectively, see Carnegie (1991); to learn more about general counselling skills, see Hill (2004). To learn more about problem-solving therapy, see D'Zurilla and Nezu (2006). For more information about using behaviour modification in supervising employees, see Blanchard and Johnson (1982).

To help yourself develop into a scholar, think about where the field of behaviour modification might go in the future. Think about what new and better assessment and behaviour-change methods might be developed (by someone like you!).