**Sensory systems and Operant conditioning**

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**Part I**

Sensation occurs when sensory information is identified by the sensory receptors of an organism. Sensory receptors are sensory nerves endings that reacts to a stimulant within the internal or in the external environment of an organism.

Although it was thought that humans possess five basic senses which are smell, sight, hearing, touch, and taste that help us to interpret our external environment. However, more research have shown that humans are more complex and our known senses go way beyond the original five. In addition to the basic senses, we also possess the vestibular, proprioception, and interoception system. All these systems work concurrently so that humans can react with its environment quickly and effectively.

The proprioception system is one of the senses that react to internal stimulant from muscles, joints, and various connective tissue. These lets us know the position of different parts of our body in space without looking, that is why we can walk around with our eyes forward and not watching our feet every step of the way.

Vestibular sense also reacts to internal stimulant, it informs us about the movement and position of the body in relation to gravity. It helps with orientation and balance.

The interoception system gives us a sense of what our internal organs are feeling. it that lets us know the physiological condition of our body. For example, it is this system that lets you know when you are feeling hungry or thirsty, lets you know when you have to go to the bathroom?

The notion that human only have 5 senses was first originated by ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle. However, research suggests that we have more than five senses (between 22-33 senses). In my opinion, only the five original senses are considered by the scientific community because these five senses are the foundation of the other senses, and they are all intertwined.

**Part II**

In operant conditioning a specific behavior is accompanied by punishment to discourage that behavior or reinforcement to encourage the specific behavior. Punishment and reinforcement could either be positive or negative. Positive add stimulus and negative remove stimulus. However, Adding or removing of the stimulus occurs after the specific behavior.

Operant conditioning can be used to improve reading skills especially amongst younger children. Positive reinforcement can be used to encourage children to spend more time reading which will lead to improved reading ability. For example, you can say for every correct sentence read, the child gets to spend 1mintues extra on the playground. Negative reinforcement could also be used to increase the likelihood of the reading skills improving. For example, you can say if the child read the sentence correctly the child gets to end the lesson earlier than expected.

Punishment could also be used to improve reading skill. For example, the child who doesn’t read the sentence correctly gets to spend extra time on the reading activity (positive punishment) or the child who doesn’t complete the reading activity gets to spend less time playing.

Even as adult, operant conditioning can help in the improvement of our reading skills. For example, if a person sets a goal to read at least 4 books in a month to improve the reading skills, and the goal is achieved, the person could go to the movies as a reward for achieving this goal (positive reinforcement).

Operant conditioning has become part of most people that they sometimes don’t even know when they are applying it to their daily activities and set goals. I believe that this is the way most of our skills were developed because we have learnt this reward and punishment system from a young age and it has become inbuilt.

References

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