What is Shaping?

- a procedure by which performance improves because higher + higher criteria are needed for reinforcement for that behaviour

Successive Approximations:

- a series of behaviours where the responses become more and more closer to the form + quantity of a well-performed target behaviour
    - each of these approximations = a "step"
- shaping is often used to trained unperformed behaviours, but can also be used to improve existing skills

Qualitative "Topographic" Shaping:

- in qualitative shaping, the standards for performance that go successively higher are linked to the degree in which the responses look, sound, or feel like the well-formed behaviour
    - any operant behaviour can be qualitatively shaped

Quantitative Shaping:

- refers the setting criteria for reinforcement to increase or decrease the quantity of the behaviour usually by changing its frequency, duration, or magnitude
    - example of quantitative shaping via biofeedback: to be able to hear the audio portion of television programs at all times, a man has to increase his heart rate from 17 beats to at least 22 beats per minute

Shaping in Real Life:

Shaping Everyday Behaviours:

- nearly everything we learn to do are shaped by real-life events
    - i.e.: learning to walk, eating with a spoon, playing the guitar

Shaping Problem Behaviours:

- shaping can increase the frequency + magnitude of undesirable attitudes in children
    - in some instances, crying are linked to reinforcers, such as getting attention or a toy they want so children might develop tantrums to get their way

Aspects of Shaping Methods:

- three tasks must be completed before conducting a shaping procedure: 1) describing the ultimate behavioural goal, 2) identifying the starting response; the first step that will receive reinforcement in the successive approximations, and 3) developing a flexible plan for the steps we expect to apply

Shaping "Steps":

- the behaviour that undergoes shaping is a behavioural deficit + new to the person so its usually really different to the desired action
    - therefore, its relationship to the desired behaviour may be hard to see so creating "steps" to achieve the desired goal is necessary
- the best advice in shaping is to be flexible enough to speed up/slow down the shaping process

Shortcuts to Shaping (4):

1) physical guidance (manually moving the person's body through the desired movements)
2) using pictures (showing examples of what the desired behaviour looks like)
3) modeling the behaviour
4) using instructions to describe how the perform the responses

Computer-Aided Shaping:

Percentile Schedules: applying a math formula to determine the criteria for reinforcement

- another computer-aided shaping technique is to use software on a computer to process data for the formula continuously + report whether an instance of the behaviour has met the needed criterion