



Elizabethtown College

The goal of highlighting or underlining is to determine the most essential elements of a reading so reviewing the material is more efficient. Highlighting or underlining as *you read* often leads to including too much information. You need to first read the section, think about the most important elements in terms of the overall chapter learning goals, and then highlight or underline. Below are some examples from a text on behavior modification.

Example #1: No Highlighting:

The Patterning of Outcomes: Schedules of Reinforcement

The patterning, sequencing, or scheduling of reinforcement affects the future occurrence and strength of reinforced behavior (Ferster & Skinner, 1957). Sometimes the scheduling of reinforcement may even be more important than the nature of the reinforcer (Morse & Kelleher, 1966). Continuous reinforcement usually increases the speed with which responses are learned. Intermittent reinforcement tends to produce more stable behavior that is more consistently maintained when reinforcement stops. For example, rewarding temper tantrums intermittently (by occasionally attending to them in an irregular pattern) may make them very durable. Since many potentially maladaptive behaviors, such as physical aggression and immature dependency, are rewarded intermittently, they can become very hard to eliminate (Plaud & Gaither, 1996). Different schedules have different influences on operant responses. Operant strength is measured by the rate of the response; the more frequently the response is made in a given time period, the greater its rate (and inferred strength). **Continuous reinforcement (CRF)** is a schedule on which a behavior is reinforced every time it occurs. Responses are learned most quickly with continuous reinforcement. A child will become toilet trained more quickly if he were praised and rewarded for every successful attempt. While continuous reinforcement is easy to create in a laboratory setting, in life it is a rare experience; a partial reinforcement or intermittent reinforcement schedule, in which a response is reinforced only some of the time, is much more common. We see partial reinforcement when a child's bids for attention succeed only occasionally in getting the parents to attend, or when a gambler hits the jackpot only in between many losing bets.



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Example #2: Over highlighting

The Patterning of Outcomes: Schedules of Reinforcement

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Example #3: Not highlighting enough:

The Patterning of Outcomes: Schedules of Reinforcement

The patterning, sequencing, or scheduling of reinforcement affects the future occurrence and strength of reinforced behavior (Ferster & Skinner, 1957). Sometimes the scheduling of reinforcement may even be more important than the nature of the reinforcer (Morse & Kelleher, 1966). **Continuous reinforcement** usually increases the speed with which responses are learned. **Intermittent reinforcement** tends to produce more stable behavior that is more consistently maintained when reinforcement stops. For example, rewarding temper tantrums intermittently (by occasionally attending to them in an irregular pattern) may make them very durable. Since many potentially maladaptive behaviors, such as physical aggression and immature dependency, are rewarded intermittently, they can become very hard to eliminate (Plaud & Gaither, 1996). Different schedules have different influences on operant responses. **Operant strength** is measured by the rate of the response; the more frequently the response is made in a given time period, the greater its rate (and inferred strength). **Continuous reinforcement (CRF)** is a schedule on which a behavior is reinforced **every time** it occurs. Responses are learned most quickly with continuous reinforcement. A child will become toilet trained more quickly if he were praised and rewarded for every successful attempt. While continuous reinforcement is easy to create in a laboratory setting, in life it is a rare experience; a partial reinforcement or intermittent reinforcement schedule, in which a response is reinforced only some of the time, is much more common. We see partial reinforcement when a child's bids for attention succeed only occasionally in getting the parents to attend, or when a gambler hits the jackpot only in between many losing bets.



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Example #4: highlighting just right

The Patterning of Outcomes: Schedules of Reinforcement

The patterning, sequencing, or scheduling of reinforcement affects the future occurrence and strength of reinforced behavior (Ferster & Skinner, 1957). Sometimes the scheduling of reinforcement may even be more important than the nature of the reinforcer (Morse & Kelleher, 1966). Continuous reinforcement usually increases the speed with which responses are learned. Intermittent reinforcement tends to produce more stable behavior that is more consistently maintained when reinforcement stops. For example, rewarding temper tantrums intermittently (by occasionally attending to them in an irregular pattern) may make them very durable. Since many potentially maladaptive behaviors, such as physical aggression and immature dependency, are rewarded intermittently, they can become very hard to eliminate (Plaud & Gaither, 1996). Different schedules have different influences on operant responses. Operant strength is measured by the rate of the response; the more frequently the response is made in a given time period, the greater its rate (and inferred strength). Continuous reinforcement (CRF) is a schedule on which a behavior is reinforced every time it occurs. Responses are learned most quickly with continuous reinforcement. A child will become toilet trained more quickly if he were praised and rewarded for every successful attempt. While continuous reinforcement is easy to create in a laboratory setting, in life it is a rare experience; a partial reinforcement or intermittent reinforcement schedule, in which a response is reinforced only some of the time, is much more common. We see partial reinforcement when a child's bids for attention succeed only occasionally in getting the parents to attend, or when a gambler hits the jackpot only in between many losing bets.