

You are giving tennis lessons to a beginning tennis player. Describe how you would teach the proper tennis swing through shaping.

Specify:

- a. An appropriate terminal behavior
- b. A reinforcer you might use
- c. The specific steps you would take during shaping
- d. When you would use continuous reinforcement
- e. When you would use intermittent reinforcement

A.

An appropriate terminal behavior would be to tell the student that he or she must make contact with the ball, hit it over the net and into the other side of the tennis court. A reinforcer I might use would be to praise the student if he or she succeeded, or to offer to buy the student lunch or ice cream if he or she succeeded a certain amount of times. During shaping, I would first reinforce any attempt the student made that came relatively close to the goal of hitting the ball. Secondly, I would reinforce a response that more closely approximates the terminal behavior—such as hitting the ball over the net. Thirdly, I would reinforce a response that resembles the terminal behavior even more closely—for example, if the student hit the ball over the net and came close to hitting it in. I would continue to reinforce closer and closer approximations to the terminal behavior until I was finally reinforcing only the terminal behavior of hitting the ball over the net and in. I would use continuous reinforcement at first, when the student needed positive thinking the most, in order to help he or she improve more quickly. I would reinforce the student for simply trying. However, after he or she gets the hang of hitting the ball over the net and in, I would only intermittently reinforce him or her when he or she performed this terminal behavior, and not reinforce him or her every time he or she tried to hit the ball.