Behaviorism is based on the stimulus-response relationship. Instruction, therefore, will be based on the same idea. As a behaviorist, instruction is designed to teach a desired behavior through specific processes. The processes vary slightly, but they all include some sort of stimulus, response and reinforcement.

Classical conditioning is more difficult for me to explain with instruction, as it is not very concrete. However, when a classroom teacher sets a positive tone in the classroom it is easy to observe the attitudes of the students. If they have positive attitudes, they were likely conditioned to have that appearance. Further into this example, if a teacher smiles each morning and personally welcomes each student to the classroom as they enter the door, students will be conditioned to respond appropriately, whether it be with a smile or verbal response. I would assume that on the first occasion of this happening, the student might be caught off guard and therefore not respond. After seeing the look of disappointment on the teacher's face, perhaps the student would remember to give a response the next day. Now, each time the teacher smiles might be associated with the overall tone of the classroom, which was determined the minute the students walked in the door. I imagine that my example is difficult to follow, which reinforces the idea that classical conditioning in a learning/ instructional situation is hard to explain.

Operant conditioning, on the other hand, is much easier to visualize. There are many ways to conduct operant conditioning in an instructional setting. The one that I seemed to have used the most, not realizing (or remembering) that is was actually operant conditioning, is Mastery Learning. Mastering leaning is when a student must master a certain skill before moving on to the next skill. Usually each skill is reinforced in some way. In my classroom, students had to master the skill of multiplication before moving on to division. Multiplication was broken down into sets, and after each set was mastered, the student was invited to a donut breakfast with the teacher. The donut breakfast was the reinforcer that was offered in hopes that the desired behavior would be reached. Other ways to instruct with operant conditioning would be any system of giving out tokens. In my classroom, it was tickets. After the initial expectations (behavioral objectives) were stated, I gave out tickets as reinforcement of desired behaviors. Every six weeks the tickets could be redeemed at our cluster store. This was an example of positive reinforcement because I was giving students something pleasurable in hopes that they would continue to show the desired behaviors. The most difficult part about this method was the schedule of reinforcement. I tried my best to be consistent, but it was often that I did not have a ticket handy (if we were outside our classroom) or I would not notice every example of expected behavior. For most students, this actually increased the likelihood that they would perform with the expected behavior because they wanted to be noticed.

Knowing the different ways to use operant conditioning, it is easier to design a plan to teach a desired behavior, as long as the desired behavior is observable and measurable. If I want to condition a student to walk in line the appropriate way, I would probably offer positive reinforcement. I've found that positive reinforcement works better than any kind of punishment. Only in severe cases have I used punishment, and it would usually only amount to missed recess or free time.

When it comes to behaviorism, I still wonder how anyone could solely believe that this is the way humans learn. I am not a scientist by any means, but I have

experience which leads me to believe that there is much more to learning than being conditioned into a desired response. I do believe that in some circumstances, conditioning an individual to learn something is appropriate. The circumstances I'm referring to are all behavior related: paying attention in class, walking in a line, raising your hand to speak in class...those are all learned behaviors that I would condition a student to exhibit. When it comes to other things that are learned, like history for example, I can't see how a behaviorist would condition someone to learn history, other than memorizing facts. The way I teach history involves much discussion, reading, projects... Sure, students are given an expectation of what needs to be learned, but much of what you learn about history is your interpretation of it, which, I believe, can't always be observed.

I am still a little rough around the edges when it comes to positive/negative reinforcement and punishment. I fully understand positive reinforcement, as it is the method I have used many times in a classroom setting. The negative aspect of reinforcement seems a little odd to me. Unless it is presented in clear terms, as I used for my example in my KB, it is really difficult to recognize. I used the example of a parent giving a child medicine to get rid of a headache so that they are able to study. The negative part is taking away the headache by offering medicine. Still, it seems like this is a positive thing to do...but the point is that the headache is the negative thing being removed to increase the likelihood that the child will study. See how that can be confusing? The same goes for positive and negative punishment. I have to remember that reinforcement is to increase a behavior and punishment is to decrease a behavior. Positive punishment is "giving" something to decrease the behavior, but what you give isn't necessarily going to be positive. For example, if you want to decrease the behavior of talking out of turn, you might "give" extra minutes of required homework. Even though you are "giving" it is still not a desirable thing. I can see how this would work to decrease the behavior, it's just that the title of positive punishment can be troubling because it's not positive in the sense that it is good. It is hard to think of the word positive in terms of something other than meaning good. Overall, I can differentiate between the positive/negative reinforcement/punishment, but it takes much analyzing and careful thought.