

The Shaping Skills Workshop

Part 3: Merging and Expanding Behavior (May 2023)

In this virtual workshop, you will learn core concepts and refine your teaching skills.

This workshop is divided into four classes:

Part 1: Reinforcement Systems (6 week class)

Part 2: Foundational Skills for Shaping (6 week class)

Part 3: Merging and Expanding Behaviors (6 week class)

Part 4: Shaping Laboratory (6 week class)

This syllabus is for Part 3: Merging and Expanding Behavior, starting in [May 2023](#).

In this course, you'll learn how to create more complex behaviors. You will practice building chains of two or more behaviors, expanding behavior, and building duration. In addition, you will continue learning how to analyze your training sessions and improve your training plans.

Prerequisites: Prior enrollment in Part 1 and Part 2 of the Shaping Skills Workshop.

Instructor information: Mary Hunter classes@behaviorexplorer.com

Class start date: This class will start on [Tuesday, May 16, 2023](#).

Class platform: Access at: <https://learn.behaviorexplorer.com/>

Assignment submissions: The last day to submit assignments, videos, and questions if you would like to receive feedback will be [July 14, 2023](#).

Class platform access: You will have access until [September 30, 2023](#).

Assignment review: During the week (Monday-Friday), feedback on assignments and answers to questions will be provided within 48 hours.

Discussion hour: [Tuesdays from 1:30–2:30 p.m. Central Time](#)
[and Tuesdays from 8:00–9:00 p.m. Central Time](#)

These optional Zoom sessions will be held two times per week to accommodate different times zones. The first sessions will be held [May 16](#) and the sixth (and last) sessions will be held [June 20](#). Note: These sessions will not be recorded.

How to work through the lessons: You will work through the lessons in order and at your own pace. However, if you have limited access to a PORTL partner or an animal learner, please talk with me so that I can help you make a plan.

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The Shaping Skills Workshop

Workshop outline

In this class, you'll learn to write, implement, and revise teaching plans. You'll practice constructing plans that produce faster learning and happier learners. In addition, you'll learn to evaluate your own behavior so that you can continue to improve your teaching.

Time commitment: Participants often ask, "How much time should I plan to spend on this class?" Each week, two new lessons will be posted on the class platform. Each lesson will take approximately one hour of time for you to complete. You can also attend a hour-long class discussion session each week.

Week 1	Lesson 1	PORTL Practice: Changing the Criteria
	Lesson 2	Expanding Behavior
Week 2	Lesson 3	PORTL Practice: Chaining
	Lesson 4	Build a Chain of Behaviors
Week 3	Catch-up week: No new lessons	
Week 4	Lesson 5	PORTL Practice: Writing Shaping Plans
	Lesson 6	Training Project: Getting Started
Week 5	Lesson 7	The Constructional Approach
	Lesson 8	Training Project: Continue Teaching
Week 6	Wrap-up week: No new lessons	

Types of activities	Core concepts	Short videos and assignments will teach you how to create optimal learning situations when working with both animals and people.
	PORTL practice	PORTL exercises will allow you to practice core concepts and improve your shaping skills with another person as your learner.
	Teaching tasks	These activities will allow you to practice teaching behaviors to animal and human learners with guidance from your instructor.

You will work through the lessons at your own pace. However, to stay on track you should aim to complete two lessons per week.

The Shaping Skills Workshop

What do you need for the Shaping Skills Workshop?

The PORTL manual

During the classes in this workshop, you will have readings and activities from the PORTL manual. The manual is available as a printed book or an ebook: <https://behaviorexplorer.com/store/>

A PORTL kit

You can make your own PORTL kit:
<https://behaviorexplorer.com/articles/portl-kit-instructions/>

Or, you can purchase a PORTL kit from Behavior Explorer:
<https://behaviorexplorer.com/store/>

An adult human helper

You'll need a family member or friend to help you in person with the PORTL activities. This helper just needs to be a willing learner. They do not need to have an interest in shaping. If you will have limited access to this person, you may want to chat with me for some scheduling suggestions.

An animal helper

You will practice teaching behaviors to a pet. This animal does not need to have any training experience. However, the animal should be comfortable interacting with you.

The animal does not need to live with you. However, you will want to have access to the animal several times per week.

A tripod (optional)

You will be asked to record some of your teaching sessions. Having a small tripod for your phone or camera will make recording easier.