

# The Shaping Skills Workshop

## Part 2: Foundational Skills for Shaping (MAR 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 2: Foundational Skills for Shaping, starting in [March 2023](#).

You will practice identifying and shaping actions that make up more complex behaviors. As you complete exercises with PORTL and with an animal learner, you will practice designing optimal learning environments, capturing actions, and transferring actions. You'll also practice evaluating your teaching and making adjustments.

**Prerequisite:** Prior enrollment in Part 1: Reinforcement Systems

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**Instructor information:** Mary Hunter [classes@behaviorexplorer.com](mailto:classes@behaviorexplorer.com)

**Class start date:** This class will start on [Tuesday, March 21, 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 [May 12, 2023](#).

Class platform access: You will have access until [July 31, 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 [March 21](#) and the sixth (and last) sessions will be held [April 25](#). 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.

**Permissions and sharing:** This workshop is the property of Mary Hunter and Behavior Explorer. Do not copy, distribute, or share the materials without written permission.

# The Shaping Skills Workshop

## Workshop outline

In this class, you'll learn how to identify and shape actions that make up more complex behaviors. As you complete exercises with PORTL and with an animal learner, you will practice designing optimal learning environments, capturing actions, and extending actions. You'll also practice evaluating your teaching and making adjustments.

**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	Learning to Look for Movement
	Lesson 2	Let's Review Reinforcement Systems
Week 2	Lesson 3	PORTL Practice: Resets and Targeting
	Lesson 4	Creating Movement with Targeting
Week 3	Catch-up week: No new lessons	
Week 4	Lesson 5	PORTL Practice: Capturing Actions
	Lesson 6	Capture Some Actions with Your Animal
Week 5	Lesson 7	PORTL Practice: Transferring Actions
	Lesson 8	Transferring Actions Project
Week 6	Wrap-up week: No new lessons	

<b>Types of activities</b>	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.