Draco is a privileged child. His family is from a long line of wealth and influence ensuring
Draco’s every need and want is always satisfied. This life of luxury instilled a sense of
entitlement in Draco and he flaunted it, imposing an attitude of power and intimidation making
it known that he was willing to do anything to have his way. If this meant he had to hurt
another individual, so be it. His behavior became ostentatious and he bullied and manipulated
others to do his dirty work for him. In his first year at The Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and
Wizardry, he walked about like he owned the place bullying and buying his way with the other
students. He discriminated against witches and wizards who were not fully bred as he was.
Some students had a muggle parent or sometimes two muggle parents and Draco despised
them. He had been raised in a pure bred wizard clan and he had the idea, reinforced by his
parents, that he was superior to any non-pure bred witch or wizard.

Draco’s behavior became increasingly disruptive in the classroom. He would interrupt his
professors with heckling remarks and intentionally switch potion ingredients so that lab
experiments would erupt in explosions and sometimes injuring the students on the other side
of his impractical joke. In the Caring for Magical Creatures course, he threw enchanted paper
airplanes at the hippogriff causing it to charge at a student, which ended in her breaking an arm
while trying to defend herself. Any successful attack upon a muggle borne student would yield
secret rewards from Draco’s family. He once received a new, state of the art broomstick for
getting a muggle borne student dropped from Hogwarts when he manipulated her grades in
the instructor’s grade books. There was one instructor, however, that Draco respected at
Hogwarts. Professor Snape, Draco’s Potions course instructor, was a family friend and had an
interest in the darker side of wizardry which fascinated Draco. Snape would often defend Draco
to the school head master when Draco’s behavior warranted suspension. The head master
demanded a course of action to change the boy’s behavior when he was caught one evening
sneaking into the Dark Forrest in hopes of capturing a unicorn. Snape agreed that Draco’s
actions had become increasingly dangerous and a plan needed to be put in place to change this
edgy behavior. Professor Dumbledore had given him a book by Mary Driscoll to read earlier in
the year. Snape pulled the book from its place on his bookshelf and began reading about radical
behaviorism.

Questions:

1. What behaviors do the instructors at Hogwarts need to help Draco change?
2. What reinforcements are responsible for strengthening Draco’s unwanted behavior?
3. Are there any consequences in place that have deterred unwanted behavior at
   Hogwarts?
4. How can instructors use extinction and/or response cost to decrease the frequency of
   Draco’s unwanted behavior?
5. How can the instructors at Hogwarts use shaping and chaining to modify Draco’s
   Behavior?
6. What are ways of maintaining new the new wanted behavior that Draco might exhibit?

Possible Solutions

It is not simple to change a deeply seated judgment that one person may have towards another
person or in Draco’s case, against all witches and wizards who are not “pure-bred”. Snape
decided to filter out those behaviors that were stoppable regardless of Draco’s opinion of who should be studying at Hogwarts.

A laundry list of Draco’s behaviors to be considered as changeable include:

- Hurting others
- Bullying others
- Heckling Professors in class
- Switching ingredients in labs
- Endangering Magical Creatures
- Endangering fellow students

The majority of the reinforcement for exhibiting this unwanted behavior is from Draco’s father and mother. His family is supportive of his misbehavior against muggle borne students. This reinforcement is difficult to diminish by some of the known techniques such as fading and extinction (Driscoll 2005). Both of these involve eventual total removal of the reinforcing stimulus which is nearly impossible when the stimulus is a deep connection such as ones family.

Using the response cost approach may impact Draco’s mistreatment of muggle borne students even though it will probably not change his attitude towards them. Using punishment can work but is usually temporary (Driscoll 2005) and it is important to change Draco’s behavior so there is a lasting effect. Using the response cost approach could entail exacting a fine by taking away “house points” when Draco’s behavior is directly related to muggle borne student mistreatment. House Points are tokens earned by the four houses at Hogwarts for grand accomplishments by students throughout the school year and represent a deep sense of pride
in one’s school. Draco has a rich legacy in the Slytherin house and defaming the house is especially damaging to his family and friends. When points are taken or given to houses they are done so in way of public announcement adding more to the humiliation of being seen as the cause for the loss of points.

Professor Snape is a favorite instructor of Draco. Snape also has a connection with Draco’s family but he understands the significance to some of Draco’s unwanted behavior, primarily harm to students and disrespect of professors other than himself. Winning Professor Snape’s attention and admiration is one of Draco’s top agenda items therefore using Snape as reinforcement could help to decrease the unwanted behavior. Professor Snape, who teaches the potions class could promote Draco to classroom assistant. Draco could bask in the professor’s undivided attention as long as his behavior met the expectations both in and out of the potions class. Snape could introduce a fixed ratio schedule providing a reinforcement of house points every time Draco exhibited “outstanding” behavior defined by the staff at Hogwarts. Professor Snape and the other instructors could have weekly meetings to evaluate Draco’s behavior and decide if any change in behavior has occurred or if they need to revise their strategy.

Resources
