The basic principle of Applied Behavior Analysis or ABA is that every behavior is preceded by an antecedent and followed by a consequence. So an antecedent is put into place which leads to a behavior occurring and is followed by a consequence. An antecedent is also known as a stimulus. A behavior is also known as a response. The consequence either acts as a reinforce, which will increase the likelihood the behavior will occur again, or as a punisher, which will decrease the chance of the behavior occurring again.

Consequences can either increase or decrease the likelihood a student will display a behavior or response in the future. When the student responds correctly, the instructor should provide reinforcement, which here is represented by a capital R and lowercase f. So let’s take a look at a scenario of a when a student responds correctly. A stimulus is presented. For example, the teacher says “When did Columbus discover America?” Then the student provides their response. For example, the student says “1492”. Then the consequence is provided. In this example the student got the answer correct so the teacher would provide reinforcement to the student. “Yes! You got it!”

So what happens when a student makes an error? On this slide are examples of error correction procedures. An error correction is usually provided by the instructor when the student does not respond to the stimulus that is presented or responds incorrectly to the stimulus presented. There are three common ways to correct an error. The first would be to model the correct response. So in the earlier example when the teacher provides the stimulus “When did Columbus discover America?” if the student provided the wrong response then the teacher would model the correct response. “Columbus discovered America in 1492.” The second way to correct an error would be to ask the student to correct the error. So when the stimulus is presented, “When did Columbus discover America?” and the incorrect response occurs, the teacher would say the correct answer. Finally, the third way to deal with a student error is by ignoring the error and continuing on with instruction. So again, in the above example, The teacher provides the stimulus, “When did Columbus discover America?” and the student responds incorrectly, the teacher will just move on and present another stimulus like “What ship did he sail on?” Often when using this option, the teacher will present the stimulus again several trails later. This option is used when students are either prompt dependent or are reinforced by providing an incorrect response.
Slide 05
Reinforcement is when the behavior increases by adding or taking something away. So what is positive reinforcement? It is when a person gains access to something after exhibiting the behavior that makes the behavior more likely to occur in the future. So you add something to make the behavior increase in the future.

Slide 06
Here is an example of positive reinforcement. The teacher provides a stimulus, “Name a carnivorous dinosaur.” The student provides a response, “Tyrannosaurus Rex”. The teacher provides positive reinforcement, “Well done!” The expression “Well done!” is added and is likely to increase the future of this response in the presence of this stimulus.

Slide 07
Remember, reinforcement is when the behavior increases by adding or taking something away. We have talked about adding something which is positive reinforcement. Let’s now look at negative reinforcement. Negative reinforcement is when something is removed or delayed after the behavior occurs that makes the behavior more likely to occur in the future. Here are some common examples of negative reinforcement. Time out can be negative reinforcement because some students like escaping an activity that is not preferred even for time out. Another example is when an academic demand of some sort is removed, this can lead to an increase in the behavior that lead to the academic demand being removed. Finally, if a staff member is working with a student and the student does not particularly like this staff member, the student might exhibit a behavior that will lead the staff member to walk away, which may end up leading to the student engaging in this behavior more often.

Slide 08
Here is an example of negative reinforcement. The stimulus is a foul smell under the kitchen sink. The behavior that occurs after the foul smell is detected is that the trash is taken out. The consequence is that the foul smell has been removed, which occurred by taking something away. Now that the foul smell is gone, it is likely to increase the behavior or taking the trash out in order to remove the foul smell.

Slide 09
It is important that an instructor spends the time identifying appropriate reinforcers for students. Here is a list of common categories of reinforcement and examples under each category.

Slide 10
When selecting a reinforcer, it must be more powerful than the naturally occurring reinforcer. To identify a strong reinforcer for a student, a preference assessment can be used that will help identify these reinforcers. This is a formal assessment that is given to a target student to help narrow down and identify a powerful reinforce.
After identifying which reinforcers you will use with a particular student, only deliver these contingent upon the target behavior occurring. So if you have identified that the student is very reinforced by listening to a particular music cd, then you will only use this as a reinforce for certain target behaviors and not all behaviors to be reinforced. Finally, it is important to know that there are many different reinforcement strategies that will be discussed in more detail to come.

Slide 11
Noncontingent reinforcement is when a student is reinforced whether or not the target behavior occurs. For example, if a teacher presents the following stimulus by asking “When did Columbus discover America?” and the student answers incorrectly, but the teacher still provides the student a reinforcer this is an example of noncontingent reinforcement. It is important to note that there is very little research to support the use of noncontingent reinforcement.

Slide 12
Differential reinforcement is reinforcing only those behaviors that meet a specific criterion (usually on task behaviors that you are targeting) and all other responses will not be reinforced, meaning they will go into extinction. One type of differential reinforcement is differential reinforcement of other behaviors, also known as DRO. This is reinforcement that is delivered when a set interval of time elapses and any behaviors other than the challenging behavior has occurred. So if targeting the challenging behavior of hitting, you would reinforce the student after the set time, for example, 5 minutes, has gone by with the student not hitting.

Slide 13
Differential reinforcement of incompatible behaviors, also known as DRI, is when reinforcement is delivered when a student exhibits a behavior that is incompatible with the challenging behavior.