

Workshop Abstracts

Mark Sundberg, Ph.D., BCBA-D

Title: Preparing a Child for Transitions to Less Restrictive Educational Settings

Abstract: Educational services for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder vary tremendously and range from restrictive programs such as a 1:1 in-home program to less restrictive programs such as full inclusion in a grade level classroom. However, it is often difficult to determine what educational setting and instructional format may best suit an individual child. That is, in what placement will the child truly learn the best, rather than just be managed or kept busy. In some cases children may spend too much time in 1:1 instruction and not enough time in group instruction, and vice versa. There are a wide variety of skills that should be considered when making decisions regarding transitions and placement. This workshop will suggest 18 skill areas to consider when determining placement (e.g., language skills, language barriers, observational learning, adaptability to change, independence, group skills). It will be recommended that each child be assessed regarding transition early in a treatment program. Intervention on many of the targeted areas should begin at the outset of an overall intervention program along with direct parental involvement. Several specific intervention procedures will be described for a number of the skill areas.

Duke Schell, Ph.D., BCBA-D

Title: Ethical Issues Posed by Behavior Analysis in Psychology

Abstract: This workshop will focus on the ethical issues surrounding the practice of behavior analysis within the larger field of psychology. The workshop will draw on issues raised at the national and state level at APA/NCPA, ABAI/NCABA, APBA and the BACB. The majority of the workshop will be spent discussing problems provided by workshop participants using small groups and participant discussions to address the ethical issues raised.

Richard Saunders, Ph.D. & Muriel Saunders, Ph.D.

Title: A Weight Loss Program for Individuals with Disabilities

Abstract: Recently, a diet and incentive program was designed by a multi-disciplinary team including dietitians, exercise physiologists, and behavior analysts. The diet was a combination of reduced-calorie packaged meals (PM) and a modified stoplight approach (SLDm). The diet was presented in a manner that was visually-based rather than numbers-based. Each participant was seen monthly in their home. The diet was tested in Project 1 with 79 adults with intellectual or developmental disabilities. Project 2 and 3 are randomized clinical trials comparing the PM/SLDm diet with a Usual Care diet [MyPyramid (USDA)]. Project 2 has an enrollment of 140 adults with physical disabilities and Project 3 is just underway to recruit 150 adults with intellectual disabilities. Results of each study will be described along with insights on problems related to obesity in individuals with disabilities. Most participants have lost weight and reactive or problem behaviors have been rare; hypotheses will be discussed.

Mark Sundberg, Ph.D., BCBA-D

Title: Teaching Intraverbal Behavior to Children with Autism: Analysis, Assessment, and Intervention

Abstract: Many children with autism acquire an extensive vocabulary of mands, tacts, and listener discriminations, but have difficulty acquiring intraverbal skills such as answering WH questions or engaging in meaningful conversational behavior. In addition, the intraverbal behavior they do have may be rote, scripted, or irrelevant to the preceding verbal context. This workshop will present an analysis of intraverbal behavior and why it is hard for many individuals with language delays. It will be suggested that intraverbal acquisition in typically developing children can serve as a guide for intraverbal assessment and intervention. The primary focus of the workshop will be on intraverbal assessment and the development of an intraverbal intervention program that can be implemented in both structured teaching and natural environment settings.

Muriel Saunders, Ph.D. & Richard Saunders, Ph.D.

Title: Functional Applications for Sound Generating Devices (Voice Output Communication Aides)

Abstract: SGDs or VOCAs are often found in settings serving individuals with multiple disabilities. Often, individuals activate the devices if they are present, but without regard to whether the time is right for the recorded messages. We have applied an evolving protocol of operant conditioning techniques to build key discriminations among times and opportunities for assisted communication. We also have developed an observation-based scale for measuring early indicators and predictors of communication success. This workshop will relate our methods to parallels in teaching triadic eye gaze to toddlers and to possible insights in the loss/lack of language in very young children diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder. Oral language is emerging in some of our participants who have been mute for years; why will be a topic for dissection and discussion. The potential for iPad technology in our interventions will be developed, especially for toddlers with cortical vision impairment.

Martin Ivancic Ph.D., BCBA-D

Title: Disability to Management: From Function to Treatment

Abstract: Treatments based on function from long-established applied and animal studies are used to present a broad perspective on function including overt and covert control. Personal experimental case studies from over 36 years of practice are used to exemplify function-based treatments to solve behavior problems of people with disabilities and the staff delivering those services with an emphasis on the different issues presented when the participant does and does not have language for both positive reinforcement (pride in work, positive self-concept) and negative reinforcement/punishment (escape/avoidance, suffering, elicited aggression) conditions. Problems people present are viewed as a normal result of learning experiences as opposed to a diagnostic condition. A value is placed on viewing behavior as something that is done (a verb) as opposed to traditional therapy models suggesting that behavior is something your client is (a diagnostic condition). Discussions are conducted to articulate automatic positive and automatic negative reinforcement contingencies, concerns with covert behavioral explanations, and how desirable behavior might be maintained without constant need for a supervisor. Discussion of current clinical issues will include attempts to suggest behavior analytic functions and possible treatments for meltdowns, going postal, PTSD, psychosis, depression, etc. and when to refer to another clinician.

Conference Session Abstracts

Carol Pilgrim, Ph.D.

Title: What's all this about Translational Research?

Abstract: Behavior analysts have heard many calls of late for increased emphasis on translational research. This talk will consider the definition of translational research, within the broader context of the nature of both scientific behavior analysis (basic and applied) and the underlying theoretical foundations of radical behaviorism. The merits of arguments that have been used to date to call attention to translational research will be examined, as will possible alternatives for the importance of the translational enterprise. Special attention will be given to consideration of how strong translational research can benefit basic science, applied behavior analysis, and behavior-analytic practice.

Timothy D. Ludwig, Ph.D.

Title: "Letta Meta make Ya Betta!"

Abstract: We will look at the dyadic role of child-parent relationships in shaping both parties' behavior through this intimate metacontingency. We will then expand the concept of learning through metacontingencies to help us help change the world.

Bethany Smith, M.Ed., Fred Spooner, Ph.D., Charlie Wood, Ph.D., & Diane Browder, Ph.D.

Title: The Effects of Computer-Assisted Instruction on Teaching Science to Students with Autism

Abstract: Education reform over the past decade has targeted the need for scientific literacy as evidenced by the rise in the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) education movement. Since the push for education reform, many organizations and programs have begun to specifically target the need for STEM for students from Kindergarten through high school. Embedded computer-assisted instruction is one way to use technology to increase academic skills for students with autism and intellectual disability. In this study, three secondary participants received instruction on nine science terms and applications of their meanings via embedded computer assisted instruction within the science general education setting. A multiple probe across participants design measured the effects of the intervention. Additionally, this study assessed the participants' ability to generalize acquired skills across materials and situations within the general education setting.

Christine E. Hughes, Ph.D.

Title: Timeout from Positive Reinforcement: Context Effects

Abstract: Timeout from positive reinforcement is perhaps the most widely used type of punishment. Although, there are a lot of studies in which the application of timeout is shown to decrease behavior, there are surprisingly fewer studies in which parameters of timeout, such as, duration and frequency are systematically investigated. In this talk, I will describe some recent data from our lab in which we show that the effectiveness of a given timeout duration depends on its context; that is, the rate of reinforcement maintaining the punished behavior. The data will be described in terms of behavioral momentum. In this talk, I also will describe some effects of drugs commonly prescribed to children (i.e., stimulants) on behavior punished by timeout.

Chad E. Drake, Ph.D.

Title: On Key Presses and Cognition: Analyzing Complex Human Behavior with the Implicit Relational Assessment Procedure

Abstract: In recent years, mainstream psychology has witnessed a tremendous flood of empirical work utilizing computerized implicit measures. Perhaps the most popular measure currently available is the Implicit Associations Task, which is commonly portrayed as a measure of implicit attitudes. In spite of the amount of intriguing research with this instrument, the measure is founded on a mechanistic perspective on cognition and thus has been difficult to integrate with a behavior analytic research program on verbal behavior. A relatively new and similar implicit measure, known as the Implicit Relational Assessment Procedure, was founded on a body of behavior analytic research on complex human behavior and may provide a means of examining patterns of cognitive behaviors that are readily interpreted in respect to basic behavioral processes. A review of the current IRAP literature will be provided, as well as a research strategy for examining the development and malleability of cognitive processes.

Charles L. Wood, Ph.D., Julie L. Thompson, M.Ed., & Keri S. Bethune, M.Ed., BCBA

Title: Academic Interventions for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders Lead

Abstract: Results from the National Autism Center's (NAC, 2009) National Standards Report (NAC, 2009) suggest a great need for research on academic interventions for students with ASD. In this session, presenters will share their results from three recent, single-subject design studies on academic interventions for students with ASD. Interventions included the use of Direct Instruction to teach time-telling skills, graphic organizers to improve reading comprehension, and response cards to increase participation in math lessons. All studies were conducted in public school classrooms. Implications for future research and practice will be discussed.

Rod Realon, M.A.

Title: The Supports Intensity Scale in North Carolina

Abstract: This presentation will provide an overview of the Supports Intensity Scale and its use in NC.

Ruth Hurst, Ph.D., BCBA-D & Robert Miller, Ph.D.

Title: Enhancements to Environments and Programs in a State Hospital for Individuals with Mental Illness: The Role of the Behavior Analytic Framework

Abstract: At Central Regional Hospital, there has been a recent initiative to enhance the quality of living environments and evidence-based programming. As a result, a variety of enhancements and additions to living environments, everyday routines and practices, staff training, behavioral assessments, and behavioral intervention plans have emerged. The goals of this presentation are 1) to review those changes/enhancements/additions as well as their effects, 2) to discuss lessons learned during the process, and 3) to provide information about future directions. Throughout the presentation, the way in which the behavior analytic framework was used to guide recommendations, decisions, development, implementation, and evaluation will be highlighted.

Bethany Smith, M.Ed., Fred Spooner, Ph.D., Bree Jimenez, Ph.D. & Diane Browder, Ph.D.

Title: Teaching Science to Students with Developmental Disabilities

Abstract: Teaching academic content to students with severe developmental disabilities is a topic that has recently been debated, even though science content is one of the academic areas that comprise a standards-based curriculum. Science content like other academic skills can be taught to this population using forms of systematic instruction, a validated evidence-based practice. In this study, three elementary aged students between 6 and 8 years old were taught units from an Early Science curriculum via inquiry-based lessons and effects were measured by a multiple probe design across behaviors (units). Visual analysis shows a functional relationship between the introduction of the intervention and a change in each participant's responding. These successful outcomes are discussed in light of other comparable work, the practicality of classroom teachers implementing similar lessons, social validity, and extending the knowledge-base of teaching science content to students with severe developmental disabilities.

Muriel Saunders, Ph.D.

Title: Return to the Good Behavior Game

Abstract: In 1967, an approach to classroom management was designed and tested in Baldwin Kansas by Harriet Barrish, Muriel Saunders, and Montrose Wolf. The approach was coined, "The Good Behavior Game." Recently it was lauded by Laura Bush as an example of a program that "is simple and inexpensive and it can work for children in schools across our country." The Good Behavior Game has been studied and its results replicated for 40 years. Now a story of the effects of the Game is emerging that is even more interesting. The talk will be given by the 4th grade teacher who first conducted the Game.

R. Trent Codd III, Ed.S., LPC, Michael P. Twohig, Jesse M. Crosby & Angela Enno

Title: Treatment of Tree Anxiety Disorder Cases with Acceptance and Commitment Therapy in a Private Practice

Abstract: ACT for anxiety disorders focuses on decreasing the behavior regulatory function of anxiety and related cognitions, and has a strong focus on behavior change that is consistent with client values. In this case series, 3 consecutive referrals seeking treatment for anxiety disorders at a private practice were treated with 9-13 sessions of ACT. In-session exposure therapy was not included to determine the effects of ACT without the compounding effects of already proven treatment procedures. The treatment procedure was identical across all disorders to test the use of a unified treatment protocol for anxiety disorders. All participants showed clinical improvement in their specific anxiety disorders with gains maintained at follow-up.

Richard Saunders, Ph.D.

Title: Down the NIH Funding and Consulting Highways Via ABA

Abstract: What does it take to obtain NIH grant funding (or any other funding)? The presenter will discuss his experience as a researcher in the “land of the ABAs” for the last 30 years. He will describe essential requirements for successful grant writing, as well as pitfalls that are likely to lead to failure. Where to look for funds, whom to collaborate with, and other anecdotal information will be discussed. This presentation will also summarize the researcher’s most recent work in applying principles of applied behavior analysis in weight loss research and the development of communication skills in children and adults with multiple profound disabilities, as examples of ABA style research funded by NIH. He will also discuss the parallels between obtaining extramural funding and developing lucrative opportunities to consult for social service agencies.

Dennis H. Reid, Ph.D., BCBA-D

Title: On Discovering What Our Science is About

Abstract: This presentation will describe strategies for practitioners to maintain up-to-date knowledge in behavior analysis. Initially, the necessity of continuously updating professional knowledge will be highlighted in light of the evolving evidence base constituting standards of practice in behavior analysis. Consequences for practitioners and the consumers they serve when individual practice lags behind current standards will likewise be summarized based on recent litigation and licensure/certification issues. Strategies for professional development will then be described, with a focus on practicality, cost, and effectiveness. Particular emphasis will be on what individual practitioners can do to maintain knowledge of current literature when contingencies within their workplace mitigate against time spent on professional development. Finally, research will be summarized that distinguishes between effective and ineffective professional development strategies.

Mark Sundberg, Ph.D., BCBA-D

Title: The Role of Multiple Control and Covert Verbal Behavior in the Study of Complex Behavior

Abstract: The primary focus of the second half of Skinner’s book *Verbal Behavior* (1957) is on the analysis of complex human behavior. Skinner points out that verbal behavior plays a central role in much of what psychologists consider complex behaviors such as thinking, problem solving, knowledge, creativity, and the emergence of untrained behaviors. Skinner suggests a number of behavioral concepts in his book that are essential to the analysis of these complexities. The current presentation will primarily focus on the role of multiple control and covert verbal behavior in the analysis of the emergence of recombinative repertoires. It will be suggested that the emergence of untrained relations observed in naming, equivalence, and relational frame experiments are in part a function of multiple control and covert verbal behavior. It will be recommended that these more parsimonious explanations, which are consistent with existing principles of behavior and the conceptual framework of radical behaviorism, be empirically explored before those that call for new principles of behavior, or even a completely new formulation of operant behavior be adopted.

Jim Bodfish, Ph.D.

Title: Might As Well Face It, They're Addicted to Trains: Behavioral Neuroscience of Reward in Autism.

Abstract: Unusual interests and preoccupations are a common clinical feature of autism. What clues might these symptoms provide about how the rest of the features of autism emerge and about how autism can be treated? Specific patterns of behavior and interest give us insights into motivation in general. Functional or motivational theories are central to our understanding and treatment of many conditions; however, very little is known about motivational features in autism apart from general ideas of reduced social motivation and models of situational events that can trigger problem behaviors. Research findings from the area of behavioral neuroscience of reward and addiction may help explain how repetitive behaviors and interests emerge, and how they can influence motivation, choice, learning and development in autism. Importantly, these basic research findings can be used to guide the development of novel forms of intervention in autism. In this talk, attendees will learn about (a) the clinical phenomenology of repetitive behavior and interests in autism, (b) brain-behavior research on interests and motivation in autism, and (c) how this research might be translated to everyday clinical practice.

Raymond C. Pitts, Ph.D.

Title: Delay Discounting: Implications for Behavior Analysis as a Translational Science

Abstract: Practitioners in behavior analysis face substantial challenges dealing with behavioral problems associated with delayed reinforcers. Delay discounting refers to the relation between the delay to a reinforcer and its effectiveness. Basic researchers have devoted substantial efforts aimed at characterizing this relation quantitatively. Practice in behavior analysis would benefit by utilizing some of the basic principles of delay discounting. Basic research could inform practice by investigating conditions under which this relation could be modified (e.g., by investigating techniques that could be used to teach tolerance for delayed reinforcers). In this talk, I will a) describe the principle of delay discounting, b) summarize some of the basic and applied research on delay discounting, and c) describe a line of research recently initiated in our lab attempting to identify techniques that could be used to train tolerance for delayed reinforcers (i.e., teach "self-control").

Panel Abstract

Ya-yu Lo, Ph.D. (chair) Panel Participants TBA

Panel Title: Licensing Behavior Analysts in North Carolina: HB487 and Beyond.

Abstract: In March 2011, House Bill 487 was introduced to the North Carolina Legislature by Jim Lantry, a lobbyist. This bill would have modified the North Carolina Psychology Practice Act to exempt persons certified through the Behavior Analysis Certification Board (BACB) from coverage by the Practice Act. The bill was brought to the attention of the North Carolina Psychological Association (NCPA) who recognized that it had almost no chance of passing the legislature as there has never been a law passed that would exclude a group of professionals from a law governing their work unless that group was “licensed” under another practice act under the General Statutes of North Carolina. NCPA convened a work group and wrote an alternative version of HB487 which would modify the Psychology Practice Act to allow Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBAs) to practice under the supervision of psychologists. NCABA posted this revised bill on their website and invited comments and questions from the NCABA membership. Nearly 100 responses were received. To answer these questions, a meeting was held between the work group that wrote the revised version of HB487 and members of the NCABA Executive Committee. The proceedings of that meeting were summarized in a special edition of the NCABA Newsletter (to be) released in January, 2011. This panel will summarize the history of the BCBA licensing issue in North Carolina and the content of the January Newsletter and then explore the options for advancing the issue of licensing behavior analysts in North Carolina.

Student Symposium Abstracts

Adrienne Anderson, M.Ed.

Title: Effects of Peer-Mediated Social Skill Instruction on Latino Students’ Social Interactions with Non-Latino Peers

Abstract: This study examined the effects of peer-mediated social skill instruction on Latino students’ social interactions with non-Latino peers. Four Latino elementary students were trained to serve as social skill instruction tutors for their Latino peers. A multiple probe design across dyads (tutor-tutee) was used to analyze verbal initiations and verbal responses of the eight Latino participants. During the peer-mediated social skill instruction, each dyad engaged in four salient social skill components: (a) building a friendship, (b) starting a conversation, (c) continuing a conversation, and (d) joining in an activity. The number of appropriate verbal initiations and verbal responses with non-Latino peers were collected during recess period across baseline, peer-mediated social skill instruction, and maintenance conditions. Visual analysis was used to determine changes in level, trend or variability across all conditions. The presenter will discuss the rationale for the study, the methodological procedures, findings of the study, and practical implications for teachers working with Latino students who have limited social interactions with non-Latino students.

Ozalle M. Toms, M.Ed.

Title: The Effects of Check-in Check-out on the Social and Academic Planning and Outcomes of African American Males

Abstract: Urban schools are more likely to use out-of-school suspensions and other exclusionary punishment techniques (Adams, 1992). There are more African American students in urban schools than other racial groups. Research also shows that African Americans are suspended at higher rates and are more likely to receive multiple suspensions than students from other racial backgrounds and are in fact, two-to-three times more likely to be suspended than white students across all grade levels (Arcia, 2007; Children's Defense Fund, 1975; Wallace, Goodkind, Wallace, & Bachman, 2008). Research also indicates that students with behavioral disabilities have poor academic achievement, have more absences, are retained more compared to students without disabilities, and have higher suspension/expulsion rates (e.g., Bullis & Cheney, 1999; Greenbaum et al., 1996; Wagner, 1995; Sutherland & Singh, 2004). Several components will be incorporated into the treatment package of this current study such as; (a) daily mentoring with a facilitator, (b) goal setting, (c) constant feedback from classroom teachers, d) potential to earn tangible rewards, and e) parent involvement. The purpose of this study is to extend the study conducted by (Todd, Campbell, Meyer and Horner, 2008) by investigating the effects of Check-in Check-Out on the social and academic planning and outcomes of African American males in an urban secondary setting.

Kelly L. Hayes, B.A.

Title: It's More Than Just a Game: Teaching Peer Engagement Skills to a Child with Autism

Abstract: The participant was a 5-year-old child with high functioning autism and good verbal skills who had a limited repertoire of peer engagement and play skills. Although it appeared that the child was reinforced by peer interaction, he would play with peers for awhile and then walk away and play by himself. Through behavioral interviewing and direct observation, it was hypothesized that he was escaping an aversive situation in which he could not play the game and failed to receive peer attention in play situations. His limited repertoire for play appeared to be the deficit that was the establishing operation for his escape from peer interactions. This led to an intervention that consisted of games, such as Red Light-Green Light and Mother May I?, to practice a broader repertoire of play skills and to have the peer and child reinforce each other to extend the length of engagement. The child gained new play skills and engaged in longer play sessions without escape the peer interaction to play by himself.

Megan Brandon, B.A.

Title: Think Function: Treating a Child with Autism who Repeatedly Asked Questions and then Answered Himself

Abstract: The participant was a five-year-old child high functioning on the autism spectrum who repeatedly asked questions and then answered himself. Initially, it was hypothesized that the child was engaging in a self-stimulatory behavior. Behavioral interviews with the parent and in-situ hypothesis testing in which the child's mother was instructed to alternately a) respond to the questions and b) ignore the questions and engage with the child after 15 seconds of no repeated question-asking revealed that the mother's responding to the questions was reinforcing the child. It was then hypothesized that the function of the behavior was to engage the mother in conversation. However, there were times when the child engaged in the behavior when ignored and seemed to reinforce himself with his question-asking and question-answering behaviors. These analyses led to a multi-component treatment to address this behavior which had multiple functions and a generalization of treatment effects across several people in the child's life.

Ashley Bouknight Wingard, M.S.

Title: Think Function: Unique Aspects of Treating a Middle School Adolescent Female with Mental Health Issues

Abstract: Conducting functional behavioral assessment with typically developing adolescents in a school setting offers a unique opportunity to practice assessment with a variety of professionals and the target individuals themselves. This poster will present a case study of a female adolescent student referred for school-based behavioral mental health services due to physical complaints, leaving class often, and expressing suicidal ideation. The original function-based hypothesis was that adult attention was maintaining each behavior. However, through behavioral interviewing with the student, her mother, and a teacher, as well as direct observation, it was determined that some behaviors were maintained by escape from bullying from another student. When the bullying behavior was stopped at school, each of the target behaviors decreased. In addition, positive peer attention when the student provided assistance to classmates was identified as a reinforcer. This case study demonstrates the use of the target individual's as well as several significant other's input in assessing the function of behaviors. In addition, behavioral assessment issues unique to the school setting will be discussed.