



CURRENT DIMENSIONS

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News From the President's Desk

Lori Bechner

I am happy to be writing my first column as President! As always, there is much to report on the activities of NJABA. Firstly, I would like to thank all those who organized and attended the 4th Annual NJABA Conference at Rutgers University Busch Campus Center this past August. Dr. Hank Pennypacker delivered the keynote address, and Drs. Patricia Krantz and Lynn McClannahan were presented with lifetime achievement awards for their service and contributions to behavior analysis. This year, the conference offered 13 workshops and a poster session, plus an all-day workshop on standard celeration charting and interpretation. With close to 200 attendees, the conference was a great success! I would like to especially thank NJABA's Past-President, Dr. Marlene Cohen, for her leadership in organizing the conference; and Dr. Sharon Reeve for coordinating the conference volunteers.

Looking ahead to next summer's annual NJABA conference (our 5th!), we will be honored to have Drs. Krantz and McClannahan present the keynote address. Dr. Murray Sidman will present a full-day workshop. For those of you marking your calendars in advance, in 2009 the conference will be moved up from August to July to enable more members to attend.

NJABA's Winter Workshop Series will also continue this upcoming year, with a presentation by Dr. Brian Iwata at Caldwell College on Friday, March 27, 2009. Dr. Iwata will be presenting on the topic of functional analysis and treatment of problem behavior. (Make sure to read his interesting interview in this issue.) As always, CEUs will be available for those who request them. We hope to see you there!

In other news, we are pleased to share results from the recent elections for NJABA's

2008-2009 Board of Directors: President-Elect-Gregory MacDuff, Secretary-Patrick Progar, 1-Year Member-At-Large-John Brown, and Consumer Representative-Mary Beth Walsh. Marlene Cohen currently serves as Past-President, and Kenneth Reeve and Linda Meyer continue to serve in their 2-Year Member-At-Large positions. The NJABA Board has also appointed the following positions: Treasurer-Tina Sidener, Membership Chair-Sharon Reeve, and Government Affairs Chair-Suzanne Buchanan. Additionally, we are currently discussing the development of a student member position on the NJABA Board.

In addition to our current status as an affiliate chapter of the Association for Behavior Analysis International (ABAI), NJABA is now an affiliate organization of the Association of Professional Behavior Analysts (APBA). APBA is a new organization with the primary mission of serving the needs of professional behavior analyst practitioners. For more information, visit APBAhome.net. We are excited to have professional organizations supporting behavior analysts, including ABAI, BACB (Behavior Analyst Certification Board), and now APBA. It is our goal to keep the NJABA membership informed about these organizations, which can serve as critical resources for professionals in our field. One of our upcoming issues of *Current Dimensions* will feature a description of each of these organizations.

Remember to regularly visit our website at www.njaba.org to stay informed on upcoming events!

Lori Bechner, M.A., BCBA is the President of the New Jersey Association for Behavior Analysis. She is Clinical Director at the Educational Partnership for Instructing Children (EPIC) in Paramus, NJ.

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An Interview with Dr. Brian Iwata



Brian Iwata is Professor of Psychology and Psychiatry at the University of Florida, where he directs research programs on disorders of learning and behavior. He has published over 200 articles and chapters and has received over \$6 million in research grants to support that work. Brian is the former editor of the *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis* and past president of the Association for Behavior Analysis, Division 33 of the American Psychological Association, the Florida Association for Behavior Analysis, the Society for the Advancement of Behavior Analysis, and the Society for the Experimental Analysis of Behavior. He has chaired study sections for both the National Institutes of Health and the National Institute of Mental Health and is a fellow in the American Association on Mental Retardation, the American Psychological Association, the American Psychological Society, and the Association for Behavior Analysis. Brian has received a number of significant awards for his work, including the D.F. Hake Award for Contributions to Basic and Applied Research as well as the Award for Applied Research from APA, the Award for Distinguished Contributions to Service from ABA, and the R. B. Dillard Award for Excellence in Research from AAMR. Brian is just as much a teacher of researchers as he is a researcher: Half of the recipients of the B.F. Skinner Award (APA Division 25) have been his former Ph.D. students.

What led you into the field of behavior analysis?

I somehow missed the course on learning as an undergraduate student, and applied behavior analysis was a relatively new field, so I had no particular orientation when I entered graduate school. Chance intervened, however. Jon Bailey, who had just received his PhD from Kansas, was assigned to be my advisor at Florida State. He introduced me to the field quickly and in as many ways as he could (TA for his undergraduate course, grad seminars, research, etc.). I was struck by the objective approach taken by behavior analysis, and the rest simply fell into place. I was a true believer by the end of my first term.

Who influenced you the most professionally?

Jon Bailey is the person most responsible for my professional development. Beyond being a superb mentor who has not stopped looking after me for over 30 years, he is simply an amazing person whose enthusiasm is infectious. The most important thing he taught me was the task analysis of a research repertoire—how every little piece fits together and how new developments keep adding to the chain.

Two others also have had a lasting impression on me (I'm including only those who have had a direct influence). I was fortunate to begin my career at Western Michigan Univ., where I was able to interact with Jack Michael, who had been Jon Bailey's advisor. Jack emphasized the conceptual side of our field and had a knack for integrating theory and research on fundamental issues often overlooked by others. He has had perhaps the greatest influence on the development of major research themes in my lab. Our work on negative reinforcement, automatic reinforcement, and establishing operations accounts for at least 50 studies and can be traced directly to him.

As an assistant professor in need of a role model for professional development, I selected Nate Azrin. Along any dimension one might select (importance of the problem, thoroughness, methodological rigor, productivity, impact, etc.), Nate's work is second to none. I kept a cumulative record of his publications as a standard for my own performance (I still have it).

Most important milestones in your professional career?

Each of the faculty positions I have held contributed to my professional development in a unique way. WMU was a near-perfect environment for a new PhD in my field—thoroughly behavioral orientation, terrific faculty, and highly motivated students. My second position at Kennedy-Hopkins (medical school setting) afforded the opportunity to develop a line of research on a high-risk problem (self-injurious behavior). Finally, my current position at UF emphasizes graduate training and has allowed me to pass on what I have learned to others.

My association with the *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis* (JABA) as author and reviewer has been the most enduring educational experience of my career. Aside from being the primary source of new information in our field, JABA is a superb context for shaping research behavior and evaluation skills. I will always regard my selection as editor as my most important professional recognition. The position is not one for which one can campaign; it goes to the person who is the deemed to be the best researcher and best research evaluator in the field.

“Toward a functional analysis of self-injury” (Iwata, Dorsey, Slifer, Bauman, & Richman) is the most frequently cited article that I've published, and I suppose it has had a noticeable influence on both research and practice.

Finally, every accomplishment of every former student is significant as a piece of data indicating that I've succeeded as a teacher.

Any advice for young professionals in our field today?

It is difficult to keep this brief because so many things are important to the development of young professionals. I'll begin with the assumption that the repertoire of one entering the field is incomplete and fragile. If that's true, the most important things are to find an environment that is conducive to maintaining skills already developed and to develop a plan for acquiring new skills. These will differ from person to person, but an emphasis on empirical work (research as a tool for learning, experimental problem solving) fits nicely at the center of both.

A Review of Roane, Falcomata, & Fisher's (2007) *Applying the Behavioral Economics Principle of Unit Price to DRO Schedule Thinning*

Reviewed by Eric Rozenblat

In the field of Applied Behavior Analysis, there are numerous scientifically validated intervention procedures that can be helpful in decreasing problem behavior. One such procedure, differential reinforcement of other behavior (DRO) involves the presentation of a reinforcer contingent on the absence or omission of the targeted response during a given period of time. Although DRO procedures have been well documented, there are potential limitations to using DRO procedures when attempting to reduce behavior maintained by automatic reinforcement contingencies (internal stimulation). For example, past research has documented that DRO schedules were unsuccessful in reducing self-injurious behavior. One potential reason for this failure might have been because the opportunity to engage in self-injurious behavior provided an immediate consequence (automatic reinforcement). In contrast, the reinforcer for not engaging in such behavior was too delayed. Thus, a variety of factors such as rate, quality, and magnitude of a reinforcer may influence responding.

Given this potential failure, the field of behavioral economics may be useful in helping behavior analysts to develop more effective DRO schedules by investigating the *unit price*. The unit price is described as the cost for a particular amount of commodity in the equation $P = R/A$, where P is the price of the reinforcer, R is the response requirement, and A is the magnitude of the reinforcer. As the response requirement or effort (R) or the magnitude of the reinforcer (A) changes, then the price (P) of the reinforcer also changes. However, if both the response effort and magnitude change by the same amount, then the price of the reinforcer (P) will still remain constant. In other words, when DRO schedules are in effect, one has the opportunity to respond to either of the two concurrently available schedules; the DRO schedule during which reinforcement is delivered contingent on the absence of the target response after a specific time period or the alternative schedule during which immediate reinforcement (automatic) is delivered contingent on engaging in the target behavior.

The authors of the current study hypothesized that altering the unit price during thinning of the DRO schedule would reduce the effectiveness of DRO as treatment procedure for behavior maintained by automatic reinforcement. Additionally, it was also hypothesized that the DRO schedule would be effective if the unit price of the reinforcer remained constant.

A 16-year-old boy with autism who engaged in self-injury, aggression, and non-functional vocalizations participated in this study. Sessions were conducted in a treatment room with a one-way observation meeting for 10-minutes per session, five to eight times per day.

A functional analysis similar to that of Iwata, Dorsey, Slifer, Bauman, and Richman (1994) was conducted to identify the contingency maintaining inappropriate vocalizations. Additionally, an extended alone condition for 20-minutes followed the functional analysis.

Following the functional analysis, a DRO procedure was implemented in an attempt to decrease inappropriate vocalizations using a highly preferred alternative stimulation (a radio). During baseline, the therapist was present in the room with the participant and no

programmed consequences were delivered.

During intervention sessions, the participant received access to the radio for 20-seconds contingent on the absence of the target behavior on a 10-second DRO schedule. If the participant engaged in the target response, the schedule was reset to a new 10-second interval. Schedule thinning began by increasing the 10-second schedule requirement by 50% following 2-3 consecutive sessions in which the frequency of inappropriate vocalizations was at least 90% lower than the baseline average. The DRO schedule was systematically thinned until the maximum criterion of 180-seconds was attained. As the response effort increased (R), the magnitude (A) remained constant therefore increasing the price (P) of the reinforcer.

During the DRO thinning condition in which the unit price remained constant, the magnitude of the reinforcer (A) increased as the response requirement (R) increased, keeping the price (P) constant. As the schedule was thinned, the magnitude of the reinforcer remained 2x greater than the DRO schedule.

The results of the functional analysis demonstrated the functioning of the behavior was maintained by automatic reinforcement. During the first baseline condition of the initial DRO analysis, inappropriate vocalizations occurred during an average of 98% of the sessions. When 20-seconds of a reinforcer was provided following the absence of inappropriate vocalizations on a 10-second DRO schedule, inappropriate vocalizations fell to near zero levels. When baseline was reintroduced, inappropriate vocalizations reached similar levels of the original baseline condition. When the DRO schedule was reintroduced and the schedule was lengthened to 23-seconds and the reinforcer remained constant (20-seconds), inappropriate vocalizations again increased. Finally, when the DRO magnitude changed, that is the reinforcer was provided for twice the DRO schedule, inappropriate vocalizations decreased.

This study demonstrated that schedule thinning and the unit price was effective in reducing inappropriate vocalizations when both were altered together. On the other hand, as schedule thinning took place and the unit price remained constant, inappropriate vocalizations increased. Thus, it is important to consider factors such as response effort, magnitude, and quality of reinforcers when implementing DRO schedules.

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Eric Rozenblat, MA, BCBA is a behavior analyst for Children's Specialized Hospital, an affiliate of the Robert Wood Johnson Health System. He received his Master's degree in Applied Behavior Analysis from Caldwell College and plans to continue his studies for his doctorate. His research interests include differential reinforcement schedules and video modeling.



Behavior Analysis Training at Rowan University

By MaryLouise Kerwin

Editor's Note: This article is the first in a series describing behavior analysis training in higher education in New Jersey.

The Center for Behavioral Research & Services at Rowan University promotes the science of applied behavior analysis through [education](#), [research](#), and [service](#) to individuals, families, and organizations at a local, regional, and national level. The Center's educational mission is accomplished through coursework and continuing education workshops.

Rowan University offers Behavior Analyst Certification Board, Inc.[®] (BACB) approved undergraduate and graduate coursework towards the BCaBA and BCBA, respectively. The Specialization in Behavioral Services for Children & Their Families consists of five courses designed to provide psychology majors with the required coursework for the BCaBA and a minimum of 160 hours of supervised experience in applied behavior analysis. Non-matriculated students may take the three BACB approved courses (Learning & Behavior; Applied Behavior Analysis; and Behavioral Assessment & Measurement) to complete the coursework requirements for the BCaBA.

Rowan University's Certificate of Graduate Study (COGS) in ABA fulfills the coursework requirement for the BCBA. The 15 credit hour COGS is designed for individuals who possess a graduate degree or who are post-baccalaureates intending to enroll in a graduate degree program.

Given the high demand, Rowan is in the process of seeking approval for a Master of Arts in ABA. Using the COGS in ABA coursework as the foundation, the proposed MA degree program consists of 21 additional credit hours for a total of 36 credits. The proposed program is organized into 5 core areas: Behav-

ior Analysis Knowledge and Skill (9 credits); Understanding Populations and Contexts (9 credits); Supervised Experience (6 credits); Research Methodology (6 credits); and Electives (6 credits).

Rowan University provides students with an active learning community created by individuals in different settings and from a variety of disciplines that utilize behavior analytic techniques. In addition to two full-time faculty members, MaryLouise Kerwin, Ph.D., BCBA and Michelle Ennis Soreth, Ph.D., Rowan University is privileged to have a cadre of talented, dedicated professionals from the region who assist in educating students. Local agencies (e.g., Bancroft Neurohealth, Devereux) partner with Rowan to offer both undergraduate and graduate courses at their location for their staff as well as the traditional student. In an attempt to enhance the learning experience of all students, Rowan offers one course section each semester consisting of both undergraduate students in Field Experience with graduate students in Practicum. Finally, all of Rowan University's coursework is geared towards the working professional, with all classes being offered in the evening.

In addition to coursework, behavior analytic research opportunities are available to both the undergraduate and graduate students at Rowan. Dr. Kerwin has several grant-funded research programs investigating behavioral interventions for drug addiction. Project BOAST (Behavioral Office-based Achievement and Success Training) creates a simulated employment setting within a residential drug treatment center for women and their children. In collaboration with Dr. Kimberly C. Kirby at Treatment Research Institute, Dr. Kerwin is adapting dependent group contingency management procedures to increase cocaine abstinence in individuals in a methadone maintenance clinic. In addition to her line of research in drug treatment, Dr. Ker-

Specialization in Behavioral Services (BCaBA Coursework)	Certificate of Graduate Studies in ABA (BCBA Coursework)
Learning & Behavior (3 credits)	Basic Principles of Behavior (3 credits)
Applied Behavior Analysis (3 credits)	Research Methods in ABA (3 credits)
Behavioral Assessment & Measurement (3 credits)	Graduate Applied Behavior Analysis (3 credits)
Developmental Psychopathology (3 credits)	Behavioral Assessment & Functional Analysis (3 credits)
Field Experience (3 credits)	Practicum in ABA (3 credits)



(Behavior Analysis Training at Rowan University continued)

win also continues to conduct research in pediatric feeding disorders as well as behavioral parent training. Students are able to work with Dr. Soreth on her research projects in several of the local school districts in New Jersey aimed at the improvement of functional assessment techniques and the wide scale delivery of effective behavior analytic services for children and adolescents. The students also have the opportunity to work in Dr. Soreth's Learning Laboratory, where basic behavior-environment relations are studied within the traditional framework of the experimental analysis of behavior. Working with pigeons and standard operant equipment, students benefit from experience with advanced behavior analytic subject matter including choice behavior and temporal discrimination as well as from exposure to complex research methodology and data analysis techniques.

The Center for Behavioral Research and Services also extends educational services to the local community of behavior analysts. As part of Rowan's educational mission, they offer continuing education workshops and networking events to assist in the continuing education and development of behavior analysts in the local region. The first CE Workshop held on October 10, 2008 (Analogue Functional Analysis in Natural Settings) was co-sponsored with Brett DiNovi Consultants and Associates. The first networking meeting was held on October 22, 2008.

For more information about Rowan University's Center for Behavioral Research & Services and their upcoming events, please visit <http://www.rowan.edu/abacenter> or e-mail at abacenter@rowan.edu.

Mark Your Calendars for This
Exciting NJABA Event!

NJABA Winter-Spring Workshop

Dr. Brian Iwata

**Functional Analysis and
the Treatment of Problem Behavior**

**Friday, March 27, 2009
Caldwell College Alumni Theater**

VISIT WWW.NJABA.ORG FOR REGISTRATION DETAILS!

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Book Review

Williams and Foxx's *Treating Eating Problems of Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders and Developmental Disabilities*Reviewed by **Mary E. Fannan**

Developing effective treatment procedures for eating and feeding problems in children with autism and other developmental disabilities is often a daunting task. Keith E. Williams and Richard M. Foxx outline systematic treatment procedures based on the science of Applied Behavior Analysis in their recent book, *Treating Eating Problems of Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders and Developmental Disabilities* (2007).

The first part of the book, aimed primarily at parents and caregivers, begins by examining various types of eating problems, including food selectivity, food refusal, and refusal to sit at a table. The authors address when to seek professional help, as well as why it is important to do so sooner rather than later. The book goes into careful detail for parents on central areas of feeding problems, such as identifying an eating problem, establishing a meal and snack schedule, and general behavioral and environmental strategies. Other common concerns are discussed in great detail, such as introducing new foods, motivating a child to eat new foods, teaching self-feeding, and addressing inappropriate behavior during mealtime. The authors include helpful answers to frequently asked questions regarding treatment. Arguably the most important chapters in the first part of the book are Chapters 14 – 16, in which the authors clearly define how to make interventions more effective and result in lasting change, explain why some interventions do not succeed, and refute common myths about behavioral interventions.

The second part of the book, aimed primarily at professionals, describes very systematic ways of planning intervention for feeding problems. Chapter 20 discusses the components of a feeding evaluation, and is followed by a comprehensive account of identifying factors that influence feeding problems. The authors then provide valuable insight into planning a feeding intervention. They discuss how to identify target behaviors, how to conduct baseline observations, set-

ting appropriate and obtainable goals for intervention, the significance of the use of positive reinforcement, as well as determining intervention components. However, as the authors themselves state, these general guidelines are typically not enough to alleviate feeding problems. The next chapter provides in much greater detail the steps involved in developing a behavioral intervention. Explicit examples of interventions, and their applications, are discussed throughout Chapter 23.

The authors end the book by providing essential additional information and resources for both parents and professionals. Templates for parents, such as a food diary and a food inventory form are available in Appendices 2 and 3. The remaining Appendices offer a range of data sheets, including those for backward chaining, a token economy program, trial-by-trial sessions, a frequency count, and a data summary.

After hearing Keith Williams speak at a recent lecture at The Alpine Learning Group in Paramus, NJ, I was compelled to purchase this book. As a professional working with children with autism, it has been my experience that treating feeding and eating problems through behavioral intervention can often be extremely challenging. *Treating Eating Problems of Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders and Developmental Disabilities* walks the reader through the fundamental steps, providing useful samples throughout each chapter. In this book, Williams and Foxx succeed in providing comprehensive, critical information for identifying, treating, and monitoring feeding and eating problems.

Mary E. Fannan, M.A., BCBA, is Head Teacher at the Educational Partnership for Instructing Children (EPIC), a private nonprofit school serving children with autism and related disorders in Paramus, NJ. She holds a Master's degree in special education (concentration in Applied Behavior Analysis) from Caldwell College, and is a Board Certified Behavior Analyst.

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New Jersey Association for Behavior Analysis



NJABA MISSION STATEMENT

The New Jersey Association for Behavior Analysis (NJABA) was founded to promote the advancement of the discipline of behavior analysis. NJABA's mission is to:

1. Promote the ethical and effective application of sound behavior analytic principles in meeting the educational and habilitative needs of persons within New Jersey.
2. Promote the activities related to conducting and disseminating basic and applied research in behavior analysis.
3. Support the activities of the International Association for Behavior Analysis.
4. Support and encourage the certification process of behavior analysts by the Behavior Analyst Certification Board™.
5. Provide informational resources in basic and applied behavior analysis to professionals, families, and the community at large.
6. Support and promote the development of higher education certificate and degree programs in basic and applied behavior analysis.
7. Advocate for the implementation of behavior analysis services.
8. Promote and provide professional development activities for behavior analysts.
9. Sponsor an annual meeting of NJABA to disseminate information about the activities of the chapter as well as to provide a forum for discussion.
10. Sponsor an annual conference to serve as a forum for the presentation of research, application, and issues related to behavior analysis.
11. Publish and distribute a newsletter devoted to dissemination of research, application, issues and achievements related to behavior analysis, and other matters of interest to the NJABA membership and community.
12. Develop and maintain a web site to provide information about NJABA, its activities, and resources relevant for behavior analysts and the community.
13. Advocate for the fair representation of behavior analysis in the media and in professional materials outside of the field of behavior analysis.
14. Form an alliance between the fields of behavior analysis and education to bridge the gap between research and practice.



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