

Editorial: Retrospections, Prospections and New Paths for Behavioral Science

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If life were a continuous steady state, it would be boring indeed. In behavioral science, transitions are the spice of life. As Lattal (2012) notes, transitions give us retrospective information about the conditions that preceded them as well as prospective clues about what may follow. Transitions are all about variability, change, and its effects. Variability leads to selection (Catania & Himeline, 1996), or as musician Frank Zappa observed:

Well I think that progress is not possible without deviation. And I think that it's important that people be aware of some of the creative ways in which some of their fellow men are deviating from the norm, because in some instances they might find these deviations inspiring and might suggest further deviations which might cause progress, you never know. (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Vm6_5j8gXM)

This issue of *The Behavior Analyst (TBA)* marks a number of transitions, transitory states, variations, and deviations that pave new paths for behavioral science. We mark the end of another volume year, acknowledge and thank our outgoing editorial board members, feature a special section on exciting new research, present new research, provide a wry deadpan commentary about a venerable old “test,” and celebrate a career.

Forty Is a Good Vintage

Now in its 40th volume year, *The Behavior Analyst* has transitioned from a newsletter/commentary/in-house publication to a serious scholarly journal with a global reach. Self-help and pop psychology writers advise that one should reflect and take stock after

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40 years. This may be dubious wisdom, but many other events seem to have conspired to make *The Behavior Analyst's* 40th birthday a transitory state. After Volume 40, Issue 2 (this issue), new issues of *The Behavior Analyst* will no longer appear in your postal or e-mail box. Beginning in 2018, the journal will be rebranded as *Perspectives on Behavior Science* with a new direction and focus. The reasons for this exciting transition are discussed more fully in this issue.

Recognition and Reward

Rousseau teaches us that gratitude is a duty to be paid. It is an especially important duty when it comes to recognizing the outstanding contributions of our editorial board members. For most journals, editorial board members labor in the shadows as silent collaborators with the authors. *TBA* editorial board members have been exemplary in providing timely, in-depth, and helpful reviews. Our editorial board members make good papers better and provide much constructive feedback to authors of papers that we cannot accept. Through their efforts, *TBA* now publishes many more papers than ever before and boasts a 30-day mean time to initial decision. But beyond these contributions, the *TBA* editorial board has also been an excellent source of ideas, guidance, and counsel as we have transitioned *TBA* into a wide-ranging journal of behavioral science. I thank outgoing editorial board members Christine Hoffner Barthold, Asle Fagerstrøm, Matthew Locey, Elizabeth Lorah, Laura Methot, Jorge Oliveira-Castro, Thomas Waltz, and Richard Yi for their hard work, expert reviews, and sage advice over the past 2 years. They have served the journal and the discipline with great distinction.

Operant BEHAVIORAL Economics

Why BEHAVIORAL in all caps? *Operant behavioral economics* should not be confused with neither the “behavioral economics” movement in economics, nor the popularized “behavioral economics” as exemplified by books and podcasts such as *Freakonomics* or *Nudge*. The former is an attempt to rescue rational choice theory by positing intervening “behavioral” (hypothetical psychological construct) variables that are said to distort rational choice through biases, heuristics, and other frailties. The latter is a noncritical embrace of these explanations for alleged departures from rationality. Operant behavioral economics is a new path for behavioral science.

Behavioral economics research in the tradition of experimental analysis of behavior (EAB) views a behavioral experiment as an economic system (Hursh, 1980, 1984, 2014; Hursh & Roma, 2016). A pigeon or rat responding under a food reinforcement schedule or a human subject in a behavioral intervention (Borrero, Francisco, Haberlin, Ross, & Sran, 2007; Donaldson, DeLeon, Fisher, & Kahng, 2014; Henley, DiGennaro Reed, Reed, & Kaplan, 2016; Reed & Martens, 2011; Reed, Niileksela, & Kaplan, 2013; Roane, Falcomata, & Fisher, 2007; Tustin, 1994) is a consumer who is paying for reinforcement with behavior. Schedules of reinforcement are statements of price and income. Basic economic concepts such as demand, substitutes, complements, elasticity, and open and closed economies are examined in common operant arrangements. All operant behavior can be viewed as economic behavior, and the foundational concepts

of microeconomics and behavior analysis are seen as complementary; the behavioral economics work in EAB does not take a dismal view of economics.

Operant behavioral economics, which combines the EAB behavioral economics work of Hursh with insights from the matching law (Herrnstein, 1970, 1990; Herrnstein, Rachlin, & Laibson, 1997) and intertemporal choice (Ainslie & Herrnstein, 1981), is an approach to economics grounded entirely in the theoretical base of behavior analysis (Foxall, 2016). The highlighted special section deftly edited by Gordon Foxall showcases cutting-edge research in operant behavioral economics and consumer behavior analysis. Consumer behavior analysis is a rapidly growing, multidisciplinary field that brings the insights of operant behavioral economics, microeconomics, and consumer research to bear on choices that free-ranging consumers make in the marketplace. This collection of papers includes both conceptual as well as empirical papers and serves as a complement to other similar special sections or issues on consumer behavior analysis in the *Journal of Economic Psychology*, *Journal of Organizational Behavior Management*, *The Psychological Record*, and, most recently, *Managerial and Decision Economics*.

Prospective and Retrospective

We include two original papers: one looking forward and modeling our new direction and the other recollecting the past. Mark Dixon and colleagues penned a thorough and quantitative review of the research on the PEAK curriculum. As acknowledged in the article, Professor Dixon is the creator of the PEAK curriculum. All reviewers and editors were fully informed of this, and blind review was waived in order to avoid any potential conflict of interest issues. This article exemplifies the kind of rigorous research review that was described in the editorial outlining our policy changes (Hantula, 2016), which will serve the field well. We hope to see more papers like Dixon et al.'s review as they provide a firm foundation for other researchers to build upon a growing research program. Jim Johnston, Jim Carr, and Fae Mellichamp provide a detailed history of various credentialing efforts in applied behavior analysis, leading up to the current Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) model. Such certification is controversial and will remain so for the foreseeable future. Their article provides some context to help understand some of the possible benefits and downfalls of certification and licensure in the applied realm.

Strangers in a Strange Land

How to speak “behaviorese” to the native populations in the institutions we inhabit is an unending issue (Becirevic, Critchfield, & Reed, 2016; Critchfield, 2014; Critchfield, Becirevic, & Reed, 2017a; Critchfield et al., 2017a, b). The final three articles give us contrasting and complementary perspectives. First, Tom Critchfield takes on the grave implications of hewing too closely to a rough translation of behavioral terminology as he asks if it is time to bury the “dead man’s test” (Lindsley, 1991). Next, we have reviews of two books written for a nontechnical audience. Emmie Herbet, Tanja Seifen-Adkins, and Alan Gross review the DATA model, written for preschool teachers, and

Matt Tincani and Amanda Guld Fisher review a volume that introduces and explains behavior analysis to speech and language pathologists.

In Memoriam

We close with a memorial piece dedicated to Maria Ruiz written by her former students Michelle Ennis Soreth, Chata Dickson, and Christeine Terry. Dr. Ruiz was known as a scholar of philosophy and ethics (Ruiz, 2015), and her writings have appeared in these pages over the years (Ruiz, 1998, 2013; Ruiz & Roche, 2007). She is remembered as an inspiring professor who ignited her students' interest in behavioral science and launched them into basic research and applied careers.

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