An Introduction to the Second Issue of *Behavior Analysis in Practice (BAP)*

Dorothea C. Lerman, Ph.D., BCBA – Editor, *BAP*

Several themes emerge from the six empirical reports and three discussion papers published in this second issue of *Behavior Analysis in Practice*. These papers touch on topics of immense importance to the practice of our profession.

Dissemination of Behavior Analytic Interventions into Schools and other Community Settings

Recent national mandates for teachers to provide scientifically based instruction (Individual with Disabilities Education Improvement Act, 2004; No Child Left Behind Act, 2002) have surfaced in the midst of a significant gap between knowledge and practice in the classroom (Heward, 2005). The field of applied behavior analysis has much to offer education in this regard. We now have more than 40 years of research demonstrating the efficacy of behavior analytic techniques for promoting learning in the classroom. Nonetheless, behavior analysts have long lamented the failure of education to adopt behavioral practices (e.g., Axelrod, 1991; Skinner, 1984). It is thus particularly noteworthy that four of the empirical reports focus on school-based interventions.

Two papers address a skill that is critical for students at all grade levels — math fact fluency. In both studies, the authors examined some type of self-management procedure to improve fluency within the context of daily practice. In “Self-Monitoring of Pace to Improve Math Fluency of High School Student with Disabilities,” Farrell and McDougall taught high school students how to monitor their pace during timed practice sessions. Through the use of tactile prompts and specially prepared worksheets, students successfully determined if they were behind or ahead

of their target pace and adjusted their speeds accordingly. Patricia Figarola and her colleagues examined the benefits of having elementary students graph their own performance data using computer software immediately after practice sessions. In both studies, the classroom teachers implemented these procedures in combination with other intervention components.

Two papers address the needs of students with behavioral concerns. In “The Effects of a Group Contingency Intervention on Academic Engagement and Problem Behavior of At-Risk Students,” Thorne and Kamps incorporated reinforcement-based group contingencies into an existing school-wide behavior management system and examined the outcomes for 12 students in 4 elementary school classes. This ambitious program, which was designed

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to reduce the time and costs associated with class-wide reinforcement systems, produced substantial improvements in behavior. Boles, Roberts, and Vernberg, who authored the paper, “Treating Non-Retentive Encopresis with Rewarded Scheduled Toilet Visits,” taught classroom staff and caregivers to successfully implement a commonly used intervention for toileting problems with a student who engaged in severe problem behavior.

Although most research in behavioral education has focused on children and adolescents in school settings, formal education often does not end at adulthood for individuals with severe disabilities. Yet, practitioners may find it challenging to disseminate high quality teaching programs into

community-based adult settings (e.g., sheltered workshops) where educational resources can be quite limited. With this in mind, Marsha Parsons and her colleagues modified effective yet intensive interventions to develop a more practical approach for enhancing learning outcomes in “Remediating Minimal Progress on Teaching Programs by Adults with Severe Disabilities in a Congregate Day Setting.”

Together, these five papers offer practitioners and educators useful tools for improving student outcomes. The findings also contribute to the profession by demonstrating the successful dissemination of behavior analytic procedures into educational settings.

Treatment Integrity

The extent to which teachers and caregivers implement prescribed interventions consistently and correctly is key to successful outcomes. Yet, direct measurement of treatment integrity is typically absent from routine

clinical practice. The authors of two papers in this issue seek to change the status quo. In “Practical Implications of Data Reliability and Treatment Integrity Monitoring,” Vollmer, Sloman, and St Peter Pipkin provide extensive guidelines for measuring and monitoring both treatment integrity and data reliability. The paper by Kate Fiske, “Treatment Integrity of School-Based Behavior Analytic Interventions: A Review of the Research,” supplements the tools described by Vollmer and colleagues with knowledge of research findings on treatment integrity.

Science and Skepticism: Introducing the “Skeptics Corner”

The field’s emphasis on scientifically based practice requires that we don

the cap of the “scientist-practitioner” when providing any aspect of clinical service. Along with the measurement of treatment integrity and reliability, practicing behavior analysts must demonstrate functional relations to insure that effective interventions are provided to our clients. The resource-intensive standards of the scientist-practitioner can be daunting when working within typical clinical settings. In addition, practitioners often must work closely with other professionals who embrace different standards for best practice and with consumers who are using multiple types of therapies. With this in mind, we are launching a new, recurring section called “The Skeptics Corner” to address specific issues related to the use of unproven therapies. To introduce this new section, we are pleased to publish a discussion paper by Matthew Normand, along with an empirical report that focuses on an unproven therapy. In “Science, Skepticism, and Behavior Analysis,” Normand arms practitioners with the

tools needed to remain skeptical when confronted with proponents of unproven therapies and to disseminate best practice in science-based intervention. The paper by Dorothea Lerman and colleagues, “Using Behavior Analysis to Examine the Outcomes of Unproven Therapies: An Evaluation of Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy for Children with Autism,” demonstrates how practicing behavior analysts can serve the field by testing unproven therapies for our clients. We welcome additional papers that would be appropriate for this special section, including research reviews and evaluations of specific therapies.

Cover Photos Needed!

Do you have a photo that illustrates the practice of behavior analysis? We are soliciting cover photos for upcoming issues of *BAP*. Photos should be 11-in tall and clean-looking (not pixilated) at 300 dpi; saved as jpeg, tiff, or eps files; and preferably in portrait orientation. Contact Dorothea Lerman at lerman@uhcl.edu.

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