

# Avoiding Sand in the Desert

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The present issue of Behavior Analysis and Practice (BAP) brings together a series of captivating features that are sure to evoke strong responses. For example, the paper by Horner and Sugai on Positive Behavior Intervention Support (PBIS) refreshes the seasoned behavior analyst on how PBIS is alive and well on the front lines of the US education system. For those readers who missed debates about PBIS that flourished in the 1990s, Horner's current installment can serve as a recap of a significant success story of reaching the mainstream with behavior analysis. Twenty-one thousand plus schools later, PBIS has done what most of us could only imagine—taking our science to the masses and impacting countless lives. Opinions surely vary as to if PBIS is behavioral enough, functional enough, or empirical enough. A series of commentaries follow Horner's paper all of which offer strong opinions on these “enough” criteria. Successful enough? Love it, hate it, or somewhere in the middle—I think we all would have to say “yes.”

Also in this current issue of BAP, and authored by my editorial team, is the presentation of an alarming analysis of research productivity across graduate training programs and their faculty. Guest Action Edited and preambled by Thomas Critchfield, our data suggest that most training programs and their faculty fail to publish research in our field's top peer-reviewed journals. The research-practice debate is nothing new within or beyond our field. However, what is new is an empirical account of where our field stands in the production of research. In this paper, we also present a series of top 10 rankings of schools and faculty, yet leave it to the reader to

draw their own conclusions about what these data truly mean. A number of such conclusions will be featured in the next issue of BAP from invited commentators. I hope that these data serve as the first of many serious looks at how we can expand consumer information about available graduate training options.

The current issue also presents an exciting diversity of areas in which behavior analysis is being practiced. Wilson et al. shows how the typical stimulus preference assessment technology could be flipped on end into an aversive assessment for a verbally sophisticated adult experiencing anxiety, and the results then used to guide relaxation training. Guercio et al. present an interesting potential enhancement to the ADOS assessment for diagnosing autism, whereby better objective definitions of behavior improve reliability scores. Finally, Scheithauer and Zarcone challenge the myth of that a causal, or even strong correlational, relationship exists between poor sleep and behavior problems in children with disabilities.

Finally, this issue showcases two quite different field reports of behavior analysis being conducted on the front lines. Reed's discussion of Beyond the Dog speaks to how any of us can move from idea to successful business enterprise, and Smith's description of the Autism Partnership illustrates how widespread proliferation across geographic borders can occur. Together, these field reports once again document the many faces of our science and the rich diversity of applications that can follow from it.

Last year, I introduced a new submission category entitled Brief Practices. This manuscript classification promises rapid review times and welcomes novel behavior analytic interventions across settings, applications, analyses, and subject matter. Brief Practices are presented in format that is extremely user friendly and designed after similar short manuscripts of broad interest that are found in many

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neuroscience journals. Submissions to the Brief Practices category have increased with each subsequent issue. Beginning this Fall issue, BAP will also feature a singular glance back at the annual ABAI Autism Convention. Presenters at this conference will have an invitation each year to submit their work to BAP for a special section dedicated exclusively to presentations and posters from the convention. The call for submissions will be open for approximately 90 days following each year's convention. Finally, I am pleased to report that submissions to BAP have reached an all-time high.

As a direct result of BAP's recent successes, ABAI has requested me to assume the role of Editor for another 3-year term. I will be looking to our readership for additional ways that BAP can continue to grow. My primary goal during this second term of Editor will be to move BAP from two issues per year to four.

Not having a strong reaction to this issue's papers could be as difficult as avoiding sand in the desert. The topics are extremely important and the implications are far reaching. The PBIS debate will be more likely fueled than finalized, and the top 10 research productivity lists will draw more critiques than praises. However, we need to keep one thing in mind. We are a really small field, and fighting internally makes us smaller. Given that our discipline generates less attendance at our regional conventions than PEZ™ candy's annual convention PEZmania (approx. 1000) and that all of our annual conventions *combined* produce a fraction of attendees to the Hello Kitty™ convention (approx. 25,000), perhaps, we should learn to live together just a little bit better. Avoiding friction is impossible, but letting that friction create impassible lines in the sand is not. Personally, I am taking off my shoes, feeling the friction of sand between my toes, and viewing the beautiful landscape ahead.