**NEABA 2025 Conference Schedule**

Scott Conference Center

**Poster Session (March 27, 2025)**

5:00-6:00 pm: Odd numbered posters

6:00-7:00 pm: Even numbered posters

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| **#** | **Poster Citation** | **Award Categ.** |
| 1 | **Pederson, C.,** Halbur, M., & Adams, A. (2025). Comparison of instructive feedback presentation schedules for young children with autism spectrum disorder.  **Abstract:** Within the limited time of a school day or therapeutic session, instructors must prioritize not only the effectiveness of their teaching but also its efficiency to maximize student learning (Konrad et al., 2011). For students with disabilities, efficient instruction is particularly crucial, as it can accelerate learning rates, enabling them to acquire more material and potentially bridge academic gaps with their peers (Skinner et al., 1995; Konrad, 2011). One way to achieve this is through Instructional Feedback (IF), a teaching method that integrates non-target stimuli into learning trials without direct reinforcement. Research has explored various aspects of instructional feedback. Nottingham et al. (2020) examined how different schedule presentations of the secondary target (IF statement) impact skill acquisition. The purpose of the current study was to replicate and extend Nottingham et al. (2020) by evaluating the efficacy and efficiency of various presentation schedules of secondary targets during discrete trial instruction with participants aged 2 to 6. The conditions included secondary targets presented on every trial, secondary targets presented on a variable schedule, and no secondary target presentation. We also assessed how IF influences other skill development through pre and post-tests of emergent skills (e.g., tact, listener-by-class, matching, intraverbal fill-in, intraverbal WH-questions). Ongoing results indicate the acquisition of primary targets and the emergence of secondary targets from IF presentation schedules. | Masters |
| 2 | **Lin, G.** (2025). Measuring What Matters: An Analysis of Social Validity in the Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis.  **Abstract:** Behavior analysts seek to create behavior changes that are socially meaningful by applying principles that deliver immediate benefits to individuals and stakeholders. One of the most common methods for evaluating the significance and meaningfulness of procedures or treatment outcomes is through social validity measures. This review summarizes recent literature on social validity measures in the Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis from 2020 to 2024. One hundred thirty articles met inclusionary criteria for further analysis. Studies were coded on many variables, including population, setting, types of study, setting of study, types of social validity, direct or indirect social validity used, empirically based social validity measures, timing of social validity, social validity dimensions, and stakeholders. Results thus far suggest that fewer than half of the studies reviewed have assessed social validity, and the majority of researchers (70% of studies) used indirect assessments that were not empirically based (80% of studies). Implications of these findings and areas for future research will be discussed. | Ph.D. |
| 3 | **Davidson, A.,** King, A., & Spender, T. (2025). Advancing Verbal Behavior Research: Applications of Manipulative Autoclitic Frames.  **Abstract:** Narratives are powerful intervention tools. Behavior analysts who recognize the autoclitic frames within narratives, at the discourse, sentence, and word levels, can promote rapid transfer of verbal behavior across contexts, modalities, and languages. This poster presents three different research applications of narrative-based manipulative autoclitic frames used in Story Champs programs. The first study examines the effect of a virtual narrative intervention delivered to 4 autistic children (7- to 9-years-old) in 16 sessions. Results indicate that oral narrative intervention, delivered via Zoom, improved children’s story writing and generation of personal stories. The second experiment, a cluster randomized waitlist-controlled trial, studies the impacts of the Story Champs Curriculum implemented by SLPs and teachers to 155 first graders across 10 schools. Post-test and follow-up data indicate that the multi-tiered academic language instruction improved students’ oral narrative retell, vocabulary inferencing, written narrative, and expository oral retell skills. The third study investigates the effectiveness of a new narrative intervention designed for AAC users, piloted with 3 autistic children (6- to 9-years-old) over 12 sessions. Results showed that narrative intervention improved children's AAC retells and generalized AAC use. In each study the direct training of manipulative autoclitic frames led to the development of generative repertoires. | Ph.D. |
| 4 | **Kuhn, M.,** & Shpall, C. (2025). Evaluation of Training on Board Certified Behavior Analysts Competency in Assent Withdrawal Responding.  **Abstract:** B.F Skinner’s philosophical ideas of autonomy and ensuring individual agency are the foundations to our understanding of assent and its importance within our growing field (BACB, 2024). Assent is generally defined as an agreement to participate voluntarily, and without coercion (Behavior Analyst Certification Board, 2020). The purpose of the current study proposes a training protocol for Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBAs) on developing competencies in assent withdrawal responding when working with Autistic individuals in a clinical environment. The study highlights the need for research directing BCBAs on the modification of intervention when client assent is withdrawn (Breaux & Smith, 2023). The protocol utilized training participants in their competency in identification, training, and intervention modifications of client assent withdrawal behavior. The results of the current evaluation demonstrated the effective use of a training protocol on developing consistent assent-withdrawal competency skills in all participants. Implications of an assent-withdrawal competency training will be discussed. | Other |
| 5 | **Kohl, A.,** Connolly, S., Frampton, S., Oliveira, J., Shillingsburg, M. A. (2025). The Emergence of Untrained Intraverbal Responses When Teaching Tacts Related to a Common Theme.  **Abstract:** Teaching individuals with autism spectrum disorder to expressively label items according by feature or function, has led to an emergence of untrained intraverbals (May et al., 2013). The purpose of the current study was to implement low-intensity theme-based instruction to directly teach tacts and intraverbal-tacts, and to assess the emergence of untrained intraverbal skills in children with ASD. Four children diagnosed with ASD, between the ages of 5-9 years, participated in the current study. During baseline, participants were presented with all target questions (tact, tact by feature/function/class, intraverbal responses, and divergent intraverbals). All targets were related to a common theme (e.g., “Summer”). During intervention, participants were taught to label items by name and according to feature/function/class during using a low-dosage treatment package (20 minutes/day, discrete trial instruction, differential reinforcement). Following training, emergence of untrained intraverbal responding was observed. The results suggest that theme-based instruction is a low-intensity, practical approach to promoting language acquisition. | Masters |
| 6 | **Tran, J.,** Livingston, C., & Fahmie, T. (2025). Enhancing the Enhanced Choice Model!  **Abstract:** The assessment and treatment of severe problem behavior has been widely researched within the literature of applied behavior analysis (Newcomb & Hagopian, 2018). The evolution of treatments in the field has led to discussions of incorporating and prioritizing social validity and compassionate care into treatment (Werntz et al., 2023). Consequently, the Behavior Analyst Certification Board recently added assent to the ethical code, highlighting the fields push to incorporate assent into our procedures. With this, Rajaraman et al. (2021) recently introduced the Enhanced Choice Model (ECM) which incorporates assent within the treatment framework. Despite initial empirical evaluation successes, the ECM has only been applied to seven individuals who were between 4-9 years old. Additionally, the ECM has not been extensively evaluated with individuals who have limited communication skills or communicate via other modalities (e.g., card exchange). The purpose of this study is to extend previous research by providing additional procedures for participants for whom the original ECM procedures are not effective. Secondly, it is to replicate and validate the procedures outlined by Rajaraman et al. (2021) and Staubitz et al. (2022) in a clinical setting, targeting a broader age range and varying communication abilities among individuals with severe problem behaviors. | Ph.D. |
| 7 | **Rocheleau, A.,** & Livingston, C. P. (2025). Comparison of Child and Caregiver Mand Modality Preferences Using Sequential Extinction.  **Abstract:** Functional communication training (FCT) has been found to be an effective treatment for individuals with developmental disabilities (Rooker et al., 2013). Although FCT has been effective, there may be variables that influence its effectiveness, including reinforcement history and proficiency (Ringdahl et al., 2009), response effort (Bailey et al., 2002), and preference for the FCR modality (Kunnavatana et al., 2018). Another variable that may influence the effectiveness of FCT is mand modality preference (Ringdahl et al., 2016). Although the incorporation of child preference into FCT is an important variable to consider, it is also beneficial to incorporate stakeholders’ preferences (Houck et al. 2023). It would be beneficial to identify a procedure that can obtain a preference hierarchy to allow for a more precise comparison of caregiver and child preferences. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to assess the effects of the sequential extinction procedure on the establishment of a preference hierarchy for mand modalities. The second purpose of the current study was to compare child and caregiver mand modality preference hierarchies. Preliminary results suggest the sequential extinction procedure resulted in the establishment of a preference hierarchy with little to no challenging behavior. Additionally, caregiver and child preferences did not fully align. Clinical implications are discussed. | Masters |
| 8 | **Hedroj, Z.,** O’Neill, P., Valdez-Nuguid, M., Judkins, M., & Rey, C. (2025). Evaluation of the Differential Outcomes Effect on the Acquisition of Auditory Visual Conditional Discriminations  **Abstract:** The differential outcomes procedure (DOP) involves correlating reinforcers with responses, in that a specific reinforcer is provided contingent on a specific response. This procedure has been shown to result in faster acquisition than standard reinforcement procedures (i.e., the differential outcomes effect). Though this is a well-established effect in both human and non-human animals, there is little research demonstrating its utility in clinical applications. This study evaluated the effect of the DOP on the acquisition of auditory-visual conditional discrimination among children with autism with a history of difficulty acquiring this skill. An adapted alternating treatments design embedded within a multiple-probe across comparisons was used to compare the DOP to reinforcement-as-usual (i.e., non-differential outcomes). Preliminary data reveal idiosyncratic results across participants. Considerations for clinicians and areas for future research will be discussed. | Ph.D. |
| 9 | **Ibarra, A.** (2025). Teaching a Child with a Pediatric Feeding Disorder and a Vision Impairment to Self-Feed using Adapted Feeding Equipment.  **Abstract:** One possible manifestation of a pediatric feeding disorder is when a child does not feed themselves by their appropriate, developmental age (e.g., typically by 24 months). Children who do not feed themselves, herein referred to as “self-feeding,” rely entirely on caregivers to feed them multiple times a day and therefore require substantial support to meet their nutritional and caloric needs. To date, evaluations targeting self-feeding involve primarily either pre-loaded spoons and cups or scooping with a spoon. The following clinical case study demonstrates an alternative to teaching a child to self-feed purees with a spoon to circumvent the amount of time it would take for the child to contact success with the demand by initially teaching the child to self-feed purees deposited from a puree pouch presented in an adaptive pouch holder. We used an ABC design to evaluate a treatment package that included escape extinction, noncontingent reinforcement, graduated guidance, and differential negative reinforcement to increase self-feeding in a 3-year-old boy diagnosed with a global developmental delay, a vision impairment, a speech delay, and a pediatric feeding disorder. The results demonstrated an increase in independent self-feeding from an adaptive puree pouch holder following introduction of treatment that maintain at a 12-month follow-up and generalized to the home setting. The case study provides a clinical example of incorporating adaptive feeding equipment into behavioral treatment programming to increase mealtime independence with purees. | Masters |
| 10 | **Cicero, A.,** Jeglum, S. R., DeBrine, J., Livingston, C. (2025).Emergency Department Utilization Due to Challenging Behavior in Children and Adolescents Diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder.  **Abstract:** Children and adolescents with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) are at a greater risk of seeking emergency department (ED) services during behavioral crises, such as acute aggression, suicidal or homicidal ideation, self-injury, or other types of challenging behavior (e.g., pica, dangerous behaviors). Research demonstrates children and adolescents with ASD often return to the ED due to challenging behavior, suggesting that gaps in care exist (e.g., follow-up appointments, referrals). However, the current knowledge basis is largely based on data from other countries. Given the unique landscape of healthcare in the United States, it is prudent to elucidate characteristics of children and adolescents with ASD who are seeking emergency care due to challenging behavior, as well as systems-level factors that both contribute to our understanding of challenging behavior and ASD in ED settings. In this study, we focus on frequency and characteristics of children and adolescents with ASD presenting to the ED with challenging behavior over the course of a 6-year period in the Midwest region of the United States. Clinical implications for ED staff are discussed. | Ph.D. |
| 11 | **Whitford, C.,** Fahmie, T., & Fritz, J. (2025). A Retrospective Analysis of Latency in Competing Stimulus Assessments.  **Abstract:** Competing stimulus assessments (CSA) are designed to identify stimuli associated with reductions in challenging behavior. A few key characteristics of the CSA are the inclusion of a no-stimulus control trial, short 1- to 5-min trials, and repeated series of test stimuli. Depending on the trial duration, number of series, and access to resources, CSAs can be time consuming and expose the learner to more instances of challenging behavior. To mitigate this issue, Imler & Weyman (2024) used latency to first response to select competing stimuli. A limitation to this study was the lack of comparison to a standard rate-based CSA to validate the outcomes of the latency-based CSA. The present study retrospectively analyzed derived latency and rate in six CSAs for individuals with automatically reinforced challenging behavior. Preliminary results suggest that latency may be a predictor of highly effective or highly ineffective competing stimuli but may fail to predict moderately effective stimuli. We analyzed correlations between latency and rate, rankings between the derived latency-based CSA and rate-based CSA, and correlation between engagement across both formats. We discuss the implications of an abbreviated assessment format, conditions under which latency may be an appropriate measure, and the analytic boundaries of latency-based assessments. | Ph.D. |
| 12 | **Reilly, M.,** Livingston, C. P., Cicero, A., Rocheleau, A., & Morris, T. (2025). The Effects of A Sequential Extinction Assessment on Mand Modality Preference and Challenging Behavior.  **Abstract:** Functional communication training (FCT) is a commonly used intervention for socially maintained challenging behavior. One factor that may influence the durability of FCT is the individual’s preference for the functional communication response (FCR). Previous research evaluated a sequential extinction mand modality preference assessment (MMPA) to determine a preference hierarchy for FCR modalities. This study extends previous research by implementing a resurgence phase and an MMPA following the sequential extinction assessment to determine if preference for FCR modalities may shift after sequential extinction. We first taught participants an FCR to mastery criterion across multiple modalities. Next, we conducted the sequential extinction MMPA to identify a preference hierarchy. We then conducted a brief resurgence phase in which all FCR modalities and challenging behavior were placed on extinction. Finally, we conducted a concurrent operant MMPA to determine if preference for the FCR modalities had shifted after the sequential extinction assessment. We replicated the results of previous research by identifying a preference hierarchy for all participants using the sequential extinction MMPA. Additionally, we observed minimal resurgence of problem behavior throughout the sequential extinction assessment for all participants. Our results also extended previous research by suggesting that preference for FCR modalities may have shifted following the sequential extinction MMPA and resurgence phase for all participants. | Masters |
| 13 | **Vesely, S.,** Frampton, S. E., & Gunderson, G., (2025). The Use of Self-Study and Matrix Training to Teach Sign Language.  **Abstract:** Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) systems allow individuals presenting with vocal–verbal speech delays to communicate their wants and needs to others. For AAC to be effective, the caregivers working with the individual must be familiar with the modality. Thus, methods for quickly teaching AAC to caregivers is necessary. The present study proposes a more efficient way to teach AAC in the form of signs to adults. Specifically, this study evaluated the effects of Self-Study Training (SST) on the text-sign intraverbal and sign-vocal tact relations for the trained diagonal targets and the untrained non-diagonal and recombinative generalization targets within a matrix. Researchers also evaluated the text-sign intraverbal and listener response relations during role-play probes. All participants began with pre-training probes of all targets. Then, participants completed SST for Submatrix 1. Following SST, researchers probed the text-sign intraverbals and sign-vocal tacts for the six trained diagonal and six untrained non-diagonal targets across all submatrices. This was repeated across submatrices, consistent with a multiple probe design across behaviors (submatrices). After all the submatrices received SST, participants completed post-training probes to test whether the 24 recombinative generalization targets and 24 role-play skills emerged. For the first participant, SST of six compound targets led to the acquisition of 30 untrained compounds and 12 component signs. | Masters |
| 14 | **Ruzicka, R.** (2025). Calm Contingent Discrete Trial Training: A Case Study Using A Resetting Reinforcement Interval.  **Abstract:** Discrete trial training is a highly effective method for teaching early learning skills. Discrete trial training can also be evocative for those who engage in intense maladaptive behavior. The Performance Based Interview-Informed Synthesized Contingency Analysis (Hanley, 2020) provides framework for ensuring that a participant has returned to “calm” or “baseline” between exposures an establishing operation. This case study evaluated the effect of the Performance Based Interview-Informed Synthesized Contingency Analysis framework implemented in a discrete trial training context on the amount of time the client spent engaging in problem behavior as well as its intensity on problem behavior. This case study applied this new protocol, the Calm Contingent Discrete Trial Training, with a client who engaged in severe self-injury and pica whenever preferred items were removed and work was presented, and who engaged in increasingly intense problem behavior with repeated exposures to the establishing operation. We found that the Calm Contingent Discrete Trial Training produced meaningful reductions in the amount of time the client spent engaging in problem behavior and the intensity of problem behavior. | Masters |
| 15 | **Jackson, K.,** Oliveira, J., & Connolly, S. (2025). Using an Applied Verbal Behavior (AVB) Model to Teach Pre-Requisite Skills for Emotional Regulation.  **Abstract:** Zones of Regulation (Kuypers, 2011), a manualized social-emotional curriculum commonly utilized within elementary education settings, is designed to develop tools and strategies for emotional regulation. The curriculum can be implemented within a multi-tiered system of school-wide behavioral support, through classroom-based teaching and individual-focused programming. Despite its ubiquitous application, there is limited empirical support indicating behavior change at the individual, classroom, or school-wide level (Mason et al., 2023). As such, there is a call for research to critically evaluate the implementation and outcomes before broadly accepting it as an evidence-based practice. Specifically, it may be beneficial to investigate the stimuli that control responding. Further, when utilizing the curriculum with children with ASD, an explicit instructional framework beyond what is described in the curriculum may be necessary to teach the foundational skills within the curriculum (e.g., naming and visual categorization of emotions). This poster presents pilot data on an adapted Zones curriculum aimed to teach prerequisite skills relevant to emotional regulation training. To accomplish this, we utilized an applied verbal behavior (AVB) teaching framework to teach naming and visual categorization of emotions to three children with ASD, with the sequence of instructional targets arranged to maximize the emergence of untrained responses. The data demonstrate that participants were able to quickly acquire the foundational Zones identification skills. This poster highlights the success of this curriculum in a group-based setting, showing its potential for improving emotional understanding in children with autism. | Masters |
| 16 | **Papproth, C.,** Fahmie, T., Regan, G., Dawson, K., & Kastner, K. (2025). The safety and flexibility of functional analysis: A clinical case example.  **Abstract:** A 5-year-old boy was referred for the assessment and treatment of aggression, disruptions, and self-injurious behavior (SIB) in the form of head-diving off elevated surfaces. This poster describes a three-part, hypothesis-driven functional analysis driven by a commitment to safety. Initial hypotheses were that SIB was maintained by automatic reinforcement and other topographies were maintained by social reinforcement. First, a traditional multielement functional analysis of combined precursors, aggression, and disruptions was used to test hypothesized social functions. To confirm the response class, reinforcement was systematically removed (extinction) across topographies. Results indicated that all three topographies were maintained by access to tangible items. Next, to safely assess the presumed automatic function of SIB, evaluators conducted a latency-based functional analysis to minimize opportunities for head diving. Lower latency responding in a no-interaction (single test) condition were compared to a play (control) condition confirming an automatic function; however, the clinical team wondered whether the attention delivered to block head diving may be reinforcing. Thus, a final analysis involved noncontingent reinforcement with and without attention, which confirmed a secondary attention function for SIB. These methods for assessing challenging behavior across topographies allowed for the selection of a treatment package that targeted various functions across topographies. | Masters |
| 17 | **Thiel, L.,** Kastner, K., Fahmie, T., Gehringer, J., Thomas, R., Whitford, C., & Kunwor, S. (2025). Toward a Model of Precursor Identification Using Machine Learning.  **Abstract:** Researchers have suggested intervening on precursors to improve the safety of the assessment and treatment of challenging behavior (Health & Smith, 2019). However, conducting a precursor verification analysis can be a laborious process (Fritz et al., 2013). The incorporation of machine learning technology may offer one solution. Specifically, the emerging use of automated real-time data collection may lead to increased precision and efficiency during verification. In the current study, trained behavioral coders collected audio and visual data on challenging behavior and precursors from severe behavior day admissions. We focused on vocalizations as precursors because they have been noted as common precursor topographies (Fahmie et al., 2011). Researchers then used existing machine learning algorithms trained to detect emotion, through acoustical properties or sentiment analysis, to explore which features best detected the vocal precursors. Two algorithms were applied and the percentage of correctly identified recordings were calculated for individual, and combinations, of machine learning models. Our preliminary results suggest that acoustics-based models may detect negative vocalizations, while sentiment analysis may be more successful at identifying other vocalizations. Future research should identify how to combine these models best to detect all vocalizations and process vocalizations from children. | UnGrd |
| 18 | **Stöckermann, H.,** Morris, A., & Livingston, C. (2025). Modified application of a single stimulus preference assessment for a child exhibiting challenging behavior.  **Abstract:** Attention-maintained challenging behavior is often treated using a differential reinforcement procedure. Specifically, systematically delivering attention for appropriate, alternative behaviors while withholding attention for challenging behavior. Nevertheless, previous research has demonstrated the differential effects of varying attention types, highlighting the importance of conducting attention preference assessments (Piazza et al., 1999; Livingston et al., 2020). Current attention preference assessments, such as the rapid assessment of attention types (RAAT), require individuals to move around a room (Strohmeier et al., 2018) or require discrimination skills (Morris et al., 2019). While both of these assessment formats have been effective at establishing attention-preference hierarchies for individuals who engage in challenging behavior, they may not be appropriate for individuals with limited mobility or discrimination skills. Other formats, like a single-stimulus preference assessment (Smaby et al., 2007), have not been evaluated with individuals who engage in challenging behavior. To address this limitation, our case study evaluated the use of a modified single-stimulus attention preference assessment to identified preferred attention types for a 15-year-old male who engaged in challenging behavior. Primary dependent variables included preference and challenging behavior, in addition to attention consumption and social avoidance movements. Overall preferred attention types were identified, and different rates of responding were observed across attention types. | UnGrd |
| 19 | **Morris, T. J.,** & Livingston, C. (2025). Mand Modality Preference Assessment Across Treatment.  **Abstract:** Functional communication training (FCT) is a function-based behavioral treatment used to reduce challenging behavior by teaching an alternative communication response (Tiger et al., 2008). The effectiveness of FCT has been demonstrated across various communication modalities. Indeed, Ringdahl et al. (2016) and Kunnavatana et al. (2018) evaluated and demonstrated the effectiveness of assessing preference among mand modalities prior and during FCT using the Mand Modality Preference Assessment (MMPA). In the majority of published research on the topic, MMPAs are introduced as a pre-treatment assessment. Although their effectiveness and precision have been demonstrated, researchers have yet to evaluate the potential discrepancies or similarities in mand modality preference across different functional treatments to decrease challenging behavior. Furthermore, mand modality preference maintenance has never been assessed at different stages of treatment (i.e., extinction, schedule thinning). Therefore, the purpose of this study was to assess mand modality preference prior and during different stages of functional treatments. | Ph.D. |
| 20 | **Aubin, J.** (2025). Transferring reinforcement contingencies from high-frequency to low-frequency eating behavior at the onset of feeding treatment.  **Abstract:** Differential Reinforcement (DRA) has been evaluated as a treatment for increasing acceptance of nonpreferred foods for children diagnosed with Pediatric Feeding Disorder (PFD). Past evaluations have not evaluated DRA in the absence of escape extinction (EE) (Piazza et. al., 2003) or other treatment components (e.g., simultaneous presentation; Peterson, et. al., 2024). Most studies have shown DRA to be ineffective in the absence of EE (Berth et. al., 2019). One reason may be the low rate with which the child is contacting the reinforcement contingency in the absence of another procedure. One way to mitigate this potential limitation would be to establish reinforcement contingencies with an eating behavior that the child is likely to cooperate with (e.g., eating a preferred food) prior to evaluating DRA for an eating behavior that the child is not likely to cooperate with (e.g., eating a nonpreferred food). Thus, for the current evaluation, we established reinforcement contingencies with a high-frequency eating behavior prior to evaluating DRA with a low-frequency eating behavior (i.e., eating 4 novel foods) in the absence of EE for 3-5 children diagnosed with PFD. Overall, DRA alone was not sufficient to increase acceptance to high levels in the absence of EE. | UnGrd |
| 21 | **Adesanya, S.,** Hedroj, Z., O’Neill, P., Mullendore, J., & Rey, C. A preliminary Investigation of Gross Motor Models with Objects and No Objects During Imitation Training.  **Abstract:** Imitation is often taught early in the course of behavior analytic interventions for autistic children. Curricula commonly recommend teaching imitation with objects before teaching imitation without objects (e.g., Partington, 2008; Sundberg, 2008). This recommendation appears to be based on data showing that imitation with objects typically develops prior to imitation without objects among young children (e.g., Kim et al., 2015; Sanefugi & Yamamoto, 2014). However, there have been no studies demonstrating that initially teaching imitation with objects confers any benefit relative to initially teaching imitation without objects for learners who require explicit instruction to develop this skill. Recent studies advocate for empirical validation of imitation protocols and guides for selecting imitation tasks (e.g., Deshais & Vollmer, 2020; Espanola Aguirre & Gutierrez, 2019). Therefore, the purpose of the current study was to experimentally evaluate acquisition across imitation with and without objects among children with autism using an adapted-alternating treatments design embedded within a multiple-probe across comparisons. |  |
| 22 | **Klute, M., Nesbitt, T.,** Hernandez, M. L., & Halbur, M. A Case Report on Small-Scale Simulation and Antecedent Strategies to Increase Tolerance of Haircutting Routines.  **Abstract:** Health and self-care routines, such as haircutting, may lead to challenging behaviors for children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Although various interventions have been explored (e.g., graduated exposure, non-contingent reinforcement, extinction), research on using small-scale simulation training to enhance tolerance for these essential health-related skills remains limited. Small-scale simulation involves using smaller models (e.g., stuffed animals, doll houses, toys) in controlled scenarios that mimic real-life situations, allowing children to observe, practice, and develop tolerance to the targeted skills. The present investigation aimed to evaluate the efficacy of small-scale simulation training in a trial-based arrangement with other antecedent components (e.g., visual timer) in improving the tolerance of health and self-care skills (e.g., haircutting) for a young child with ASD. The findings indicated that simulation training increased tolerance, with positive outcomes observed in the maintenance and generalization of the skill (e.g., adding caregiver implementation, additional steps). Implications, including other clinical procedural variations and the broader application of small-scale simulation training methods from the literature will also be discussed. |  |
| 23 | Agana, T. R., Rodriguez, N. M., & **Heyden, H.** (2025). Teaching Early Level Play Skills Using Development-Matched Targets.  **Abstract:** Previous research supports using development-matched targets combined with modeling to teach play skills to autistic children (e.g., Pane et al., 2022). However, most studies have focused on children with more advanced play skills and required imitation as a pre-requisite. To our knowledge, no studies have examined teaching play using development-matched targets for autistic children with early play skills and limited imitation. In this study, we evaluated the effects of development-matched play targets and modeling on play skills for four autistic children. Notably, no physical prompts or programmed consequences (e.g., praise) were used to teach the play skills. Our findings showed that children engaged in the development-matched play targets during the modeling condition. Additionally, we assessed whether the children maintained these play actions without modeling during post-treatment and alone sessions. The results indicated that they continued to engage in play in the absence of modeling and without the experimenter's presence. These results suggest that using modeling development-matched play targets may be an effective approach for autistic children who have limited imitation skills. | Other |
| 24 | **Barall, R. J.,** Frampton, S. E., & Shillingsburg, M. A. (2025). Use of Systematic Pairing to Promote Willing Participation in Intervention Research.  **Abstract:** Minimally verbal autistic children are often underrepresented in intervention research (Stedman et al., 2019). Underexamined treatments may be aversive for this population. This study examined the effects of a reinforcement pairing and instructional fading procedure with minimally verbal autistic children, aged 4-8, who used speech-generating devices (SGDs) for communication. The nine-stage procedure (Shillingsburg et al., 2014; Shillingsburg et al., 2019) paired the therapist and instructional setting with highly preferred items and activities and gradually introduced therapeutic tasks. We measured the percentage of session time spent in proximity to the therapist, frequency of participant cooperation with therapy tasks, and any harmful/avoidant behaviors (e.g., self-injury). In baseline, all participants demonstrated variable levels of proximity and cooperation and two participants demonstrated increasing levels of problem behavior. In the terminal stage of the pairing protocol, all participants demonstrated zero rates of harmful/avoidant behavior and high levels of proximity and cooperation. These findings suggest that reinforcement pairing and instructional fading can result in willing participation in therapy sessions with minimally verbal autistic children. | Ph.D. |
| 25 | **Ayala, C.,** Clements, A., O’Neill, P., Gilmore-Black, J., Georgopoulos, A., Wegner, N., Gibson, A., & Clark, T. (2025). Uncommon Applications of Stimulus Tolerance Procedures.  **Abstract:** One of the core symptoms of autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is restricted and repetitive behaviors that can present as sensory defensiveness. A child with ASD may avoid certain types of stimulation (e.g., certain noises, certain ways to being touched). In some cases, the environment can be adjusted to avoid these stimuli (e.g., headphones to deaden loud noises) or different approaches can be taken to change how the child contacts a sensory experience (e.g., toothbrush with softer bristles). However, in some cases an aversive stimulus may not be able to be avoided resulting in elopement, aggressions and self-injury. In this poster, we will describe two such situations and what we learned when designing stimulus tolerance procedures. For Jang, sensory defensiveness prevented him from undergoing a needed medical procedure. We taught Jang how to tolerate a typical electroencephalogram (EEG). For Martin, sensory defensiveness left him vulnerable to tissue damage from self-injury. For Martin, we taught him to tolerate wearing a glove that protected the area where he bit himself. | UnGrd |
| 26 | **Lafo, G.** (2025). Using Behavioral Skills Training to Train Clinicians to Conduct a Mand Modality Assessment.  **Abstract:** For individuals whose vocal communication repertoire is not sufficient, augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) should be considered for behavior analytic interventions such as functional communication training (FCT) and mand training. The selection of AAC, or a mand modality, requires consideration of multiple variables, including independent responding, reduction of challenging behavior, and client preferences. Many practitioners, including speech-language pathologists (SLPs), the primary provider of AAC interventions, report being unfamiliar with AAC assessment. Current AAC assessment procedures can be generally subjective, lengthy, unstandardized across practitioners, and without consideration of the individual’s preference. The current study examines the effects of a telehealth behavioral skills training (BST) intervention on the accurate administration of a mand modality assessment as a form of AAC assessment. Two speech-language pathology graduate student clinicians attended a virtual training with instruction, modeling, rehearsal, and feedback components. BST resulted in increased accuracy of mand modality assessment administration for both participants. The results of this study suggest that BST may be an effective method for disseminating a standard AAC assessment to SLPs and other practitioners. | Other |
| 27 | **Frye, I.** (2025). Delay Discounting of Treatment Effectiveness and Evaluating Caregiver Preference in Pediatric Feeding Disorder Interventions.  **Abstract:** For individuals whose vocal communication repertoire is not sufficient, augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) should be considered for behavior analytic interventions such as functional communication training (FCT) and mand training. The selection of AAC, or a mand modality, requires consideration of multiple variables, including independent responding, reduction of challenging behavior, and client preferences. Many practitioners, including speech-language pathologists (SLPs), the primary provider of AAC interventions, report being unfamiliar with AAC assessment. Current AAC assessment procedures can be generally subjective, lengthy, unstandardized across practitioners, and without consideration of the individual’s preference. The current study examines the effects of a telehealth behavioral skills training (BST) intervention on the accurate administration of a mand modality assessment as a form of AAC assessment. Two speech-language pathology graduate student clinicians attended a virtual training with instruction, modeling, rehearsal, and feedback components. BST resulted in increased accuracy of mand modality assessment administration for both participants. The results of this study suggest that BST may be an effective method for disseminating a standard AAC assessment to SLPs and other practitioners. | Ph.D. |
| 28 | **Gunderson, G.,** Vesely, S., Oliveira, J., Connolly, S., Frampton, S. E., & Shillingsburg, M. A. (2025). Examining the Acquisition of Tacts and Emergent Intraverbal Responses in Individualized Thematic Multiple Tact Training.  **Abstract:** Thematic multiple tact training (T-MTT) involves the presentation of targets all related to broader category (e.g., Holidays, Summer) deployed in a universal manner across learners (see Kohl et al., 2025). Following T-MTT, probes are conducted to evaluate the emergence of intraverbals (Conine et al., 2024). For example, having learned to tact a fishing rod by name and its feature as a handle, an individual may answer the questions, “What does a fishing rod have?” (i.e., handle) and “What has a handle?” (i.e., fishing rod). The present study examines an individualized T-MTT procedure with a vocal-verbal eight-year-old female with autism spectrum disorder that required additional support for complex verbal discriminations. Progression criteria were modified to permit more time in instruction and the number of discriminations was reduced in comparison to peers in the universal thematic model (Kohl et al., 2025). Probes for tacts of item names, tacts of features, intraverbals, and divergent intraverbals were probed for three thematic subunits each including three targets (9 total targets). T-MTT following the applied verbal behavior model was implemented with all three targets in the subunit until mastery was observed. In subsequent probes, the participant independently emitted untrained intraverbal responses. This series of subunit T-MTT and probes continued across subunits, consistent with a multiple probe design across subunits (behaviors). This study demonstrates that universally applied thematic instruction can be individualized to meet the needs of children while aligning with the same overall instructional model. | Masters |
| 29 | **Frohberg, A.,** Halbur, M., Gifford, M., Gormley, J., Fiala, M., & Nathan, G. (2025). Bridging the Gap Between Professions: Examining Ethical Codes to Enhance Collaboration and Understanding.  **Abstract:** Ethical guidelines of principles and standards of conduct for a profession are generally referred to as ethical codes. Ethical codes are created unique to each profession to serve their practitioners and clients. This project examined and compared the ethical codes of behavior analysts, occupational therapists, school psychologists, and speech-language pathologists. An initial examination revealed that there are main topics included in most, or all, of the ethical codes along with resemblances and differences in each comparison. Eight main topics were identified: confidentiality, scope of practice, informed consent, welfare, honesty, rights, reporting, and equality. Many differences between the codes were also identified. These differences, subtle or major, could cause potential conflict or lend to more effective collaborating when differing professions interact and service clients. To expand upon the initial examination, the core competencies developed by the American Speech-Language-Hearing- Association (ASHA) for interprofessional collaborative practice in collaboration with 22 professional organizations were examined. The IPEC core values and ethics were operationally defined and analyzed in relation to the Behavior Analyst Certification Board (BACB) ethics code and American Speech-Language-Hearing- Association (ASHA) to determine the resemblance and differences across the ethical codes. The hope is that this examination and comparison of ethics codes will help professionals become more aware and respectful of the ethical principles and standards of all professions, ultimately benefitting all parties and fostering better collaboration across professions. | Ph.D. |
| 30 | **Sullivan, K.,** Kaur, J., Livingston, C. P., & Fahmie, T. (2025). Integrating the Enhanced Choice Model with a Contingency Contract: A Case Study.  **Abstract:** Cooperating with academic work and home-based chores can be challenging for children with behavioral and developmental concerns. Our case study outlines the admission of a 12-year-old female diagnosed with Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder who was referred to a university-based outpatient clinic for the assessment and treatment of challenging behavior. A synthesized functional analysis indicated her challenging behavior was maintained by escape from instructions to child-led activities. We incorporated the enhanced choice model into skill-based treatment (Rajaraman et al., 2021) in accordance with a reversal design. This allowed our client to continuously choose between practicing skills (e.g., communication, toleration) in the presence of events that previously evoked challenging behavior (e.g., academic work, household chores) or taking a break in a hangout space. To promote generalization and autonomy, we introduced a contingency contract that allowed our client to self-monitor her behavior while completing household chores, academic work, and interacting with siblings. The contingency contract increased cooperation to 91% and reduced overall levels of challenging and non-dangerous behavior. Additionally, when given choice, our client practiced 99% of the time with the contingency contract extension. These findings highlight the flexibility of treatment approaches promoting choice and shared governance. | Masters |