



# BC-ABA

Volume 1, Issue 1

Newsletter August 2009

## BC-ABA 2nd Annual Conference and AGM Spring, 2010

Date to be announced soon. Please visit BC-ABA website for updates

[www.bc-aba.org](http://www.bc-aba.org)

We currently have 200 members!

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## Greetings from the President!

2008 was our inaugural year – we finally moved from being an idea at the ABAI Autism SIG conference in Boston, that some of the British Columbia Behaviour Analysts discussed, to being a chapter member of ABAI! It has been a year of learning and growth for the Executive as we delineate our roles and responsibilities and work diligently to move the organization forward within the province.

In March we hosted our first Annual Conference at UBC with keynote speaker Dr. Ilene Schwartz from the University of Washington. We were also privileged to have the opportunity to listen to a variety of presentations from Behaviour Analysts within our own community! Thank you to the speakers who volunteered their time. Thank you also to the Conference Committee and all the additional volunteers who worked hard to make that day successful. We offered CEU's at the conference and we will be continuing to do so at future events that we sponsor and co-sponsor.

We can only be as strong as our membership, so please take time to volunteer in some capacity with BC-ABA. Your ideas and enthusiasm are welcome!

Elizabeth Sparling  
BC-ABA President

## The Board of Directors for 2008-2010

**President** - Elizabeth Sparling , M.Ed., BCBA

**President Elect** - Richard Stock, M.S., BCBA

**Secretary** - Emily Keats, M.A.

**Treasurer** - Dr. Cristin Johnston, BCBA-D

### Members at Large :

Sharon Baxter, M.A., BCBA  
Miriam Elfert, M.Ed., BCBA  
Anna Matchneva, M.Ed., BCBA  
Alexia Stack, M.Ed., BCBA  
Theresa Tournemille, B.A.  
Dr. Sara White, BCBA

### Student Representatives :

Marecel Cleto  
Jan Palmer, M.Ed., BCBA



2010 is BC-ABA election year

Consider contributing to BC-ABA by being a board member!

## Graduate Student Research at UBC

*Dr. Pat Mirenda, BCBA-D*



Seven M.A. students at UBC are currently engaged in research projects related to autism spectrum disorders (ASD). Brooke Myers is examining the effectiveness of self-advocacy/self-determination training and practice with six adolescents with Asperger syndrome. Nadine Trottier is employing a multiple baseline design to examine the effectiveness of teaching peers to support three children with ASD to use voice-output communication devices in social situations at school. Landa Mark is examining the effectiveness of video modeling to teach generalized sharing behaviors to children with ASD. Landa and Sarah Verheyden are also involved in a project evaluating single-subject research studies aimed at teaching social/communication skills to individuals with ASD. Vanessa Neufeld is examining the impact of a positive behavior support (PBS) intervention to decrease anxiety-related behaviors in a child with ASD. Rachel Zylka is evaluating the effectiveness of an intervention to deal with sleep-related

problem behaviors; and Preetinder Narang will assess the impact of a PBS approach to teach play behaviors to grandparents of South Asian children with ASD.

Four doctoral students are also engaged in dissertation-related research projects. Brenda Fossett taught staff working with deaf children to conduct functional assessments and design PBS support plans, and plans to examine the impact of this training using a multiple-baseline design. Richard Stock is comparing the outcomes for young children with ASD participating in group applied behavior analysis and pivotal response training programs in BC and Nova Scotia. Miriam Efert is examining the impact of a psychoeducational support group intervention on fathers of children with ASD. Finally, Stephanie Jull is comparing the effectiveness of group and individual training programs to teach parents of children with ASD to support peer play dates in their homes.

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## Autism Spectrum Disorders: Pathways to Better Outcomes

*Dr. Pat Mirenda, BCBA-D*



The main purpose of this study is to describe the heterogeneous developmental pathways related to the outcomes achieved by 400 children with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) and their families in Nova Scotia, Ontario, Quebec, Alberta, and British Columbia. Children were entered into the study at the time of diagnosis (around age 3) and will be followed until they reach at least grade 5. The research team administers a wide variety of child and family assessment measures over eight annual time points to examine child, family, school, and community factors that are related to better outcomes. The data will enable us to begin to answer one of the most important questions facing the field of ASD today: "Which treatment in which dosage is 'best' for which children in which families?" Eight UBC graduate students are involved in this project as evaluators and/or data managers.

A secondary goal of the project is to examine autism policies across Canada from the perspectives of parents, researchers, and policy makers, in order to delineate policy pathways that will result in improved outcomes for children with ASD. Preliminary results were presented at the International Meetings for Autism Research in 2007, 2008, and 2009, and will also be presented at an upcoming meeting of the Canadian Autism Intervention Research Network (CAIRN). The project was first funded by the Canadian Institutes of Health (CIHR) in 2004, with additional contributions from the BC and Alberta Governments. In 2009, it was extended with additional CIHR funding to 2014.

## Transforming Coercive Processes in Family Routines: An Experimental, Single-Subject and Sequential Analysis with 11 Families of Children with Developmental Disabilities and Severe Problem Behaviour

Joseph M. Lucyshyn<sup>1</sup>, Brenda Fossett<sup>1</sup>, Lauren Binnendyk,<sup>1</sup> Christy Cheremshynski<sup>1</sup>, Sharon Lohrmann<sup>2</sup>, Lauren Elkinson<sup>2</sup>, and Lynn Miller<sup>1</sup>



The study examined the efficacy and acceptability of an approach to behavioural family intervention that was designed to promote survivable (i.e., acceptable, effective, sustainable, durable) interventions in family contexts with families of children with developmental disabilities and severe problem behaviour. An ecological unit of analysis - coercive processes in family routines -- informed an assessment and intervention approach that aimed to transform coercive processes of parent-child interaction in unsuccessful family routines into constructive processes of interaction in successful routines. Eleven families of children with developmental disabilities and problem behaviour participated. Each family collaboratively defined 2 to 4 target routines in the home or community (e.g., dinner routine, grocery shopping) for assessment and intervention. Dependent measures included problem behaviour, routine steps completed, conditional probabilities of parent-child interaction, and social validity. A multiple baseline design across routines for each family assessed the functional relationship between implementation of the approach and child outcomes. Sequential analysis methods assessed the transformation of coercive processes into constructive processes of parent-child interaction. Preliminary results across baseline and intervention show marked improvements in child behaviour and routine success, and high parent ratings of social validity for 9 of 11 families. Preliminary sequential analysis results show the dissolution of coercive processes and emergence of constructive processes for 4 of 4 families analyzed to date. Implications include the value of: (a) assessing coercive processes; (b) intervening within family activity settings; (c) assessing family ecology and providing adjunctive family-centered supports; (d) interventionist's receiving clinical supervision; and (e) adopting a life-span perspective.

<sup>1</sup> University of British Columbia

<sup>2</sup> University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey

## Expanding the Unit of Analysis and Intervention for Children with Developmental Disabilities and Food Refusal Behaviour

Lauren Binnendyk  
University of British Columbia

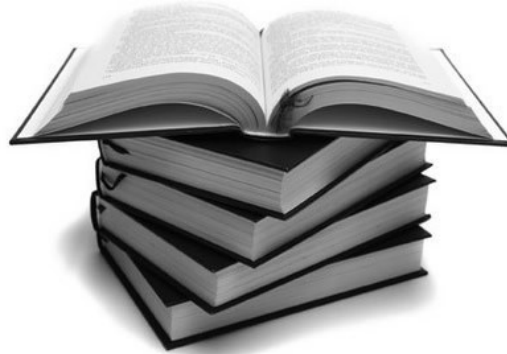


The purpose of this study was to empirically investigate an approach to behavioural feeding intervention that integrates child eating behaviour, parent-child interaction, and the activity setting of meal routines into an ecological unit of analysis. The aim of this unit of analysis is to generate necessary and sufficient knowledge for the design of effective and acceptable feeding interventions that parents can sustain across a variety of natural family meal routines in the home for a long period of time. Specifically, the present study examined the efficacy of an ecological behavioural feeding approach for: (a) improving child eating behaviour; (b) empowering parents to build a valued and successful mealtime routine; and (c) transforming coercive parent-child interactions into constructive interactions in meal routines. Three families of children with developmental disabilities and severe food refusal behaviour participated. One home-based meal routine for each family was selected for assessment and intervention. A single subject, nonconcurrent, multiple baseline design across families was employed. Direct observation data were gathered across baseline, intervention, and follow up phases. Following implementation of the ecological behavioural feeding approach, single subject research results showed improvements in child problem behaviour, consumption of new foods, and participation in valued meal routines. These improvements maintained three months post-intervention. Sequential analysis results across the three families showed improvements in parent-child interaction during meal routines. Statistically significant, four-step coercive processes were evidenced during baseline but not during intervention. The onset of intervention evidenced the emergence of statistically significant, four-step constructive processes. Social validity data indicated that the families viewed the approach as acceptable. Positive outcomes, however, were moderated by little to no improvement in overall family functioning. Results are discussed in terms of contributions to the literature, limitations and cautions, and implications for practitioners and researchers who are involved in behavioral feeding interventions.

## Douglas College Programs: Behavioural Interventionist (BI) and Disability & Applied Behaviour Analysis (DABA)

Douglas College offers a one-year, part-time behavioural interventionist (BI) citation program for entry-level paraprofessionals (18-credits). This academic year (September 2008-August 2009), 31 students enrolled in the program. This citation is not a dead-end program. All of the Douglas College credits are transferable into the two-year, full-time, classroom and community support (CCS) diploma program (60-credit).

Beginning last September, Douglas College began its pilot (15-credit) program in Disability and Applied Behaviour Analysis (DABA). 32 students were accepted into this program, three of whom were graduates of the Behavioural Interventionist citation and five are current students in the University of Calgary's Bachelor of Community Rehabilitation degree (this is offered as a satellite program at Douglas College's New Westminster campus). The majority of DABA students plan to write the BCaBA certification exam within the next year

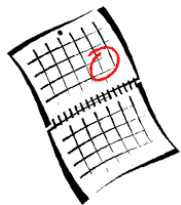


after accruing the necessary supervision.

A number of the current DABA students have applied and/or have already been accepted into various graduate ABA programs including the University of British Columbia, the University of North Texas and the University of Dublin, Ireland.

Students in the CCS program can transfer all 60-credits and start in the third year of the University of Calgary's four-year degree program. Students can enter Douglas College in the BI program, transfer into the CCS program and graduate with a degree from the University of Calgary with a specialty in ABA.

The primary faculty for these programs are Nicholas Watkins, M.Div., BCBA and Bruce Hamm, MA, BCBA.



### Upcoming Events

#### **September 30 – October 3, 2009**

Florida Association for Behavior Analysis 29th Annual Conference  
Daytona Beach, Florida

#### **October 24, 2009**

Manitoba Association for Behavior Analysis (MABA) 4th Annual Conference  
Winnipeg, Manitoba

#### **November 19 – 21, 2009**

Ontario Association for Behavior Analysis (ONTABA) Conference  
Toronto, Ontario

#### **February 18 – 20, 2010**

California Association for Behavior Analysis (CalABA) Conference  
Irvine, California

#### **February 25 – 26, 2010**

Behavior Analysis Association of Michigan (BAAM) Convention  
Eastern Michigan University

#### **January 22 – 24, 2010**

ABAI 4th Annual Autism Conference  
Chicago, Illinois

#### **May 28 – June 1, 2010**

Association for Behavior Analysis International (ABAI) 36th Annual Convention  
San Antonio, Texas

## Committees at Work

### Conference Committee



The Conference committee is currently co-chaired by Theresa Tournemille and Dr. Sara White. We have a very successful first year hosting the inaugural conference with ap-

proximately 20 presenters and over 200 attendees. Dr. Ilene Schwartz gave an interesting and thought provoking presentation on inclusion and applied behavior analysis. We are currently in the planning stages for our second year and the call for papers will likely go out late this year, and the conference will again be in the late winter or early spring. We are always looking for more help with planning and execution as well as suggestions on what you would like to see us provide. If you are interested, please contact the committee at [conference@bc-aba.org](mailto:conference@bc-aba.org).

### Supervision Committee

In the seminal year for the BCBA/BCABA committee, we are currently developing a supervision handbook to help ensure a common baseline for supervisee's pursuing their Board Certification as Behaviour Analysts. Because the supervision process can be quite different across experiences, it is our goal to develop a tool that will help facilitate a more consistent supervision experience across the relevant domains covered on the BACB exams. By converting the task items into observable and measurable terms with clearly identified criteria, we hope individuals seeking Board Certification learn how to apply the theoretical concepts learned at the university level directly into their field experiences. Through this process we hope supervisees are able to self-manage their accumulated hours effectively so they are more prepared when working in the field. The committee's long-term goal is to help individuals acquire a stronger applied behaviour analytic repertoire so that BCBA/BCABA's will serve the community more effectively. If you are interested to join the committee or learn more information, please contact committee Chair William Kent.

### Membership Committee

The Membership Committee is up and running! Currently, we are in the process of organizing administrative duties and recruiting new members. We are also pleased to announce Miriam Elfert as our Membership Coordinator!

The Membership Committee is seeking volunteers to help recruit new members. If you are interested in joining the membership committee, please contact committee Chairs Marecel Cleto or Jan Palmer at:

[membership@bc-aba.org](mailto:membership@bc-aba.org)

### Publications Committee

The BC-ABA Publications Committee is currently co-chaired by Anna Matchneva and Bruce Hamm. This committee worked to develop this first BC-ABA newsletter. We are delighted to be able to inform BC-ABA members about our association's numerous accomplishments over the past year or so. Also, we are pleased to bring news about important research studies being conducted by BC-ABA members to everyone's attention. So, a big thanks to everyone who contributed to this newsletter!



## BC-ABA Annual Conference

### CALL FOR PAPERS!

We invite submissions for presentations, workshops, and panel discussions about your important behavior analytic work – presentation topics may be related to behavioural research, theory, or practice (in various settings).

Presentations should be approximately 30 – 50 minutes and should include oral as well as audio-visual components (e.g., powerpoint summaries, videos).

For further submission information, or questions about potential submissions, please contact the Conference Committee at [conference@bc-aba.org](mailto:conference@bc-aba.org)

*Dear Reader,*

We hope you have enjoyed the first issue of the BC-ABA Newsletter. We welcome your feedback and input for the upcoming issues. The newsletter will be published two times a year in June and January. At this time we invite you to contribute to our January newsletter issue. You can submit your contributions in the following areas:

- **Research:** summary of recent behaviour analytic research you have conducted or currently involved in
- **Professional Development:** information on upcoming conferences and workshops, summary of behaviour analysis conferences attended, opportunities for continuing education
- **Book and article review:** share a summary of particularly interesting books or research articles
- **Applied behaviour analysis in everyday practice:** case reviews and examples
- **Behavior Analysis in British Columbia:** information about local resources, programs, and service providers.
- **Resources:** share any valuable resource that you've come across

*With your support, our second newsletter will contain even more news about the varied and important individual and collective achievements of our thriving behaviour analytic community. Please direct your questions, feedback or submission ideas to [publications@bc-aba.org](mailto:publications@bc-aba.org).*

*We look forward to hearing from you,*

*Anna Matchneva, M.Ed, BCBA and Bruce Hamm, MA, BCBA  
Publications Committee Chairs*