Busy Analytical Bee

NEWSLETTER March

Welcome to the March edition. In this edition we are looking at Reading Interventions. There is also a look at the Premack Principle, a NET using Kinetic sand and the product section includes role-play ideas. There's events, study tips and more! Have a great month!

Kirsty Angel M.Sc. BCBA (Author)

TEACHING READING SKILLS

In the UK, children typically begin learning to read from the age of 4 or 5, as they enter their first year of school. The National Curriculum supports the teaching of phonics and reading in Key Stage 1 (5-7 years old). A popular teaching method is Jolly Phonics, which has songs and actions for each letter to help children learn the phonetical sound the letter makes (for example "Ants on my arms, /a/ /a/"). This is very popular in schools across the UK, who begin introducing children to phonics and then teach them to blend the sounds to enable them to read words. Unfortunately though, statistics from 2012 show that 1 in 5 children, in England, cannot read well by the age of 11 years (The Reading Agency). This means many children find reading difficult, which may make reading books an unenjoyable experience, and can impact their future independence as adults. Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) focuses on principles of reinforcement and motivation. ABA also uses a variety of methods to reduce the difficulty of tasks and support learning. Researchers (Hughes et al 2007, Layng et al 2003, Layng et al 2004, Richardson et al 2017) have investigated a variety of approaches that incorporate these principles to the acquisition of reading in young children.

Richardson et al (2017) investigated and compared a variety of teaching methods for reading. Comparing vocal prompts and picture prompts for supporting reading and also word to picture matching. They also assessed responding during teaching and acquisition (final probe for each session). They found that use of pictures accompanying words hindered acquisition of reading

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skills. They suggest it may be because the pictures interfere and overshadow the words. Richardson et al (2017) found that acquisition was better in a picture fading condition (the pictures transparency increases). The researchers did also find that embedding picture to word matching trials accelerated acquisition of reading targets. This means pictures can facilitate reading acquisition, but if they are presented simultaneously or not faded then this can be problematic. Another interesting result from this research is that responding from the learners was lower in the vocal prompt teaching trials (learners required higher level of prompting), but acquisition was similar to other conditions, picture fading and picture-word matching.

Headsprout Reading Basics™ is an evidence-based computer programme that teaches reading skills. It incorporates the principles of ABA. The programme consists of a variety of exciting and engaging stages of learning using cartoon characters who teach the important skills involved in phonetical identification and reading. The programme is available online, for more information visit the website. Layng et al (2003, 2004) have presented learners data who have completed the Headsprout programme. They found that learners make steady increases in the letter/sound reading ability and that children improved on Diagnostic Reading Assessment (DRA) scores. This supports Headsprout as an effective tool for children to learn basic reading skills.

Precision Teaching (PT) is an area of ABA that has four

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main principles, one of which is using a Standard Celeration Chart (SCC). Hughes et al (2007) compared a group of children who received PT for reading fluency to a control group. They found that the children who received PT made significant gains in reading frequency and fluency. The PT condition involved the use of SAFMEDS (**S**ay **A**ll **F**ast for a **M**inute **E**ach **D**ay **S**huffled) and word sheets, which contained words which the children practised. PT is effective in teaching a variety of skills and reducing challenging behaviours, and this research supports that this is an effective approach to teaching reading.

This is promising that ABA is able to provide support for reading in so many ways. Parents, teachers and ABA practitioners can adopt one or more of these approaches to their child's reading programme. All programmes should be individualised, so consider your child's needs and prerequisite skills when developing a reading programme. If you want to support your child with reading or want to learn more about reading interventions, you can speak to a Behavioural Consultant for more support. Alternatively, visit the Headsprout website, to find out more about the product and have a free trial.

Headsprout Reading Basics, https://www.headsprout.com/

Hughes, J. C., Beverley, M., & Whitehead, J., (2007) Using Precision Teaching to increase the fluency of word reading with problem readers, European Journal of Behavior Analysis, 8, 221-238.

Jolly Learning, Teaching Literacy With Jolly Phonics, Retrived from: http://jollylearning.co.uk/overview-about-jolly-phonics/

Layng, T. V., Twyman, J. S., & Strikeleather, G. (2003). Headsprout Early Reading™: Reliably Teaching Children to read, *Behavioral Technology Today,* **3**, 7-20.

Layng, T. V. J., Twyman, J. S., & Stikeleather, G. (2004). Selected for success: How Headsprout Reading Basics™ teaches beginning reading. In D. J. Moran & R. W. Malott (Eds.), Evidence-based educational methods (pp. 171–197). San Diego: Elsevier Academic Press.

Government Digital Service, National Curriclum: Phonic, Retrived from: https://www.gov.uk/education/phonics

Richardson, A. R., Lerman, D. C., Nissen, M. A., Luck, K. M., Neal, A. E., Bao, S., & Tsami, L. (2017) Can pictures promote the acquisition of sight-word reading? An evaluation of two potential instructional strategies, *Journal of Applied Behaviour Analysis*, **50**, 67-86.

The Reading Agency, Reading facts, Retrived from: https://readingagency.org.uk/about/impact/002-reading-facts-1

EVENTS

Beyond Autism are holding a workshop (13th & 20th March) for ABA practitioners, titled 'Developing Effective Teaching Skills for ABA tutors', costing £200 and there is 'Introduction to ABA' workshop, across 4 days in June for £250. Please book through the website.

You can study in the comfort of you home with Florida Institute of Technology (FIT). They have a wide range of courses (costs vary) to help you develop you understanding of the principles of Behaviour Analysis. Continuing Education (CE) Units available on many courses.

Child Autism UK have several workshops available for the Initial Tutor Training course (2 day workshop), Behaviour Management Strategies course (1 day), Lead Tutor Training (1 day), School Shadowing course and Social Skills and Playdates course (1 day) in Manchester and Bracknell. Visit the website for more info.

TERMINOLOGY

The Premack Principle is a behavioural tool that can be used to increase the likelihood of someone engaging in a low probability response or behaviour. A low probability response or behaviour is a behaviour in their repertoire but is not consistent in frequency. The Premack Principles outlines that to increase the frequency of these behaviours, they should be followed by a high probability response or behaviour (a response or behaviour that is engaged in at a high frequency). The Premack Principle is often referred to as *Grandma's rule*. This rule is typically "if you eat your peas, you can have ice cream", where eating peas is a low probability behaviour and eating ice cream is a high probability behaviour. This means eating peas will increase in frequency if followed by eating ice cream. Some other examples are, if I go to the gym I can get a massage or if I study for an hour I can watch a movie. These contingencies encourage low probability behaviours and the high probability behaviours act as reinforcers.

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT TEACHING (NET) IDEA

This month's activity is for Kinetic Sand. This is a fun sensory activity, as the sand can be modelled and moves. You can buy some from Argos or Amazon, and comes in a variety of colours, with a variety of accessories. During these activities you can contrive motivation for requests for the sand and different accessories, for instance, spades, rollers, knifes/cutters (mand 1M-5M). Also you can contrive mands that incorporate adjectives, colours, big or small, etc. (mand 9d, 10c). You could also place the sand in a pot or container and pause before lifting this and say "ready, steady…" and when your learner says "go" (mand 7b), list the pot and watch the sand fall. Also there may be motivation to request for actions, squash, roll, cut, scoop, or help (mand 7b, 7f, 7M). You can label or identify colours "what colour is this?" or "show me the red sand", and you could also cut the sand into a variety of shapes and label or identify the shapes, "What shape did we make?", or "find the square cutter". (tact, 10d, 10e, LR* 10b, 10c). This also incorporates many play targets (IP† 3c, 6c, 7c).

Preceding skills reference to the VB-MAPP Assessment tool:
Sundberg, M. L. (2008) Verbal Behavior Milestones Assessment and Placement Program: The VB-MAPP. Concord, CA: AVB Press.
*LR: Listener Responding †IP: Independent Play

From: https://flic.kr/p/WRBHZW

STUDY TIPS

Prepare to Pass from Global Autism Project (GAP) may be the perfect tool for you during your studying. There are four free videos (once you sign up) that you may find useful about fluency and applying your knowledge. For studying material and support, there are three course available. These courses include a 2-Day exam review ($497, approximately £355*), the 2-Day review plus a study guide ($597, approximately £426*) and Scholar Sessions (6 week course, $997, approximately £712*).

**Costs converted using google.co.uk on the 14/2/2018*

PRODUCTS

This wish list contains lots of wonderful toys and resources that will help you become any character for some fantastic role-play activities. Be a doctor, or a vet, or a builder. Or work in a shop or a hairdressers. This activities can incorporate a variety of learning opportunities, help practise important life skills or support desensitisation of different situations (e.g., doctor visits).

From: https://flic.kr/p/nukmac

PEOPLE WHO INSPIRE US

Patrick McGreevy, Ph.D, BCBA-D is known for his development of the Essential For Living curriculum, which focuses on functional life skills. Pat McGreevy started his career by studying his Bachelor and Masters degree at the University of Iowa. He moved to Kansas University to obtain his PhD degree in Education. Here he was a student of Ogden Lindsley (father of Precision Teaching). McGreevy worked as a Special Education Teacher for 8 years and now consults and trains schools and residential staff to teach functional life skills. He also directs a clinic in Orlando and is an assistant professor at Florida Institute of Technology. He was one of the first people to become Board Certified in 2000. McGreevy has authored several books and journal articles and was the founder of the 'Journal of Precision Teaching and Standard Celeration Charting'. To learn more about Pat McGreevy, visit his website.

Next month we're looking at *Prader-Willi Syndrome*, so be sure to subscribe so you receive the next exciting edition.

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