Busy Analytical Bee

NEWSLETTER February

Welcome to the February edition. In this edition we discuss the Practical Functional Assessment. The NET idea discusses using 'Simon says' as a game to encourage social skills. Also there are events, products and terminology for you to check out. The study tip has links for many great BehaviorBabe resources, and I celebrate the career of the amazing Betty Hart.

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PRACTICAL FUNCTIONAL ASSESSMENT

Developing functionally appropriate interventions is the gold standard of Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA). Ensuring that the intervention matches the function when teaching new or replacement behaviours, have been shown to be the most successful. Behaviour Analysts (BA) can use a variety of Functional Assessments to source information that can help them understand functions of challenging behaviours better. This includes interviews, observations, Antecedent, Behaviour and Consequence (ABC) data and Functional Analysis. A Functional Analysis requires the BA to adapt the environment to manipulate the various functions and analyse which condition evokes the highest frequency of behaviours. This was developed by Brain Iwata and his team (Iwata, 1982). This approach is widely adopted in much of the ABA research and will often precede the intervention. The Functional Analysis devised by Iwata is empirically supported by over 150 studies. Many of these were reviewed by Beavers et al (2013) who found that it was a successful approach to a variety of topographies and populations. To learn more about this, you can review the October 2014 Edition of Busy Analytical Bee. Despite the popularity of the functional Analysis, it is not often adopted by Behaviour Analysis working in the field, within schools, homes and institutions. This is due to the difficult to control specific variables to isolate conditions to represent only one function, time involved and potential harm to persons. Potential harm is possible due to the fact that challenging behaviours are purposefully evoked.

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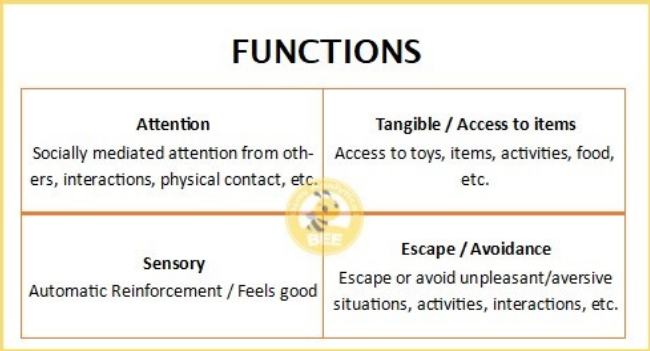
The four functions of behaviour are categorised as either maintained by attention, tangible/access to items, sensory or escape/avoidant. Behaviours can have multiple functions (i.e., escape demands and get attention from peers).



Picture produced by Kirsty Angel BCBA for Busy Analytical Bee

Greg Hanley has become well known for his work in Functional Assessments and the development of the Interview–Informed Synthesized contingency Analysis (IISCA) which is now known as the *Practical Functional Assessment* (PFA). Slaton & Hanley (2019) state that "Hanley et al (2014), was the first publication to apply the descriptor *synthesized* to a procedure in which multiple reinforcers were combined in a single test condition". The main feature of the PFA, when com-

pare to the one developed by Iwata (1982), is that instead of individual conditions to manipulate each function (escape, vs tangible, vs attention, vs control), the PFA has one condition that manipulates multiple functions (escape from demands and access to attention and tangibles) hense the term "*synthesized*".

This approach has been demonstrated in individual studies. Jessel et al (2018) conducted a 20-30 minute interview with caregivers (separately) for each of the three participants. These interviews informed a 5-minute PFA, where they manipulated the reinforcers to assess the possible function of the challenging behaviours. They then implemented a Function Communication Training (FCT) Intervention, from the information collected from the interview and 5 minute PFA. They observed reductions in challenging behaviours for all three participants and an increase in compliance. This supports the efficacy of this approach in developing meaningful interventions.

In addition, literature reviews have supported the efficacy of the PFA further. Coffey et al (2019) reviewed a variety of studies using the PFA. They found that in their studies meaningful gains were made (90% reduction is challenging behaviours observed in all studies reviewed). They also found that the PFA to take less time (approximately 70 minutes), compared to the Functional Analysis requiring a minimum of 2 hours to conduct.

The PFA has been demonstrated to be an effective approach to the analysis of behavioural functions, which in turn help support development of meaningful and successful Behavioural Interventions. If you would like to learn more, visit the Practical Functional Assessment website or Listen to the Behavioral Observation Episodes with Greg Hanley: episode 1, episode 7, episode 20, episode 94. Also, check out the blog I wrote when I heard Greg Hanley speak in May 2019.

Beavers, G. A., Iwata, B. A. & Lerman, D. C. (2013). Thirty years of research on the Functional Analysis of problem behaviour. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis*, **46**, 1-21.

Coffey, A. L., Shawler, L. A., Jessel, J., Nye, M. L., Bain, T. A., & Dorsey, M. F. (2019). Interview-informed synthesized contingency analysis (IISCA): Novel interpretations and future directions, *Behaviour Analysis in Practice*, 1-9. https://doi.org/10.1007/s40617-019-00348-3

Hanley, G. P., Iwata, B. A., & McCord, B. E. (2003). Functional Analysis of problem behavior,: A review, *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis*, **36**, 147-185.

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Iwata, B. A, Dorsey, M. F., Slifer, K. J., Bauman, K. E., & Richman, G. S. (1982). Toward a Functional Analysis of Self Injury. Analysis and Intervention in Developmental Disabilities, 2, 3-20

Jessel, J., Hanely, G. P., Ghaemmaghami, M., Metras, R. (2018). An evaluation of the single session interview-informed synthesized contingency analysis, *Behavioral Interventions*, 1-17.

Jessel, J., Metras, R., Hanley, G. P., Jessel, C., Ingvarsson, E. T. (2019). Evaluating the boundaries of analytic efficiency and control: A consecutive controlled case series of 26 functional analyses, *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis*, **9999**, 1-19,

Slaton, J. D., & Hanley, G. P. (2018). Nature and scope of synthesis in functional analysis and treatment of problem behavior, *Journal of Applied Behaviour Analysis,* **51**, 943-973.

STUDY TIPS

BehaviorBabe has a great website, podcast and YouTube channel. She offers a lot of great resources on her website that are great for anyone developing their understand of ABA and useful for studying for the exam. You can find terminology, acronyms and SAFMEDS. She also shares videos and materials on her Facebook page. I love BehaviorBabe's podcast as its really informative, but the episodes are relatively short, which is manageable if you only have a little time. You can also check out the Facebook page and Twitter page.

EVENTS

The UK-SBA has an upcoming Organisation Behavioural Management (OBM) workshop on the 21st of February , 9am-5pm. To book a place visit their website.

Child Autism UK offer a variety of events for extending your skills and knowledge. These include an introduction ABA Tutor Training, Advanced ABA Tutor Training, Lead Tutor Training and more! Learn more on their courses page.

Wanting to learn more about Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT)? Contextual Counselling are holding two events next year. A webinar with Richard Bennett on the 27th February, and a workshop in London with Russ Harris on 23rd and 24th March. Learn more.

Association of Behavior Analysis International (ABAI) will be hosting a conference in Dublin, Ireland in September 2021. To learn more, visit the event page.

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT TEACHING (NET) IDEA

This months activity is to play Simon says. This game involves one person "Simon" giving instructions with or without the cue "Simon says". When they say "Simon says" the other players must do the action, for example "Simon says touch your toes", the other players then touch their toes. If they give an instruction without saying "Simon says" then the other players shouldn't copy, and if they do they could be out of the game, for example "spin around" the players should continue to do the previous action, or stand still. This works best with children who have well established motor imitation and receptive repertoires and you want to teach them to distinguish the stimulus of "Simon says", or if working with peers, to copy peers actions. If you are playing with just you and your learner, this could be trickier but can be important for your learner to cue into the stimulus of "Simon says" to know that they should complete the action. Hopefully when playing with peers they will successfully follow the instructions (social 9M). If you learner struggles with discriminating the "Simon says" stimulus, but your playing with peers, they can cue into the peers action and imitate them. Imitating peers spontaneously (Social: 5M) is an important skill for children to develop too. Its important that when teaching your learning to imitate peers, you prompt them physically or verbally "look what your friends are doing!", and avoid transferring the imitation on to yourself; don't reinstate the instruction or give a model of the action required. This is a great game for peer play and interactions, even if you require a promised reinforcer or preferred activity initially to follow this game (Social 4M, 8M). You can even let your learner have a turn to be Simon (Social: 7M).

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.

From: https://flic.kr/p/2A18Dm

TERMINOLOGY

Autoclitic: This is a part of a language that changes the function of what is spoken, for instance "I think", "I guess" or "I feel" can change the function of a statement. An example would be "*I think* your Mum is here". An another example, the 'not' in this sentence changes the function—"it is *not* raining".

PEOPLE WHO INSPIRE US

This month we are celebrating the career of Betty Hart. Born in July 1927, she was American education research who had a significant impact on the field. She first graduated from University of California and then moved to Washington University. Hart received her PhD from Kansas University. She worked alongside Todd Risley and Montrose Wolf. Together they introduced how adult attention and time-out can be used effectively. In addition, how to shape speech and language procedures that are widely used in special education. In addition she wrote 'Meaningful differences in the everyday experience of young American children' with Todd Risley. In this book they coined the term "30-million-word-gap" which emphasises differences between low-income and higher –income families, in which children in low-income hear far fewer words each day which is associated with vocabulary acquisition and academic achievements in later life. Hart passed away in 2012 due to lung cancer.

PRODUCTS

This months wish list includes a variety of books around Direct Instruction. If you want to learn more about this approach you can read the August 2015 edition.

Next month we're looking at *Visiting the Dentist* so be sure to subscribe so you receive the next exciting edition.

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