

# 6th Annual ONTABA Conference

The 6th Annual ONTABA Conference and Annual General Meeting were held on November 12 and 13, 1998 at Metro Hall in Toronto. The theme of the conference was "Behaviour Consultation in the New Millenium"

ONTABA  
 the ANALYST



**Dr. Robert Horner**

The conference was the most successful to date, with approximately 90 people in attendance. The Annual General Meeting kicked off the first day, which was followed by a presentation on standards of practice for behaviour analysts in Ontario and an update regarding certification. Afterward, a number of speakers provided their perspective on a variety of topics of interest to behaviour analysts, including parent training, consultation to the aged, and future directions for the field. A wine and cheese poster session followed their presentations.



**Dr. Charles Cunningham**

The keynote addresses were delivered by two internationally renowned educators and researchers, Robert Horner from the University of Oregon and Charles Cunningham from McMaster University and the Hamilton Health Sciences Corporation.

Dr. Horner's first presentation, which took place on the opening evening of the conference, "Positive behaviour support and supported living: Blending technology and values".

His second presentation on the following morning was on school-wide positive behaviour support. He discussed some of the challenges of working within a school system and the need to advance beyond traditional approaches that are geared toward changing the behaviour of a specific individual to intervene at a broader level that includes a classroom or entire school. Dr. Horner presented data and case examples to illustrate some of the technology that has been developed and employed within school settings and the outcomes that have been achieved using his collaborative approach.

Another example of innovative research was presented by Dr. Cunningham, who provided data from his large-scale studies which indicates that primary division student mediated conflict resolution programs are effective in reducing the level of violence that occurs on school playgrounds.

Many thanks to the various presenters, poster submissions, the conference committee for all their hard work, and especially to the members of ONTABA who attended.

This year's conference was a resounding success!

## Ontaba

The Ontario Association for Behaviour Analysis

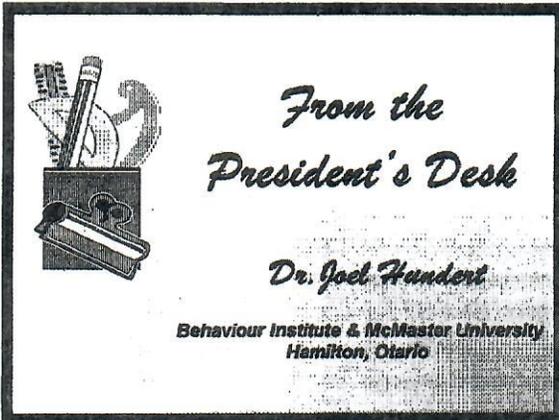
An Affiliate Chapter of The Association for Behavior Analysis International

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One of the tenets of applied behaviour analysis is its emphasis on empirical evaluation on the effectiveness of interventions. This is probably one of the key features that separates ABA from other orientations in psychology. Interventions must be field-tested and demonstrated to work before they are widely accepted. Yet, even the most effective intervention will not have impact unless it is implemented. A colleague of mine once stated that, "Implementation is the Bermuda triangle of good ideas". McConnell, McEvoy and Odom (1992) proposed the following formula to describe the relation between impact of an intervention, effectiveness of an intervention and likely of implementation:

$$\text{Impact} = \text{Effectiveness} \times \text{Likelihood of Implementation}$$

Unfortunately, there is been almost no research to advance our understanding of factors that affect the likelihood of an intervention being implemented to guide us in maximizing the impact of our interventions. Logically, there are at least three types of implementation errors that can occur when a behaviour analyst promotes a program for "mediators" to implement. First, the mediator regardless may not implement the program at all. Second, the mediator implements the program but not with the frequency or in the manner that adheres to the design of the program. Third, the mediator implements the program as designed but discontinues it prematurely. Each of these implementation errors affect the impact of the intervention on the client.

As a field, it is critical that we have a better understanding of factors affecting the likeli-

hood of program implementation. For instance, the literature on teacher consultation suggests that teacher program adoption is influenced by whether the program can be implemented with the time and resources available to the teacher. Similarly, the perceived consistency of the program with teachers' principles, values and beliefs has been found to influence program uptake. The integrity of program delivery seems to be affected by the amount and type of training and ongoing consultation staff receive. Almost all the behaviour programs I develop contain a "fidelity checklist" which is used to provide feedback to implementers on their adherence to program components.

Program continuation in organizations is a challenge given staff mobility and other "system" issues. In a large five year longitudinal study in which I was involved, we found that approximately 25% of teachers and 15% of principals moved each year. Similar levels of staff turnover exists in residential settings for adults with developmental disabilities. It is extremely difficult to ensure the longevity of a program in the face of such instability. The active and visible support of administration, the appointment of "champions" to promote the implementation of the program seem to be important.

To tackle the issue of program implementation more effectively, we need to learn more about how organizations systems adopt innovations and maintain changes over time. We also need to learn consultation methods that are collaborative in nature. People are more likely to be committed to a program if they have had input into its design. Factors that influence mediator implementation should be designed into programs when they are still under development, than waiting for the final product to think about "marketing".

Joel Hundert

**Reference:**

McConnell, S.R., McEvoy, M.A., & Odom, S.L. (1992). Implementation of social competence interventions in early childhood special education classes. In S.L. Odom, S.R. McConnell, and M.A. McEvoy (Eds.) *Social Competence of Young Children With Disabilities*, Baltimore: Brookes

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*...from the cocktail napkin*

Some of our best work has been recorded on the back of those drink recipe placemats in raunchy road-houses. While reviewing the recipes, we decided the newsletter had picture resolution of about the same quality...and we didn't even have colour. One thing leads to another and the topic of what improvements should be made in this darn Newsletter came to light (the PG edited version will appear here).

We know, we know... we have a serious job ahead of us, but if we can't have fun along the way... then all we'd be doing is "Taking away the moments that make up a dull day", P. Floyd (1972). A couple of cocktails have been known to assist in decision making and goal setting... no matter how ridiculous! That's why editing does not take place in the brainstorming session. With drink recipes in hand, we learned that even famous people have to work somewhere!

**Recipe for a better newsletter:** Start with improved resolution, create a virtual cocktail napkin (website contributions), increase written contributions, add humorous tidbits, a dash of member profiles, a sprinkle of announcements, stir up the interests of membership, add an international flavour by exchanging ingredients with one ABA International Affiliate Newsletter with one of ours, generate revenue to produce the *ONTABA Analyst*, list educational events and opportunities for practicums. Mix together and bake until done.

**Special Toppings:** Make sure that members providing article submissions that are published get reinforced in some tangible way.

**NOTE:** Makes 3 servings a year, and 1 special edition.

We hope this tastes good to you, but if you feel a few more ingredients would make it even better, let us know!

Caroll Drummond, Editor and Production Manager & Gerald Bernicky, Associate Editor and Submissions  
The *ONTABA Analyst*

**Calling for *ONTABA Analyst Submissions***

**Your newsletter is only as good as your contributions.** The *ONTABA Analyst* is a forum for us to get and keep connected in many ways. All members are encouraged to submit articles on topics related to behaviour analysis; theoretical, practical or topical issues, perspectives from different regions, jobs or schools, research accounts, news, announcements, your biography, reviews, student practicums, etc. Job ads in the *ONTABA Analyst* are placed for a fee payable to *ONTABA* (\$50.00 1/4 pg, \$100.00 1/2 pg., \$200.00 full pg.).

**Article submissions:** We reserve the right to edit without changing the intent of an article, request further editing by the author, publish articles relative to the content of the current Newsletter, publish them at a later date with due respect to the timeliness of a given article, or refuse an article. You will be informed of acceptance, rewrite, or refusal of an article. Announcements will be published at the discretion of the editor. *ONTABA* is not responsible for the views and opinions of *ONTABA Analyst* contributors.

**Submissions for the next *ONTABA Analyst* must arrive to Gerald Bernicky by April 31, 1999.**

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## News from the North

Jay Nixon, Behaviour Therapist  
Community Living Algoma

December 9, 1998

Greetings, fellow Ontabians, from the frozen tundra of the District of Algoma. With the lights up all over town, the bustling of the frenzied throng in the local malls, and the anticipatory gleam in children's eyes, it's easy to conjure up an image of the winter wonderland that is the hallmark of Northern Ontario. A perfect seasonal image ... except for the occasional interruption of a growling motorcycle or the distant droning of a lawn mower. Great White North indeed! Despite this year's unusual climatic gift (or at least hopefully unusual, and not simply global warming in its infancy) some things in the north remain constant.

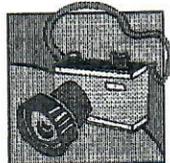
One such constant is the challenge of delivering services to a population spread out across a large geographical area. In particular, Community Living Algoma provides direct service to over 600 people living in the 55,000 square kilometer district of Algoma. While a majority of the people served live in or close to the city of Sault Ste. Marie (population 82,000) a number of those served live in relatively remote locations. One particular challenge has been to provide ongoing service and treatment to those within the developmentally disabled population who also have a psychiatric illness.

Currently accepted epidemiological studies have established the lifetime prevalence of psychiatric illness within the developmentally disabled population at between 30-40 percent. Historically, in the District of Algoma, locating and accessing individuals with experience in the field of developmental disabilities who are also qualified in psychiatry has been enormously difficult. Until recently this challenge has been met (often at great expense and inconvenience) by accessing service in other communities such as Sudbury and Toronto.

But the times they are a changin' ... In recent years Community Living Algoma has been working with Dr. B. King, consulting psychiatrist to North Bay Psychiatric Hospital's Developmental Disabilities Programme toward the provision of ongoing care and treatment for individuals with a dual diagnosis (i.e., concurrent developmental disabilities and mental health concerns) in their home communities. The results are very encouraging to say the least. Initial referrals, facilitated by Community Living Algoma's

(continued pg.9)

### More Conference Pics:



Above: Brad Littleproud-Treasurer, Joel Hundert-President, and Gerry Bernicky-Past Chair of Membership/Recruitment

Centre: ONTABA conference participants sign up for more information on Dr. Horner's work.

Above Right: Henrietta Penny, 1998 Conference Committee Chair.

Lower Right: Amy McParland, the new Membership/Recruitment Committee Chair

## “ From The Inside ”

### ***Membership Update:***

This article will be included in each edition of "The Analyst" to provide members of *ONTABA* with up-to-date information on membership rates, and the various recruitment activities that the Membership & Recruitment Committee are involved in. As of February 25, 1999, there are a total of 117 paid memberships (83 full members, 20 sustaining members, 12 student members, 1 affiliate member, and 1 member emeritus - Dr. W. Larry Williams, University of Nevada-Reno). Of the 117 members, 43 are new members to *ONTABA* with the remaining 74 being renewals.

Recruitment activities for the 1999 calendar year were started at the Annual Conference in November of 1998, and this was followed by a December mailing to those members unable to attend. A presentation in February of 1999 at a community agency will continue the recruitment effort, as well as, a second mailing for 1999 membership renewals.

### **1998 *ONTABA* Prize winners:**

In 1998, the Membership and Recruitment Committee held two draws for books from the paid membership. The first book was titled "Drugs and Behaviour", and was won by **Korina Clarke**, a BST student living in Kingston, Ontario. The second book given away was titled "Including Exceptional Students: A Practical Guide for Classroom Teachers". This book and four others were donated to *ONTABA* by the publishing company Prentice Hall, Allyn & Bacon. This book was given away in a draw held at the Annual Conference, and was won by **Heather Penny**, a Behaviour Therapist at Tri-County Behavioural Services in Lakefield, Ontario. The committee will be holding the next book draw from the paid 1999 memberships in May of 1999. Good luck to everyone!

### **Change to the 1999 Membership Application Form:**

Members either attending the 1998 Annual *ONTABA* conference, or those receiving their renewal package, will note a change in the membership application form. The major change was to provide members the option of including or excluding their name, position and contact information from the annual directory. With the production of the 1998 *ONTABA* Membership Directory, we see this becoming a resource for interested individuals to obtain information and a means to contact individuals with knowledge, experience, and interest in applied behaviour analysis across Ontario. With this potential sharing of information, we felt that members should have a say in whether they wish their information to be shared. The 1999, and future *ONTABA* Membership Directories, will be printed with only those members who wish to have their information included. If your organization or agency is interested in having a member of the Membership & Recruitment Committee come and provide an informative presentation on the goals, benefits, and areas of focus of *ONTABA*, please contact **Amy McParland** at (416) 243-3600, ext. 2605, or by e-mail: [amcparla@westpark.org](mailto:amcparla@westpark.org). This year is just beginning and efforts are being made to make 1999 the best ever for membership/recruitment.

*Amy McParland, Gerald Bernicky, and Angela Burgess*



### **Upcoming Events:**

**Kingston: March 24- Ontario Association on Developmental Disabilities Research Special Interest Group and March 25,26- O.A.D.D. Conference**

**Chicago: May 26-30 -Association for Behavior Analysis International Convention ( ABA International)**



## Student's Corner

### Rosemary A. Condillac, M.A.

There is a current emphasis on early behavioural intervention for young children with Autism. In many post-secondary institutions there are jobs advertised for students to implement discreet-trial training programs in children's homes and preschool settings. At first there appears to be a windfall, as it is infrequent that jobs are readily available in our chosen field. However, a closer look reveals some concerns worth considering.

There are many individuals claiming to provide early behavioural intervention, however, their motivation, training, and professionalism can vary considerably. At present, in the Province of Ontario, there are limited public funds available for supporting early behavioural intervention. Parents are forced to purchase their intervention at high costs, some are spending between \$30,000 and \$50,000 Canadian dollars per year. While some individuals and organizations are well worth the money spent, others have limited training and expertise. As students who are training in the field, we owe it to the clients we support and to ourselves, to carefully scrutinize any potential employment situation.

Before accepting a position, there are at least four important questions that can be asked to help evaluate the job opportunity:

1. What are the qualifications of the person responsible for overseeing the program? Shook & Favell (1996) suggest that programs should be overseen by someone with post-graduate training in applied behaviour analysis with experience treating young children with Autism. Some excellent behaviour analysts who do not have post-graduate training do their work under the supervision of a registered psychologist.
2. What are the specifics of the treatment offered? Ensure that treatment is based upon a comprehensive assessment and a developmental skills approach. When working with young children, it is critical to have a clear understanding of their developmental level in order to select optimal teaching goals. While goals are specific to individual needs, they typically include skills across the following areas: attending, imitation, receptive and expressive language, social interaction, self-care, and cognitive/academic.
3. How are the treatment effects evaluated? Methods for objective measurement of the child's progress are an essential part of any intervention program. Regularly scheduled reviews of the data ensure that the intervention is always in-line with the child's progress. One way to gain a better understanding of the data that will be collected is to ask to see the evidence of treatment effects that have been experienced by other clients. While treatment effects will vary across individuals this will provide a general idea of the kind of objective data that will need to be collected.
4. Are direct-care staff are provided with hands-on training? Training is an integral part of the intervention and should cover the fundamentals of applied behaviour analysis and specific information pertaining to individualized treatment for the child. The specific needs of the individual should be clearly addressed in the training process. Training should also include methods of measurement and contingency plans for dealing with resistive behaviour.

As a student, involvement in early behavioural intervention programs for children with Autism can provide an excellent opportunity for consolidating the skills & knowledge which we are taught. Seek out experiences which connect you to respected and qualified professionals who implement interventions based upon "state of the art" assessment and treatment techniques.

#### Reference

Shook, G.L., & Favell, J.E. (1996). Identifying qualified professionals in Behaviour Analysis. In C. Maurice, G.Green, and S. Luce (Eds.), Behavioural Intervention for Young Children with Autism: A Guide for Parents and Professionals, pp. 221-229. Austin, TX: Pro-ED Inc.

#### Suggested Readings

Maurice, C., Green, G., Luce, S. (1996) Behavioural Intervention for Young Children with Autism: A Guide for Parents and Professionals. Austin, TX: Pro-ED Inc.

Powers, M.D., (1992). Early Intervention for Children with Autism In. D.E. Berkell (Ed.), Autism: Identification, Education, and Treatment, pp. 225-252. Hillsdale N.J: Lawrence Erlbaum.

# Puzzle Power

Conditioned reinforcers such as money, scholarships, awards, stickers, points, happy faces, etc., have a powerful influence on human behaviour. When conditioned reinforcers are utilized within a token economy system for therapeutic purposes we can assist our clients in learning functional behaviours while at the same time reducing dysfunctional or disruptive behavioural patterns.

I have used token systems over the course my career as a behaviour analyst with a variety of populations of all ages. For a number of years now I have been using one form of token that has been very effective and may be helpful to those of you using such systems. I should mention that I am assuming that those of you who may use this strategy are well versed in the process of developing an effective token economy system.

Picture puzzles depicting a specific reinforcer can be very effective in increasing the behaviour of your clients, particularly children of differing levels of functioning. This process involves identifying specific reinforcers for your clients and then constructing picture puzzles depicting those reinforcers. The technique is very simple and involves little preparation time. For example, if you have a child that will work for computer time, photocopy a picture of a computer monitor, paste it on a piece of bristol board and make it into a puzzle. Allow the child to obtain pieces of the puzzle contingent upon operationally defined behaviours that are incompatible with disruptive behaviours.

A teacher or teacher's assistant may cue the child to get a piece of the puzzle contingent upon variable intervals for being in seat, on task, and for discrete behaviours such as task completion, meeting a performance criterion, raising one's hand, etc..

Obviously, the variety of ways such picture puzzles are used is only limited by your creative repertoires. I have used puzzles depict-

ing audio and video cassettes, pictures of Big Macs, toy cars, numerous activity based reinforcers (e.g., hockey sticks, balls, skates, etc.), as well as real photographs of children participating in preferred activities alone or with friends and relatives.

Using actual pictures made into puzzles are much more effective with children who have autism than more abstract pictures. I have used such strategies in discrete trial training programs for children with autism and have found them quite effective in maintaining performance. On the other hand, normal children with behavioural problems respond to all forms of puzzles. A variation of the puzzle system is to have children who can read earn letters of a word or words that lead to a reinforcer.

I once assisted a teacher in turning a severely disruptive grade six male around by allowing him to borrow a compact disc by Garth Brooks for the week end. He had to build the sentence; " I Earned Garth Brooks CD" (20 letters, 5 earned per day for in school task completion and homework completed).

As you can well imagine, I could go on and on in describing the tremendous flexibility using picture puzzles and word systems within token economy programs. These techniques allow one to develop inventories of puzzles which lead to clients having choices. Puzzles can be used over and over by a client and used by others for the same purpose. They are amenable to scheduling and are therefore excellent for shaping purposes. Bonus puzzles can be used for filling in other puzzles. They can be used for individuals and groups and kids loving making them (particularly with parents and teachers). So, go be creative!

Ken Hbranchuk  
Member-at-Large

## Behaviour Analysis on the World Wide Web

Gerald Bernicky

The present cost and state of computer technology continues to amaze me. From my home PC, with the click of a single mouse button, I can access the World Wide Web. Using free web browser software and either an internet address I have come across, or one that I have obtained using search engine generated lists of addresses, I can go to any location on this planet in search of information on almost any given topic. Once there, I can review the information and make a decision as to how well it answers my question(s). I can read and/or print this information; watch short films clips, or even listen to the recorded conversations of others. All of this is readily available to expand my knowledge base, which can then have a direct impact on my actions in my efforts to understand and help change the behaviours of others.

My goal in writing this column is to describe different sites on the world wide web that are related to our common area of interest, behaviour analysis. I have used the web for about five years and have visited many sites to find those that are most relevant and useful. I guess those are the ones I should describe! In each review I will note how to reach the web-site, what is there, and the pros and cons of such information.

Let's visit the ONTABA web-site located at: <http://www.stlawrencec.on.ca/guests/ontaba/ontaba.html>

What's there:	Pros	Cons
A very brief introductory paragraph about ONTABA.		Some outdated information. No description of what behaviour analysis is for the accidental visitor.
Information on the most recent annual conference (fall 98).	Includes selected conference highlights. Contact information for the conference.	
<u>ONTABA information corner:</u> Standards of practice for behaviour analysis in Ontario: ONTABA Newsletters Online:	A complete copy of the standards available for anyone to read. Some selected articles from past newsletters available to read.	Nothing newer than 1995 and incorrect ONTABA mailing/contact information.
Need to speak to a fellow ONTABA member:	This is an email listing of ONTABA members: an excellent idea and very useful contact tool.	Some incorrect information: - individuals are listed that are not present ONTABA members, - some present ONTABA members are not listed, - some of the email addresses are incorrect.
Information form:	Excellent why to initiate a quick contact with Membership and Recruitment committee for requesting or changing information!	Incorrect ONTABA mailing address.
A behaviour analyst's reading list:	Excellent list of articles covering behaviour analysis.	This list has not been recently expanded (older articles)
ONTABA behavioural links:	Excellent collection of links to journals, searchable directories, personal behaviour analysis homepages, university and academic institution homepages, education and interactive sites, and miscellaneous behaviour analysis sites.	Was not able to check if all sites listed were currently active and correct.



News from the North (continued from pg.4.)

Psychological Services, are monitored on an ongoing basis through a collaborative effort on the part of the individual's primary care physician and the programme in North Bay, and the individual is able to maintain all of the other supports and services that are available as a result of remaining in their home community.

For a behaviour therapist such as myself, it's the stuff that dreams are made of. In many situations the kind of foggy frustration and multidisciplinary 'muddling through' associated with such hard to serve cases are replaced with systematic, objective, purposeful planning and treatment, which are empirically evaluated and monitored. In addition, there has been a rekindled interest among some local practitioners and other resource people who have responded very favourably to our efforts at developing supports for these vulnerable people. Despite progress to date there is much work to be done. When one considers that in all likelihood 30-40 percent of the more than 600 people we serve will need some form of this type of support...as they say, "do the math"!

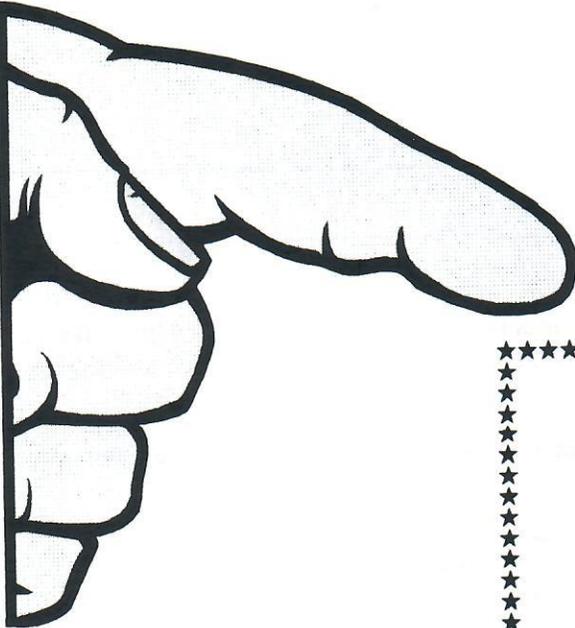
It is my fervent hope that this kind of creative solution to a rather daunting challenge can continue to grow in the sometimes less than hospitable climate of "geographically challenged" Northern Ontario. I am also hopeful that sharing such experiences with other service providers will, in some small way, encourage optimistic tackling of seemingly arduous challenges. I mean ...it's not like we're too busy shoveling snow or anything!!

**Jay Nixon**

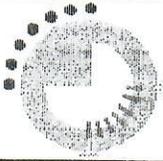
[jayn@onlink.net](mailto:jayn@onlink.net)

**Editors' note:**

Little did Jay know that his dream of a warm winter was momentary. He spent the rest of it trying to fix the snow blower. Glad to hear from you!



**YOUR  
AD  
COULD BE HERE**



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is an affiliate Chapter of the Association for Behavior Analysis International.  
ONTABA currently has members from professions such as  
education, nursing, health care, and psychology.

The objectives of ONTABA are to promote behaviour analysis in the province of Ontario,  
to facilitate interactions between professionals engaged in behavioural activities,  
to monitor and participate in legal and professional issues related to behaviour analysis,  
and to initiate standardized practices and certification of Behaviour Analysts.

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