Contemporary ABA, Social Skills, and Relationships: How ABA is Still Finding It’s Heart

A Bit of History
(mine and a few others)

• Getting Old So Indulge Me
• Eyewitness to History
• The Benefit and Beauty of What Has Come Before

Lovaas
University of Kansas

SOME CURRENT DIMENSIONS OF APPLIED BEHAVIOR ANALYSIS
DONALD M. BABA, MONTROSE WOLF, AND TERRY R. RILEY
THE UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS

The analysis of individual behavior is a problem in scientific demonstration, especially with individuals (Burnham, 1955), that has been thoroughly treated (Journal of Experimental Analysis of Behavior, 1957). This analysis has been pursued in many settings over many years. Despite variable praise, critique, and pursuit, it has resulted in general descriptive statements of mechanisms that can produce effects of the forms desired.

The existence of these mechanisms establishes the possibility of their application to problem behavior. A society willing to consider a technology of its own behavior apparently is likely to support that application, if it is seen, not as analytic behavioral explanation in the process of applying some form of treatment, principles of behavior in the formation and perpetuation of specific behavior, and simultaneously evaluating whether or not any changes noted are indeed attributable to the process of application, and if so, to what parts of the process. In short, analytic behavioral application is a self-evolving, self-enhancing, discovery-oriented research procedure for altering behavior, to be in all cases, and according to the usual tenets of modern scientific testing. The differences are matters of emphasis and of direction. The differences between applied and basic research are not differences between that...
General State of Affairs

- ABA Approach: Can Be Simple, Superficial, Rote, Mechanical

- Other Approaches: Can Be Nebulous with indefinite, “magical” process—but some have appeal because respects social-ness
Other Approaches

• Floor Time
• RDI
• Social Stories
• Social Thinking/Cognition Approaches
• Experiences and Exposure

What’s The Research?

• Leaf, J. B. et al. (In Press). What is the proof? A methodological review of studies that have utilized social stories. *Education and Training in Autism and Developmental Disabilities*.

HOW?

• Capture of Meaningfulness, Naturalness, Essence, Intent, and Spirit without blind hope of magic approaches
• Approached the Way Individuals with Autism need to Learn
• Matter of how taught, what taught, and social purpose
HOW?

- NO COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULA
  - ELUSIVENESS
  - BREADTH OF NEEDS
  - INDIVIDUALIZED NATURE

- SOCIAL SKILLS TAXONOMY
  - WAY TO ORGANIZE AND CONCEPTUALIZE EFFORT
  - GUIDES ASSESSMENT AND INTERVENTION
  - SOCIAL VALIDITY
  - RESEARCH SUPPORT

HOW?

SOCIAL SKILLS TAXONOMY

- SOCIAL AWARENESS
- SOCIAL COMMUNICATION
- SOCIAL INTERACTION
- SOCIAL LEARNING
- SOCIAL RELATEDNESS

- Not mutually exclusive

- Early, Intermediate, & Advanced in Each

What’s The Research


SOCIAL AWARENESS

- Identifying Significant Others
- Relationship Discrimination
- Gestures
- Impact of Behavior on Others
- Inferences
- Jokes
- Optimal Times
- Perspective Taking (Theory of Mind)
- Character Traits
- Interpersonal Dynamics

SOCIAL COMMUNICATION

- Basic, Intermediate, Advanced Conv (W in P)
- Inflection Pattern
- Conversational Tracking
- Giving Compliments/Feedback
- Acknowledging points/message
- Interrupting
- Expressing Feelings
- Conversational Repair
- Apologizing
- Maintaining or Changing Conv Flow
- Implying/Subtleness/Hints
- Joke Provision
- Arguing/Discussing/Persuasion

TEACHING INTERACTIONS

- Identification and Labeling
- Rationale
- Description/Demonstration
- Practice
- Feedback
- Consequence *
**What’s the Research?**

- Achievement Place and The Teaching Family Model (Phillips, Phillips, Fixsen, & Wolf, 1972)
- Maloney et al., 1976
- Solnick, Braukmann, Bedlington, Kirigin, & Wolf, 1981
- Leaf et al., (Group) 2010
- Dotson et al, (Adolescents) 2010
- Oppenheimer-Leaf et al, (Play and Communication) 2011
- Oppenheimer-Leaf et al, (Game Play) 2012
- Leaf et al, 2012
- Kuyumjian et al, (Generalization) 2013
- Kassarjian et al, 2014

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**SOCIAL INTERACTION**

- Comfortable Proximity
- Responding to Other’s Initiations
- Attention Seeking
- Initiating/Maintaining Interactions
- Being a Good Sport
- Interactional Reciprocity
- Responding to Cues
- Helping
- Assertion
- Sharing
- Negotiation
- Decision Making/Problem Solving/Coping

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**SOCIAL LEARNING**

- Imitation
- Observational Learning
- Vicarious Learning
- Incidental Learning
- Flow of Group Social Play
- Information Seeking
- Group Effects
- Peer Culture Influence
- Screening Negative Influences
SOCIAL RELATEDNESS

- Desire for Proximity/Social Reinforcement Value
- Joint Attention
- Engagement
- Playing To and Off of Others
- Desire for Approval/Acceptance
- Attachments
- Friendships
- Interpersonal Reciprocity/Being a Good Friend
- Empathy/Compassion/Carin g/Altruism

ESSENCE, INTENT, AND AUTHENTICITY

- How Do You Capture These?
- The Failure of Prompts
- The Lesson of Communication Temptations
- Remembering Natural Reasons

ESSENCE, INTENT, AND AUTHENTICITY

- How Do You Capture These?
- The Failure of Prompts
- The Lesson of Communication Temptations
- Remembering Natural Reasons/Social Validity
- An Empathy Example
ESSENCE, INTENT, AND AUTHENTICITY

• How Do You Capture These?
• The Failure of Prompts
• The Lesson of Communication Temptations
• Remembering Natural Reasons/Social Validity
• An Empathy Example
• What About Relationships?

Groups As A Means

• For Social Skills
• For Relationship Skills
• For Friendships

SOCIAL SKILLS GROUPS AND CLASSES

• What They Typically Offer:
  – Opening Routine
  – Social Lessons
  – Social Exercise
  – Social Activity
SOCIAL SKILLS GROUPS AND CLASSES

• What They Should Offer:
  – Individual Assessment
  – Individual Instructional Content (and Methods?)
  – Trained Staff & Systematic Programming
  – Active, Experiential Learning
  – Clarity of Objectives
    • Know the Various Purposes and Design Accordingly
  – Diminishing Role of the Adult
    • Balance of Adult Led and Adult Orchestrated Activities
  – Spread the Work, Facilitate Transfer

What Is The Research?

A PRELIMINARY Evaluation of a Behaviorally Based Social Skills Group For Young Children Diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder: A Randomized Control Trial

Justin B. Leaf, Mitchell Taubman, John McCrackin, Ronald Leaf, Jeremy Leaf, Christine Milton, Donna-Townley Cochran, Misty Oppenheim-Leaf, & Alyne Kassardjian

Autism Partnership Foundation
GROUP DESIGN: SSIS

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<th>Evaluator</th>
<th>Group A Pre</th>
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<th>Group B Pre</th>
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<td>Social Skills Teachers</td>
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<td>60 (3%)</td>
<td>91.5 (42%)</td>
<td>60.4 (1%)</td>
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SSIS: ONE WAY ANOVA ANALYSIS

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