ADDRESSING CHALLENGING BEHAVIORS ETHICALLY IN SCHOOLS

MODULE 1: How to Maximize the Value & Facilitate Collaboration Across Service Providers

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This self-study online course was written by Dr. Ronnie Detrich. Funding to develop and deliver this course was provided by Special Learning Global Solutions.
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Learning Objectives & Outcomes

- List key barriers (non-clinical) to achieving successful outcomes in schools
- Identify objective key drivers such as success measures and metrics for schools vs behavioral providers.
- List variables that lead to school administrators to requesting for ABA services for a student.
- Describe how different agendas by individual educators can influence the delivery of service.
- Demonstrate working knowledge of the roles and responsibilities of Administrators, Educators, Behavior Analysts and specialists, Speech Language Pathologists, ESE Department personnel etc. in the school system.
- Develop a systematic approach when working in schools to achieve the highest level of collaboration among the professionals to ultimately serve the student presenting with problem behaviors.

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Subject Matter Expert Bio

Ronnie Detrich, Ph.D., has been providing behavior analytic services for over 50 years. His work can be characterized as thorough-going behavior analysis drawing from the conceptual, experimental, and applied branches of our discipline.

From 1970-1977, he worked at a pioneering Family Service Agency in Flint, Michigan, providing behavior analytic services for anyone requesting help. Later, he developed and was the director of a state-wide educational and residential program for school-aged children with autism in South Dakota. In the 1980s, Ronnie was the director of a residential program based on the Teaching Family Model for adjudicated juvenile offenders in West Virginia. From 1986-2004, he was the clinical director for a large non-public school in the San Francisco Bay Area serving children with intellectual disabilities and serious behavior challenges. In addition, he also co-directed a public-school consultation project supporting students with academic and behavioral challenges. From 2004-2018, Ronnie was a Senior Fellow at the Wing Institute, an education policy think tank that focuses on the implementation of evidence-based practices in public schools. Currently, he is the proprietor of Detrich and Associates, a consulting project based in Logan, Utah. He also holds an appointment as adjunct faculty at Utah State University.

In recent years, Ronnie's work has focused on the challenges of achieving adequate levels of treatment integrity in large systems, the role of the evidence-based practice movement in behavior analysis, and the large-scale implementation of effective practices in public schools. He is a trustee of the Cambridge Center for Behavioral Studies and is on the editorial boards of Perspectives in Behavior Science and Exceptional Children. He serves as an Associate Editor for the Journal of Positive Behavior Intervention. Ronnie has also served on the editorial board of Behavior Analysis in Practice and was the Coordinator of ABAI's Practice Board.

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Panelist Bio

Dr. Noor Syed, BCBA-D, LBA (CT, NY) is currently with Lehigh University's Special Education Department as Professor of Practice and Clinical Director for Lehigh University Autism Services. Previously, Dr. Syed was an Assistant Professor of Special Education at Manhattanville College.

Dr. Syed has over 10 years experience in the field of applied behavior analysis, general and special education, autism, and developmental disabilities as a classroom teacher, Special Education Itinerant Teacher, ABA home-based therapist, and behavioral supervisor for center and home based services. Dr. Syed has worked in early intervention, preschool, and school aged settings, as well as with adults.

In 2018, Dr. Syed was selected as a Top Tier International Partnership Discovery Fellow in the Inaugural Fellowship Class of the Global Autism Project, a nonprofit organization that provides training for local international practitioners in the utilization of evidence-based practices when working with people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Her research interests lie in verbal behavior, ethical practices in behavior analysis, and the implementation of behavior analysis to curriculum and teaching

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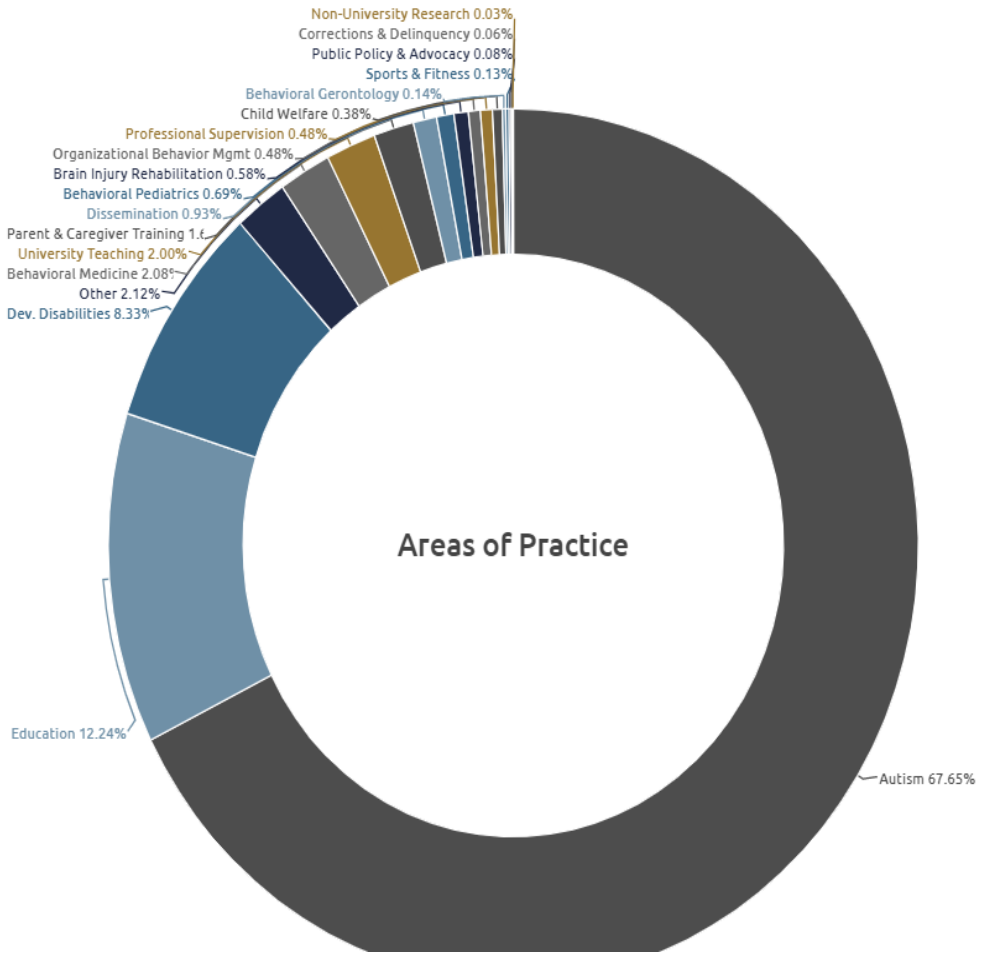
BCBAs Who Provide School-based Services



Autism	67.65%	28,347
Education	**12.24%**	**5,129**
Dev Disabilities	8.33%	3,491
Other	2.12%	888
Behavioral Medicine	2.08%	872
University Teaching	2.00%	838
Parent & Caregiver	1.60%	670
Dissemination	0.93%	390
Behavioral Pediatrics	0.69%	289
Brain Injury Rehab	0.58%	243
OBM	0.48%	201
Professional Supervision	0.48%	201
Child Welfare	0.38%	159
Behavior Gerontology	0.14%	59
Sports & Fitness	0.13%	54
Public Policy & Advocacy	0.08%	34
Corrections & Delinquency	0.06%	25
Non-University Research	0.03%	13
	100.00%	**41,903**

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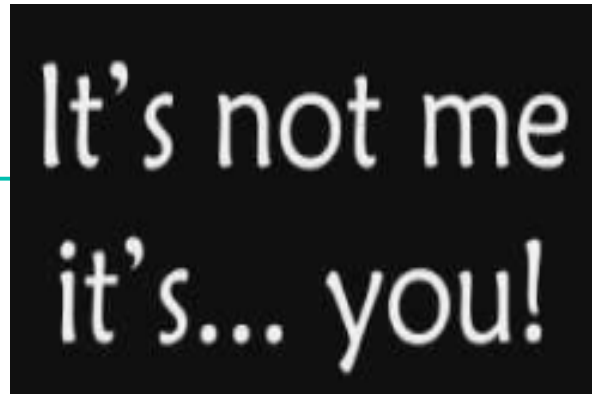
Source: BACB

Realities of Working in Schools



BIGGEST PROBLEM: BCBAs are not taught how to be successful in schools.

- Many Systems (schools) are set up to reject the adoption of ABA
  - Administrators do not understand the value / how to maximize the value of BCBA
  - Teachers don't "buy into" ABA / don't understand how ABA can support their goals: academic growth
- Many, many stakeholders with different goals, many of which has nothing to do with student outcomes
- Severe resource constraints
- Lack of clarify on roles
- Many BCBAs often lack the knowledge to:
  - Gain acceptance, increase confidence and increase adoption
  - Modify programs to fit the condition

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Why would *anyone* work in schools if it's so difficult?

What makes it worth the challenges?

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Context for Working in Schools: *Cultural Fit*

Schools are a unique culture with their own values, norms, and cultural rules.

Each classroom is a separate culture within a school.	Each school has its own unique culture within a district.	Each district has its own unique culture.

To be effective our interventions must be a good contextual fit within a classroom, school, and district.

Contextual fit begins with the selection of intervention goals.

Solve the problem for the client

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Context for Working in Schools:
Multi-disciplinary Team Members

Teacher/Educator

Para-professional

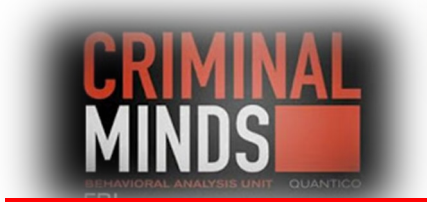
Principal

Central Office Administration

School Psychologist

Occupational Therapist

Physician



Board Certified Behavior Analyst

Speech Language Pathologist

Physical Therapist

Nature of schools is multi-disciplinary

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Context for Working in Schools: *Behavior Analysts*

Behavior Analyst is the newest of the disciplines working in schools.

It's inevitable that the behavior analyst will be working with multi-disciplinary teams most of the time.

The members from different disciplines have different world views, different perspectives about appropriate intervention, and different goals for intervention.

Differ from behavior analysis and differ from other members of the team.

Individuals from other disciplines are not bound by our ethics code.

Providing coherent, effective services becomes complicated

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Context for Working in Schools

Referrals are usually made because a student is causing "pain" for members of the school community.

The task of the behavior analyst is to provide "pain" relief.

Pain relief may be different for various members of the school community.

Special educator may make referral to behavior analyst because a student is being disruptive in the classroom.

- The pain for the special education director can take the form of complaints from the school principal, complaints from parents, complaints from the classroom teacher.
- The special education administrator is motivated to reduce the number of complaints.
- The school principal is motivated to reduce the number of complaints from teachers, the student's parents, and parents of other students.
- The teacher is motivated to reduce the disruptive episodes of the student with the least intrusion to classroom routines.

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Context for Working in Schools: *Referral Rationale*

Determine who made the referral and why?

- Usually comes from an administrator but often reflects difficulties at another level.
- Necessary to understand the agenda (goals) for all who are involved and their role in service.
  - Each of these individuals can be considered clients of the behavior analysts service.
  - The agenda may be different for every individual involved.
  - How does each person frame the problem?
  - The behavior analyst's task is to design a comprehensive plan that addresses each agenda.

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Context for Working in Schools: *Implementation Responsibility*

Who will bear the primary responsibility for implementing the intervention?

- The task of the behavior analyst is to change the behavior of adults that in turn change the behavior of the student.
  - Social influence skills are essential to change the behavior of adults.
    - Technical skills without social influence skills results in resistance from those we are trying to influence.
    - Social influence is process for gaining "buy in."
    - Buy in= implementation of intervention recommendations.
    - Part of social influence is being seen as a partner working alongside rather than an expert telling what to do.
    - Data are rarely sufficient to influence decisions to adopt an intervention.

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Context for Working in Schools: *Social Influence*

"The function of social influence is to have adults we are working with adopt and implement our recommendations."

Rogers, Diffusion of Innovations (2003)

- Diffusion of innovation is a social process, even more than a technical matter.
- The adoption rate of an innovation is a function of its compatibility with the values, beliefs, and past experiences of the individuals in the social system.
- Innovation has to solve a problem that is important for the client.
- Must have a relative advantage over current practice.
- Champion of the innovation has to be seen as credible.

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Context for Working in Schools: *Problem-Solving*

Solving the problem for the client:

Before intervening, survey implementers for behaviors that are most difficult for them (talking back, aggression toward peers, spitting, swearing, self-injury, etc.)

- Make this behavior the priority for intervention.
- It is very difficult for an implementer to ignore a behavior that pushes all of their buttons.
- It may be necessary to include components in intervention that are not active components but give the implementer something to do during behavioral episode(s) so they don't inadvertently reinforce problem behavior ("rip sheets and boil water").

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Questions from the Field

- How do extinguish the targeted behavior when the function is attention and the attention is provided by the other peers (all with ASD) in the classroom?

- How are issues regarding cultural and linguistic diversity being addressed when evaluating children in the schools who present with challenging behaviors?

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Case Scenario

"1st grade male student in special day mild moderate classroom elopes and refuses to return. When out of the classroom, strikes other students - all ages, no identified pattern to whom he strikes. School staff afraid to block exit because he will strike them repeatedly. (Staff receiving training in non violent crisis intervention but attitude is that this is not their job and student does not belong) FBA difficult because student is frequently not at school but background research does reveal history of parental relationship struggles - divorce threats that include restraining orders.

Demonstrated ability in a 1:1 setting to utilize a timer and self management sheet to track own on task behaviors - sitting in seat, looking at instructor, raising hand to gain attention, and responding appropriately and as expected to questions of a lesson (social skills Second Step lessons).

How to ethically support given minimal resources - I'm 1 BCBA for a district of 29 schools. Trying to train educators at all levels but limited time available due to other responsibilities."

Submitted by: Behavior Analyst, Educator, Program Specialist District Wide Level

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5-minute Break (Intermission)

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Common Ethical Issues that Arise in Schools

Ethical Issues	Frequency
Understanding the role of BCBAs in a school setting	6
Consents and contract rights	6
Scope of practice	2
Appropriate assessments, programming, and behavior plans	4
Ethical caseloads	3
Multiple roles, relationships and conflicts of interest	4
Relationships with teachers and related service providers	3
Professionalism	1
Communication with families	3
Confidentiality	1

Total emails questions: 23
Timeframe: 1/24/19-2/29/20
Citation:
Syed, N. & Bailey, J. (n.d). *ABA ethics hotline questions*. ABA Ethics Hotline.
https://www.abaethicshotline.com/

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Context for Working in Schools

Ethical standard: 2.03 (b)

When indicated and professionally appropriate, behavior analysts cooperate with other professionals, in a manner that is consistent with the philosophical assumptions and principles of behavior analysis, in order to effectively and appropriately serve their clients.

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Questions from the Field

"What do ethical service models look like in public education given limited funds in this sector?"

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Relevant Ethical Standards

Ethical Code 2.0 Behavior Analysts Responsibility to Clients

Behavior analysts have a responsibility to operate in the best interest of clients. The term client as used here is broadly applicable to whomever behavior analysts provide services, whether an individual person (service recipient), a parent or guardian of a service recipient, an organizational representative, a public or private organization, a firm, or a corporation.

Specific Codes:

- 2.03 Consultation
- 2.09 Treatment/Intervention Efficacy

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Using Implementation Planning To Increase Teachers' Adherence And Quality To Behavior Support Plans

Sanetti, Collier-Meek, Long, Kim, & Kractochwill, 2014

(1) Implementation Planning	(2)Barriers Coping Plan
▪ List all steps of the intervention in behaviorally specific terms. ▪ Explicitly discuss if modifications are needed to increase contextual fit. Logistical planning for each step: 1. When will you implement each step? 2. How often will you implement each step? 3. For how long? 4. Where will you implement each step? 5. What resources do you need and do you have them? 6. Who is responsible for acquiring resources? 7. When will the resources be obtained?	▪ After planning completed, develop coping plan: 1. Consultee identifies up to four barriers to implementation of intervention. 2. Consultee and behavior specialist develop coping plans. How will intervention be maintained if barriers are encountered.

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Questions from the Field

- Is it ethically sound to continue to support students in community preschools/childcare centers when they are engaging in severe challenging behaviors without the private space/support to decelerate?

- Is it ethically sound to continue to expose the other students in the class to occurrences of severe aggressive behavior, etc.? Often the other students are evacuated from the classroom, but are frequently witness to severe aggressive behavior, tantrum behavior, destructive behavior, etc.

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Context for Working in Schools: *Barriers- Know Your Audience*

In some instances, behavior analysts have an image problem in public schools.

- To some extent the negative image is self-created.
  - Our technical language can create barriers.
  - Our enthusiasm for behavior analysis and certainty about its effectiveness can be off-putting to our audience.
  - The interventions developed by behavior analysts are often not a good contextual fit for a public school.

"If you think I am kidding - go to an interdisciplinary meeting at a school and introduce yourself as a behavior analyst and watch the smirks, eye rolls and annoyed nods that follow. By trying to disseminate our science, an ethical code we must adhere to, we do not have to stand on our soap box and speak down to others with a holier-than-thou mentality."

- R. N. Carr, PhD, BCBA-D

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Context for Working in Schools: *The Professional Conundrum*

It is often the case that the educational system does not know exactly who we are and what we do.

Equally true, is that many of us have not had extensive training and experience working in schools.

The inexperience of the educational system with behavior analysts and the inexperience of behavior analysts with the school system can create difficulties.

- Often presumed that a behavior analyst can work ethically and effectively with any behavior problem.

Relevant Ethical Standard

Ethical Code 1.02 Boundaries of Competence

(a) All behavior analysts provide services, teach, and conduct research only within the boundaries of their competence, defined as being commensurate with their education, training, and supervised experience.

(b) Behavior analysts provide services, teach, or conduct research in new areas (e.g., populations, techniques, behaviors) only after first undertaking appropriate study, training, supervision, and/or consultation from persons who are competent in those areas.

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Scope of Competence
Modifying Approach to Intervention

- SIB
- Feeding
- Emotional Behavior Disorder (EBD)
- Working Across Different Populations
- Working Across Age Levels
- Elementary vs. High School

Why do you say no? Determined by levels of severity

How do you say no?

Where do you draw the line?

What's the worst-case consequence?

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Increasing Contextual Fit

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Power of Language: *Where's the Evidence?*

Behav Analysis Practice (2017) 10:97–106
DOI 10.1007/s40617-016-0161-9

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Normative Emotional Responses to Behavior Analysis Jargon or How Not to Use Words to Win Friends and Influence People

Thomas S. Critchfield[1] · Karla J. Doepke[1] · L. Kimberly Epting[2] · Amel Becirevic[3] · Derek D. Reed[3] · Daniel M. Fienup[4] · Jamie L. Kremsreiter[5] · Cheryl L. Ecott[6]

- 1:15 Ratio strongly positive: strongly negative
- 60% Behavior analytic terms rated unpleasant
- 28% Rated as strongly motivating
- Taken together suggests many may be motivated to avoid us (escape avoidance)

Words Matter: Behavioral Jargon May Impede Dissemination

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Increasing Contextual Fit: *The Power of Language*

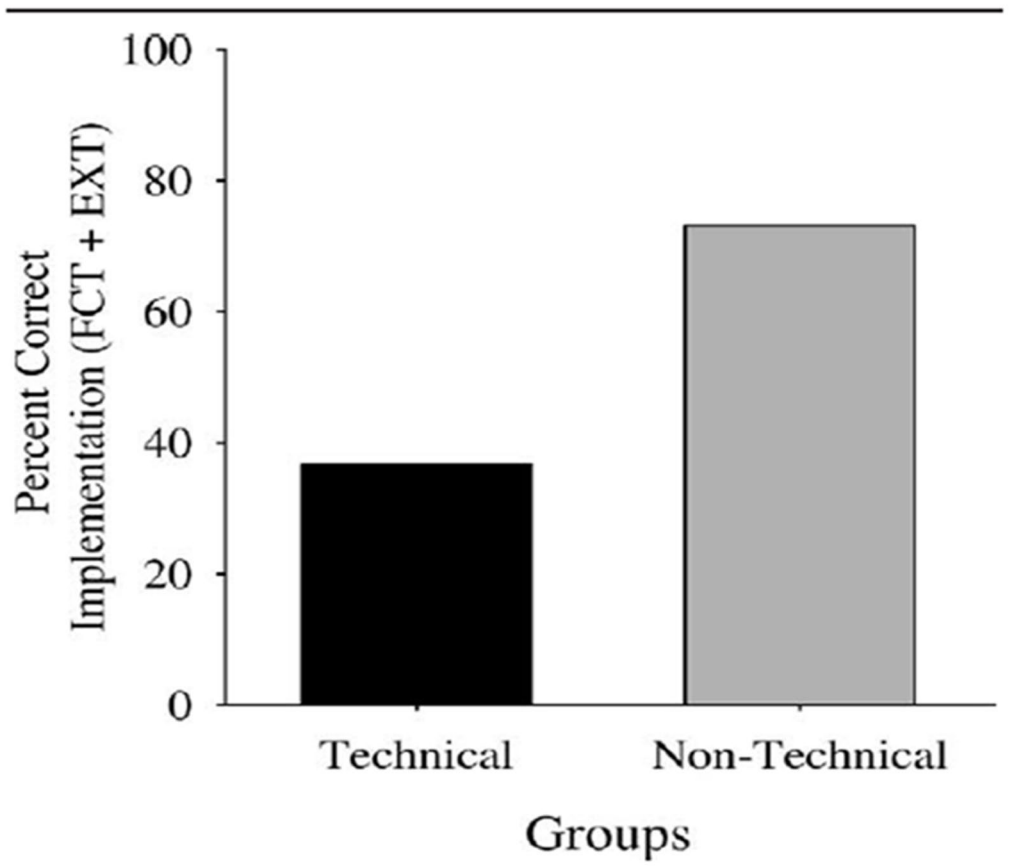

Figure 3 Mean correct implementation for both treatment components combined for the technical language and nontechnical language groups (inexperienced).

Effects of Conversational Versus Technical Language on Treatment Preference and Integrity

David P. Jarmolowicz, SungWoo Kahng, Einar T. Ingvarsson, Richard Goysovich, Rebecca Heggemeyer, and Meagan K. Gregory

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Keys to Long-term Success

What Constitutes Social Validity in Schools?

1. Understand multi-tier system of support
2. Understand school-curriculums
3. Understanding school terminology (language of schools)
4. Form a community of other BCBAs who work in schools
5. Find credible resources (NOT Social Media!)
6. Understand how to access school-based literature
7. Understanding “business” rationale
8. Understand academic interventions (school goals)
   - Reading, writing, math, etc.
   - Definition of fluency in schools
9. Learn how to create a bridge between **academics** and **behavior analysis**

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Above All… Demonstrate Success: Use Meaningful Data

Behavior analysts typically measure outcomes using direct measures of behavior.

- Frequency of behavior
- Percent of intervals
- Duration

We do not always show the relation between these measures and more general outcome measures that are important to educators, families, policy makers:

- Academic achievement
- Bullying
- Substance abuse

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Module 1:
How to Maximize the Value & Facilitate Collaboration Across Service Providers

Next session in the series: Module 2

Must-have Skills (and Understanding) for School-based BCBAs and Other Service Providers (LIVE April 8, 2020)

Thank you to the wonderful Special Learning team members without whom our experience would be greatly diminished (or just plain disorganized!)

- *Dr. Ronnie Detrich (Subject Matter Expert / Content Creator and Presenter)*
- *Dr. Noor Syed, EdD, BCBA-D (Panelist)*
- *Jennifer Rumfola, CCC-SLP, BCBA, LBA (ACE/QABA Coordinator)*
- *Krystal Larsen, BCaBA, Director of Clinical Solutions (Moderator and Clinical Support)*
- *Michelle Capulong (Client Support Manager)*
- *Pia Agsao (Client Support)*
- *Sasho Gachev (Creative Director)*

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