Montrose M. Wolf (Editor, 1968–1970)

REMEMBRANCES OF ISSUES PAST:
CELEBRATING JABA's 25TH ANNIVERSARY

Why Did We Need a New Journal Anyway?

In the mid 1960s, many of my colleagues and I wanted a new journal desperately. The only journal that would publish our applied research was *Behaviour Research and Therapy*. BRAT was a British journal. Its chief editor was Hans Eysenck. Eysenck was an important and valued ally. Historically, psychoanalysis had dominated discussion about the nature of "psychological disorders" and their treatment (Kazdin, 1978). Eysenck had published seminal articles criticizing the psychoanalytic model (e.g., Eysenck, 1960). Eysenck was also interested in a "behavioral" approach, as the name of his journal showed. But, many of us felt that he did not have the commitment to a Skinnerian behavioral approach that would be needed to fully explore the total range of possible behavioral applications as well as the methodological issues of experimental design and measurement that were important to us.

We had a very hard time publishing our applied research in the American psychological journals of the 1960s. We could occasionally publish. But, usually the editors did so with great reservations. Many editors weren't convinced, for example, that single-subject designs could lead to valid conclusions. I remember reading a methodology book of the time, which stated unequivocally that one could not study scientifically a single case and draw valid conclusions.

Some journals like the *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology* might seem like they would have been appropriate outlets. I was a member of the *JECP* editorial board. Unfortunately, the majority of the editorial board made an explicit editorial policy decision not to publish applied research. I submitted a couple of applied research papers to *JECP* myself hoping to sneak them by. But, the

editor reminded me of the policy against applied research. So, I submitted them to *BRAT*, where they were published.

Saved by SEAB

When I learned that the Society for the Experimental Analysis of Behavior (SEAB) might support the publication of an applied research journal, you can imagine how delighted I was. I had heard that SEAB would discuss this issue at a meeting that was to be held at the same time as the 1967 annual meeting of the American Psychological Association.

Because I wasn't a member of SEAB, I couldn't attend and observe. However, from reports I think it is safe to say that we applied researchers owe a lot to Nate Azrin. I know that the SEAB members trusted Nate's judgment. Without Nate making a convincing case at the SEAB meeting, I don't think the new journal would have happened.

After that meeting, I was shocked when Nate told me that not only was SEAB starting the new journal, but that I had been elected its first editor. Why me? I guess because I was young and inexperienced enough to want the job, not realizing the incredible amount of time and effort it would take. I was young enough and dumb enough to think that I was lucky. Well, I was lucky. I loved it.

There are so many neat decisions that one gets to make when founding a journal. The name was an example. I sent a note around asking for ideas. I remember Fred Skinner saying at some point that he liked the name *Journal of Operant Behavior*. He liked the acronym *JOB* with *JEAB*. He said the two together had an almost "biblical ring."

I liked the name *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis* for lots of reasons. Its initials (ABA) celebrated our first experimental design. I liked the

tone of the term "behavior analysis" better than "behavior modification" because it sounded less harsh and intrusive and more analytic. I also enjoyed the play on "psycho" analysis, one of our major competitors. Finally, I liked what I thought might happen to the name of our field.

We had called ourselves as a field the "experimental analysis of behavior." This name eloquently described our basic research branch and heritage. However, this name didn't make room as comfortably for the applied and conceptual analyses branches that were also important. I hoped that when we named the journal *JABA* that we would eventually adopt the name "behavior analysis" for our field. I did worry about the built-in grammatical error: "behavior analysis" versus "behavioral analysis." But we seem to have survived that. Thus, I think that "behavior analysis" has been useful for the field.

SEAB gave me two great advisors to help set up the journal: Nate Azrin and Vic Laties. Both had extraordinarily wise counsel and gentle feedback styles. The only serious disagreement that I can remember was with Nate about a methodological issue. Nate was suspicious of observer-measured behaviors. He argued that human observer behavior, like other human behavior, could be affected by contingencies and that microswitches were more reliable than human observers. He was right, of course. But, I had seen the applied research group at the University of Washington use human

observers effectively. So I argued that reliable human observation was possible and would greatly expand the range of behaviors that we could study. Also, I suggested that we could deal with potential problems by requiring data about the reliability of the human observation systems. As you who have argued with Nate know, one doesn't win many. So that debate continued for years. I'm not sure that Nate has conceded yet.

Were we right about needing a new journal? I think the data are compelling. I think that clearly we were ready to develop a new journal and a new applied field. Our first issue had a huge effect. I think that a majority of the articles in that first issue have become *citation classics*.¹

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¹ The "Citation Classics" series is published in *Current Contents of the Social and Behavioral Sciences*. Philadelphia, PA: Institute for Scientific Information.

K. Daniel O'Leary (Editor, 1978–1980)

AN EDITOR'S RECOLLECTIONS: 1978–1980

Stewart Agras, a psychiatrist from Stanford, called to ask whether I would consider being editor of the *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis*. That call in 1976 was exhilarating because I had great respect for Stewart, and because as associate editor

of *JABA*, I had become quite involved in the development of the field of behavior modification and behavior therapy. I was very happy to be part of the *JABA* tradition, with editors who preceded me like Baer, Wolf, and Risley who had such an