Retracing Our Path

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As the seventh year of Behavior Analysis in Practice (BAP) comes to a close, it feels as if we are somewhat retracing our steps in attempts to define BAP's mission as a journal. The journey to this place has seen a few iterations of mission, or at least outcomes of the mission. My first issue as editor revealed a haunting reality—most practicing behavior analysts never heard of the journal or did not care about the journal. Given that this was the very population BAP attempted to target, the data were eye-opening. As a result, my editorial team has made a radical transformation of the journal into an outlet that we feel practitioners cannot afford to ignore. Easy access options via Springer's digital format and radically quick submission to publication timelines, BAP now delivers the field's emerging research and practice like never before. Furthermore, regular issue features such as product reviews, field reports from the editors, and thought provoking Ask the Experts dialogue provide the BAP reader with a multifaceted intellectual and practical experience.

The paper authored by Diller found within this issue reveals that our field has great work ahead of itself if we wish to disseminate our science to the greater nonbehavioral community. Our field's top peer-reviewed journals, including BAP, have failed to speak to readers with a vocabulary that nontechnical persons can understand. The argument against a purely technical vocabulary is logical, as the dilution of procedures and terms will probably reduce successful replications of the findings reported. However, if we can only speak to the tiny subsection of the community that already knows our esoteric language, the impact of behavior analysis on the world at large will be minimized. I believe the most skilled behavior analyst is one that can speak with common day language to those who need it, and back the dialogue up with technical definitions

when necessary. Our field has tried rather tirelessly to force feed “establishing operations,” “differential reinforcement,” and “extinction-induced variability,” to glazed eyed staff members of the front line. I believe I speak for many of us who have unsuccessfully passed along a journal article to a parent, caregiver, or teacher and thought they would have actually wanted to read it. Sorry folks, it is not going to happen. If we truly embrace a functional account of behavior, and not just clinical-context behavior, but all behavior, have we not paid attention when it comes to our own talk? A functional account would suggest that the topography of our dialogue is not what is truly important, but rather the critical factor is the effect on the environment. To date, our effect on the broader environment has been minimal. We have made some great strides with certain populations and certain contexts, but these few successes do not make up for all our failures. The nightly news is not laden with behavior analytic findings; textbooks in psychology often describe us as a dead discipline, and we must constantly describe our profession to the common public as “something like a psychologist who looks at behavior.”

You will see that this issue of BAP contains a new manuscript category entitled Brief Practices. This category is the result of a long discussion with my editorial team during the spring of 2014 as to how BAP might be able to better meet its mission as a journal of applied practices in behavior analysis, while at the same time ensuring sufficient internal validity for applied behavioral scientists. And perhaps most importantly, how is BAP going to break the tradition of preaching to the converted. The resulting outlet of Brief Practices was formulated to allow contributors an outlet to communicate a wide variety of ways in which behavior analysis is being practiced. The scope is broad for what constitutes appropriate material for this submission. Acceptable content can include clinical validations of known behavioral phenomena, translational research that has practical applications, program evaluations,

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single-subject demonstrations, group design comparisons, and innovative extensions of technology, methodology, or client populations. Basic research that has direct clinical relevance is also welcome. Perhaps most importantly is that the Brief Practices category radically deviates from our traditional journal manuscript format. We purposely have broken tradition and have taken a lesson from our nonbehavioral neuroscience peers who seem to be doing everything right, at least when it comes to mainstream acceptability.

Brief Practices report an application of behavior analysis within a practice context. The manuscript should be of broad interest. Brief Practices begin with a short abstract (4 sentences, no more than 90 words), and follow with 4 bullet points summarizing the utility of the work for clinicians. The bullet points should not be a rewording of the abstract. The body of the manuscript should contain a summary of the prior literature, general procedures, detailed results, and implications of the findings for practice. The entire text should not exceed 2500 words, including abstract, references and figure legends, and contain no headings. The manuscript should have no more than three figures and tables combined. Brief Practices must include a detailed methods section that should follow the references. References are limited to ten. All submissions under this category will receive a 14-day editorial decision timeline, and upon final acceptance by the editor,

availability on Springer's Online First within 30 days. The expedited review and publication process is designed to facilitate contemporary science reaching the practice community. Most papers will subsequently appear in the very next BAP print issue.

The format of Brief Practices focuses on an easy to read narrative of what took place within the experimental or clinical investigation, and is followed up by a detailed method section that provides sufficient information for successful replication. The methods will be of interest to many current readers of BAP, but not necessarily all of them. Furthermore, methodological nuances often can detract an unskilled reader from the take-home message of an article. Separating the final manuscript as described will allow much easier construction of press-releases of our findings, accessibility for entry level staff and employees, and perhaps an ability to draw interest from the next generation of potential behavior analysts who can now actually understand our science.

As we travel this path of life, it is unsettling to retrace the route and step backwards to eventually move forward with more success. However, this reflective route often can yield great gains. Looking through the pages of this issue of BAP, I am confident you will agree the journey was worth it. Enjoy the new face and content of your applied, practical, and functional behavioral journal.