EDITORIAL

Editorial

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It is an honor and a pleasure to conclude my term as editor of *The Analysis of Verbal Behavior* (TAVB) with the journal's very first fall issue. The Association for Behavior Analysis International (ABAI) recently partnered with the renowned publishing company Springer for the publication of TAVB along with the association's other journals, starting with the current volume. This co-publishing agreement has resulted in several positive changes for TAVB. One of them is a long-awaited increase in publication frequency, from one to two issues per year. Another important change is that articles are now published online before they appear in print, which benefits authors by substantially reducing the time from acceptance to publication. It is my hope that these developments, among others, will serve to increase the visibility of the journal and enhance its attractiveness to authors as a potential outlet for high-quality verbal behavior research.

TAVB is now in its 30th year of publication. Early in its history, the journal primarily contained conceptual papers and other contributions that did not include original data (Normand et al. 2000). The importance and usefulness of such work notwithstanding, empirical research is also vital to the survival and evolution of the behavior-analytic approach to language and language intervention. Empirical research derived from Skinner's

(1957) analysis of verbal behavior has increased substantially in recent decades (Sautter and LeBlanc 2006). This increase has been reflected in the types of articles published in TAVB, and reports of experimental research comprised the majority of the journal's content by 2008 (Marcon-Dawson et al. 2009). Continuing that trend, the current volume is composed largely of empirical contributions. The spring issue contained four research articles, four brief reports, and one conceptual article, and the current issue contains seven additional research articles and four brief reports.

To date, research influenced by Skinner's (1957) analysis of verbal behavior has predominantly consisted of applied studies on teaching basic language skills to children and adolescents diagnosed with developmental disabilities (Dixon et al. 2007). This emphasis has been evident in TAVB from the beginning of its publication (Marcon-Dawson et al. 2009; Normand et al. 2000), and is not surprising, as the first few chapters of Skinner's analysis lend themselves exceptionally well to this type of practical application with their emphasis on the controlling variables of basic verbal operants. One area of applied investigation that has been identified as being in need of further development (Grow and Kodak 2010) is the emergence of untrained verbal relations following instruction of other related skills. To that effect, the current issue contains a special section on engineering verbal generativity that includes three research articles (Byrne, Rehfeldt, & Aguirre; Vallinger-Brown & Rosales; Zaine, Domeniconi, & de Rose) and three brief reports (Kohler & Malott; O'Neill & Rehfeldt; Pérez-González, Cereio-Blanco, & Carnerero).

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The present volume also contains a number of other excellent examples of applied research on verbal behavior intervention and assessment. Two studies deserve to be highlighted because the participants represent populations that are understudied in applied behavior analysis: Oleson and Baker, in the current issue, evaluated the feasibility of procedure for teaching mands to older adults with dementia, and Beaulieu et al. (2014), in the spring issue, evaluated an intervention to improve the conversational skills of a college student diagnosed with a learning disability. In addition to applied work, the current volume contains several basic investigations. The spring issue contained an innovative study on teaching facts of private events (Stocco et al. 2014) and a study on the effects of contingent imitation on infant vocalizations (Hirsh et al. 2014), and the current issue contains a laboratory study on rule-following (Miller, Hirst, Kaplan, DiGennaro Reed, & Reed) and a demonstration of autoclitic-like behavior in pigeons (Kuroda, Lattal, & García-Penagos). Dixon et al. (2007) noted that Skinner's (1957) *Verbal Behavior* suggests a wealth of underexplored research topics (see also Sundberg 1991), and concluded that in spite of the practical significance of research on teaching basic language skills, "there is a need to expand basic research on verbal behavior to typically developing individuals and to more advanced forms of language" (p. 204). The aforementioned studies may represent a step in the direction of extending the scope of empirical research on verbal behavior to areas that have received relatively little attention to date.

As I step down, I am thrilled to be able to pass the baton to my former dissertation advisor, Jim Carr, who has been appointed the next editor of *TAVB* and is already handling new submissions. With Jim, the journal is going to be in exceptionally capable hands, and I look forward to seeing it thrive under his stewardship. In closing, I would like to thank all of those who have assisted me with the journal for the last 3 years. First and foremost, I was fortunate to have an outstanding team of associate editors who served for part or all of my term, including Jim Carr, Einar Ingvarsson, Linda LeBlanc, Caio Miguel, Matt Normand, Dave Palmer, and Mark Sundberg. I am also indebted to the large number of

individuals who have contributed their services as reviewers, and to Charlotte Carp and Tracy Lepper for serving as editorial assistants prior to the adoption of Springer's online editorial management system. I thank Mary Hashman for her meticulous work as managing editor before the transition to Springer, and our entire team at Springer for their assistance with that transition and their helpfulness ever since. Together, all of these people made my job seem easy and enjoyable. Finally, I would like to thank the original publisher of *TAVB*, the Verbal Behavior Special Interest Group (VB-SIG) of ABAI for continuing to take interest in and promote the journal.

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