TUTORIAL

Perspectives on the Field of Behavior Analysis

Mark R. Dixon¹

Published online: 6 October 2015
© Association for Behavior Analysis International 2015

Absolute truth is a legend. It is real as Bigfoot, UFOs, and Santa Claus. I think. Perhaps, more data will get us closer to capital T truth, but for now, we better keep it lowercase t. For centuries, philosophers have debated the objectiveness of our world and cautioned us about how our own participation in the observation of events may bias or taint the objective nature of such inquiry. In this issue of *Behavior Analysis in Practice (BAP)*, we must remind ourselves once again about trying to capitalize the T in what we feel as truth. Where we stand as an observer positions ourselves to see things from a certain perspective. The series of commentaries on the Dixon et al. (2015) paper that ranked graduate training programs and faculty research productivity provide 14 different opinions about truth. A similar example can be found with Putman and Knoster paper that replies to many critics of PBIS, some of which appeared in a prior issue of *Behavior Analysis in Practice*. Both the research ranking and PBIS discussion/response series of *BAP* in 2015 illustrate the sometimes unsettling reality that Truth has yet to be found. Instead, discourse such as this helps researchers and clinicians hone the questions of tomorrow, and also refine the perspective by which they approach and observe the event in question. Furthermore, these intellectual exercises help move closer towards T even if we never can actually capitalize it.

Beyond the papers mentioned above, you will see a variety of topics of investigation and conclusions inferred, which together showcase the dynamic perspectives a behavior analyst may take as they seek to make our world a better place with behavioral science. In the paper by Pantermuehl and Lechago,

the authors explore how feedback to employees can maintain effectiveness even when delivered online to staff at remote locations. In the study by Luiselli, Sperry, and Draper, the authors reveal a novel means of assessing the social validity of physical restraint intervention procedures, and the paper by Wilder which gives the reader an interesting series of tips for newly minted clinicians from research savvy practitioners. These are only a few examples of the scope of the current issue of *BAP*. Other papers span from valuable tricks when graphing data with Microsoft Excel, to increasing food selections for a child with autism. When taken together it becomes clear that there are many different ways in which our field is attempting to apply science to practice. This issue also includes the first of a yearly installment of highlights from the ABAI annual autism convention. Both speakers and poster presenters from the yearly meeting are encouraged to submit papers under a distinct review category for inclusion in *BAP*.

This final issue of *BAP* for 2015 signifies the end of an era, along with the introduction of a phase change in the development of the journal. As the sun sets on this chapter for *BAP*, I look forward to 2016 when the journal transitions to quarterly production instead of semiannually. Submission numbers has reached historical highs, and the volume of material will now be made available four times per year. Doing so will reduce acceptance-to-publication times, and allow for me to deliver a more timely and substance rich issue to the readership. It is my hope that we will see another doubling of submissions under this new publication cycle, as more researchers, clinicians, and instructors seek *BAP* as a their premier source for everything behavior analytically relevant to practitioners. And what is behavior analytically relevant? Our forefathers have provided useful guidelines that have shaped the discipline, yet at the same time may have conservatively constricted it. From my perspective, anything a behavior analyst practices is relevant. In upcoming issues of *BAP*, I can assure you dynamic content

✉ Mark R. Dixon
mdixon@siu.edu

¹ Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, IL, USA

that truly represents the broad scope of our field's potential to impact the world in positive ways, at least from my perspective.

What took place during the past 3 years at *BAP* under my editorship has been amazing. The positive outcomes are due to the hard work of my editorial team of Derek Reed and Tristram Smith. These two individuals gambled with me on a number of initiatives that were somewhat radical for the journal at that time. We created new submission categories, recruited highly respected authors to contribute commentaries on targeted papers, and as an editorial team, the three of us published a few extremely controversial papers in the journal. Together, these efforts paid off. *BAP* is alive and well and ready for my encore. I am delighted to have a second term as Editor in Chief, and hopefully from your perspective, you are delighted too.

As I embark on this sequel for *BAP*, I must bid farewell to Derek and Tris. These two outstanding professionals amazed me away with the volume of work they did and their creative

nature to the challenges we faced as a journal. I owe them everything for what *BAP* has become, because I surely could not have done it alone. Their impact on *BAP* will forever be felt in our pages ahead. My new cast of individuals serving as Associate Editors will have very large shoes to fill. However, as you read the names Yvonne Barnes-Holmes, James Luiselli, Linda LeBlanc, and Terry Falacomata, I hope you perceive the right individuals have been placed in Derek and Tris's shoes. Together, this talented group of four new Associate Editors will move *BAP* to its next level of sophistication. Look for special issues, expanded submission categories, and perhaps even a few more envelope-pushing papers that this amazing editorial team will join forces on.

It is always feared that the sequel to any movie will never be as good as the first. I am not in a position to know the future of *BAP* with capital T truth, but from my perspective, this second iteration of *BAP*'s editorial team under my direction will be just as powerful as its first, perhaps even legendary, like Bigfoot.