



The Behavioral Observations Podcast: Stimulating Talk for Today's Behavior Analysts

Take home points from Greg Hanley's interview:

1. Be more analytic in your approach to functional assessment. There are many ways to do this that do not involve the classic multi-element, five-condition design.
2. Traditional FA approaches may unnaturally decouple positive and negative reinforcement contingencies that may be operating in naturalistic settings. As Greg says, "Nobody takes a break to nothing," so think about what conditions, settings, interactions, etc.. that an individual is escaping to.
3. The existing literature generally hasn't looked for combined EO's. For example, a transition to a work-related activity may involve a primary EO (ceasing a preferred activity) followed by a secondary one (a caregiver imposing a demand of some sort).
4. The Interview Informed Synthesized Contingency Analysis (IISCA), does the following:
 1. Allows the caregiver (parent, teacher, etc...) to provide qualitative details about the conditions in which problem behaviors occur, which,
 2. Allows the analyst to extract the hypothesized, synthesized reinforcers that maintain the challenging repertoire.
 3. This information, in turn, provides the basis for a brief assessment session that involves a control condition - where all the hypothesized reinforcers are provided non-contingently, and a test condition - where the EO(s) are evoked.
 4. The goal is to be able to turn problem behaviors on and off systematically.
 5. If the control condition does not neutralize or cease responding, and/or, if the test condition does not generate problem behavior, go back and re-interview the caregivers because some detail(s) may have been missed.
 6. The overall goal is to conduct a safe (by reinforcing precursors) and efficient assessment that quickly leads to targeted treatment objectives.
5. This approach has not only been used with individuals with ASD, but also with children with psychiatric diagnoses, such as bi-polar disorder.
6. For more information about Greg's research program, check out www.practicalfunctionalassessment.com. You'll find all the relevant literature there along with videos and case studies. It's a real treasure-trove of information.

Please note: I have a follow up interview with Greg in which we discuss how to tailor a specific approach to Functional Communication Training based on the IISCA assessment. It's a really novel approach to FCT that I think you will find very thought provoking.

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