

Distinguished Scholars 2022/2023

Supporting the advancement of elite graduate students
on their journeys toward becoming leaders in behavioral science.

LEADER:

Michael Kranak, PhD, BCBA-D

*Assistant Professor, Department of Human Development and Child Studies and Director of Research for the Center for Autism
Oakland University*

Michael P. Kranak, PhD, BCBA-D



Michael Kranak, PhD, BCBA-D is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Human Development and Child Studies and the Director of Research for the Center for Autism at Oakland University. He completed a post-doctoral fellowship at the Kennedy Krieger Institute and Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine; and earned his PhD in Psychology and Behavior Analysis from Western Michigan University, MA in Special Education and Applied Behavior Analysis from The Ohio State University, and BA in Psychology from West Virginia University.

His research interests include applied and translational investigations of relapse, the assessment and treatment of problem behavior, and behavioral technology in supervision and higher education. He is a co-investigator on NIH-funded research, and has supported several R01 and LRP applications.

Dr. Kranak serves on the Board of Editors for the *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis*, and as an ad hoc reviewer for several other journals. In his spare time, he enjoys working out, cooking, golfing; and is an avid Pittsburgh sports fan.

The DISTINGUISHED SCHOLARS:

Elaina Heard, MS, BCBA, LBA-MI, *The Chicago School of Professional Psychology - New Nominated by Robyn Catagnus*

Carla Lasagna Del Val, BS, *University of West Florida - Nominated by Dayna Beddick*

Matthew Laske, MA, *University of Kansas*

Alyssa McElroy, MA, BCBA, LBA, *Western Michigan University*

Fernanda Oda, MA, BCBA, *University of Kansas - New Nominated by Derek Reed*

Alyssa Rojas, MS, BCBA, *University of South Florida*

Kristen Rolf, MEd, *Utah State University*

Ashley Romero, MA, BCBA, *University of Kansas*

Sandra Ruby, MA, *University of Kansas - New Nominated by Florence DiGennaro Reed*

Michele Sereno, MA, BCBA, *The Chicago School of Professional Psychology - New Nominated by Robyn Catagnus*

Elaina Heard, MS, BCBA, LBA-MI



Elaina has spent a decade practicing in the field of applied behavior analysis (ABA). She is the founder and chief clinical officer of Watson's Way ABA Corp. She received her undergraduate degree in psychology from The University of Michigan (Ann Arbor) and her MS in applied behavior analysis (ABA) from The Chicago School of Professional Psychology. Currently, Elaina is completing her third year in the applied behavior analysis doctoral program studying under the supervision of Dr. Robyn Catagnus and Dr. Chrystal Jansz.

She believes in helping the world through behavior analysis while finding cultural components to enhance science literacy. While practicing as a Board-Certified Behavior Analyst, she provides and develops verified international lectures and presentations coupled with ABA to students and parents with practitioners in the field. To date, she delivers courses and guest presentations in Latvia, Brazil, West Africa, and South Africa.

As a researcher, her interests include video-modeling, play-based learning, audience response systems, training, inter-cultural competency in behavior analysis, and inclusive practice.

Carla Lasagna Del Val, BS

Graduated at the University of Sussex, in Brighton, UK, with a degree in Psychology, since 2017 she has been working in the field of Behavior Analysis, experiencing the application of such a science in the field of Autism, and specifically within the Organizational Behavioral Management context. From 2020 she has been specifically working as a consultant, under the supervision of Professor Fabio Tosolin and Doctor Maria Gatti, with the implementation of Behavior-Based Safety processes in various national and international industrial settings. In 2020 she passed and achieved her certification as a Registered Behavior Technician, from the Board of BACB. In 2021 she took part at the Verified Course Sequence in Behavior Analysis, accredited by the ABA International entity and she is currently studying to achieve her accreditation as a BCaBA. Since 2020 she has been collaborating with AARBA, the Italian scientific association that has the main

to promote and disseminate the scientific methodological evidence-based applications of Behavior Analysis.

She participated at the Behavior-Based Safety course, achieving her qualification and certification and consequentially she is currently part of the registry of the qualified experts in BBS implementations.

Matthew Laske, MA

Matthew Laske is a second-year doctoral student at the University of Kansas' behavioral psychology program, working under the supervision of Dr. Florence DiGennaro Reed. Matthew completed his master's degree in industrial-organizational psychology and human resource management at Appalachian State University working under the guidance of Dr. Timothy Ludwig. He completed his bachelor's degree in behavioral sciences from Western Michigan University. He previously served as a project manager for the safety analytics team at Appalachian State University seeking to identify variables that are most predictive of adverse safety outcomes. His current research interests include the investigation of effective communication, improving public speaking behaviors, and behavioral safety. In his free time, Matthew enjoys biking, painting along with Bob Ross, and anything involving basketball.

Alyssa McElroy, MA, BCBA, LBA

Alyssa is Board CAs Alyssa McElroy is a BCBA and fifth-year doctoral student at Western Michigan University. Alyssa received her master's degree in behavior analysis with a focus on early intervention and organizational behavior management from Western Michigan University in 2013. Upon receiving her master's degree, Alyssa worked as a clinician at Trumpet Behavioral Health in California and Colorado, where she, developed interventions for individuals diagnosed with autism and developmental disabilities, supervised BCBA fieldwork, and oversaw operations at Trumpet's South Denver Center. After spending four years in the field, Alyssa re-joined Western Michigan University as a doctoral student in 2017. Alyssa has a variety of experience teaching undergraduate courses, including introduction to behavior analysis, introduction to psychology, concepts and principles in behavior analysis, and research

methods/statistics. She's published research on teaching feminine hygiene skills to young females with ASD and is currently working on research related to supervision best practices in the field of behavior analysis. Alyssa serves as an executive member of the Michigan Autism Conference planning committee. Her interests include school-based consulting, effective teaching strategies, supervision, and instructional design.

Fernanda Oda, MA, BCBA

Fernanda Oda (she/her) is currently a doctoral student from the University of Kansas (KU) in the Applied Behavioral Economics Lab. She was born and raised in Brazil and received her bachelor's degree in Psychology from the Federal University of Paraná in 2012 and her master's degree in Behavior Analysis from the University of Houston-Clear Lake (UHCL) in 2019. In Brazil, she received training in conceptual, historical, EAB, and applied research and conducted research on sustainability and conceptual behavior analysis. During her master's studies, she received training in verbal behavior, behavior analysis applied to ASD, served as the clinical coordinator for the Verbal Behavior Clinic at UHCL, worked with staff and caregiver training, and conducted translational research on self-editing and gender-biased verbal behavior. At KU, she served as a teaching assistant for a KU preschool

Fernanda Oda, MA, BCBA *continued*

program and for an introductory course in applied behavioral sciences, worked with the World Health Organization in Africa to assist with the development of data collection systems related to COVID-19, and is currently involved in projects related to verbal behavior, behavioral economics, and promotion of social justice. She has peer-reviewed publications in American and Brazilian behavior-analytic journals and currently serves as an Associate Editor of a peer-reviewed Brazilian journal in behavior analysis. Her interests include verbal behavior, conceptual and translational research, social justice, and international dissemination. Her dissemination projects include donating textbooks to all graduate programs in behavior analysis in Brazil and five small publications in the Science Magazine. Fernanda received national and regional awards and scholarships, including the 2017 SABA International Development Grant, the 2019 SEAB Graduate Student Diversity Scholarship, the 2019 UHCL Most Outstanding Student, the 2019 MABA Best Applied Poster Award, the 2019 FABA Best Overall Poster Award, the 2020 VB-SIG/ABAI Student Grant Competition, the 2020 VB-SIG/ABAI Student Paper Award, the 2020 MABA Forrest J. Files Basic Research Student Paper Award, and the 2021 University Women's Club Scholarship of KU. She served as the UHCL Program Delegate for the ABAI, the 2016 UHCL Student Representative of the VB-SIG/ABAI, as a member of the ABAI Task Force on Gender and Sexual Orientation, and is currently the ABAI Incoming Student Representative Elect.

Alyssa Rojas, MS, BCBA



Alyssa Rojas is a first year PhD student in the Applied Behavior Analysis program at University of South Florida. She earned her Masters in Science in Applied Behavior Analysis at California State University Northridge under the advisement of Dr. Tara Fahmie where she worked on a prevention of problem behavior project. She is currently under the advisement of Dr. Catia Cividini-Motta where her research focus is on the assessment and treatment of automatically reinforced problem behavior. She is currently a doctoral level instructor in the University of South Florida's ABA minor program. She is currently working on a systematic literature review and a precursor identification assessment protocol. She looks forward to continuing her contributions to this field as an active researcher is interested in continuing her research in prevention of problem behavior and strives to foster an interdisciplinary approach to developing efficient programs and disseminating research.

Kristen Rolf, MEd



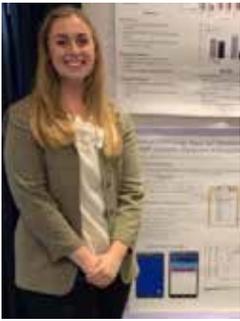
Kristen Rolf is in her final year of the Special Education PhD program at Utah State University under the supervision of Tim Slocum and Kaitlin Bundock. She earned her teacher certification and M.Ed. from the University of Washington Tacoma. She taught for five years in K-8 general and special education classrooms and served three years as an instructional coach. As an instructional coach, she was responsible for supervising dual-certification pre-service teachers from the University of Washington Tacoma and training pre- and in-service teachers and paraeducators in the implementation of Direct Instruction programs. Since coming to Utah State, she has researched the selection and implementation of empirically-supported instructional programs in schools. Currently, she is leading a cross-disciplinary team in the development of an explicit, systematic mathematics vocabulary intervention. She plans to study the efficacy of the intervention for her dissertation. Kristen has co-authored multiple articles and

conference presentations on Direct Instruction and implementation in the context of education since becoming a doctoral student. She is also a co-author of *Direct Instruction Mathematics – 5th ed.*

Ashley Romero, MA, BCBA



My name is Ashley Romero and I am a fifth-year doctoral student at the University of Kansas under the advisement of Dr. Pam Neidert. I received my Master's degree in 2018 from the University of Kansas and my thesis was an evaluation of effective and efficient toileting procedures in young children. I received my bachelor's degree in 2016 from the University of Florida. I am currently working as a BCBA for an early intensive behavioral intervention clinic and supervising RBTs and BCBA supervisees. My research interests include the assessment and treatment of severe problem behavior, training FA methodology to staff and students, functional communication training, and dissemination of our field. My personal interests include spending time with my family in Miami, FL while boating, fishing, and diving.

Sandra Ruby, MA

Sandra is a doctoral student in the Performance Management Laboratory at the University of Kansas under the mentorship of Dr. Florence DiGennaro Reed. She completed her bachelor's degree in Psychology at California State University, Fresno, while managing Dr. Steven W. Payne's P.A.W. Lab and working as a Registered Behavior Technician. During her graduate studies, she has consulted with a human service organization serving adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities and a behavior-based dog training company. Her current research interests include efficient staff training practices, technology-based interventions, and professional development. In her free time, Sandra enjoys cooking, exploring and laughing with friends and photography.

Michele Sereno, MA, BCBA

Michelle A. Sereno, MA, BCBA earned her BS in psychology from the University of Florida and her MA from the University of Nevada, Reno. She is a PhD candidate at the Chicago School of Professional Psychology in the applied behavior analysis (ABA) online program. Michelle is passionate about applying ABA toward socially meaningful change for families experiencing abuse, trauma, and intimate partner violence (IPV). She currently serves as Regional Senior Behavior Analyst for ChildNet, Inc. In this role, she oversees ABA services for children and families in the foster care system. She also designs and delivers trauma-informed behavioral skills trainings for caregivers and professionals. Michelle's research has primarily focused on functional-contextual analyses of variables impacting victim-survivors of IPV. Her systematic review of studies using the Implicit Relational Assessment Procedure (IRAP) to measure implicit biases demonstrated by professionals toward clients was recently published in a peer-reviewed journal. Michelle's dissertation evaluates problematic biases related to intimate partner violence within the dependency system. Following completion of her PhD program, Michelle intends to seek a faculty position that would afford her the opportunity to stoke student interest in research and application of ABA to issues of social justice within a multi-disciplinary framework.