

# CURRENT REPERTOIRE



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# 19th Annual Conference on Autism: Research-Based Solutions

FRIDAY, APRIL 24

Berwyn, Pennsylvania + Virtual Access

9 Expert Speakers  
& Panelists



Jonathan Schmidt, PhD, BCBA-D



Matt Tincani, PhD, BCBA-D



Keith E. Williams, PhD, BCBA



### Joint Presentation

Amanda Duffy, MEd, BCBA, LBS; Kristina Gasiewski, MOTR/L, MEd, BCBA;  
Lara Redcay, MEd, BCBA



### Joint Presentation

Helena Maguire, MS, LABA, BCBA, CDE®  
Jill Harper, PhD, BCBA-D, LABA, CDE®



### Panel Moderator

Mary Jane Weiss, PhD, BCBA-D, LABA



### Welcome

Dr. Rob  
Holdsambeck  
Executive Director

BACB® Learning CEUs &  
Psychology CE Credits  
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**behavior.org**

**REGISTER IN-PERSON**  
Berwyn, Pennsylvania

**REGISTER VIRTUAL**  
Zoom

**Earn BACB® Learning CEUs and/or  
Psychology CE Credits**

*Learn more about Continuing Education Opportunities  
Asynchronous/Home Study CHANGE this year. Review Information Online\**

# Conference Program

## 19th Annual Conference on Autism: Research-Based Solutions

### Eastern/PA Timezone - Friday, April 24, 2026

8:00 - 9:00 am	Check-in (Virtual Attendees: Test Your Zoom link!)
9:00 - 9:15 am	<b>Introduction</b> <b>Rob Holdsambeck, EdD, LCP, BCBA-D</b> “Understanding the Cambridge Center for Behavioral Studies™”
9:15 - 10:15 am	<b>Matt Tincani, PhD, BCBA-D</b> “Neurodiversity, Neurodivergence, and Applied Behavior Analysis”
10:15 - 10:30 am	Break
10:30 - 11:30 am	<b>Helena Maguire, MS, LABA, BCBA, CDE®</b> <b>Jill Harper, PhD, BCBA-D, LABA, CDE®</b> “From Framework to Fidelity: Building Effective BCBA Supervision Systems in Applied Settings”
11:30 - 11:45 am	Break
11:45 am - 12:45 pm	<b>Jonathan Schmidt, PhD, BCBA-D</b> “Integrating Treatment Components and Tactics for Reducing Self-Injurious Behavior and Self-Restraint”
12:45 - 1:50 pm	Lunch is provided ( <i>sandwich assortment, chips, &amp; cookies</i> )
1:50 - 2:50 pm	<b>Amanda Duffy, MEd, BCBA, LBS</b> <b>Kristina Gasiewski, MOTR/L, MEd, BCBA</b> <b>Lara Redcay, MEd, BCBA</b> “Advocating for Empowerment: Navigating End of Life Care for the Autistic Population”
2:50 - 3:05 pm	Break
3:05 - 4:05 pm	<b>Keith E. Williams, PhD, BCBA</b> “Helping Persons on the Spectrum Expand Their Diets: Thirty Years of Lessons Hard Learned”
4:05 - 4:15 pm	Break
4:15 - 5:15 pm	<b>Mary Jane Weiss, PhD, BCBA-D, LABA, Panel Moderator</b> “Invited Speaker Panel: Autism Intervention: Lessons, Challenges, and Opportunities”

**CONTINUING EDUCATION NOTE:** For BOTH In-Person and Virtual attendance, we need to verify your attendance if you are earning continuing education. Codes will be given during EACH presentation. You will need to complete an online evaluation and pass a code submission quiz (100%) to earn your continuing education certificate. If this is not completed by end-of-day, Monday, April 27, and you plan on finishing after recording links are sent, there is a new procedure for asynchronous/home study for BACB Learning CEUs. An interactive quiz with 3 questions per presentation has been added. Instructions will be given during conference AND emailed to you at the end of the day.

**\*Continuing Education:**

BACB® Learning CEUs - (6.0) In-Person & Virtual  
Psychology CE Credits (6.0) Synchronous/Live Attendance ONLY In-Person or Virtual

Presented by: [Cambridge Center for Behavioral Studies™](#), [Melmark](#), and [Amego Prepare](#)



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# 19th Annual Conference on Autism: Research-Based Solutions

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### Elevating the Field of Human Services

Founded 60 years ago, Melmark is a multi-state non-profit human service organization providing clinically sophisticated evidence-based special education, residential, vocational and therapeutic services for children and adults with autism spectrum disorders, developmental and intellectual disabilities, acquired brain injuries and other neurological and genetic disorders. All specialized special education services are based on the principles of applied behavior analysis (ABA) and are designed based on each student's individual needs.



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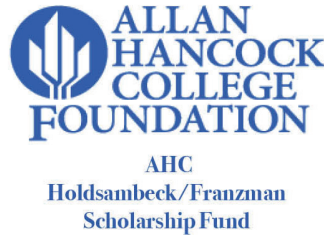
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CAMBRIDGE CENTER  
FOR  
BEHAVIORAL STUDIES

# 2026 Annual Meeting of the Trustees

Connect with friends while planning for our future

We look forward to your participation as a Trustee, Advisor,  
Distinguished Scholar or Friend of the Center.



TUESDAY, MAY 19

WEDNESDAY, MAY 20 (½ DAY)



CORQUE  
HOTEL  
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California



There's Still Time to  
REGISTER

A Special  
1 ½ Day  
Planning Event  
in Wine Country

Or  
Attend  
Virtually

INFORMATION,  
REGISTRATION & HOTEL  
RESERVATION THRU  
**behavior.org**

## CCBS Distinguished Scholars Recognized for Excellence



Jasmeen Kaur

Specialized Behavior Intervention  
**Excellence in Research**



Carson Whitford

Specialized Behavior Intervention  
**Excellence in Clinical Services**

We're proud to celebrate two Distinguished Scholars, **Jasmeen Kaur** and **Carson Whitford**, who were recently recognized by the University of Nebraska Medical Center for their excellence in research and clinical service. From advancing rigorous, innovative scholarship to delivering compassionate, high-quality care that transforms outcomes for families, these Distinguished Scholars exemplify the very best of our field and community.

Trustee Tara Fahmie, PhD, BCBA-D, LBA (NE, IA)  
*Former Distinguished Scholar Leader*  
Director, Specialized Behavior Intervention  
University of Nebraska Medical Center  
Munroe-Meyer Institute

ABA Doctoral Awards *Phoenix Award* 2025

# The Wing Institute Is with Morningside Academy

The Wing Institute at Morningside Academy is an independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit operating foundation dedicated to the promotion of evidence-based education policies and practices in K-12 education. The Wing Institute was originally founded in California in 2004. It was named after Ernie Wing, an outstanding educator and child advocate who was an early champion of evidence-based education and quality services for children with special needs. When the California institute folded, the leaders designated Morningside Academy as a logical organization to keep its function flowing.

As a “catalyst” organization, it is designed to bridge the research-to-practice gap by facilitating communication, cooperation and collaboration among individuals and organizations currently engaged in evidence-based education. Its goal is to analyze and disseminate existing

knowledge, help create new knowledge, and facilitate the effective application of that knowledge to real world settings in real time parameters.

To check out the Wing Institute at Morningside, go to [www.morningsideacademy.org](http://www.morningsideacademy.org) and click on Wing Institute along the top of the home page.



## Recommended Readings from Morningside Academy

- ***Raising Kids O.K.*** by Dorothy Babcock & Terry Keepers
- ***Kidbits: The Science and Art of Teaching*** by G. A. Smith
- ***Finding Flow: The Psychology of Engagement with Everyday Life*** by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi
- ***The Anxious Generation: How the Great Rewiring of Childhood Is Causing an Epidemic of Mental Illness*** by Jonathan Haidt
- ***The Power of Positive Parenting: A Wonderful Way to Raise Children*** by Glenn Latham
- ***Of Boys and Men: Why the Modern Male Is Struggling, Why It Matters, and What to Do About It*** by Richard V. Reeves
- ***The Morningside Model of Generative Instruction: Bridging the Gap Between Skills and Inquiry Teaching*** by Kent Johnson, Elizabeth Street, Andrew Kieta, and Joanne Robbins
- ***A Kids Book About Kindness*** by Jackson Cooper
- ***Response to Intervention and Precision Teaching: Creating Synergy in the Classroom*** by Kent Johnson and Elizabeth Street

### Morningside Academy's Parent Lending Library

Adding books all the time, including a few recommendations from founder, Dr. Kent Johnson, CCBS Trustee!



- ***How To Build Good Behavior And Self-Esteem In Children*** by Henry D. Schlinger Jr.
- ***Head Strong: A Parenting Survival Kit for Reducing Tension and Building Self-Esteem*** by Ted Ayllon
- ***Contracting with Kids: A Positive Way to Change Your Child's Behavior*** by Jill C. Dardig, William L. Heward

[Download Full Descriptions \(PDF\)](#)

# Congratulations to CCBS Trustee Robert Pennington

## Dr. Robert Pennington Becomes Editor-in-Chief

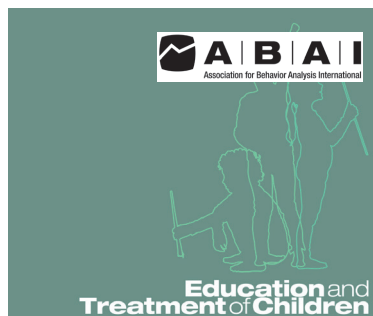
Educ. Treat. Child.

<https://doi.org/10.1007/s43494-026-00177-4>

EDITORIAL

“As I humbly step into the role of editor-in-chief of *Education and Treatment of Children* (ETC), I acknowledge that I am also stepping onto the mighty shoulders of Michael Himle, Claire St. Peter, Stephanie Peterson, Bernie Fabry, David Hansen, Dan Hursh, and others, including hundreds of reviewers and authors. They have built and shaped ETC into a respected outlet for meaningful research related to

improving outcomes for children with a range of behavioral and emotional support needs. These individuals served the journal and its mission with tireless commitment, high expectations, and grace. As a former ETC guest associate editor, reviewer, and author, I have experienced their excellence first hand and am a better researcher and professional because of it. I am keenly aware of the high bar set before me as incoming editor.”



*From “Leaning Further into the Education and Better Treatment of Children in Schools: An Editorial” found on Springer.com. Read Dr. Pennington’s full editorial.*

## Spotlight Trustee Darrel Bostow & His Contributions to behavior.org

Darrel earned his B.A. in Psychology from the University of Cincinnati in 1966. He was introduced to the experimental analysis of behavior while earning an M.A. in Experimental Psychology from Western Michigan University in 1968. He worked in an animal research laboratory, a hospital, and schools while accomplishing thesis work in the field of discriminated avoidance with laboratory animals. He turned to the investigation of instructional principles and earned his Ph.D. in Educational Psychology from Southern Illinois University in 1970.

Darrel spent 37 years teaching at the University of South Florida, where he worked closely with public schools and supervised the research of master’s and doctoral students. His early academic focus centered on college instructional techniques. In the latter half of his career, he specialized in computer-based interactive instruction and contributed to the formative development of USF’s Behavior Analysis Master’s Program.

Darrel is the founder of [www.scienceofbehavior.com](http://www.scienceofbehavior.com) where he continues to collaborate with Kevin Murdock, Ph.D., to offer their web-delivered tutorials about the field of behavior analysis. The website specializes in the application of programmed instruction tutorials that are free of cost. Visitors can employ the website with or without assignment by instructors in courses or workshops.



The CCBS behavior.org site currently lists Darrel’s tutorials as one of the selections in the Help Center. The tutorial about learning principles gives a broad introduction to basic learning principles and consumes about two hours in total time—done with rest periods. It is a series of eleven “sets” of tightly programmed user-interactive instruction. Users must pay close attention as they learn. The series is accomplished in progressive order without skipping any portions. Users can advance to the next tutorial when they achieve at least an 80% ongoing score.

The series of eleven component sets about learning principles is a global introduction composed for the newcomer to behavior analysis in academic courses, workshop, or independently. The series is useful for review in preparation for certification. Many instructors around the world are assigning the series in their introductory courses. To date,

the entire series of sets about learning principles has been accomplished over 1400 times, prompted primarily by instructors. The remaining available tutorials are careful reviews of B. F. Skinner’s major works for users who wish to delve more deeply into behavior analysis. Again, **all tutorials are free** and accessed primarily through [www.scienceofbehavior.com](http://www.scienceofbehavior.com), or via the Help Center at [www.behavior.org](http://www.behavior.org).

### Have news to share?

Send your milestones, moves, or shout-outs for the next issue to [pavlik@behavior.org](mailto:pavlik@behavior.org).



# Tech, Tools, & Tips

Curated by Trustee and Board of Director Dr. Janet Twyman

In this recurring column, Janet will describe some of her favorite free or low cost technology, tools, and tips that may be of interest to the CCBS community.

## Designing Conference Presentations That Matter

I love our science and its related fields, and much of that love was shaped by the conferences I attended early in my career. The Association for Behavior Analysis (now ABAI), New York State ABA (NYSABA), Northern California’s regional conferences (now the much larger Cal ABA), the lesser-known, now-defunct Behaviorology conferences, and the CCBS Annual Meetings gave me something priceless. At those events I met researchers and authors whose work inspired me, heard their words firsthand, and gained lifelong colleagues and friends who helped form what I do in this field. And quite often, I learned something.

These days, behavior analysts have over 40 conferences to choose from annually, ranging from international proceedings to small specialty-themed events. With that expansion comes something important to consider: **There have never been more opportunities for speakers to shape how someone in their audience thinks or behaves.**

At conferences speakers share basic findings, applied innovations, program models, replications, conceptual analyses...often involving data they have worked on for years. Yet as an instructional designer (and as a presenter) I can’t help asking: **When someone leaves your presentation, what should be different in their repertoire?**

A presentation is a professional act of translation. Just like almost everything in our field, it is successful only if something changes: how someone thinks, what they notice, what they do or stop doing... Our journals have a number of publications about how to be a better presenter (e.g., Friman, 2014 or Heinicke et al., 2022) and often they touch upon necessary but insufficient themes like verbosity, style, font size, etc. In addition, I’m encouraging all “want to be great” presenters to **first consider outcomes**. Before you present, ask yourself:

- Have I clearly articulated why this work matters?
- Have I answered the listener question, “Does this apply to me?”
- Would someone be able to describe what changed in their thinking after attending?

Design your talk to answer these questions *before* they’re asked by the audience. After a key finding, briefly address why it matters, where it generalizes, and what it means for research or practice. Research and sessions have slightly different obligations. For research talks, name at least one practical implication and one boundary condition. For applied talks, include at least one concrete implementation example. Do not leave the relevance of your talk to be inferred. Tell us.

*Continued*

Before you open your **SLIDE SOFTWARE**, ask yourself:

FOR A BASIC RESEARCHER, THAT MIGHT MEAN:	FOR AN APPLIED PRESENTER, THAT MIGHT MEAN:
Refining how colleagues <i>interpret</i> a functional relation.	Improving <i>implementation fidelity</i> .
Clarifying <i>boundary conditions</i> .	Adjusting <i>supervision practices</i> .
Challenging a commonly accepted <i>assumption</i> .	Rethinking when a <i>procedure</i> is (or is not) appropriate.

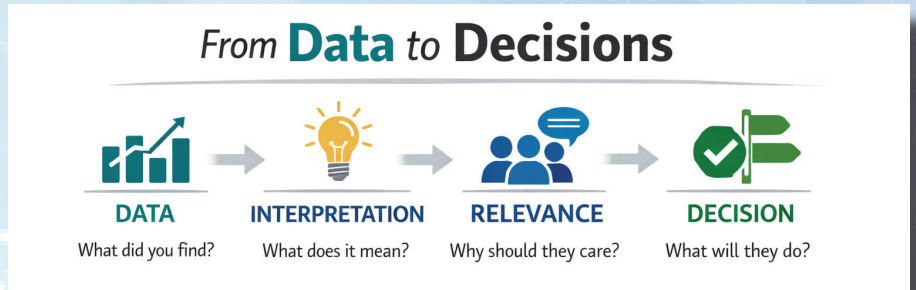
If you can't answer these questions, your design work *isn't finished*.

Also reflect with us. Occasion “So What?” moments by providing discriminative stimuli for opportunities to incorporate professional judgment, such as:

- **After the background:** “Here’s the gap we’re trying to close.”
- **After the results:** “Here’s what this means for practice, research, or supervision...” or “If you are running a clinic with limited staff time, the practical takeaway is ...” or “This finding suggests we should be cautious about assuming...”
- **Before your conclusion:** “If you remember one thing...”

Think about how to convert your knowledge, findings, or expertise into a form that is meaningful and usable for *this specific audience, in this specific context.*

And now I hear you saying, “Okay, I’m great on content, but what about...”



### Visuals

Stop and ask yourself, who are your slides for? (Hint: Not you). They are not your dedicated speaking notes, nor should they be a transcript of your talk (we’d all just read way ahead of you). Keep it to one idea per slide (at most). Paragraphs are for documents, not slides. Frankly, if more than a few words are needed to highlight a point, then the slide needs a revision. And for all of us squinting at a washed-out projection from the back of a room, please consider high contrast, clean fonts, and plenty of white space. It helps all of us see and thus get your message.

Of course you do have a lot of information to share. Perhaps share supplementary materials via [QR code](#) or a link. Use your slides as attention-shaping tools, directing attention and supporting interpretation. For each slide, think about:

- What meaning or message should it convey?
- What should the audience notice here?
- What discrimination do I want to strengthen?
- Does the imagery (if any) match or support my tone?



### Engagement

If you’ve ever been in the audience when I present, you know I always ask you to do *something*. Not just to keep you awake, as an educator, I know that active responding is one of the most reliable ways to strengthen learning. If a goal is behavior change, then asking your audience to practice during your talk gets us closer to that goal.

Some of my favorite Free or Free to Try Audience Participation Resources

- Kahoot
- Mentimeter
- GoFormative
- Padlet

The easiest entry point is audience questions and polling, digital or not (see Heward & Twyman, 2021; or a previous column listing some of my favorite [Active Responding Resources](#)). A well-placed question before a key finding primes attention and creates a moment of anticipation. Response cards and brief checklists serve a similar function. And they’re fun. But do go beyond multiple-choice formats and selection-based responding. Think about how you can ask your audience to produce: to write down their current practice, sketch a decision flowchart, jot down the biggest barrier they’d face implementing what you just described. Passive audiences hear or see information. Active audiences practice behavior.

*Continued*

## Delivery

Content and visuals are only two legs of our “presentations that matter” stool. Delivery matters too. A few things have helped me, take what’s useful as you maintain or develop your own style.

Breathe, and really know your opening. Even though you can warm up as a talk progresses, the first few seconds lay the foundation for your confidence and the audience’s perception. Once you’re rolling, remember that eye contact is *contact*, use it throughout the talk and the room. Pace yourself (slowing down is often seen as confidence rather than hesitation) and vary your voice when you can (it keeps everyone interested, including you).

Silence can feel uncomfortable, but it’s a great tool. A well-placed pause after a key finding gives it room to land. A deliberate pause before participation works similarly (e.g., “*Write down one thing you’d change in your setting.*”) functions as an establishing operation for what’s coming next. And watch the clock to end on time. Don’t be one of *those people*.

A word on preparation and nerves. I’m not saying to memorize your talk; just know it well enough to be *present* with your audience rather than being concerned about what comes next or what you might have left out. We in the audience are rooting for you. **We came to learn.**

## Presentation Creation Tools

Here’s a few free or free-to-try digital tools that help presenters design clearer, more effective slides. Slide builders such as [Canva](#), [Google Slides](#), and the web version of [PowerPoint](#) will help organize content and create visually polished slides without requiring advanced design skills. For even more assistance with structure or layout, AI-assisted slide tools like [Gamma](#), [Beautiful.ai](#), and [Canva’s Magic Design](#) can generate draft presentations or automatically adjust layouts as content is added, helping prevent cluttered slides. When presenting research or other data, data visualization tools such as [Datawrapper](#) and [Flourish](#) can produce clean, high-contrast charts and graphics that make patterns and functional relations easier for audiences to see. Play around with these tools to help you focus audience attention on your message.

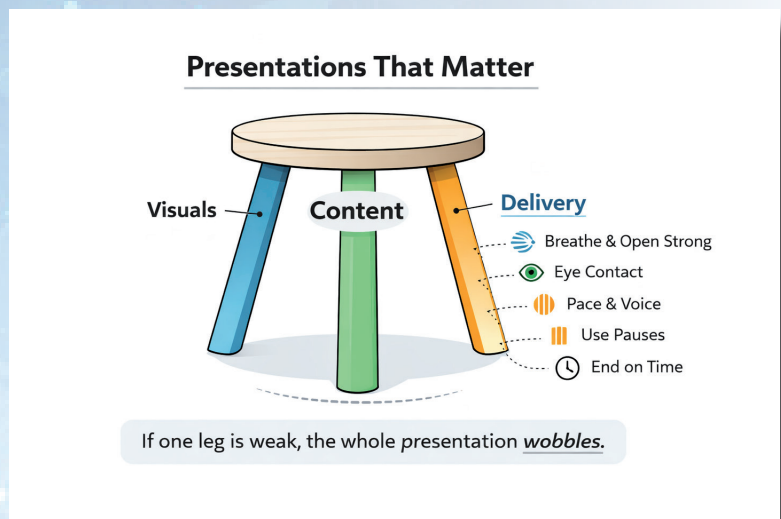
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A professional conference presentation is part of the dissemination process. Our field has long emphasized that effective behavior change is engineered, not improvised. The same should be true of our professional presentations. Let’s all design them so that behavior changes.

All visuals created by the author using ChatGPT 5.2.

## References:

- Friman, P. C. (2014). Behavior analysts to the front! A 15-step tutorial on public speaking. *The Behavior Analyst*, 37, 109–118. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40614-014-0009-y>.
- Heinicke, M. R., Juanico, J. F., Valentino, A. L., & Sellers, T. P. (2022). Improving behavior analysts’ public speaking: Recommendations from expert interviews. *Behavior Analysis in Practice*, 15(1), 203-218. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40617-020-00538-4>
- Heward, W. L., & Twyman, J. S. (2021). Teach more in less time: Introduction to the special section on direct instruction. *Behavior Analysis in Practice*, 14(3), 763-765. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40617-021-00639-8>



# A Memorial of CCBS Advisor John Donahoe

*We just lost one of the greats of our field, John Donahoe. His contributions to the science of behavior are nearly immeasurable. I first met John in 1986 and continued to learn from him ever since. The following was composed by his former student and good friend David Palmer. While we mourn the loss of John, we must celebrate his contributions to our understanding of the bio-behavioral approach needed to understand complex behavior.*

## To the behavior-analytic community:

John Donahoe died this morning (1/8/26) from complications of pneumonia at the age of 93. A year ago, he lost his wife of more than 70 years, but he continued to live alone in the family home, supported by his three children, until he entered the hospital a week ago. We corresponded regularly, and he remained sharp until the end. Those readers who knew him will attest that he was extraordinarily scholarly. He read widely in the natural and biological sciences and seemingly never forgot anything he read. I have always referred to him as a biological search engine.

John did his undergraduate work at Rutgers and his graduate work at the University of Kentucky, where he was mentored by James Calvin, a Hullian, and Ernest Myers, a Skinnerian--whispering incompatible doctrine in each ear. In 1958, John received his degree in experimental psychology and the secondary field of neurophysiology. Upon Myers' untimely death the same year, John was appointed to replace him, with a remit to run two labs, one in human learning, one in animal learning. Fortunately, the labs were housed in different buildings: When an arsonist burned down the psychology building, his animal lab was spared, so chance decreed that he would turn to animal research for the rest of his career.

Together with Fogel Clark (whose early work appears in Volume 1 of JEAB), he trained chimpanzees in operant tasks preparatory to being launched into orbit in space capsules. (Years later, he would regale us with stories of "Double-Ugly," the chimp who was both homely and nasty. One day, the wires in the control room all started sparking and shorting out. When they ran into the experimental room they discovered that Double-Ugly, who had been strapped into a chair attached to a metal pole, was up at the ceiling of the room. He had pulled himself up the pole, hand over hand, bursting the bolts that held the chair to the floor.)

A few years later, John spent a sabbatical year at the Center for Brain Research at the University of Rochester and honed

his expertise in neurophysiology. By the late 60s he was ready to move on, and a former graduate student, Joe Ayres alerted him to a position at the University of Massachusetts, where he spent the rest of his career. At UMass he pursued a program of research on a unified principle of reinforcement (e.g., 1982, with Will Millard, Mike Crowley, and Ken Stickney), and he published two textbooks, coauthored with former students, *Language, Learning, and Memory* (1980, with Michael Wessells) and *Learning and Complex Behavior* (1994, with me). The latter half of his career was inspired largely by Skinner's distinction between experimental analysis and interpretation. Together with Jose Burgos, John was an early investigator of neural network models of behavior. To nearly his last breath, John was devoted to a molecular analysis of behavior, which he believed was sufficient to explain the molar regularities in behavior that are of widespread interest in the field.

John faced reality with equanimity. A few weeks ago, ignorant of what was to come, I wrote a note that ended with this line: "I turn 78 in 5 days, and whatever else that brings, the next 10 years are going to be different from the preceding 78. I will be stupider, more forgetful, less ambitious, and prone to more ailments as my body remembers that natural selection has no interest in what happens to me after my child-generation years are behind me."

He replied, ever precisely: "Natural selection will still have some interest in you to the extent that your behavior affects the survival of those with whom you share genes. Be that as it may, natural selection has lost most of whatever interest it ever had in either of us."

A dispassionate epitaph!

*Dave Palmer*

CCBS Advisor David C. Palmer, PhD  
Senior Lecturer Emeritus in Psychology

[\*Read Dr. Donahoe's obituary through Legacy.com\*](#)



## Recommended Viewing from North Ireland



In this ABAI invited presentation I recount a letter I wrote recently to B. F. Skinner in which I ask for advice in obtaining letters of support from professionals who promote branded versions of ABA. I had thought the letters would be relatively easy to obtain, but this has proven not to be the case. The letters were to be sent as an aid to a Psychologist in the UK who represents parents in tribunals where she fights to obtain ABA services for their children who are diagnosed with autism. I have yet to receive a letter 3 months after my request was made public. [Link to YouTube video.](#)

**CCBS Trustee Mickey Keenan. PhD, BCBA-D**

Professor School of Psychology  
Ulster University, N. Ireland

The thumbnail features a YouTube logo at the top. Below it, on the left, is a black and white image of Mickey Keenan sitting at a table with money. On the right is a color image of Mickey Keenan in a suit, looking out at a large moon in a dark sky. A wooden bucket with a yellow sign that says "HELP" is suspended by a rope in the center. At the bottom, the text reads "IT'S LIKE DROPPING A BUCKET DOWN A DRY WELL". A small email address "m.keenan@ulster.ac.uk" is visible in the bottom right corner of the image area.

## Introduction

The [Distinguished Scholar](#) interviews in *The Current Repertoire* highlight scholars' analysts whose work has made meaningful contributions to research, practice, and training in our field. In this interview, I spoke with Bryan Simmons, fellow Distinguished Scholar, about the experiences that shaped his development, the mentors and scholarship that influenced his thinking, and his commitment to improving quality of life for individuals with complex support needs. Our conversation also explores the role of functional analysis in clinical decision-making, the importance of open dialogue within the field, and the values that guide his work as both a scholar and practitioner.



## Interview

### Looking back on your graduate or early professional journey, what moments stand out as particularly formative for you?

Looking back on my early professional development, my time working at the University of Kansas stands out as particularly formative. I have been fortunate enough to have the opportunity to train closely under the mentorship of Dr. Claudia Dozier, and that experience has greatly shaped much of how I perceive behavior analysis today. One particularly impactful aspect of my training was gaining extensive experience developing, conducting, and interpreting functional analyses. Having repeated opportunities to be intimately involved in the iterative process that is functional analysis has solidified my interest in assessing and treating severe challenging behavior and reinforced the importance of not only evidence-based assessment and treatment processes, but sound training.

### Was there a specific article, book, mentor, or experience that significantly shifted how you think about behavior analysis?

Mentorship has been central to my growth. Again, Dr. Claudia Dozier has been my most notable influence, but also informally, through coursework, projects, and interactions with Dr. Ed Morris. Any time I had the opportunity to stop by his office to listen to stories about the early development of behavior analysis, especially at Kansas, I'd take it. Those moments provided a unique perspective on the history and evolution of our field and will be memories I hold onto forever.

Several classic articles have shaped my thinking, particularly in supporting individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities across the lifespan. Bannerman et al. (1990), often referred to as the "doughnut article," discusses balancing habilitation with personal liberties. That framework continues to influence how I think about individual rights in applied settings. Similarly, Van Houten et al. (1990) on the right to effective behavioral treatment has shaped my perspective on ethical practice and our responsibility as behavior analysts, particularly with the work our lab does in supporting adults with IDD who have histories of severe challenging behavior.

### Can you describe a time when something in behavior analysis "didn't quite add up" for you, and how that tension shaped your growth?

At times, tensions in the field have also challenged my thinking. Different "camps" exist regarding intervention approaches, and while disagreements occur, I believe most of us share the same goal: supporting individuals from vulnerable populations in meaningful ways. Open dialogue, rather than confrontation, has been essential to my professional growth. I've learned to consider the conditions under which certain procedures may be appropriate instead of adopting absolutist positions and that is thanks to my experiences at Kansas.

### How has behavior analysis influenced you personally, beyond your academic or professional life?

Behavior analysis has definitely influenced my life beyond professional work. Growing up in an area with a dense concentration of behavior analysts inspired me to pursue the field. Today, behavioral principles guide how my wife and I parent our two neurotypically developing young children. Texts like "Positive Parenting" by Glenn Latham have been particularly helpful to me by offering behaviorally grounded guidance that can be supportive to any parent and one that I return to regularly.

### Can you share a moment when behavior analytic thinking changed how you interpreted an event in your own life?

Parenting is where behavior analytic thinking influences me daily. From the moment I wake up to the time I go to bed, I try to approach the highs and the lows with a behavioral lens, such as identifying relevant motivating operations, antecedents, maintaining consequences, and thinking about overall skill development. This perspective helps me collaborate effectively with my wife to support our children in respectful and dignified ways.

*Continued*

## Distinguished Scholar Interview: Bryan Simmons, MS, BCBA, LBA

### What values guide your work as a scholar and/or practitioner?

At the heart of my work is improving quality of life. I focus on understanding severe challenging behavior and the environmental variables that evoke and maintain it. When behavior isn't effectively addressed, individuals face the unfortunate likelihood of restrictions in daily life, including limited access to the community. I aim to identify these conditions through the functional assessment process and develop individualized interventions that remove barriers and support meaningful engagement.

### What kinds of questions in behavior science inspire your work today?

I'm motivated by questions that address challenging behavior and barriers it creates for individuals' access to the community, engagement in meaningful activities and building relationships. I aim to understand under what conditions challenging behaviors occur, and how we can use evidence-based approaches to reduce unnecessary restrictions while supporting autonomy, rights, and quality of life.

### What advice would you give to students who are just beginning to explore their interests in behavior analysis?

For students entering the field, my advice is to gain as much hands-on experience as possible. For example, observe and participate in functional analyses, seek out high-quality mentorship, pursue accredited training programs, and put your behavior out there so it can be shaped. Growth requires actively practicing what you learn and not being afraid to have your behavior contact contingencies.

### How would you recommend students approach readings that initially feel dense or difficult?

When readings feel dense, break them into manageable sections and focus on the core elements: history, contribution to the literature, purpose, targeted participants, independent and dependent variables, experimental design, results, and limitations. Summarizing these aspects helps make empirical research more accessible and meaningful, at least to me.

### What does it mean to you to be recognized as a Distinguished Scholar?

Being recognized as a Distinguished Scholar is truly an honor. I am not one to usually highlight my own achievements, so this recognition means a lot. It's gratifying to be acknowledged among the many respected scholars who have shaped our field in meaningful ways.

### What impact do you hope your work will have on the field?

Looking ahead, I hope my work encourages broader adoption of evidence-based assessment and treatment processes like functional analyses in both research and applied settings. Although it remains the gold standard for understanding challenging behavior, many practitioners still hesitate to use it. One goal is to identify efficient, accessible approaches that allow more people to adopt these processes and practices, ultimately improving outcomes and quality of life for individuals with significant behavioral challenges.

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## An Update About Bryan - Congratulations!

The Center recently learned that Bryan has officially accepted an offer for his next placement.

Bryan will be joining the wonderfully talented team (Brian Greer & Wayne Fisher) as a postdoctoral fellow at Rutgers University and the Rutgers University Center for Autism Research, Education, and Services (RUCARES) at the Brain Health Institute (BHI) within Rutgers School of Medicine.

Bryan reports that he is beyond grateful for offers received and could not be more excited to join an amazing group of researchers and clinicians. Bryan gives particularly special thanks to his wife (Nika Simmons) for maintaining his sanity and his mentor and advisor (Claudia Dozier) for the constant support and guidance.



**About the Author:** Rebecca J. Barall (she/her) is a PhD student at the University of Nebraska Medical Center's Munroe-Meyer Institute, mentored by Dr. Alice Shillingsburg and Dr. Amanda Zangrillo. She is a Board Certified Behavior Analyst, Licensed Behavior Analyst (NE, IA), and Certified Brain Injury Specialist. Rebecca holds an M.Ed. in Special Education from California State University, Monterey Bay, and a B.A. in Philosophy from the University of California, Santa Cruz. She was accepted as a Distinguished Scholar of the Cambridge Center in 2025.

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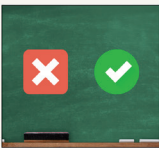


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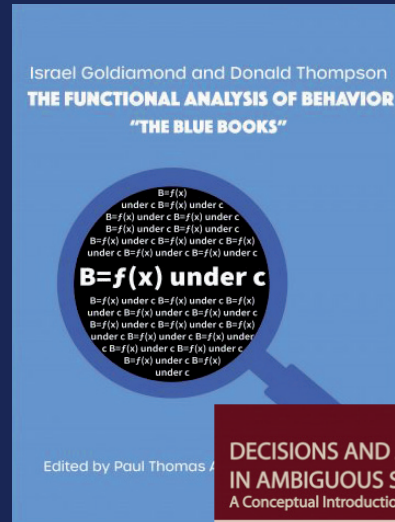
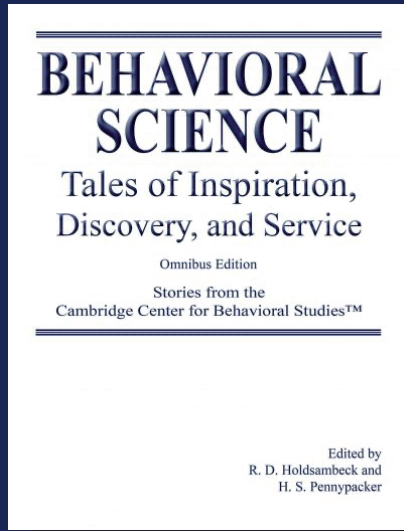
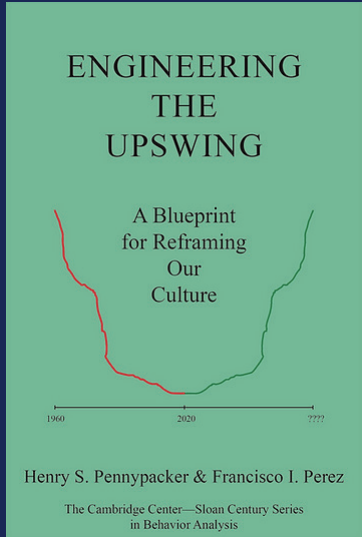
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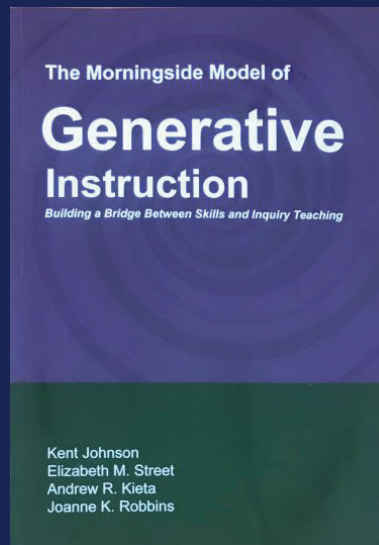
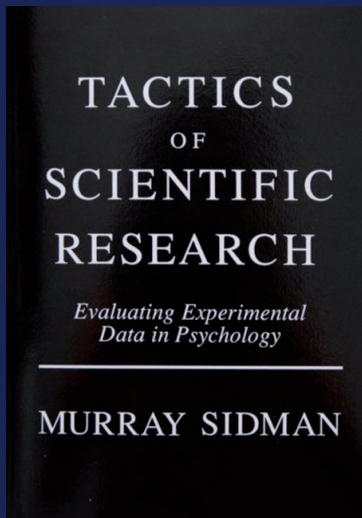
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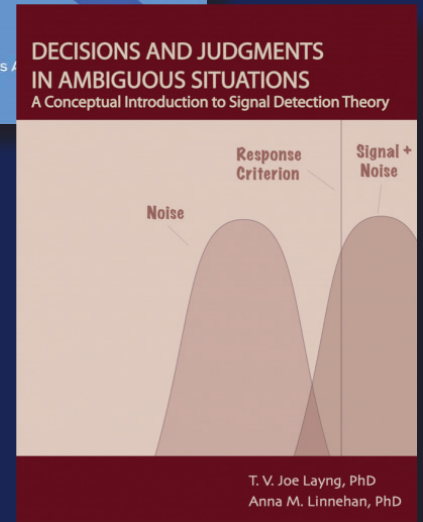
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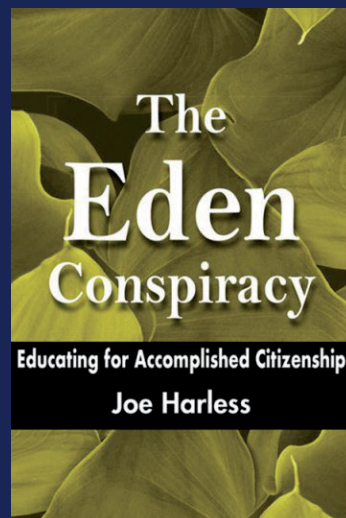
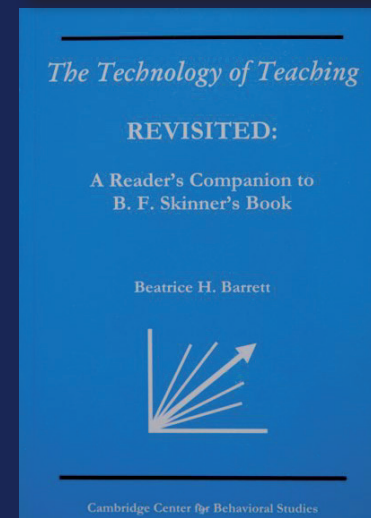
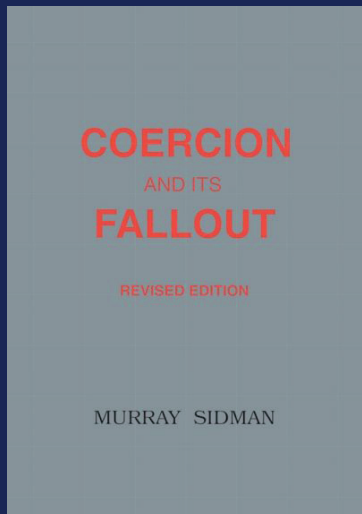
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