

Year Two of a Training Service for Members of Challenging Behavior Teams in Iowa

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Project Summary & Objectives

•Project Summary

- Iowa has nine Area Education Agencies (AEAs) that are responsible for delivering a variety of services to local school districts. AEAs employ specialty disciplines, including school psychologists, school social workers, behavior analysts, educational consultants, and speech-language pathologists to assist in the evaluation and intervention of students. Each AEA develops its own plan for delivering services to meet the needs of students within their agency. To help address behavior needs in the AEAs, the Iowa Department of Education (DE) contracted with behavior analysts from The University of Iowa Children's Hospital to provide training in the area of applied behavior analysis. This is the second year the Iowa DE has supported an initiative for each AEA to develop and train a challenging behavior team to conduct functional assessments and develop intervention plans for children who exhibit problem behavior at school.

•Project Objectives for TRAINERS during Year Two

- Customize consultation and training for teams based on an assessment of each team's experience and training needs at the end of year one.
- Provide training by coaching trainees to design and conduct functional assessments, supervising trainees' assessment practices, discussing/analyzing assessment results with trainees, and providing didactic training.
- Ongoing use of outcome measures to identify skills gained by trainees as a result of training.

•Project Objectives for TRAINEES during Year Two

- Gain independence in seven main skill areas: Functional Analyses, Antecedent Analyses, Concurrent Operants Assessments, Preference Assessments, Data Collection, Graphing, and Data Analysis.
- Learn fundamental behavioral principles including Motivating Operations, Discriminative Stimuli, Response Class, Reinforcement Schedules, and Generalization.
- Apply behavioral principles when developing functional assessments and behavior intervention plans.

Participants

- Challenging behavior teams consisted of 1 to 9 persons (M = 4.8). Time commitment for each member varied (percentage of full time employment [FTE]), from .10 FTE to 1.0 FTE.
- Thirty-three individuals have participated in the project since Year 1 (Cohort 1), and ten individuals have participated since Year 2 (Cohort 2).
- Although training focused on members of the Challenging Behavior Team, all teams included other AEA members and school personnel in parts of the training (see Table 1).
- Team members were diverse with regards to behavioral experience and educational/employment background (see Table 2).

Table 1: Summary of Participants

Group	N
Number of Participating AEAs	9
AEA Personnel	
Challenging Behavior Team Members	43
Non-Challenging Behavior Team Members	94
School Personnel	
School Team Members	128
Students Served	106

Training Activities

•Training Center (University of Iowa Children's Hospital) & Onsite Visits

- Teams practiced conducting experimental analyses (see Table 3) in a controlled environment (i.e., training center) and in the school setting (i.e., onsite visits). Teams were offered 5 to 6 visits to the training center and 7 to 8 onsite visits throughout the course of the year.

•Didactic Training

- Training was provided on principles of behavior analysis to help team members better understand how to conceptualize assessments, analyze data, and match assessment to intervention. Training was provided during training center visits, onsite visits, and through structured lectures that occurred via the Iowa Communications Network (ICN).

Table 3: Summary of Assessments Conducted

Assessments	Training Center	Onsite Visits	TOTAL
Antecedent Analyses	6	13	19
Functional Analyses	30	31	61
Concurrent Operants Assessments	10	19	29
Preference Assessments	13	29	42



Needs Assessment

•Skills Assessed

- Tools for Functional Assessment: Record Review, Interviews, Direct Observation, Experimental Analysis.
- Conceptualization of Assessment/Intervention: Motivating Operations, Discriminative Stimuli, Response Class, Reinforcement Schedule, Generalization.
- Behavior Interventions: Categorical (Diagnosis), Functional, Skill Accommodation, Skill Deficit.

•Participants

- All Challenging Behavior Team members (Cohort 1, N = 33; Cohort 2, N = 10)

•Procedure

- The needs assessment was distributed at the onset of the project (Fall 2009) and at the end of each subsequent school year (Spring 2010, Spring 2011). Hence, the needs assessment has been distributed a total of 3 times to Cohort 1 and a total of 2 times to Cohort 2.
- Participants used a Likert Scale to rate themselves:
 - Level of Experience (ratings 1 to 5): 1 = No Experience; 2 = Used 1-2 Times; 3 = Used 3-10 Times; 4 = Used Frequently; and 5 = Expert Skills.
 - Priority for training (ratings 1 to 4): 1 = Training Not Needed; 2 = Needed, Low Priority; 3 = Needed, Mid-Priority; 4 = Needed, High Priority.
- To summarize the data, criteria for "Minimum Level" competence and for "High Priority" needs for training were identified. We identified that a trainee met "Minimum Level" competence when they rated a tool as being "used frequently" or identified themselves as "experts" with the tool (ratings of 4 and 5). We identified a trainee being in High Need of training when they rated their desire for training as "High Priority" (rating of 4).

•Results

- Figure 1 displays the percentage of trainees who reported having a high level of experience with tools for functional assessment. Overall, trainees rated themselves as having the highest levels of experience with record reviews, interviews, and direct observations and the lowest levels of experience with experimental analyses. However, as training progressed, more trainees reported having a high level of experience with experimental analyses.
- Figure 2 displays the tools trainees rated as a high priority for training. Although trainees rated experimental analyses as their highest priority for training, the need for training decreased as trainees gained more experience with experimental analyses.

Figure 1: Needs Assessment (High Level of Experience) Tools for Functional Assessment

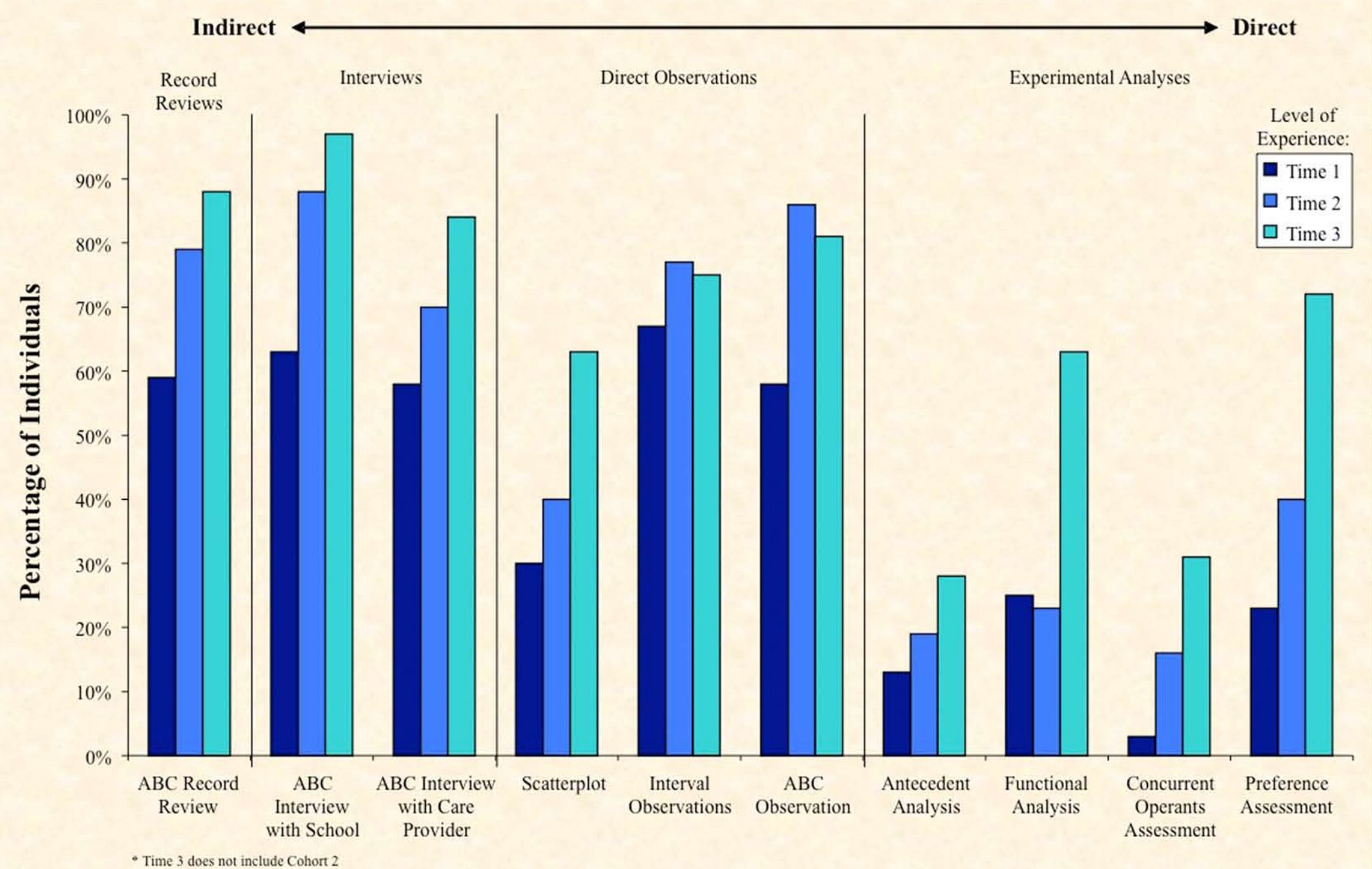


Figure 2: Needs Assessment (Priority for Training) Tools for Functional Assessment

