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## The BACB: The Best Stimulant for Behavior Analysis Training Programs

*Jose Martinez-Diaz, PhD, BCBA  
Florida Institute of Technology,  
BACB Board of Directors Member  
and Treasurer*

Before I began my current position as associate professor and department head of the Behavior Analysis Program at the Florida Institute of Technology, I was in various administrative positions in both the public and private sector for more than a decade. During that time I had the privilege of recruiting and hiring behavior analysts. Unfortunately, the supply was small as there were only a few universities in the country producing well-trained behavior analysts. In the mid-1990's, while I was running my own agency, I developed a proposal for a Masters program in ABA that would help others, as well as I, increase the number of potential qualified applicants for our positions. Even though at the time there was a Florida-based certification program, and I had data from employer and potential student surveys I had conducted, I mostly hit brick walls with all the university administrators I solicited. Finally one university, Florida Tech, liked my idea enough to support the creation of our program in 1998; however, I was funded as a 1/4-time faculty member and not given much in the way of resources to start the program. However, I had great hopes that all my hard work would pay off.

Fortunately, the BACB was formed in 1998, the same year our Behavior Analysis Program was founded. Since then the BACB has proven to be a great ally in obtaining resources for our program. In addition, there is strong evidence that the BACB has been a great stimulant for creating Behavior Analysis Programs and in helping existing programs grow.

Even though the program I started had more qualified applicants than we could admit, my university's administration was not very supportive during the first two years of the program. However, a significant event occurred in 2000: the BACB began to approve course sequences. My university was one of the first 13 universities that submitted an application and was granted approval of our course sequence. I believe that this was the first event that helped me obtain more resources when I asked for them. Shortly thereafter, I was able to point out to our administration that coursework requirements were increasing and that we needed additional faculty in order to meet the new requirements. Then in 2004 I was able to present the new intensive practicum requirements that were coming into effect in 2005 and, as a result, get additional faculty lines.

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Overall, we went from one part-time position in 1998 to six full-time positions within eight years. In addition, we have two part-time faculty members splitting a seventh full-time position as of the Fall semester of 2006! We currently have over 70 full-time graduate students in our program. I am certain that we would not have been able to get these resources if I had not continued to point out to administration that in order to continue to be successful we needed our graduates to meet BACB requirements; and that in order to do so we needed the faculty positions to do it.

I believe other universities would have similar stories. For example, I have heard similar stories from my colleagues at Florida State, Auburn, and the Chicago School of Professional Psychology. From the original 13 universities, the BACB currently has approved over 130 course sequences in over 90 universities, 25 of which are outside the US. Over the last five years I have also seen a significant increase in the number of faculty position announcements in our field; many of these even specify that the applicant should be a BCBA. And now I can find many more qualified applicants for ABA positions.

## Did You Know?



- The BACB has begun approving university-based experience. Currently, 7 universities offer courses that meet all or part of the experience requirements for BACB certification.
- The BACB currently has more than 4,800 active certificants.
- The BACB is currently accepting nominations for the Michael Hemingway award, which honors an individual who has advanced the field of behavior analysis. More information about the award can be found on the Maintaining Certification page of [www.BACB.com](http://www.BACB.com).
- Contributions you make to the BACB may be tax deductible. As a 501(c)(3), you may make certain tax deductible contributions to the BACB. For those of you wishing to help fund our research into specialty credentials, you may earmark any contributions to the BACB as being for "specialty credential" research and development. We also accept contributions to the Michael Hemingway memorial fund.
- In 2006, a total of 1,073 people took BACB examinations in 155 locations around the world. Within the United States, 1,001 people tested in 140 different locations. Outside of the US, 72 people tested in 15 different locations.

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## Did You Know? *cont'd*



- The results our survey last year reveal that many BCBA certificants are members of the Association for Behavior Analysis, International. Kudos to those of you who are active members of your professional associations! (See the figure below for other professional associations that have BACB certificants as members.)
- Sixty-eight percent of people answering the survey said that clients learn about them through word-of-mouth.
- Twenty-six percent of survey respondents said they have liability insurance and 47% reported that they would like to obtain it. In response to this need we are posting the names of liability insurance vendors on [www.BACB.com](http://www.BACB.com). Go to the "Maintaining Certification" page and click on the link contained in the "BCBA and BCABA Liability Insurance" section.

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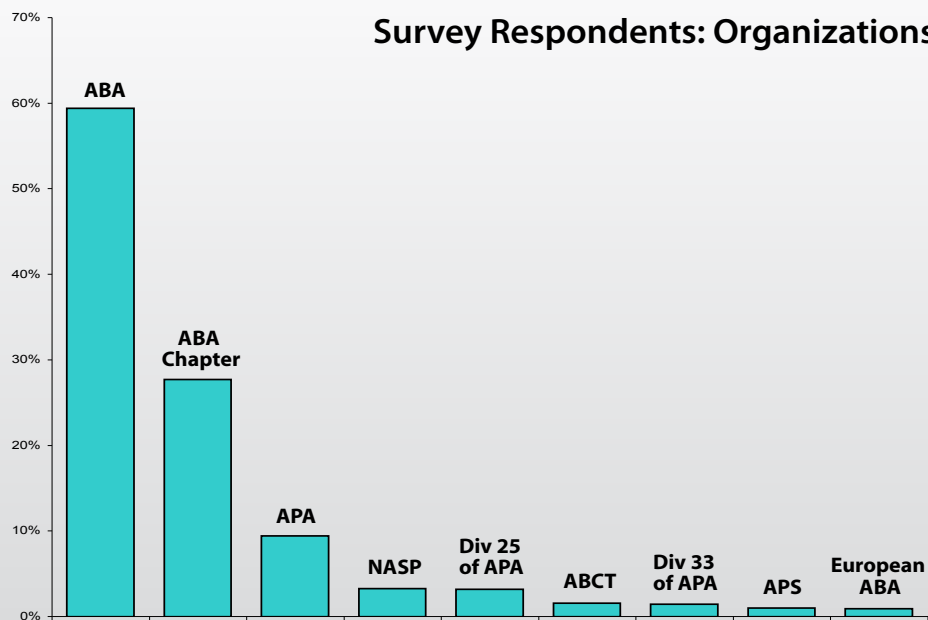
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## Survey Respondents: Organizations







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*Gerald Shook, PhD, BCBA*  
*BACB Chief Executive Officer*

### On-Line Certificant Survey

We wish to thank all of you who participated in the on-line "BACB Mega Survey" conducted this past spring. The main purpose of the survey was to obtain information from certificants that could be used by the BACB and its Board of Directors in future planning activities. Individual invitations were sent to all of the BACB's then 4,200-plus certificants. A total of 1,767 individuals (42%) participated and earned one hour of Type 5 continuing education credit. The survey results were reviewed by the Board of Directors at their 2006 annual meeting in late May and they are playing an important role in a number of key decisions. For example, survey results indicated that you wanted to renew, recertify, and pay on-line as well as have your continuing education tracked on-line. In response, the BACB has contracted with The Cobalt Company in Virginia for the development of a new, more robust database that will support all of these on-line functions. In another example, you indicated strong support (93%) for the current practice of on-line certificant voting for new Directors, and the BACB will retain that format. Over 60% of you indicated that you preferred the current printable electronic format of newslet-

ter to a paper edition so we will retain this electronic printable format, at least in the near term (this allows us to save money in printing and mailing costs so that we can invest in initiatives such as the on-line features you requested). Responses to other survey questions will most certainly guide future actions. The survey results also provided interesting demographic information. For example, 73% of the survey respondents were female; the largest numbers of respondents who also held an additional credential were teachers; over 60% of the respondents attend the Association for Behavior Analysis International conventions; and 4 of the certificants who responded also are lawyers. We learned a lot through this survey, including how to ask better questions, and you can look forward to this type of survey regularly in the future. By the way, we think that the 2% of survey respondents who rated the information in this newsletter as "not at all helpful" must have us confused with another newsletter.

### Specialties

Influenced by survey responses, the BACB Board of Directors decided to explore the need for specialties in both 1) autism, and 2) other developmental disabilities, as either two separate or one combined credential. The BACB plans to follow established specialty development protocol

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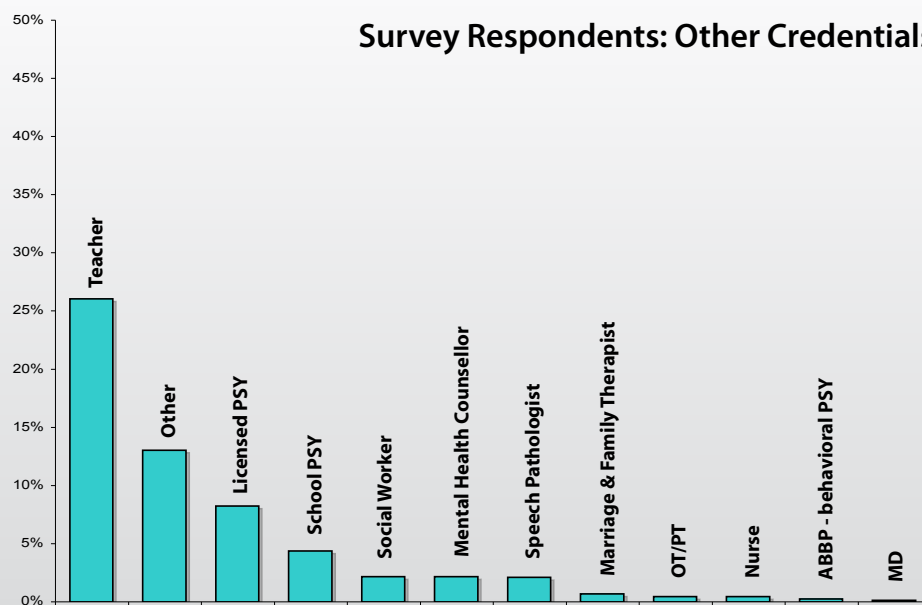
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Survey Respondents: Other Credentials





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and convene a three-day subject matter expert panel meeting following the California Association for Behavior Analysis conference in February to address the matter of specialty credentials. The panel will be a representative group of certificants who work with individuals with autism and other developmental disabilities and who are academics, administrators, consultants, and practitioners who supervise or conduct direct behavior analytic interventions. The panel members were chosen from the group of certificants who responded to the BACB's call for volunteers last year. The CalABA panel will first identify the tasks that are required to work with persons who have autism and persons with other developmental disabilities. The panel will then review and compare the task items contained in the Third Edition Task List with the identified tasks to determine 1) if the differences are sufficient to warrant developing an additional credential or credentials to supplement BCBA certification, and, if so, 2) if the differences between what is required to work with persons with autism and what is required to work with persons with other disabilities warrant a separate specialty credential for each, or a combined credential covering both. The panel also may make some preliminary recommendations on what should be required for specialties to supplement BCBA certification, should the data show that development of specialties is warranted. The BACB Board of Directors likely will review the findings and recommendations of the subject matter expert panel at its May meeting and decide how to proceed.

### **Certification Recognition**

Increasing the recognition of BACB credentials and funding opportunities for certificants who hold them are main goals of the BACB. We are in the process of developing a draft database with state-by-state information on 1) funding sources available for BACB certificants, and 2) regulations pertaining to behavior analysis services. Individual state contact people will be responsible for keeping their state's data current and the contact person will have access to the data from all other states. The BACB and the Association for Behavior Analysis International's Professional Affairs

Committee are planning several certification-related events at the San Diego ABAI convention – watch this space for details.

As you may recall, we have contracted for the expert consulting services of Sam Bell to help us with government and legislative matters. Sam is on the Board of Directors of State Law Resources, a consortium of legal firms specializing in government affairs. SLR has a member firm in nearly every state capital and provides a national network of support for its clients. Sam and I attended the SLR annual meeting in Austin, Texas this past fall along with Jon Bailey who was invited by the BACB to represent state behavior analysis associations. Jon and I presented before the group on behavior analysis, the BACB, and the nature of legislative challenges that were likely to confront certificants. I believe that through our affiliation with the SLR group, the BACB has begun forming a national network of professional support that will allow us to deal effectively with the increasing number of governmental and legislative issues we are facing in the US. In addition, Sam has help draft model legislative language that will be available for use by state associations for behavior analysis as the need arises. The state association is the focal point in each state for action required to protect certificants' right to practice and fund behavior analysis service. It is the state associations who will speak for behavior analysis in their states and the BACB will continue to support these efforts. Please contact me if you would like consultation from the BACB regarding government or legislative matters, and/or you would like me to present at your state conference. Several states do not have state associations, however, and certificants in those states run the risk of having unqualified individuals speak for behavior analysis in government and legislative matters. We believe that BACB certificants and other qualified behavior analysts should represent the field and, over the next year, we will encourage and support certificants to form state associations in states where there are none. You're probably asking yourself what you can do right now to help get certification recognized more widely, so .....



## News and Notes *cont'd*

### *Twelve Easy Things You Can Do to Foster Certification Recognition*

- 1** Always use your certification mark (BCBA or BCABA) after your name.
- 2** Request that your listings in conference presentations, program listings, and publications include your certification mark.
- 3** Require, and ask others to require, BCBA or BCABA certification in job postings for all behavioral positions.
- 4** Know and form a professional network with the BACB certificants in your area and your state. Communicate with them frequently.
- 5** Join and participate in your state association for behavior analysis (What! Your state doesn't have a state association? Put your head down for 2 minutes and then go out and form one).
- 6** Educate the consumers of your services about the quality and importance of your professional certification. Ask them to tell other consumers.
- 7** Make opportunities to meet your elected officials under pleasant circumstances. Tell them what you do and why it's important that BACB certified professionals do this important work.
- 8** Volunteer to be on a committee with an administrator who makes important decisions about behavior analysis services. Educate them on what you do and why BACB certifications are important.
- 9** Tell friends and acquaintances outside the field about how BCBA's and BCABA's help others and why certification is important to consumers.
- 10** Go out of your way to work positively with colleagues who have other professional certifications and licensures. Support their professional standing and encourage them to support yours.
- 11** Maintain your certification and help the BACB by volunteering to serve as an item writer, exam review committee member, subject matter expert, etc. Tell others about the value of this professional experience.
- 12** Write an article for a local non-behavior analytic newsletter in which you give an example of how you helped a consumer. Mention the value of BACB professional certifications.

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### **Universities with New BACB-Approved Training**

We are pleased to welcome the following universities to the list of 99 universities with BACB-approved course sequences. For a complete listing of universities with approved training, including those with the newly available BACB-approved experience, please see the recently-revised [Approved University Training page](#) on [www.BACB.com](http://www.BACB.com)

- **Akershus University College** (Norway)
- **SUNY Stony Brook University** (New York)
- **University of Limerick** (Ireland)
- **National University, Bakersfield** (California)
- **University of Kent** (England, UK)
- **Becker College** (Massachusetts)
- **San Diego State University** (California)
- **Namseoul University** (South Korea)
- **National Chang-hua University of Education** (Taiwan)
- **Fresno Pacific University** (California)
- **University of Southern Maine**
- **West Virginia University**
- **National University of Ireland, Galway**
- **ABA España** (Spain)
- **Northern Arizona University**

University faculty who are interested in developing course sequences to be approved by the BACB are encouraged to contact me for initial discussions and consultation. We will provide application materials that will delineate the requirements for approval and provide a framework for us to provide feedback to the applicant on what else is needed, if anything. If additional coursework development is called for, we will work with the applicant university until the course sequence is approved. Faculty who are in the initial stages of developing coursework may wish to begin the approval process early so they may consider BACB content requirements as they proceed. We have found that many university administrators like the notion of having their program's coursework approved by an international credentialing body such as the BACB and they will support faculty efforts to achieve that goal.

### **International Development**

As evidenced in the list of universities above, there is considerable interest in BACB certification outside of the United States. Approximately one-quarter of the universities with BACB-approved course sequences lie outside of the US. See the accompanying table listing all of the non-US universities with one or more approved course sequences.

### **Non-U.S. Universities**

 United Kingdom	<b>Cardiff University</b> (South Wales) <b>University of Kent</b> (England) <b>University of Ulster</b> Coleraine (N. Ireland) <b>University of Wales at Bangor</b> (Wales) <b>University of Wales at Swansea</b> (Wales)
 Ireland	<b>National University of Ireland, Galway</b> <b>University of Dublin, Trinity College</b> <b>University of Limerick</b> <b>University College Cork</b>
 Canada	<b>University of British Columbia</b> <b>University of Manitoba</b>
 Israel	<b>Tel Aviv University</b> <b>Zinman College Wingate Institute</b>
 New Zealand	<b>University of Auckland</b> <b>University of Waikato</b>
 Norway	<b>Akershus University College</b>
 Poland	<b>Warsaw School of Social Psychology</b>
 S. Korea	<b>Namseoul University</b>
 Spain	<b>ABA España</b>
 Sweden	<b>Stockholm Institute of Education</b>
 Taiwan	<b>National Chang-hua University of Education</b>



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During 2006, 72 candidates were tested outside the United States at four sites in Canada, 3 sites in Ireland, and 1 site each in France, Sweden, United Kingdom, Japan, Australia, Hong Kong, New Zealand, and Taiwan. The BACB currently has 214 international certificants. Over the past year, the BACB has worked with Associations for Behavior Analysis in Canada and Spain to develop time-limited alternative pathways for behavior analysts to qualify for examination. We realize university education approaches will vary from country to country, and we may need to work together to mesh BACB requirements with the educational systems of individual countries. Last spring I was honored to visit Taiwan and Japan where I presented at conferences and met with university and government officials. These activities were sponsored by SEEK Education as part of an effort to foster the application of behavior analysis in Asia. I also traveled to Milan this past summer to present at the European Association for Behavior Analysis' conference. My special thanks to Director Gina Green who substituted for me at my EABA conference presentations while I was researching Italian surgical procedures.

### **Director Election**

The nominations are in for the four Board of Directors positions up for election this year. We wish to thank all of you who nominated individuals and we particularly thank

those who have agreed to run. As mentioned above, we will continue to hold our elections via on-line certificant voting. We will be holding the elections soon so please check BACB.com to vote for the candidates of your choice. For a description of how the nominations and elections processes work, please see our article in the March 2006 edition of our newsletter.

### **Rate of Renewal and Recertification**

We are pleased to announce that the certificant renewal and recertification rate for each of the past three years has exceeded 95%. This is an extremely high retention rate when compared to other credentialing programs. We are honored and grateful to all of you for this demonstration of confidence in the BACB and dedication to the field of behavior analysis. As always, we appreciate your continuing support.

If your renewal or recertification is due next year, don't forget that you're welcome to send it in early. But please do be sure to read your applications carefully before you send them off to us. We've noticed that some are delayed unnecessarily because certificants have failed to answer the mandatory questions or have inadvertently checked the wrong answer to one of them (for example, quickly marking "no" to the question about whether one agrees to comply with BACB rules and regulations).







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## Focus on Ethics

In addition to routine correspondence with certificants, we sometimes receive calls or emails from people with ethical questions. This is one of the most difficult parts of our job because we are often unable to provide the definitive answers that these individuals seek. We are not in a position to render opinions on specific matters because it is impossible for us to know all of the facts about a situation; especially when an email or phone call from a single person is our only source of information. As much as we know you'd appreciate a direct quote from us telling you "yes" or "no" in a particular case, we simply are unable to provide such specific guidance. Our legal counsel would be quite unhappy with us if we did!

As with any high stakes profession, answers often do not lie clearly within one section of the BACB's Guidelines for Responsible Conduct. In fact, in most cases, the parties involved will need to research and weigh together several sections of the Guidelines, along with other factors (e.g., applicable laws in the region, current research on a particular technique) to determine what is ethically best.

It is important to keep in mind that the BACB's Guidelines for Responsible conduct are, ultimately, only guidelines. They contain general information to assist certificants and consumers in making responsible decisions about the provision of behavior analytic services. They are not enforced by the BACB.

Whenever an ethical question arises, it is also important to consider the BACB's Professional Disciplinary Standards. Unlike the Guidelines, the Disciplinary Standards are enforced. The Professional Disciplinary Standards define the types of activities that may be grounds for the BACB to issue sanctions against an individual's BACB certification. If a violation of the Disciplinary Standards occurs, the BACB relies heavily on individuals close to the situation to document the violation and submit a complaint to the BACB. When viewing the Disciplinary Standards

on [www.BACB.com](http://www.BACB.com), there is a link to the Consumer Complaint Format, which describes the types of information required in order for a possible violation to be reviewed. The same format applies to complaints filed by non-consumers (e.g., certificants or other involved parties).

We encourage certificants to contact us with their ethical concerns. We can often identify the sections of the Guidelines that may be helpful in discussing the situation with others involved and, if appropriate, help identify whether the issue appears to fall within one of the activities identified in the Professional Disciplinary Standards. In addition, we'd like to use this section of our newsletter to bring you discussions about ethical issues. We hope to make "Focus on Ethics" a regular section of the newsletter that will be thought-provoking and promote discussion among certificants.

For our first installation, we would like to present a Q&A from Dr. Jon Bailey and Dr. Mary Burch. In recent years, Dr. Bailey & Dr. Burch have been writing and presenting around the country about ethical issues in the practice of behavior analysis. They have generously agreed to share with us some of their writing that expresses their opinions on common ethical questions and their interpretation of the BACB Guidelines for Responsible Conduct. We hope to bring you additional writings from Dr. Bailey & Dr. Burch in the future, as well as contributions from other authors.

*While we are happy to be able to bring you this column on ethical issues, please remember that the answers provided are the authors' personal-professional opinions, and are not held, agreed to, supported or endorsed by the BACB. The BACB does not consult on specific ethical cases. The answers provided are for general educational purposes. The facts and circumstances of each client/certificant relationship may vary and this article is not intended to be factually specific consultation on a particular matter.*



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# The Ethical Behavior Analyst

*Jon Bailey, PhD, BCBA*

*Mary Burch, PhD, BCBA*

*Note: This is the first in a series of articles on ethics where we attempt to answer ethics questions from behavior analysts. This question came from a BCBA in California. Numbers in parentheses denote specific citations of the BACB Guidelines for Responsible Conduct.*

**QUESTION:** "Many BCBAs promote interventions for autism and related disorders that have proved ineffective or harmful in sound research (such as Facilitated Communication, auditory integration training, sensory integration therapy, secretin, and megavitamins) or have not yet been evaluated in scientific studies (e.g., elimination diets, chelation therapy). Those interventions and the theories on which they are based clearly contradict behavior analytic principles and methods."

**ANSWER:** Many of us never thought we would see the day that behavior analysis would become a commodity in our culture, but this particular question certainly makes it clear that commercial interests are beginning to erode on our traditionally "pure" values as scientists-practitioners. We understand there are pressures from consumers, primarily parents of children with a diagnosis of autism, to "try anything" rather than putting all their eggs in one behavioral basket so to speak. We know parents are under extreme duress when the autism diagnosis is made. It is highly unlikely most parents will have a background in science and a scientist's respect for the importance of solid evidence for effectiveness. Unfortunately we seem to be living in a time where there is a culture of skepticism about science and many people would rather make their own judgments rather than rely on unknown researchers who are promoting (possibly bogus) treatments. As behavior analysts, we trust our science, but this doesn't mean parents who are learning about a diagnosis of autism for the first time and hearing that there are evidence-based treatments available will be willing to place their full trust in this information. It is quite a gamble for consumer if you think about it; if there was any chance one of these unproven treatment approaches, diet regimens or drug therapies might work, many parents will want to spend at least some time and money on it.

The enormous pressures to find something

that works may result in comments and questions to their BCBA about alternatives to behavioral treatment, which leads us back to the question of commerce. If the BCBA thinks she is about to lose a customer by saying, "If you don't use behavior analysis exclusively I'm afraid I will have to drop you as a client" she may think twice about the consequences of lost revenue. The acceptable statement, "My ethical guidelines require me to inform you that these alternatives you are considering have no empirical base; there is no legitimate, well-controlled research to support them." is preferred. Informing consumers that these alternatives are ineffective is the minimum required of the ethical behavior analyst; promoting alternatives to improve the bottom line is of course is an entirely different matter.

So, what do the BACB Guidelines for Responsible Conduct say the ethical behavior analyst should do when confronted with pressures from parents to offer or at least endorse other unproven methods? To start, it is clear from the Guidelines (2.09) "The behavior analyst always has the responsibility to recommend scientifically supported most effective treatment procedures" (i.e. those that have been "validated as having both long-term and short-term benefits"). Note that recommending does not mean insist on, which means it is not unethical to work with clients who are at the same time trying other, unproven, methods of treatment. But, we do have an ethical obligation to inform them and educate consumers. Next, the Guidelines clearly state (4.0) behavior analysts do what they are trained to do which is "design programs based on behavior analytic principles." This means it is absolutely unethical for a behavior analyst to be trafficking in unproven approaches such as Facilitated Communication, auditory integration training, sensory integration therapy, secretin, megavitamins, elimination diets, and chelation therapy. If you know of a Board Certified Behavior Analyst engaging in these practices you have an obligation to inform them (9.01) by bringing the ethical lapse to their attention. You could show a Behavior Analyst who is using unproven methods the Guidelines and you have permission to use this article to make your point.

Finally, rather than supporting these unproven, dangerous and controversial procedures, the ethical behavior analyst should be promoting the "application of be-





## The Ethical Behavior Analyst *cont'd*

havior principles in society by presenting a behavioral alternative." (10.01). Although the BACB does not enforce the Guidelines for Responsible Conduct, it is the opinion of these authors that every BCBA has an ethical obligation to be familiar with the Guidelines (8.03) and to comply with them in any public statements (10.03) including meetings, presentations, and websites. The economic pressures on behavior analysts will no doubt continue to increase as we become more visible in the culture and the demands for our services escalate. For this

reason, Board Certified Behavior Analysts and Board Certified Associate Behavior Analysts must be very aware of the ethics guidelines and do what they can to educate colleagues as well as the public about the need for evidence-based treatments; a deep, abiding, regard for our clients' welfare demands nothing less.

*Jacobson, J.W., Foxx, R.M. & Mulick, J.A. (2005). Controversial Therapies for Developmental Disabilities. Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.*

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*Christine Ratcliff, MS, BCBA*

*BACB Chief Operating Officer & Newsletter Editor*

*Fae Mellichamp, MS*

*Senior Psychometrician,  
Professional Testing, Inc.*

It's not unusual for newer certificants to tell us that they remember a question or two from their exam that really threw them for a loop. Sometimes they even use more colorful descriptions of their reactions (which we won't repeat here). Inevitably, in the course of these conversations, someone always asks, "Where the heck do these questions come from?" The answer is we get them from you – the certificants!

A professional credentialing exam is a continuously evolving and improving thing. In our last newsletter, we gave you a bit of history on how the new Exam Content Task List was developed. But that was just the beginning for the BCBA and BCABA examinations. In order to make the best possible test instruments, we must engage in an ongoing process of reviewing and improving existing exam questions, as well as adding new questions. We often joke around the office that Fae's need for more questions is immune to satiation. It's no joke, though, that the more high-quality examination questions we have, the better the exams will be. And for that, we need BCBAs and BCABAs who are willing to help.

Certificants can help to develop the examinations by participating in a number of activities that help to improve the BACB examination item bank. The item bank is

comprised of all of the questions (a.k.a. "items") that have been written for the examinations. Exam development activities usually focus on adding new items to the bank and improving existing items. The most common exam development activities that certificants are needed to do are item writing, pilot testing, and exam reviews.

### Item Writing

In order to meet our constant need for new questions; we need certificants to write them. If you attend some of the larger behavior analysis conferences in the US (ABA, CalABA, FABA) you may have noticed, or even participated in, BACB item-writing events. At these events, Fae first conducts "item writer training" where certificants learn what features make for a good exam item and the kinds of things to avoid when writing exam questions. Then the writers are let loose to create new questions.

### Pilot Testing

Before a new item becomes a part of the exam, it needs to go for a test drive. Traditionally, newly written items are pilot-tested by asking certificants to complete small exams made up of the new questions. Pilot testing, like item writing, often takes place at behavior analysis conferences. Pilot testing new items allows Fae to determine whether an item is ready to become part of the exam or if it needs more work. The change to computer-based testing has also allowed us to pilot test new items on the exam itself. Each person who takes the



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exam answers 10 extra questions that are actually pilot items and do not count toward their final score. Pilot-testing on the exam is ideal, but there is a limit to the number of questions that can be included during each exam administration. We will still continue to do pilot testing with certificants whenever we have a large number of new items to try out.

### Exam Reviews

Even after an item gets the go-ahead to become part of the exam, it may still be subject to review and revision, if necessary. Each time the exam is given, exam review meetings are conducted here in our Tallahassee offices. Pre-exam review sessions are conducted before every exam administration. Once the items for the next exam are selected, a group of certificants reviews them. They check for a little bit of everything; from making sure the answer key is correct to identifying spelling errors.

Post-exam reviews are also conducted after each administration of BACB exams. Data on how test-takers responded to each question are used to identify any items that didn't perform well. A group of BACB certificants then reviews all of the poorly performing items. Their objective is to review each item in light of its performance and to determine what revisions might improve it. It is also their job to determine if an item is flawed to such an extent that the recent test-takers should be given credit for it.

### Future Activities

We strive not only to continuously improve the exam, but our exam development activities, as well. In the past, pre- and post-exam reviews were one-day meetings held before and after each exam administration. Since we have begun offering the exam three times per year, we have been able to successfully combine the pre- and post-exam reviews, allowing us to have

three two-day meetings each year rather than six one-day meetings. Not only is this more cost-efficient, we've found that the longer meetings promote lively and productive discussions that carry throughout the course of the two days – often through lunch and dinner, as well!

In the future, we plan to continue to conducting item writing, pilot testing and exam review activities. Our plans for improving item writing activities include such things as targeted item writing and "item rehab." In order to conduct targeted item writing, we will identify content areas where we have the most need for more items and focus item writing sessions on those areas.

Fae conducted the first "item rehab" sessions at the FAB conference this fall. There, she presented volunteers with items that have been identified in past exam review meetings as in need of major revisions. These sessions were very successful and we expect to hold similar ones in the future.

An area for improvement that is very important to us is ensuring that the individuals who participate in exam development activities are diverse and representative of all of our certificants.

In the past year, we have made a concerted effort

to make exam development activities available to more certificants and to be certain that our participants include individuals that represent a wide variety of geographic locations and educational backgrounds.

We hope to continue improve all of these activities to make them more accessible to certificants. In our survey of certificants last year, we asked a few questions about whether you would be interested in participating in exam development activities. We were thrilled to see that 69% of the people responding said they would be willing to help! We used the answers to combinations of questions on this section (e.g., interest in different activities, willingness to travel, etc.) to include a large number of individuals in our invitation for the December pre-post exam meeting. The number of



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people who replied was absolutely amazing and we had more potential volunteers than we knew what to do with. If you responded positively to either of these recent surveys, you can expect to receive future invitations for exam development activities. If you haven't responded in the past but wish to be added to the volunteer pool, please email Fae Mellichamp at [fmellichamp@proftesting.com](mailto:fmellichamp@proftesting.com) and let her know you'd like to be included on future invitations.

We know that there are many of you out there that would like to help, but cannot travel for a variety of reasons. We are currently researching ways to allow certificants who have attended item writer training to send new items to us securely, so that they can contribute new questions even if they are not at a conference. Along the same

lines, we hope to utilize internet conferencing technology so that certificants can participate in item writing and review activities without having to travel at all.

### **Don't Forget the Reinforcer**

Ok, so it's too delayed to be a true reinforcer, but we do offer Type 5 CE for participation in exam development activities. We greatly value the contributions of the certificants who take the time to assist with exam development and we believe that these activities provide unique learning opportunities that are certainly worthy of CE credit. If you've always wondered how you can earn Type 5 CE, well, now you know!

## Many Thanks

Last, but certainly not least, the BACB would like to thank the certificants (named below) who volunteered their valuable time in 2006 by participating in item writing workshops at various conferences, the cut-score panel held in Tallahassee, and examination review panel meetings also held in Tallahassee. Although there are too many to mention individually, we'd also like to thank all of the certificants who responded to the online survey. All of us are fortunate that we have fellow certificants who are willing to donate their time and knowledge to ensure that the BACB continues to maintain the highest of standards.

Dawn Bailey	Linda Heitzman-Powell	Mary Ann Powers
Jon Bailey	Nitzyah Helman	Mary Riordan
Michael Benvenuto	Keith Hersh	Terri Rodgers
Barbara Brock	Rita Honan	Robert Ross
Chrystin Bullock	Dan Hursh	Rebecca Rubie
James Carr	Marja Huzevka	Maria Ruiz
Joseph Cautilli	Mariele Koenig	Amy Salzman
Stelios Chimonides	Mark Koorland	Susan Silvestri
Joel Christian	Chris LaBelle	Jennifer Simon
Sonja deBoer-Ott	David Lee	Mike Stoutimore
Iser DeLeon	Sonia Littlejohn	Louis Tarasi
Mike Dorsey	Jose Martinez-Diaz	Karen Umstead
Claudia Dozier	Donna Mattison	Mary Vanderklock
Sheldon Ebbeler	Russell Mattison	Janet Vasquez
Billy Edwards	Charles Merbitz	Diana Walker
Christie Enzinna	Tom Moore	Sonya White
Heather Fuller	Al Murphy	Catherine Williams
Tony Gelabert	Stacie Neff	Steve Woolf
Rebecca Godfrey	Sharon Older	David Ziskind
Jon Hagerott	Melissa Poole	
Debora Harris	Valerie Postal	