



Assumption University

SCHOOL OF
GRADUATE STUDIES

THE THIRTEENTH ANNUAL GRADUATE SCHOOL SYMPOSIUM

APRIL 13, 2023

4:30 pm – 7:00 pm

TFAC Ballroom A

OR

<https://assumption.zoom.us/j/95740161761?pwd=L0pUSlJoK2VHcUhVUGhkczU0cVVQQT09>

Password: Assumption

Program Schedule at a Glance

4:30pm - 4:40pm	Welcome Session
4:40pm - 5:20pm	Poster Sessions (3 presentations)
5:20pm - 5:25pm	Break
5:25pm - 6:30pm	General Sessions (4 presentations)
6:30pm - 7:00pm	Presentation of Certificate of Recognition & Closing Remarks

Symposium Schedule

4:30pm-
4:40pm

WELCOME SESSION

Dr. Nanho Vander Hart, Director of the Special Education & Transition Specialist Programs
Dr. Kimberly Schandel, Dean of the School of Graduate Studies

4:40pm-
5:20pm

POSTER SESSIONS (In-Person Presentations)

[I'm Talking About You, Baby: Is Young Adults' Mentalization Associated with Co-Caregiving Behaviors?](#)

Presenter: Mikayla DeBois
Program: Clinical Counseling Psychology
Faculty Advisor: Dr. Regina Kuersten-Hogan

Mentalization or viewing others as psychological agents has been linked to parents' coparenting dynamics (Dollberg et al., 2020), though this association has not yet been explored in nonparents. The present study observed mental state use and co-caregiving behaviors during a caregiving simulation task with a computerized doll in 82 undergraduates and their roommates (total N=164). Greater co-caregiving cooperation and warmth and less competition observed between caregiving partners were associated with mental state use directed at the partner. The variety of mental state words was also correlated with more supportive co-caregiving behaviors as well as with greater investment in the task.

[The Perspectives of Adolescents with ASD on Inclusion: Findings from a Systematic Literature Review](#)

Presenter: Kimberly Preece
Program: Special Education
Faculty Advisor: Dr. Samantha Goldman

Inclusion is becoming a popular special education placement for students with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) in the twenty-first century, based on the social and academic benefits for students. This systematic literature review analyzed results from studies that considered the perspectives of adolescents with ASD on their inclusive experiences in secondary education settings. 23 studies were identified, spanning from 2000-2022. A majority used qualitative methods that were responsive to the needs of adolescents with ASD: semi-structured interviews with familiar adults, picture prompting, or journals. Themes of academic instruction, teacher characteristics, social interactions, and physical environment were identified and expanded upon.

[ABA Staff Training Using Train-to-Code?](#)

Presenter: NikkiAnn Ryan
Program: Clinical Counseling Psychology
Faculty Advisor: Dr. Karen Lionello-DeNolf

Entry-level personnel, including behavior therapists, frequently deliver discrete trial (DT) programs to students with autism. The Train to Code (TTC) computer program teaches service-delivery staff how to deliver a behavior intervention program by presenting a series of video clips of a teacher delivering DT programs including social questions, receptive labeling, and motor imitation. Participants then entered a code indicating correct or incorrect examples and type of

identification error. Pre-/post-test results indicate an increase in participants' ability to correctly implement DT programs. This training program may be an effective method for staff training in settings based in applied behavior analysis interventions.

5:25pm-
6:30pm

GENERAL SESSIONS (In-Person and Virtual Presentations)

Implementation of a Class-Wide Positive Behavior System in Substantially Separate Kindergarten Special Education Classrooms

Presenter: Elizabeth Sloan

Program: Special Education-Positive Behavior Supports

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Samantha Goldman

Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) is an implementation framework that is designed to enhance academic and social behavior outcomes for all students. It has been shown to significantly reduce detention referrals, restraints, and seclusion in schools utilizing the framework. Due to the disabilities of many of the students educated within substantially separate classrooms, they may not be able to properly access the Tier 1 school-wide PBIS (SWPBIS). In this implementation project, a SWPBIS program was enhanced to suit two substantially separate kindergarten special education classrooms for students with developmental disabilities. Treatment fidelity and staff quality of life were evaluated.

Does the Service Dog Community Want a National Registry?

Presenter: Anna Brunt

Program: Health Advocacy

Faculty Advisor: Professor Christine Sawicki

The purpose of this study is to examine if people who utilize service dogs believe a national service dog registry would be beneficial and if enacted, would they be amenable to the potential extra steps required to register their service dogs. Currently, rules and regulations pertaining to service animals in the United States are murky at best. This makes it difficult for both people with disabilities requiring the assistance of service animals to move easily in public, as well as businesses trying to abide by no-pet policies.

Vermont Summer Career Exploration Program: Pre-ETS Services Delivery and Collaborative Practice in Vocational Rehabilitation

Presenter: Sheila Mercon

Program: Rehabilitation Counseling

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Nicholas Cioe

For the past two years, HireAbility Vermont (Department of Vocational Rehabilitation) has hosted a Summer Career Exploration Program, allowing Pre-Employment Transition Services delivery and Work Based Learning opportunities to Vermont students with disabilities outside of the school setting. This state-wide program represents collaboration among multiple agencies and local businesses to provide integrated Pre-ETS service delivery and hands-on work skills development. Student employment rates have been positively impacted by participation in this program. This presentation shares the process of creating this program and the results we have seen in Vermont.

Teaching Communication Response to Decrease Challenging Behavior

Presenter: Margaret May

Program: Applied Behavior Analysis

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Nicole Pantano

To help children access things they want or need, children will emit requests or mands. A mand is a way for a child to communicate effectively with another person, however some children with ASD may not acquire mands without specific training. Functional communication training (FCT) is an evidence-based teaching strategy to help children acquire a way to mand for things they want or need (Fischer et al., 1993). This is often used when children currently emit unsafe, challenging behavior as a mean to access their wants or needs as they currently do not have a safe, alternative way to mand. FCT teaches that safe replacement behavior and as a result, has been demonstrated to decrease challenging behavior (Fischer et al., 1993). The current project taught an FCT response, specifically a sign for "more" to decrease challenging behavior related to accessing food. The participant was taught to sign "more" to request additional food during meal times, as a safe replacement behavior for aggression and self-injury. The results support the effectiveness of FCT to decrease challenging behavior for the participant.

6:30pm-
7:00pm

PRESENTATION OF CERTIFICATE OF RECOGNITION CLOSING REMARKS

Dr. Kimberly Schandel, Dean of the School of Graduate Studies

Dr. Karen Lionello-DeNolf, Director of Applied Behavior Analysis Program

Assumption University Graduate School Programs

Master of Arts degree (MA)

Master of Science degree (MS)

Certificate of Graduate Studies (CGS)

Certificate of Advanced Graduate Studies (CAGS)

Master of Business Administration (MBA)

Applied Behavior Analysis (MA & CAGS)

Autism Spectrum Disorders (CAGS)

Clinical Counseling Psychology (MA)

Health Advocacy (MA & CGS)

Physician Assistant Studies (MS)

Rehabilitation Counseling (MA & CAGS)

Resiliency in the Helping Professions (CAGS & CGS)

School Counseling (MA & CAGS)

Special Education (MA & CAGS)

Special Ops: SMVF (CAGS & CGS)

Transition Specialist (CAGS)