

THE FOURTEENTH ANNUAL

GRADUATE SCHOOL

SYMPOSIUM

APRIL 25, 2024

5:30 pm – 8:00 pm

La Maison Salon & Hall

OR

<https://assumption.zoom.us/j/96896349794?pwd=TzU3SG5tMnhTdzlMQ0s1QTJmVm1vUT09>

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| Program Schedule at a Glance  5:30pm - 5:40pm Welcome Session  5:40pm - 6:25pm General Sessions (3 presentations)  6:25pm - 6:35pm Break  6:35pm - 7:10pm Poster Sessions (4 presentations)  7:10pm - 7:45pm General Sessions (2 presentations)  7:45pm Presentation of Certificate of Recognition &  Closing Remarks |

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Office of the Graduate School

Assumption University’s mission statement speaks to awakening a sense of wonder in our students. When that wonder, or curiosity, is combined with critical thinking, problem solving, and research, new frontiers are explored, and important questions can be addressed. The process of getting to an answer is as important as the actual answer. I hope you will join me in appreciating the efforts of our graduate students, supported by faculty mentors, as they asked bold questions and charted paths to uncover the answers. Whether the path was easy or littered with obstacles, the students persevered and are here today to share their journeys. Perhaps they will inspire you to wonder.

Kimberly A. Schandel, Ph.D.

Dean of the School of Graduate Studies

Symposium Schedule

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| 5:30pm-5:40pm | WELCOME SESSION  Dr. Nanho Vander Hart, Director of the Special Education & Transition Specialist Programs  Dr. Kimberly Schandel, Dean of the School of Graduate Studies |
| 5:40pm-6:25pm | GENERAL SESSIONS (In-Person and Virtual Presentations)  How Negative Reinforcement Can Impact Infant Caretaking  Presenter: Ashley Calore  Program: Clinical Counseling Psychology  Faculty Advisor: Dr. Nicole Pantano  Caregivers will emit behaviors to minimize the sound of infant crying. The purpose of this study was to simulate infant caregiving and observe how caregivers respond to crying. We aimed to determine if caregiver behavior is sensitive to negative reinforcement. We predicted that caregiver behavior would match the reinforcement schedule. For example, if infant crying stops only when the parent rocks the baby, then we expect rocking to increase in the future. We found that participants will try a variety of caretaking skills (e.g., rocking, feeding) but will continue to emit responses that are negatively reinforced.  **Complexities of an Autism Diagnosis**  Presenter: Maureen Toscano  Program: CAGS in Autism Spectrum Disorders  Faculty Advisor: Dr. Samantha Goldman  In this presentation I will present the information on the history of the autism diagnosis in the DSM, including the recent removal of Asperger's Syndrome. It is evident that the DSM-V change has caused quite a stir for individuals with Asperger's, communities that support those individuals, and educational and allied service providers that work with individuals with Asperger's. Both barriers and positives from the change will be discussed. Then I will use a case study to show how these DSM-V diagnostic criteria can be used to make special education recommendations for students.  Exercising Patient Autonomy: How Is Agency Developed or Regressed in Patients with Chronic Illness?  Presenter: Melina Oien (virtual presentation)  Program: Health Advocacy  Faculty Advisor: Professor Christine Sawicki  This study aims to better understand what patients with chronic illness perceive and experience as influencing, positively or negatively, their ability to make autonomous decisions regarding their medical care and how or if it has changed over the course of their care. |
| 6:35pm-7:10pm | POSTER SESSIONS (In-Person Presentations)  I’m Talking About You, Baby: Is Young Adults’ Mentalization Associated with Co-Caregiving Behaviors?  Presenter: Katherine Gatto  Program: Clinical Counseling Psychology  Faculty Advisor: Dr. Regina Kuersten-Hogan  Parent’s mind-mindedness shapes children’s cognitive development, though co-parenting may mediate this relationship. These associations have not yet been studied in non-parents. Observations of non-parents engaged in a simulated caregiving task with a computerized doll were coded for mental state word-use and co-caregiving dynamics. Findings indicated that a greater variety of mental state words used by non-parents and more mental state words referring to partners during the simulation task were associated with more supportive co-caregiving behaviors.  Sexual Education and Wellness for Students with Severe Disabilities  Presenter: Allison Tantone  Program: CAGS in Transition Specialist  Faculty Advisor: Professor Michael Law  Sex education and wellness programs are often a part of the "ignored curriculum" for students with intellectual disabilities. Almost every other high school student is required to take a health course, which discusses sexual health and wellness for teenagers. Students with severe disabilities, however, are not required and often denied this education, when in reality these students are the most at risk. Current curriculums for sex education geared towards students with disabilities are not current, nor is the research surrounding best practice for this population. There are many misconceptions regarding disabilities and sexuality. Everyone is entitled to ownership over their body and understanding why and how their body works.  Using Behavior Skill Training to Train Direct Care Staff on Data Collection  Presenter: Success Asalu  Program: Applied Behavior Analysis  Faculty Advisor: Dr. Nicole Pantano  Data collection is very important in behavior analysis because every decision a Board Certified Behavior Analyst makes is based on information gathered from data. Data informs the behavior analyst to take decisions regarding which intervention to develop, what needs to be reviewed, and in some cases, when to discontinue a protocol. This project focuses on training direct care staff using behavior skills training to collect skill acquisition data using a novel software known as Theralytics. The goal of this project was to teach staff to accurately and reliably collect data.  Comparison of Tokens or No Tokens on Skill Acquisition  Presenter: Chelsea Mensah  Program: Applied Behavior Analysis  Faculty Advisor: Dr. Nicole Pantano  A token economy is behavior change system consisting of a list of target behaviors, with tokens (points or small objects) participants earn for emitting the target behaviors, and a menu of backup reinforcers (i.e., preferred items, activities, or privileges) for which participants exchange earned tokens (Cooper et al., 2020). The primary focus of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of a token economy while teaching two novel imitation skills to two children diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder. Specifically, this study compared the implementation of a token economy for one of the actions while not using it for the other. To facilitate this comparison, an adapted alternating treatment design embedded in a multiple-baseline design was used. |
| 7:10pm-7:45pm | GENERAL SESSIONS (In-Person Presentations)  Human Choice Behavior under Concurrent Variable Interval Schedules of Reinforcement  Presenter: Patrick Malone  Program: Applied Behavior Analysis  Faculty Advisor: Dr. Karen Lionello-DeNolf  Within psychology broadly, choice has been a popular area of study. Behavior analysts have traditionally studied choice by presenting subjects with concurrent schedules of reinforcement: two or more options that dispense reinforcers (e.g., food, money) at varying rates. Animal subjects in these arrangements often exhibit predictable patterns of choice, responding to a given option in proportion to the percentage of total reinforcers available on it. Human performance in these arrangements, by contrast, has been more variable. The present study sought to assess factors potentially responsible for these interspecies discrepancies by exposing participants to three concurrent variable-interval schedules on a computer interface. Presses on two response keys were reinforced with points putatively exchangeable for money. Most participants exhibited indifference to the programmed schedules of reinforcement.  Applications of Behavior Skills Training in a School Setting  Presenter: Felicia Rodriguez & Meghan Buelow  Program: Applied Behavior Analysis  Faculty Advisor: Dr. Nicole Pantano  Behavior skills training (BST) is a training package that is used to teach staff, caregivers, or clients new skills (Drifke et al., 2017). What makes BST unique is its four components: written instruction, modeling, rehearsal, and feedback. These can be applied as a package or sequentially across multiple training sessions. The purpose of this project was to determine the effectiveness and adaptability of BST in the public school systems and as a tool during regularly occurring staff trainings. BST was used to teach behavior technicians to correctly implement error-correction procedures, prompting procedures, and probe procedures with children in a sub-separate classroom. |
| 7:45pm | PRESENTATION OF CERTIFICATE OF RECOGNITION  CLOSING REMARKS  Dr. Kimberly Schandel, Dean of the School of Graduate Studies  Dr. Nicholas Cioe, Director of Rehabilitation Counseling Program  Dr. Karen Lionello-DeNolf, Director of Applied Behavior Analysis Program |
| Assumption University  Graduate School Programs  Master of Arts degree (MA)  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)  Organizational Leadership (MA)  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) | |