

# Preface

For the things we have to learn before we can do them,  
we learn by doing them.

—ARISTOTLE

Addressing the social and behavior problems that humans display is a daunting task; the first and most important step is the realization that changing behavior inevitably involves *learning by doing* in an environmental context in which the contingencies of reinforcement promote desirable behavior over undesirable behavior. As behavior analysts, we may identify and understand the prevailing contingencies of reinforcement better than most laypersons, but that knowledge does not inoculate us from the potent effects those contingencies have on our own behavior. As applied behavior analysts, in particular, we often find ourselves in contexts involving strong social contingencies in which we are expected to solve complex and socially important behavior problems. Such powerful contingencies are likely to shape and hone our behavior-analytic skills—much more so than reading this or any other book. Nevertheless, an informative text can provide a roadmap that helps us respond to those social contingencies more effectively and rapidly. We have developed and revised this book specifically for that purpose.

As we conceived of and developed the first edition of this book, it occurred to us that there was no single source we would consistently go to when faced with a particularly challenging clinical or applied research problem. Rather, we might start by going to any one of a number of different sources, including (1) consulting with in-house colleagues or those at other institutions, (2) conducting searches of the *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis* or the *Journal of the Experimental Analysis of Behavior*, or (3) reading sections of the many books covering behavior-analytic topics relevant to the specific clinical or research challenge before us. Thus our central goal for the first edition of this book was to develop a resource for those behavior analysts working in service and applied research settings—one that, we hoped, would be the first source they would turn to when presented with a unique or difficult clinical or applied research problem. In fact, in selecting the authors for each of the chapters, we spent a considerable amount of time asking ourselves whom we would call upon as a first choice for a consultant on the specific topic, and then we invited that person to be the senior author for the chapter. It was exceedingly reinforcing when our first choices accepted our invitation to author the chapters on their specific areas of expertise in almost every case.

In planning the second edition of this book, we relied heavily on the feedback we received from applied behavior analysts who used the first edition, particularly the feedback we received from professors who employed the first edition to aid in the teaching of applied behavior analysis. Based on that feedback, we have worked diligently to update and improve the integration, readability, and relevance of the book's contents. Importantly, we have expanded the number of chapters from 30

to 34, in order to cover topics important to our readers that we did not cover sufficiently in the first edition. We have added two chapters on the quantitative analysis of behavior: one on the matching law and behavioral persistence by Podlesnik et al. (Chapter 6), and another on behavioral economics by DeLeon et al. (Chapter 7). These chapters cover highly relevant topics in applied work, since they address the basic processes that govern how individuals allocate their time to various response options, such as why individuals chose to emit problem behavior over adaptive behavior in certain environmental conditions. We have also added a chapter on the assessment and treatment of pediatric feeding disorders by Piazza and Kirkwood (Chapter 25), one on teacher training by DiGennaro Reed and colleagues (Chapter 27), one on providing in-home behavioral services via telehealth by Wacker et al. (Chapter 31), and one on organizational behavior management by Wilder and Gravina (Chapter 32). These chapters provide important and timely information on topics highly relevant to applied behavior analysts providing services in these areas.

The overall organization of this second edition of the book is similar to that of the first, in that it provides the reader with the foundations of behavior analysis in the early chapters and then ties these basic concepts to applications in subsequent chapters. As such, it strikes a balance between emphasis on research and clinical applications. The book provides a detailed level of analysis for both general and specialized areas of behavior analysis. Its content reflects the breadth of behavior analysis and the expansion of applied behavior analysis into mainstream domains such as pediatric care, psychology, organization management, psychiatry, and drug addiction.

After the book's Introduction (Part I/Chapter 1), Part II of the book devotes six chapters to a concise yet detailed review of the history, philosophy, and basic principles that provide the foundational basis for applied behavior analysis. Part III is devoted to two chapters on measurement, experimental design, and related methodological issues. Part IV consists of four chapters that discuss stimulus preference assessments and both functional and structural approaches to assessing problem behavior, as well as specific chapters on indirect, direct, and controlled functional assessments. Part V of the book describes a variety of concepts and procedures relevant to interventions for increasing desirable behavior. The four chapters in this section cover topics such as differential-reinforcement procedures, building complex repertoires and establishing stimulus control, teaching verbal behavior, and staff training and management. Part VI of the book includes five chapters covering issues related to developing interventions for decreasing problem behavior. Topics in this section include developing antecedent interventions; designing function-based extinction, reinforcement, and punishment interventions; and developing token economies. Part VII describes a variety of important specialties within the field of applied behavior analysis, including treatment of autism spectrum disorder, behavioral pediatrics, treatment of pediatric feeding disorders, behavioral approaches to education, teacher training, establishing safety skills in children, behavioral treatment of drug addiction, behavioral gerontology, telehealth delivery of behavioral services, and organizational behavior management. Part VIII, the final section of the book, focuses on professional issues in applied behavior analysis; it includes a chapter on ethics and training, and another on professional certification. Of interest to the reader is that although the topics of each chapter are specific to that content area, there are several overlapping themes across chapters. The discussion of specific principles across different content domains is representative of the breadth of the basic tenets of behavior analysis.

This book can be used as a core or primary textbook for courses in psychology, education, or behavior analysis. The target audiences for the book are practicing behavior analysts and students in graduate classes in psychology, education, or other related fields, and it could serve as a primary source for preparing for professional certification. The quality and comprehensiveness of the book make it a must-have for any behavior analysis library. We hope that our readers will find this text as informative as it was enjoyable for us to edit.

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