

Implementing Skill Based Treatment for Learners with Limited Communication, Low Skill Acquisition, and Interfering Behaviors

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Introduction

- Jessel et al. (2018) reported a 90% or greater reduction in interfering behaviors by the end of skill-based treatment.
- Fiani & Jessel (2022) provided further research on the use in support of using the PFA to inform effective treatment for treating severe problem behavior.
- Purpose**
 - Evaluating if progress could be made in skill-based treatment (SBT) with learner profiles of low skill acquisition rate, interfering behaviors, and minimal precursor behaviors can further prove the range of learner profiles that can benefit from this process.
 - Evaluate if an IISCA in which precursor behaviors were shaped can successfully inform skill-based treatment without the presence of interfering behaviors.

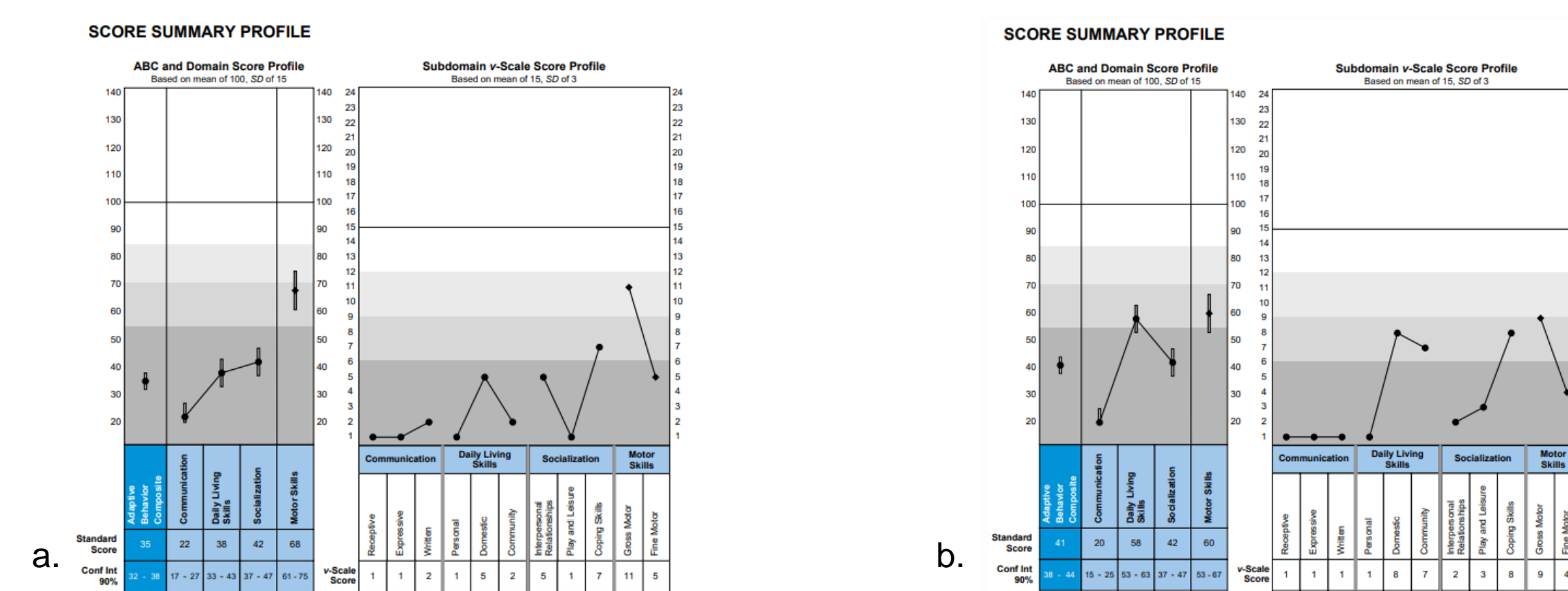
Methodology

- Participants:**
 - Two male participants a 5-year-old and 7-year-old. Both participants have an ASD diagnosis and limited language, one of the participants has an additional diagnosis of Christianson Syndrome.
 - The two clinicians participating in the study were two BCBA's who have been practicing as BCBA's since 2019. The BCBA's have experience implementing IISCA's PFA's and SBT since 2018.
- Setting:** The study took place in an ABA clinic in the Southeast Michigan area that serves clients with ASD.
- Independent variable:** Skill-based treatment package consisting of shaping, differential reinforcement, extinction, FCT, TR, and CAB chaining. Mixed and varied schedules of reinforcement are also utilized.
- Dependent Variables:** Communication response, contextually appropriate behaviors, interfering behaviors.
- Procedure:**
 - Baseline:** Presence of dangerous/high intensity behaviors. Low acquisition rate.
 - IISCA:** Safe and effective analysis conducted to inform treatment.
 - Skill-based Treatment:**
 - Reinforcement condition:** A context in which a learner is provided with all suspected reinforcers and is observably happy, relaxed, and engaged.
 - FCR:** A communication response to replace interfering behaviors in the presence of EO's historically evoking IB.
 - TR:** Delivery of all suspected reinforcers in the absence of interfering behavior for tolerating a denial signal from the implementor.
 - CAB1:** Contextually appropriate behaviors reinforced to shape and tolerate relinquishing all reinforcers.
 - CAB2:** Contextually appropriate behaviors reinforced and shaped to tolerate a rich to lean transition away from reinforcers to an area of learning.
 - CAB3:** Contextually appropriate behaviors reinforced and shaped to complete 1 to 4 easy instructions on a variable schedule of reinforcement.

Results

Figure 1.

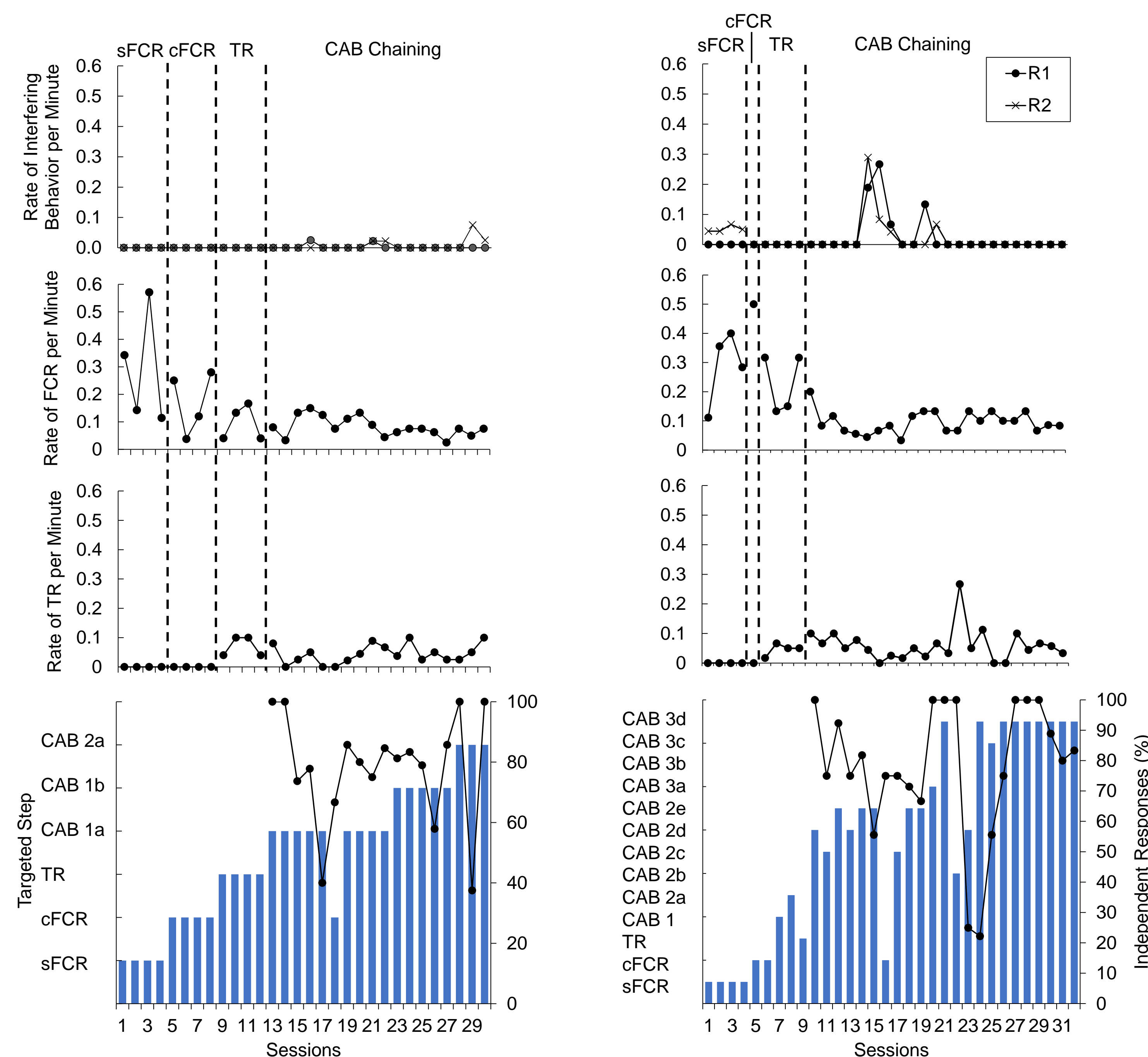
Vineland Score Summary



Note. Results of the Vineland assessment for each participant (a. Ryan; b. Salazar).

Figure 2.

Interfering Behavior and Skill-based Treatment Graphs



Note. Rates of interfering behavior, responses per minute, independent responses, and targeted steps during SBT sessions for both participants.(a. Ryan; b. Salazar).

Discussion

- Skill-based treatment is an effective treatment package following an IISCA for learner profiles with low skill-acquisition, minimal functional communication, minimal precursor behaviors, and high-intensity or dangerous behaviors.
- Learners with previously low skill-acquisition rates can progress through each phase of SBT in a timely manner.
- Socially valid outcomes can be achieved and maintained while skills are taught under establishing operations that previously evoked interfering behavior.
- Limitations**
 - Drop in two of the client's hours for 1 month due to school.
 - Various moments in which the reinforcement context was re-assessed as variables previously contributing to HRE were no longer effective.
 - Still progressing through SBT to reach CAB 6 and generalization.
- Implications**
 - Further efforts should be made to specifically highlight when precursor levels of interfering behavior were reinforced to shape a class of precursor behaviors.
 - Evaluate the quality of the reinforcement context as it compares to response acquisition by objectively defining happy, relaxed, and engaged.
 - Further efforts should be made to highlight learner profiles in SBT research.

Acknowledgements

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References

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- Jessel, J., Ingvarsson, E. T., Metras, R., Kirk, H., & Whipple, R. (2018). Achieving socially significant reductions in problem behavior following the interview-informed synthesized contingency analysis: A summary of 25 outpatient applications. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis, 51*(1), 130-157.