



## Bibliography – Functional Behavioural Assessment annotated

21<sup>st</sup> September 2012

Belleck, Alan, S. & Hersen, M. (1998) Behavioural Assessment: A Practical Handbook London, Allyn and Bacon. 430 pages Index is very large

This is *the* textbook for resources and methods on gathering data through direct measurement and/or observation of behaviour. Very good for the 'measuring behaviour' part of FBA but does not deal with the functional aspect of FBA. Not a cheap book.

Buron, Kari, D. & Curtis, Mitzi The Incredible 5 Point Scale Kansas, AAPC  
69 pages. No index.

Related to FBA and I use it a lot. Simple tool to help children understand and express their feelings. Especially useful for young children who have limited vocabulary. Works well.

Crone, Deanne, A., Horner, Robert, H. Hawken, Leanne, S. (2004) Responding to Problem Behaviour in Schools Guilford Press, New York. 115 pages. Index reasonable.

Good introduction. Written to respond to the legislation that mandates FBA before clinical diagnoses. Authors make it look easy but it is not. I have found that FBA in the field has more iterations before finally identifying the triggers than is portrayed in the books and manuals. This text offers a range of forms and case studies.

Pellegrini, Anthony, D. Observing Children In Their Natural Worlds New Jersey, Lawrence Erlbaum & Associates. 200 pages. Index is brief

Pellegrino walks the reader through observational methods, perspective, research methods, developing a category system (interesting!), measuring and sampling and recording behaviour, and other topics including indirect data collection methods. Sound text but few case studies (see Reinecke)

Reinecke, Dana, R. & Newman, Bobby. (2007) Behavioural Detectives Dove and Orca  
Subtitled "a staff training exercise book for applied behaviour analysis"  
250 pages  
No index

Offers realistic, actual case studies in functional behavioural analysis you can use to hone your logical and deductive skills (to detect the triggers, and rewards and penalties, contextual issues, situational behaviour, secondary gain especially in on compliant children).

Sturmeay, Peter. (1996) Functional Analysis In Clinical Psychology New York, Wiley.  
238 pages. Index very brief

Written by a psychologist for psychologists. Well laid out, excellent introduction to functional analysis. Hard to go past this text. He lays out the methodology in relatively easy to read chapters, and describes reasonably straightforward tools and methods.

He outlines a fascinating functional analysis of diagnostic categories, page 22. There is emerging evidence that the functional analysis of diagnostic (clinical) categories offers an adjunct to behavioural clinical interventions.



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### Notes

Most texts indicate you will work with a reasonably large team of people to:

- get a wide range of data from diverse sources and
- help assess the child's behaviours (to develop new behaviours),

Large teams have not been my experience working in SA: there are teams but they have high case load and are stretched to the limit. However, the teaching and counselling staff (including School Chaplains) I have worked with have been good, but very busy. Texts comment about the need for whole teams to address behaviour, which may be a reflection of the service model in USA. Either way, I have successfully used the class teacher, parents and me. That is a small team, but it works.

Functional analysis looks outside the dyads of operant and classical conditioning, and sees systems of behaviours and reciprocal influence, so we can expect more nuance and complexity. Some practitioners and authors may have thought that data collection needed be correspondingly complex.

It is interesting to note that some of those involved in Applied Behaviour Analysis<sup>1</sup> in Australia have traditionally relied on detailed, formal data collection by a number of people and also sourced formal data from different providers. However, they now proceed with informal data collected from a variety of sources (which is subsequently developed into a formulation).

I cannot find a complete text that shows how to develop a functional behavioural formulation, and opinions vary as to what makes up a thorough functional behavioural formulation. Most behavioural formulations take into account setting events, predictors (demands, tasks etc) and the function or purpose of the unwanted behaviour to either get/obtain something or to escape/avoid something. The 'something' can be positive or negative and can be very varied e.g. exposure to a bully, or a wanted object, or a privilege. It gets nuanced. There is no substitute for practice. One very sound observation in one of the texts is 'make no assumptions about behaviour': this is sound advice.

I suggest you start with Sturmey and read through Reinecke to develop your functional behavioural problem solving skills, then reassess what extra information you need.

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<sup>1</sup> Personal communication during training with the Behavioural Neurotherapy Clinic (Doncaster, Victoria). Presenters conveyed that training for intensive Applied Behaviour Therapy has largely rejected what they now see as "massive data collection" and instead rely on data from a broad array of sources (so they ask teachers, family, child carers and any others) to report anything that looks like a behavioural pattern.