

Evolution of a Behavior Analysis Department: How it was formed, and where it is going to be

Sigrid Glenn, Ph. D. (University of North Texas)

1: Introduction

Interviewer (I): Thank you very much for agreeing to an interview with the Japanese Association for Behavior Analysis. We are beginning a project to interview behavior analysts whose works and their historical background should be known to Japanese behavior analysts -- to the younger generations.



Glenn 博士
(<http://sigridglenn.org/>より)

Dr. Glenn: May I just say that I am very honored to be interviewed at all, certainly honored to be one of the first people you interviewed.

I: Thank you for saying that. I'm honored, too. For the interview, we have some protocols so that we can learn about you in the history of behavior analysis, as well as your professional works. From your CV, you are a Regents Professor at the University of North Texas, and you received your Ph. D. in clinical psychology from North Texas State University.

Dr. Glenn: Which is now UNT (University of North Texas).

I: And you took over the Center for Behavioral Studies after its founder, Don Whaley, died in 1983. And you have grown the Center into the Department of Behavior Analysis. Is that correct?

Dr. Glenn: Right.

2 : The encounter with behavior analysis

I: So, then, how did you start in behavior analysis because I see from your vita that your undergrad major was drama at the University of Texas at Austin?

Dr. Glenn: Right

I: What did bring you up to Denton, Texas, where you ended up majoring in clinical psychology?

Dr. Glenn: After I got my bachelor's degree in drama, I taught for a couple of years. And then, I went to New York and did a small amount of acting, I kept going to a library and reading books, most of them about psychology. So, I decided that that must be what I was interested in. So, I went to graduate school, and majored in clinical psychology. As a first year graduate student, I met Don Whaley. He suggested that I read B. F. Skinner's book, "Contingencies of reinforcement," which was turned my head around completely. From then on I was a radical behaviorist.

I: So, that was the first exposure to behavior analysis.

Dr. Glenn: Right. That was my first exposure to behavior analysis and I never looked back from that day forward. After getting my doctorate in in clinical psychology, I went to work at the Center for Behavioral Studies. Actually, I worked at the Center while I was getting my doctoral degree. We had an autism treatment program, which I worked in for about 10 years.

I: Really?

Dr. Glenn: Yes, I learned a tremendous amount by working with kids with autism.

I: I see. So, now I would like to ask you about founder of the center, Dr. Donald (Don) Whaley.

Dr. Glenn: He was a brilliant man. Not well, he had very bad asthma and he worked really hard to keep his weight down. He wasn't very healthy, and when he was younger he smoked and that didn't help his asthma. He probably had emphysema, too. But he was very brilliant, and he was a charismatic person. Students use to follow him around the campus like puppies. He was like Pied Piper of Hamelin. And he started a Center so students could help treat children with autism. Then other programs were added. One was a counseling service called The Behavior Exchange Clinic was. Around 1979, a series of difficulties began and we started closing programs down. By 1983, we had no kids with autism to work, and we had done everything we were going to do; we were closing the whole thing down. Then he was just going to be a professor in the

School of Community Service. He died in October 1983. Very unexpectedly. He was 49 years old. Very young. So, he died and the dean asked me to teach... we had undergraduate four courses in behavior analysis.

I: Is it like ... no longer the Center format?

Dr. Glenn: [Laugh] When Whaley died Janet Ellis and I were the only ones still there. And then she left to do some work ...with the idea she would come back as soon as we had enough courses for two people to teach. I got her back a year later and then the two of us worked together. And then we got some more people. [Laugh] Wait, wait, Yuka. I'm writing about a book about this.

I: Oh, you are?

Dr. Glenn: Yes. I'm going to put it on a Website. So, you can read the whole thing if you want to.

I: Great.

Dr. Glenn: It's a pretty long book. The first half of the book is about before Don Whely died. And the second half of the book is after he died.

I: It's a very big portion of before era. Really interesting.

Dr. Glenn: Well, I started writing several years ago. So, now it's kind of up to the third section probably.

I: Well Skinner had three parts in his autobiography.

Dr. Glenn: Well, that's a good point. [Laugh].



3 : Founding the first “Department of Behavior Analysis”

I: So, you grow the program with Dr. (Janet) Ellis, and Dr. (Joel) Greenspoon ...

Dr. Glenn: And, Cloyd Hyten. For a long time, Cloyd and Janet and I were the only faculty and we invited Dr. Greenspoon to come after he retired. And came and taught courses for us. We just loved having him. He was wonderful. And then we started getting more faculty.

I: Could you tell us why the Master's program was very intensive? For example, the program requirement is way over than minimum credit hours for Master's degree requirement. Was it like that from the beginning? And why is that.

Dr. Glenn: Well, I always knew that behavior analysis has too much to teach to do it as a part of Psychology. Because if you are in a Psychology program there are whole a lot of things to learn, and you won't get much behavior analysis. Just a little tiny bit. And, I knew that you couldn't get enough to do any good. You needed intensive work. And I wanted it to be behavior analysts who graduated from our program. Real behavior analysts, not just to know a little bit. And not just to be able to do one thing. As you may remember, we insisted that you do two practica in different areas.

I: Yes.

Dr. Glenn: Behavior is behavior and it works the same way in different areas. But you won't understand that until you use behavior analysis in at least two

areas. You won't understand it goes across all fields. So, it was really important to me to make a really intensive program. Program accreditation by the Association for Behavior Analysis a course in conceptual analysis, a course in experimental, a course in applied... so we had all of those, and then we added the other things we thought that graduated needed to be a well rounded behavior analyst, really be good, you know. And I ... I must say, I've been very impressed with our students. Our students really know their field.

I: Right. In my own case, I feel very comfortable facing behavioral problems. It doesn't matter what kind of the behavior, or even what species, because I think we learned at UNT the process of how to approach to the problem.

Dr. Glenn: And you know, you also have to learn the particulars of the



situation. If you work with children with autism, you have to know something about children as well as about autism. But you can learn that and then use your behavior analysis there. Anyway, to call yourself a "behavior analyst" I thought you needed some pretty broad based knowledge. So,

just took that long to get it done. So, it is longer than most masters programs there. The minimum Master's degree at North Texas is 36 semester credit hours. And, some programs have 42 very few. And ours says either 42 or 48. That's very long Master's program.

I: Yeah, hours for applied track.

Dr. Glenn: They get 48.

I: Yes. I chose applied track because more hours were required than for the basic track. I didn't take Verbal behavior course because it was not a mandatory for applied track. It was unusual that really smart American (native English) student rarely finish the program within two years.

Dr. Glenn: Right. We did have two or three students complete 42 semester credit hour track in two years. Students in that basic track usually go to Ph. D. program in another University..

I: Wow...

Dr. Glenn: One was Kathryn Mistr, who was in the very first cohort. In fact, she was the first person to complete her thesis, which was published in the Analysis of Verbal Behavior Journal.

I: However, there is no Ph. D. program...

Dr. Glenn: No, we sort of missed our chance on that one. But I expect we'll get one eventually.

I: Would you still think to have a Ph. D. program?

Dr. Glenn: Well, I think we need a Ph. D program. As long as students are getting that much, they might as well go a little more... to get a Ph. D.

I: Having philosophical, ethical, and conceptual aspect of behavior analysis, learning in a Master's degree as well as the practice stuff, it's really rich and concentrated.

Dr. Glenn: Yes.

I: If the program has the Ph. D. program, Ph. D. requires more research.

Dr. Glenn: Right. Much more research. I don't think there would be whole a lot more courses... Probably a few seminar courses. But mostly, just be a lot of research.

4 : Transition of the Department: Cultural evolution

I: Right. Okay. So, at the same time, keeping the good solid foundations, the department's health evolves. How would you think about it? I mean I have seen the change a lot in the department over time. What would you think the significant change of the department now compare to the beginning period.

Dr. Glenn: Well, I think the department is had three stages. During the first stage, as I said, Cloyed Hyten, Janet Ellis, myself, and Joel Greenspoon were there. That stage was oh, a long time... about 6 years. The three of us, along with Joel as a visiting professor. Then we got Rick (Richard) Smith, and Jesus Rosales-Ruiz, followed by Shahla Ala'i-Rosales and Manish Vaidya. I consider that that's second stage.

I: Oh.. That's when I was there.

Dr. Glenn: That was the much-broadened stage than the first stage because we had so many more practicum opportunities. When it was just the first four of us, we didn't have as many practicum opportunities. After we got Rick, Jesus,

and Shahla and Manish, we had a lot broader range of things for students to do. And I think that the students really, really became outstanding in that period. Now, all of the original four people are gone. And it happened very quickly. Within a year and a half, Cloyd Janet and I all left. Joel had died a few years earlier. So, that was a very sudden change. And we did not replace ourselves. So, that was Traci. And it took a while before faculty were hired to replace all of us. We only to replace one at first. We got Traci Cihon. Then, we had to wait another year or two to get someone else, that was Jon Pinkston. And then we had to wait another year or two, to get Karen Toussaint, who we have now. So we are back to seven people. The same number we had, when you were there, Yuka. But it's a different seven people. So, it's changed in a way that I don't even understand because I'm not involved in that part of the department that offers the Master's degree. Now I do only the distant learning program for the students who already have Master's degrees, students who want to be certified by BACB. So, since I retired, that's what I have been doing, and so that's been the big change in the department because there have been a huge turnover in a very short period of time, after no turnover for twenty years. It's interesting to see. My sense is that all is going well, that the students are learning, and they are happy, as far as I know.

I: How about as far as the number of students who entered to the program. Has it been changed?

Dr. Glenn: You know, many years ago, we capped our entering students at twenty. Seven faculty, and twenty Master's degree students in a three-year program... That all that we can do. So, it seems likely to stay that size.

I: I think my generation was one of the earlier time of having 20 students. I think the previous year was less than 20.

Dr. Glenn: Right. it may even be while you were there we got up to 20. I'm not sure. I don't remember the details. But I know we started with about 6, the first year. And then we went to about 12 and we were 12-15 for 3-5 years. And then we went to 20, we've kept the number of entering students to 20 each year since then.

I: Was it like there was a strategic plan for that?

Dr. Glenn: No. It took a while for people to learn about the program When I told colleagues all over the country that UNT was going to start this degree program in behavior analysis, I asked "Would you write a letter saying that this is a good thing to have a Master's degree in behavior analysis." Quite a few wrote back and said, "I don't think your students will get a job". They were concerned that the degree would not be in a recognized field, like psychology, social work, or education... any of those. And I said, "I think they will get jobs. And I think people need behavior analysis." If they are called "behavior analysts" that will be able to do the work of behavior analysts. So, we took a

chance and it worked out. From the very beginning, we were getting students from all over the country. Few of them came from Texas at first.

I: Really?

Dr. Glenn: Yeah. The very first we had several years who lived in Denton or got there undergraduate degree from North Texas. Our first four students were Greg Madden, Doug Field, Vicki Ford, and Manish Vaidya. But at the same time, we had a couple of students who were already in an Interdisciplinary master's program taking our courses. These included Guy Bruce and Leslie Burkett. In the second year of the program, we had several students from around the country, when the word started getting around that there was a Master's program in behavior analysis. And then once students started graduating, they really started coming in. Soon they were coming from all over the world: Norway, England, Iceland, China, Brazil, Colombia, and Japan!

I: Hahaha. Yeah, I was one of them. It's ... I don't know what to sum up. So, would you recommend ... having a program like this in other Universities?

Dr. Glenn: I certainly would. I think having a master's in behavior analysis allows students to be well-trained. They get good jobs, they get good money. They are advancing. They come to ABAI. You know, a lot of times people graduate and never come back to ABAI. Our graduates come to ABAI.. If the graduates of a program come to ABAI that is one piece of evidence that they are well-trained.

I: Because ABAI is the community of the behavior analysts.

Dr. Glenn: It's the community, where you get connected with all other people in a community. You learn what's going on in areas outside your main interests.

It's important to learn your own area well, but ABAI gives us a chance to learn about other areas. And like we were saying, if you are good behavior analyst



you can take what you learned one place and make use of it in another place. I think our students come to ABA are trained to have a broad perspective. I would like to see a lot more behavior analysis departments. There are a couple more now. There is one up in New England, department of behavior analysis, here is another one

can't remember what part of the country. Oh, Chicago school of professional psychology, they have a department of behavior analysis. So, there are several now. I am very excited about that. I'm really pleased that I was able to see that it was possible, that it would work, and was able to help make it happen.

I: Like a replication.

Dr. Glenn: Something that I hope grows more and more.

I: ...the cultural contingencies.

Dr. Glenn: Yes, that's right.

I: So, this design will be survival.

Dr. Glenn: So, how about Japan? Are we going to have a department of behavior analysis there?

I: It is difficult as far as the policies are concerned. It's not the same as the US. But it could be... there are possibilities because nowadays governments are allowing new Universities and new schools by the newer names. Different names.

Dr. Glenn: Oh, that's a great opportunity. You need to move in there. I'm serious. That's good a opportunity. We were lucky to be in a college that was kind of free-wheeling. You know, kind of out on the edges. That was the place to try to do something like what we did. You can say, "Let's try it. If it doesn't work, you can close it down. Try it out. What do you have to lose?"

I: I guess Japanese Association for Behavior Analysis as whole; we should have a strategic plan to have one behavior analysis program.

Dr. Glenn: That's great. A program is good. A department is even better. Well, we had a program before we had a department. We had a behavior analysis Master's degree for six years before we got a department. The program was in the Center for Behavior Analysis in the School of Community Service. And then we turned it into a department. So, the two don't have to start at the same time. You can have the program first, then the department.

I: Okay. So, it's been taped. I will transcribe this, and see what happens.

Dr. Glenn: Okay! Great. This was fun. Thank you.

5 : Message to Japanese behavior analysts:

I: Thank you very much. One last thing, if you have a comment or a message to Japanese behavior analysts. Please make a comment.

Dr. Glenn: Well, I have met several Japanese behavior analysts, and I am very impressed with their dedication. I think if the Japanese ABA gets serious about what you just said, have a strategic plan and establish a program somewhere in Japan, it would help behavior analysis in Japan. I think our department helped behavior analysis grow in the U.S. Because you know we don't really have much behavior analysis in the States. It's a big country. Behavior looks big because ABAI is big. But compared to other disciplines, behavior analysis is very small in the United States, very small. When you are in other fields, they can get rid of you. So, we need our own programs. Brazil and Norway are establishing strong programs. You have the talent in Japan, too, to grow behavior analysis. So, I think Japan and Brazil and Norway will be our future.



I: Thank you very much!

Interview with Dr. Pennypacker
Interviewed on May, 25, 2013

Interviewed on May, 25, 2013

Place: Hilton Minneapolis Hotel

Interviewer: Yuka Koremura, Ph.D.

Assistant Interviewer: Ayuko Kondo, M.A.