

Incorporating Student Self-Reports in Functional Assessment

Desiree Villec

Bond University

Certification of Sources

This thesis is submitted to Bond University in fulfilment of the requirement is for the Degree of Master of....Doctor of Philosophy/Doctor of Legal Science.

This thesis represents my own work and contains no material which has been previously submitted for a degree or diploma at this University or any other institution, except where due acknowledgement is made.

Signature:.....

Date:

Acknowledgements

Mom and Dad, thank you for always helping me get through, even though you think what I'm doing is ridiculous. It was ridiculous, but it was worth it.

Vicki, thank you for thinking I could write a thesis. Thank you for spending endless hours reading, revising, advising and calming me down. I hope that whatever I do next makes you proud because I never would have gotten there without your support.

Ben, Barb and Darcy, thank you for all the moral support and coffee breaks. Thank you for letting me freak out and always being on my side. You guys make me better. Thanks!

Abstract

Interventions created to alter challenging behaviour should be preceded by a thorough investigation into the purpose of the behaviour. Functional Assessment is a framework created to investigate the purpose, or function, of behaviour viewed as a problem. Careful analysis of the behaviour through interviews, questionnaires, rating scales and direct observations, are combined to form hypotheses pertaining to the reasons why a particular behaviour might be of value to the individual. Functional Assessment has a history of being implemented for cases of extreme behaviour often exhibited by individuals with severe disabilities. Its success in these cases has allowed for branching out to new populations of individuals with verbal ability and average intelligence. For these latter populations, current literature recommends for inclusion of the target individual during the Functional Assessment – especially during the collection of data via interview. The current study uses an $n = 1$ paradigm to compare the contribution of information from 10 student-parent-teacher triads on rating scales, Functional Assessment interviews and direct observations. The study aims to investigate whether inclusion of students in the Functional Assessment process (i.e., Student-Assisted Functional Assessment) is superior to traditional Functional Assessment frameworks that do not include the individual with challenging behaviour as an informant.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 1.	Introduction.....	1
Chapter 2.	Functional Assessment and Intervention Frameworks and Methodologies Developed for the School Environment.....	7
2.1	Functional Assessment in Schools.....	7
2.2	Historical Background of Functional Technologies.....	11
2.3	Functional Assessment vs. Functional Analysis.....	14
2.4	Expanding of Functional Assessment.....	14
2.5	Various Client Groups.....	17
2.6	Functional Assessment of Students with Emotional/Behavioural Problems.....	21
2.7	Diagnoses Commonly Encompassed by the Emotional/Behavioural Disorder Classification.....	23
2.8	Potential Discrepancy between Caregiver and Student Reports of Behaviour.....	25
2.9	Student-Assisted Functional Assessment in Detail.....	27
Chapter 3.	Methods Used to Conduct a Student-Assisted Functional Assessment in the School Setting.....	31
3.1	Participant Group.....	31
3.2	Data-Collection Settings.....	33
3.2.1	Interview setting.....	33
3.2.2	Standardised assessment setting.....	35
3.2.3	Direct observation setting.....	35
3.3	Data Collection Phases and Methods.....	35
3.4	Description of Standardised Tests.....	38
3.4.1	Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test – Fourth Edition (PPVT-IV). ...	38
3.4.2	Slosson Intelligence Test – Revised (SIT-R).	41

3.4.3	Conners Comprehensive Behaviour Rating Scales (Conners CBRS) and Conners Clinical Index (Conners CI).	44
3.4.4	Questions About Behavioural Function (QABF).	49
3.4.5	Valued Outcomes Analysis.	52
3.5	Description of Observation Method.	53
3.6	Research Design.	54
3.7	Rationale for Inclusion of Student in Functional Assessment Method.	55
Chapter 4.	Application of Student-Assisted Functional Assessment on 10 Experimental Cases.	56
4.1	Experiment 1 (Participant 01).	57
4.1.1	Standardised testing to establish eligibility for inclusion of participant 01.	57
4.1.2	Data from the initial semi-structured interview.	58
4.1.3	Standardised testing for presence of behaviour problems for participant 01.	60
4.1.4	Identification of target behaviour for Functional Assessment.	62
4.1.5	Summary of findings from the QABF.	63
4.1.6	Data from individualized Functional Assessment (FA) interview.	65
4.1.7	Summary of findings from three direct observation sessions involving participant 01.	71
4.1.8	Comparison of data trends across assessment methods.	75
4.2	Experiment 2 (Participant 02).	80
4.2.1	Standardised testing to establish eligibility for inclusion of participant 02.	80
4.2.2	Data from the initial semi-structured interview.	81
4.2.3	Standardised testing for presence of behaviour problems for participant 02.	83
4.2.4	Identification of target behaviour for Functional Assessment.	85
4.2.5	Summary of findings from the QABF.	86
4.2.6	Data from individualized Functional Assessment (FA) interview.	87
4.2.7	Summary of findings from three direct observation sessions involving participant 02.	93
4.2.8	Comparison of data trends across assessment methods.	97
4.3	Experiment 3 (Participant 03).	101
4.3.1	Standardised testing to establish eligibility for inclusion of participant 03.	101

4.3.2	Data from the initial semi-structured interview.	102
4.3.3	Standardised testing for presence of behaviour problems for participant 03.	104
4.3.4	Identification of target behaviour for Functional Assessment.	106
4.3.5	Summary of findings from the QABF.	107
4.3.6	Data from individualized Functional Assessment (FA) interview	108
4.3.7	Summary of findings from three direct observation sessions involving participant 03.	114
4.3.8	Comparison of data trends across assessment methods.	116
4.4	Experiment 4 (Participant 04).....	119
4.4.1	Standardised testing to establish eligibility for inclusion of participant 04.	120
4.4.2	Data from the initial semi-structured interview.	121
4.4.3	Standardised testing for presence of behaviour problems for participant 04.	122
4.4.4	Identification of target behaviour for Functional Assessment.	124
4.4.5	Summary of findings from the QABF.	125
4.4.6	Data from individualized Functional Assessment (FA) interview.	126
4.4.7	Summary of findings from three direct observation sessions involving participant 04.	132
4.4.8	Comparison of data trends across assessment methods.	136
4.5	Experiment 5 (Participant 05).....	140
4.5.1	Standardised testing to establish eligibility for inclusion of participant 05.	141
4.5.2	Data from the initial semi-structured interview.	142
4.5.3	Standardised testing for presence of behaviour problems for participant 05.	144
4.5.4	Identification of target behaviour for Functional Assessment.	145
4.5.5	Summary of findings from the QABF.	146
4.5.6	Data from individualized Functional Assessment (FA) interview.	148
4.5.7	Summary of findings from three direct observation sessions involving participant 05.	153
4.5.8	Comparison of data trends across assessment methods.	158
4.6	Experiment 6 (Participant 06).....	161
4.6.1	Standardised testing to establish eligibility for inclusion of participant 06.	161
4.6.2	Data from the initial semi-structured interview.	162
4.6.3	Standardised testing for presence of behaviour problems for participant 06.	164
4.6.4	Identification of target behaviour for Functional Assessment.	166

4.6.5	Summary of findings from the QABF.	167
4.6.6	Data from individualized Functional Assessment (FA) interview.	168
4.6.7	Summary of findings from three direct observation sessions involving participant 06.	174
4.6.8	Comparison of data trends across assessment methods.	175
4.7	Experiment 7 (Participant 07).....	177
4.7.1	Standardised testing to establish eligibility for inclusion of participant 07.	178
4.7.2	Data from the initial semi-structured interview.	179
4.7.3	Standardised testing for presence of behaviour problems for participant 07.	181
4.7.4	Identification of target behaviour for Functional Assessment.	182
4.7.5	Summary of findings from the QABF.	183
4.7.6	Data from individualized Functional Assessment (FA) interview.	184
4.7.7	Summary of findings from three direct observation sessions involving participant 07.	189
4.7.8	Comparison of data trends across assessment methods.	195
4.8	Experiment 8 (Participant 08).....	197
4.8.1	Standardised testing to establish eligibility for inclusion of participant 08.	197
4.8.2	Data from the initial semi-structured interview.	198
4.8.3	Standardised testing for presence of behaviour problems for participant 09.	199
4.8.4	Identification of target behaviour for Functional Assessment.	201
4.8.5	Summary of findings from the QABF.	202
4.8.6	Data from individualized Functional Assessment (FA) interview.	203
4.8.7	Summary of findings from three direct observation sessions involving participant 08.	208
4.8.8	Comparison of data trends across assessment methods.	212
4.9	Experiment 9 (Participant 09).....	216
4.9.1	Standardised testing to establish eligibility for inclusion of participant 09.	216
4.9.2	Data from the initial semi-structured interview.	217
4.9.3	Standardised testing for presence of behaviour problems for participant 09.	218
4.9.4	Identification of target behaviour for Functional Assessment.	
4.9.5	Summary of findings from the QABF.	219
4.9.6	Data from individualized Functional Assessment (FA) interview.	220
4.9.7	Summary of findings from three direct observation sessions involving participant 09.	222

4.9.8	Comparison of data trends across assessment methods.	229
4.10	Experiment 10 (Participant 10).....	235
4.10.1	Standardised testing to establish eligibility for inclusion of participant 10.	235
4.10.2	Data from the initial semi-structured interview.	236
4.10.3	Standardised testing for presence of behaviour problems for participant 10.	238
4.10.4	Identification of target behaviour for Functional Assessment.	240
4.10.5	Summary of findings from the QABF.	240
4.10.6	Data from individualized Functional Assessment (FA) interview.	242
4.10.7	Summary of findings from three direct observation sessions involving participant 10.	248
4.10.8	Comparison of data trends across assessment methods.	250
Chapter 5.	Results and Integrative Discussion of 10 Case Studies.....	254
5.1	Participant-Generated Data Obtained via Rating Scale Completion.....	254
5.1.1	Participant-generated Conners CI findings.	254
5.1.2	Participant-generated QABF findings.	256
5.2	Participant Perspective on Target Behaviour.....	257
5.3	Participant-Generated Data Obtained via Functional Assessment Interview.....	257
5.3.1	Participant perspectives on antecedents.	257
5.3.2	Participant perspectives on consequences.	259
5.3.3	Participant perspectives on functions and valued outcomes.	261
5.4	Importance of Including the Participant in the Functional Assessment Process.....	264
Chapter 6.	General Discussion on Student-Assisted Functional Assessment.....	266
6.1	Effects of Student Inclusion in the Data-Collection Process.....	268
6.2	Student Responses to Different Assessment Procedures.....	269
6.3	Elaborating on the Functions of Challenging Behaviour.....	270
6.4	Clinical Implications.....	271
6.5	Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research.....	272

6.6	Conclusion.....	273
Appendix A	Topic Areas for Interview Protocol.....	274
Appendix B	Questions About Behavioural Function (QABF) [modified].....	276
Appendix C	Valued Outcomes Analysis Procedure Form.....	277
Appendix D	A-B-C Observation.....	281
References.....		282

Tables

2.1	Participants and setting characteristics.....	19
2.2	Prevalence of behaviour topographies.....	20
3.1	Participant age and grade characteristics.....	32
3.2	Summary of data-collection methods per phase of study.....	39
3.3	SIT-R cognitive domain distributions.....	42
3.4	List of five subscales for the Conners CI.....	45
3.5	Understanding T-scores and percentiles.....	46
3.6	QABF function label distribution.....	50
3.7	Modifications made to the QABF for the current study.....	51
4.1	Standardised test scores for participant 01.....	58
4.2	TSS Scores from the Conners CI-P, Conners CI-T and Conners CI-SR.....	62
4.3	Description of direct observation contexts.....	72
4.4	Summary of antecedents for participant 01.....	74
4.5	Summary of consequences for participant 01.....	75
4.6	Standardised test scores for participant 02.....	81
4.7	TSS Scores from the Conners CI-P, Conners CI-T and Conners CI-SR.....	85
4.8	Description of direct observation contexts.....	94
4.9	Summary of antecedents for participant 02.....	96
4.10	Summary of consequences for participant 02.....	97
4.11	Standardised test scores for participant 03.....	102
4.12	TSS Scores from the Conners CI-P, Conners CI-T and Conners CI-SR.....	105
4.13	Description of direct observation contexts.....	115

4.14	Standardised test scores for participant 04.....	121
4.15	TSS Scores from the Conners CI-P, Conners CI-T and Conners CI-SR.....	124
4.16	Description of direct observation contexts.....	132
4.17	Summary of antecedents for participant 04.....	133
4.18	Summary of consequences for participant 04.....	135
4.19	Standardised test scores for participant 05.....	141
4.20	TSS Scores from the Conners CI-P, Conners CI-T and Conners CI-SR.....	145
4.21	Description of direct observation contexts.....	154
4.22	Summary of antecedents for participant 05.....	155
4.23	Summary of consequences for participant 05.....	156
4.24	Standardised test scores for participant 06.....	162
4.25	TSS Scores from the Conners CI-P, Conners CI-T and Conners CI-SR.....	166
4.26	Description of direct observation contexts.....	174
4.27	Standardised test scores for participant 07.....	178
4.28	TSS Scores from the Conners CI-P, Conners CI-T and Conners CI-SR.....	182
4.29	Description of direct observation contexts.....	190
4.30	Summary of antecedents for participant 07.....	192
4.31	Summary of consequences for participant 07.....	193
4.32	Standardised test scores for participant 08.....	198
4.33	TSS Scores from the Conners CI-P, Conners CI-T and Conners CI-SR.....	201
4.34	Description of direct observation contexts.....	209
4.35	Summary of antecedents for participant 08.....	210
4.36	Summary of consequences for participant 08.....	211

4.37	Standardised test scores for participant 09.....	217
4.38	TSS Scores from the Conners CI-P, Conners CI-T and Conners CI-SR.....	220
4.39	Description of direct observation contexts.....	228
4.40	Summary of antecedents for participant 09.....	230
4.41	Summary of consequences for participant 09.....	231
4.42	Standardised test scores for participant 10.....	236
4.43	TSS Scores from the Conners CI-P, Conners CI-T and Conners CI-SR.....	239
4.44	Description of direct observation contexts.....	249
5.1	Similarities in area of concern on the Conners CI.....	255
5.2	Similarities in function on the QABF.....	257
5.3	Similarities in Functional Assessment interviews.....	263

Figures

1	Steps for conducting Functional Assessment chart.....	29
---	---	----