CalABA 2026 Symposium
Citation Summaries

How Each Reference Supports the Presentation
"Beyond Observable Behavior: Measuring and Modifying the Function of Thought in School-Based Assessment"

PAPER 1: The Assessment Phase

EO-Behavior-AO Framework

Michael, J. (1993). Establishing operations. *The Behavior Analyst, 16*(2), 191-206.

This seminal paper introduces the concept of establishing operations (EOs) as distinct from discriminative stimuli. Michael argues that behavior analysis had conflated two separate functions: the discriminative function (signaling availability of reinforcement) and the motivating function (altering the value of a consequence). This distinction is critical for the symposium's claim that traditional ABC analysis captures only observable triggers while missing the motivational variables that truly drive behavior. When a student engages in self-talk or cognitive fusion before problem behavior, the EO is the verbal/cognitive event—not the environmental antecedent observers record.

Laraway, S., Snycerski, S., Michael, J., & Poling, A. (2003). Motivating operations and terms to describe them: Some further refinements. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis, 36*(3), 407-414.

This paper refined Michael's original terminology, introducing "motivating operation" (MO) as an umbrella term encompassing both establishing and abolishing operations. The authors clarify that MOs have two effects: value-altering (changing how reinforcing/punishing a stimulus is) and behavior-altering (changing the frequency of behavior that has produced that stimulus). For the symposium, this supports the claim that ACT interventions work by targeting the value-altering function—cognitive defusion reduces how "reinforcing" escape from uncomfortable thoughts becomes.

PAPER 2: ACT-Informed BIPs

ACT Core Framework

Hayes, S. C., Strosahl, K. D., & Wilson, K. G. (2012). *Acceptance and commitment therapy: The process and practice of mindful change* **(2nd ed.). Guilford Press.**

This is the definitive clinical manual for ACT, providing the theoretical and procedural foundation for the symposium's intervention approach. The book establishes ACT's six core processes (acceptance, defusion, present moment awareness, self-as-context, values, committed action) and explains how psychological inflexibility—the rigid dominance of verbal/cognitive control over direct environmental contingencies—underlies diverse behavioral problems. For school BCBAs, this text justifies targeting "what happens inside the student" when traditional function-based interventions fail.

Hayes, S. C., Luoma, J. B., Bond, F. W., Masuda, A., & Lillis, J. (2006). Acceptance and commitment therapy: Model, processes and outcomes. *Behaviour Research and Therapy, 44***(1), 1-25.**

This review summarizes the empirical basis for ACT across clinical populations. Crucially for the symposium's evidence claims, the paper documents ACT's efficacy across anxiety, depression, chronic pain, and workplace performance—demonstrating that psychological flexibility is a transdiagnostic process variable. The symposium leverages this evidence to argue that ACT-informed BIPs can address behaviors maintained by avoidance of internal experiences.

Relational Frame Theory

Hayes, S. C., Barnes-Holmes, D., & Roche, B. (Eds.). (2001). *Relational frame theory: A post-Skinnerian account of human language and cognition***. Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers.**

RFT provides the behavior-analytic foundation for ACT. This edited volume explains how humans derive relations among stimuli through a history of multiple-exemplar training. The key insight for school behavior support: once a student derives that "I'm stupid" is equivalent to failure experiences, the thought itself acquires aversive functions —and escape from the thought (not just escape from the academic task) can maintain avoidance behavior.

ACT Matrix

Polk, K. L., & Schoendorff, B. (Eds.). (2014). *The ACT matrix: A new approach to building psychological flexibility across settings and populations.* **New Harbinger Publications.**

The ACT Matrix is a visual tool that helps individuals (including children) distinguish between "toward" moves (values-consistent behavior) and "away" moves (experiential avoidance). The symposium uses the Matrix as both an assessment tool (mapping students' current patterns) and an intervention framework (helping students notice the workability of their choices).

ACT with Youth

Greco, L. A., & Hayes, S. C. (Eds.). (2008). *Acceptance and mindfulness treatments for children and adolescents: A practitioner's guide.* **New Harbinger Publications.**

This edited volume addresses the unique considerations for ACT implementation with children. The authors discuss developmental adaptations including simplified language, concrete metaphors, and activity-based exercises. For the symposium's population (school-age students), this text provides empirical and clinical guidance supporting the feasibility of ACT-informed interventions in educational settings.

CPFQ Measurement

Greco, L. A., Lambert, W., & Baer, R. A. (2008). Psychological inflexibility in childhood and adolescence: Development and evaluation of the Avoidance and Fusion Questionnaire for Youth. *Psychological Assessment, 20*(2), 93-102.

This paper reports the psychometric development of the AFQ-Y, which measures psychological inflexibility in children. The measure shows good internal consistency (α = .90) and correlates with anxiety, somatic complaints, and behavior problems. This citation supports using standardized measurement of psychological flexibility as both a baseline assessment and outcome measure.

PAPER 3: Implementation & Fidelity

Behavioral Skills Training (BST)

Parsons, M. B., Rollyson, J. H., & Reid, D. H. (2012). Evidence-based staff training: A guide for practitioners. *Behavior Analysis in Practice, 5*(2), 2-11.

This paper provides the gold standard for training implementers in behavior-analytic procedures. BST consists of four components: instruction, modeling, rehearsal, and feedback. The symposium's implementation protocol uses BST to train teachers and paraprofessionals in ACT-informed strategies. This citation supports the claim that effective BIP implementation requires more than just handing staff a written plan.

Sarokoff, R. A., & Sturmey, P. (2004). The effects of behavioral skills training on staff implementation of discrete-trial teaching. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis, 37*(4), 535-538.

This empirical study demonstrated that BST significantly improved staff implementation of discrete-trial procedures, with improvements maintaining at follow-up. The symposium extrapolates this evidence to ACT-informed BIP implementation.

Implementation Fidelity Research

Noell, G. H., Witt, J. C., et al. (2005). Treatment implementation following behavioral consultation in schools: A comparison of three follow-up strategies. *School Psychology Review, 34*(1), 87-106.

This study found that teachers' implementation of behavior plans dropped to **40-60% accuracy within days** after initial training unless follow-up support was provided. Performance feedback—brief meetings providing implementation data—maintained higher fidelity than either no follow-up or commitment emphasis alone. The symposium cites this research to justify the implementation support systems described in Paper 3.

DiGennaro Reed, F. D., Codding, R., Catania, C. N., & Maguire, H. (2010). Effects of video modeling on treatment integrity of behavioral interventions. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis, 43*(2), 291-295.

This study demonstrated that video modeling combined with performance feedback improved treatment integrity for behavioral interventions. The symposium's implementation protocol incorporates video modeling as part of the BST sequence.

PAPER 4: Outcomes & Social Validity

Social Validity Framework

Wolf, M. M. (1978). Social validity: The case for subjective measurement or how applied behavior analysis is finding its heart. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis, 11*(2), 203-214.

Wolf's classic paper argues that behavior analysis must attend to three dimensions of social validity: (1) the social significance of goals, (2) the social appropriateness of procedures, and (3) the social importance of effects. The symposium's inclusion of student voice data, teacher acceptability ratings, and family feedback directly implements Wolf's framework.

Function-Based Intervention Effectiveness

Newcomer, L. L., & Lewis, T. J. (2004). Functional behavioral assessment: An investigation of assessment reliability and effectiveness of function-based interventions. *Journal of Emotional and Behavioral Disorders, 12*(3), 168-181.

This study found that function-based interventions were significantly more effective than non-function-based interventions (**effect size d = 0.78**). The symposium uses this evidence to argue that identifying the correct function—including when internal verbal events are the functional variable—is essential for intervention success.

Functional Analysis Methodology

Classic FA

Iwata, B. A., Dorsey, M. F., Slifer, K. J., Bauman, K. E., & Richman, G. S. (1982/1994). Toward a functional analysis of self-injury. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis, 27*(2), 197-209.

This landmark paper established the standard FA methodology comparing attention, escape, tangible, and alone conditions. While the symposium argues that traditional FA may miss internally-mediated functions, this citation acknowledges the foundational contribution and explains that latency-based FA is an extension—not a replacement—of established methods.

Practical Functional Assessment

Hanley, G. P., Jin, C. S., Vanselow, N. R., & Hanratty, L. A. (2014). Producing meaningful improvements in problem behavior of children with autism via synthesized analyses and treatments. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis, 47*(1), 16-36.

This paper introduced the Interview-Informed Synthesized Contingency Analysis (IISCA), which the symposium references as "Pathway A" for behaviors maintained by external contingencies. Hanley's practical functional assessment is faster and more clinically relevant than traditional extended FAs. The symposium positions ACT-informed assessment as "Pathway B"—a parallel approach for internally-mediated behavior.

Hanley, G. P. (2012). Functional assessment of problem behavior: Dispelling myths, overcoming implementation obstacles, and developing new lore. *Behavior Analysis in Practice, 5*(1), 54-72.

This review addresses common misconceptions about FA implementation in applied settings. Hanley argues for flexible, clinically-informed approaches rather than rigid protocols. The symposium extends this flexibility argument to include assessment of internal verbal events when behavioral indicators suggest internal mediation.

Summary Table

Claim in Presentation	Supporting Citation	Key Evidence
EOs are distinct from discriminative stimuli	Michael (1993)	Conceptual analysis of motivational vs. discriminative functions
ACT has broad empirical support	Hayes et al. (2006)	Meta-analysis across clinical populations
Psychological inflexibility is measurable in youth	Greco et al. (2008)	AFQ-Y psychometrics ($\alpha = .90$)
RFT explains rule-governed behavior	Hayes et al. (2001)	Derived relational responding framework
ACT Matrix is practical for schools	Polk & Schoendorff (2014)	Clinical manual with applied examples
BIP implementation drops without support	Noell et al. (2005)	40-60% fidelity within days
BST improves implementation	Parsons et al. (2012)	Evidence-based staff training
Function-based BIPs outperform default	Newcomer & Lewis (2004)	Effect size $d = 0.78$
Social validity matters	Wolf (1978)	Three dimensions framework
IISCA is practical FA	Hanley et al. (2014)	Synthesized analysis methodology

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