

The Ethics of Supervision

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The British Columbia Association for Behaviour Analysis



“If during the direct services portion of our ‘intensive practicum experience’ we are primarily left on our own while the supervisors are off site at meetings or on the computer in a different area writing articles, replying to email etc. and only directly supervise us when we specifically ask for help, is this appropriate?”

Is this how the intensive practicum supervision is normally conducted?”

5.0 Behavior Analysts as Supervisors.

When behavior analysts are functioning as supervisors, they must take full responsibility for all facets of this undertaking.

5.01 Supervisory Competence

5.02 Supervisory Volume

5.03 Supervisory Delegation

5.04 Designing Effective Supervision and Training

5.05 Communication of Supervision Conditions

5.06. Providing Feedback to Supervisees

5.07 Evaluating the Effects of Supervision.

5.0 Behavior Analysts as Supervisors.

- Prompting supervisees to engage in relevant clinical skills
- Be particularly aware of any repeated errors since the last feedback

“When behavior analysts are functioning as supervisors, they must take full responsibility for all facets of this undertaking.”

needs improvement.

the next.

- Prioritize the corrective steps that need to be taken

5.0 Behavior Analysts as Supervisors.

When behavior analysts are functioning as supervisors, they must take full responsibility for all facets of this undertaking.



*“My question is about my supervisor. I am a **grad student** and I work 10-hours per week in a school. I met her on the phone before the first day of my assignment, she asked me a few questions and then told me where to meet her a couple of days later in one of the classrooms.*

I arrived early for the 1:00 pm meeting and waited and waited but she never showed. As I was headed to the main office to sign out my cell rang, “So how did it go?” I told her I was waiting for her and that I did not “do anything” since I wasn’t sure what to do.

She said, “Oh, I should have mentioned that I was running late, I guess I forgot to call you, let’s try again on Thursday. Just go in the classroom and introduce yourself to the teacher and have her point out Allie, she’s the problem child, gotta run.” I heard from her again two weeks later and asked if she was going to observe me, “No, not now I’ve got a lot going on, just put your supervision papers in my mailbox at the school and I’ll sign them for you.”

Comments, Discussion?

5.0 Behavior Analysts as Supervisors.

When behavior analysts are functioning as supervisors, they must take full responsibility for all facets of this undertaking.

Question from a Supervisor

“I got a call from the principal at a school where one of my 1st year grad student supervisees is doing her practicum. She said that this individual kicked one of the 3rd grade children and wanted to know what I was going to do about it. The parents have been called and want to meet with me.”

“I wasn’t there, I don’t know the child and have not seen that grad student in several weeks; am I responsible for this mess? Shouldn’t they be talking to the grad student? This is not my fault is it?”



Comments, Discussion?

5.01 Supervisory Competence.

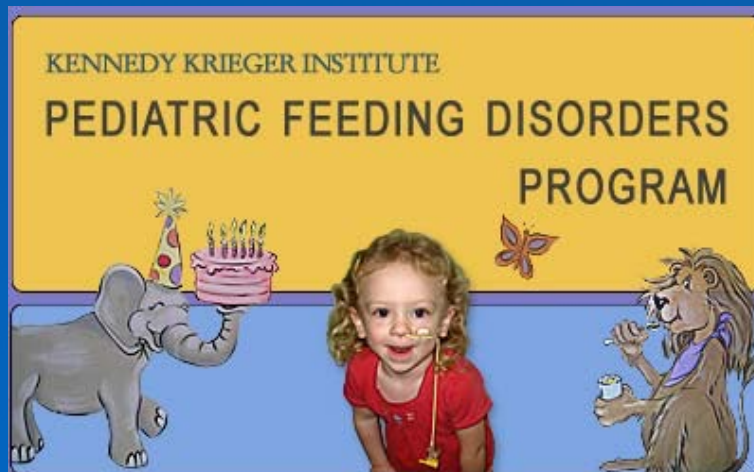
Behavior analysts supervise only within their areas of defined competence.

5.01 Supervisory Competence.

- “Defined competence” is not operationalized
- A competent behavior analyst: One who has the necessary knowledge, skills, and ability to perform routine tasks in the general areas of our field including:
 - Discrete Trial Training (DTT)
 - Managing off task, self-stim behaviors
 - Classroom management including token economies
 - Consulting on DD clients in home and residential settings,
 - Delivery of standard autism training services with this background should be able to handle routine supervision tasks.

5.01 Supervisory Competence cont.

- But, a supervisee assigned to work with a client with a life-threatening feeding disorder or, dangerous self-injurious behavior, not only may that therapist not be competent to take the case but the supervisor may also fall short.
- Competence is defined by the types of specific training and supervision ABA professionals have had
- Such as:
 - Participating in a series of workshops followed by a practicum experience at a specialized center for treatment and research.



The BIG 6 Competencies

- Pica
- Feeding Disorders
- Aggression
- Property Destruction
- Elopement
- Self-injurious Behavior

5.01 Supervisory Competence cont.

- Receiving a certificate of completion of training from such a program would provide the necessary “defined competence” that is called for in this code item.

*“One of the BCaBAs I supervise has been assigned a client who presents with pica. I don’t know anything about that so I told the **assistant** to go look up some research and get back with me. In the meantime I was called into the Clinical Director’s office and told I was put on suspension because one of **my** clients choked and nearly died on a sponge that he swallowed.”*



Clinical Director

Comments, Discussion?

5.02 Supervisory Volume. NEW

Behavior analysts take on only a volume of supervisory activity that is commensurate with their ability to be effective.

5.02 Supervisory Volume. NEW

- Key phrase: “ability to be effective” which focuses attention on the *performance* of the supervisees
- Difficult to specify due to assignment of responsibility
- For example: A full time BCBA with her own case load works 15-hrs per week as a supervisor & 10 supervisees
 - One hour per week minimum per supervisee
 - One hour per week group meeting
 - This totals 11 hours plus time for travel, paperwork etc

5.02 Supervisory Volume cont.

- Some outcome measures of effectiveness
 - **All** supervisees receive their one-on-one observations and feedback sessions
 - **No** supervisees have any **complaints** lodged against them
 - Satisfaction **survey** of supervisees and clients would indicate at least an “8” on a 10 scale,.
 - Data on **client progress** which was rated as at or above the expected or projected rate of success.

5.02 Supervisory Volume cont.

- Some variables that would affect this standard formula would include:
 - Status of the supervisees
 - Difficulty of the cases that they are working on.
 - For example, a new supervisee with a difficult case would obviously require more intense supervisory time;
- Supervisees preparing for the BCaBA or BCBA exam will require more time than a BCaBA who is more experienced and would require less time from a supervisor.

Comments, Discussion?

5.02 Supervisory Volume cont.

“My supervisor has a full case load of clients plus she teaches part time at the university and she has six of us 2nd year grad students to supervise. We have met and none of us feels like we are getting adequate supervision.”



BCBA
Supervisor

What recourse do the students have?

Comments, Discussion?

5.03 Supervisory Delegation.

- a) Behavior analysts delegate to their supervisees only those responsibilities that such persons can reasonably be expected to perform competently, ethically, and safely.**
- b) If the supervisee does not have the skills necessary to perform competently, ethically, and safely, behavior analysts provide conditions for the acquisition of those skills.**

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“Annie is a BCBA working in a new center that boasts two BCBA’s, several BCaBA’s, enough room for 30 children, and a state of the art environment. One client, Gloria, has been with the center for several months. She has made some good progress but is still largely non-verbal (she is able to ask for a few things vocally, but uses an electronic PECS system concurrently).

The parents start discussing with the BCBA that Gloria makes vocal sounds that they find annoying, and they want to know if there’s anything that can be done about it. Annie recommends a procedure she knows has become popular in the research, although she has never used it before—Response Interruption and Redirection (RIRD). She is excited that she has an answer to this problem for these parents and so she implements RIRD right away with her team of therapists.

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When the other BCBA in the program is on the floor and sees the RIRD implemented, she notices that the staff seem to be applying the procedure differently. Some seem to be applying it to vocalizations that seem appropriate, and others are only applying it to vocals that are repetitive or non-functional.

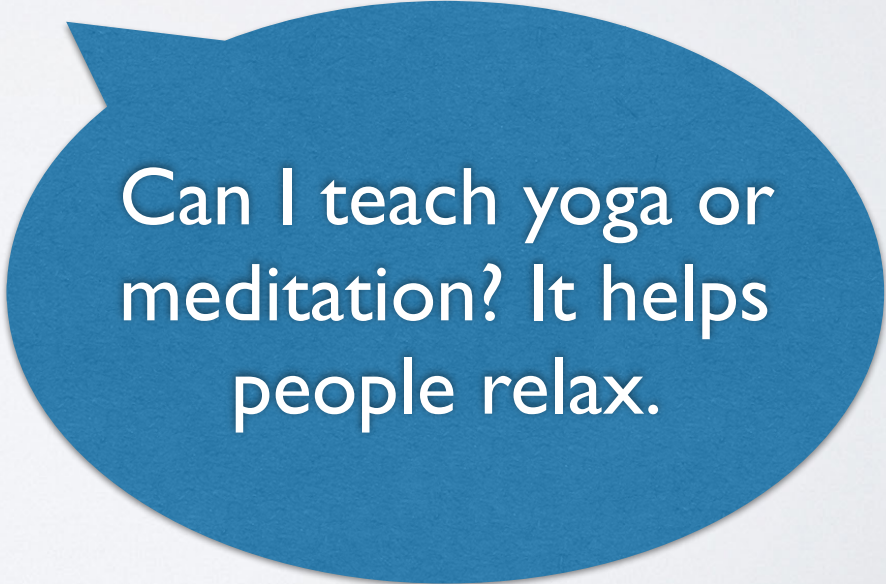
When this BCBA asks the direct service staff about the program, two of the four instructors on Gloria's team call it a 'vocal imitation' program and do not seem to understand the purpose of it. Lastly, the data appears to show that all of Gloria's vocal mands and other vocal/verbal behaviors have decreased since the onset of the RIRD.

When this BCBA asks Annie about what the research says on using RIRD on early vocal learners, Annie replies, 'I don't know... I haven't read it.'"

Comments, Discussion?

5.04 Designing Effective Supervision and Training.

Behavior analysts ensure that supervision and trainings are behavior-analytic in content, effectively and ethically designed, and meet the requirements for licensure, certification, or other defined goals.



Can I teach yoga or meditation? It helps people relax.

5.04 Designing Effective Supervision and Training.

- 1. Establishment of performance expectations of both supervisor and supervisee**
- 2. Description of how supervision will proceed according to the BACB Experience Standards (e.g., frequency of individual supervision, group supervision)**
- 3. Description of potentially appropriate activities as described in the BACB Experience Standards**
- 4. Description of competency tests of understanding**
- 5. Development and review of contractual agreement of the nature of supervision and performance expectations**
- 6. Assessment of initial skills of supervisee - Interview or Observation**
- 7. Behavioral skills training of supervisee**
- 8. Scheduled observations that may include in-vivo, video, web-based, computer-assisted observations- Before, during, and after training**
- 9. Review of written materials developed by the supervisee, including written plans, data sheets, and reports**
- 10. Ongoing scheduled supervision meetings - Individual, Group, or Web-based, computer assisted**
- 11. Performance evaluations (formal & informal) of the supervisee - Meetings**
 - Written evaluations**
- 12. Evaluation of the supervision process and the supervisor by the supervisee - Meetings**
 - Written evaluations**

5.04 Designing Effective Supervision and Training.

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*“Ryan has been engaging in high frequencies of hair pulling (himself and on others). Katie (a BCBA) tells the staff to start using ABC narrative recording. After several weeks, the other BCBA on staff notices that the staff are reactively giving this child **massages** to the head and hands as an **intervention for this hair pulling**, so she looks over the data and sees that the frequency of this problem behavior does not seem to be decreasing.*

The graph shows that if anything, the frequency of Ryan’s hair pulling seems to have increased since the start of the intervention, which was several weeks ago, but no one seems to be concerned about this.

5.04 Designing Effective Supervision and Training. Cont.

Behavior analysts ensure that supervision and trainings are behavior-analytic in content, effectively and ethically designed, and meet the requirements for licensure, certification, or other defined goals.

The parents have approached the center to say that these behaviors also seem to be occurring at the school that Ryan attends half the day, and the teachers there are complaining about it, especially because he has now done it to other children in his class.



When the other BCBA approaches Katie about this, she replies that she is sure the intervention is working because she has not seen as much hair pulling during her observations of him, and the staff are not complaining about it as much.”

Comments, Discussion?

5.04 Designing Effective Supervision and Training.

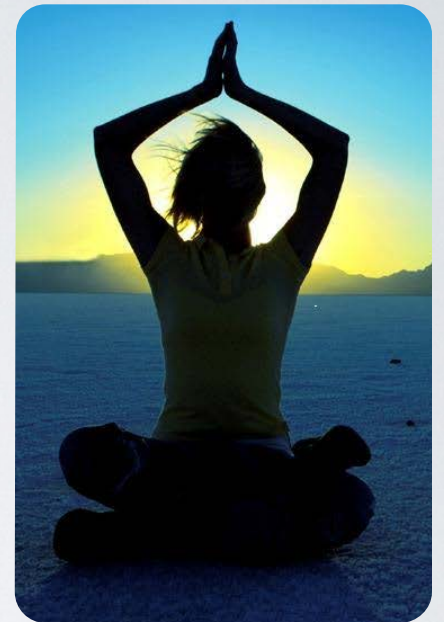
Behavior analysts ensure that supervision and trainings are **behavior-analytic in content**, effectively and ethically designed, and meet the requirements for licensure, certification, or other defined goals.

One More...

“At the government center where I work, they have decided to spend a lot of money on spreading the practice of **Mindfulness** through the staff. I have nothing against Mindfulness per se as a way for people to try and feel calmer or better about themselves or in general.

The person they have been working with is a **BCBA-D** and a ‘big name’ in mindfulness and specifically with people caring for individuals with destructive behavior, as a way to reduce problem behaviors and aggression in these individuals (the clients).

To be sure, I DO have a problem with the fact that no money is being spent on educating their front line workers in behavioral interventions, and instead upwards of \$100k has been spent on Mindfulness to date.”



Comments, Discussion?

5.05 Communication of Supervision Conditions.

Behavior analysts provide a clear *written* description of the purpose, requirements, and evaluation criteria of supervision prior to the onset of the supervision.



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“I was assigned to a new case over the phone. I was told what school to go to and which classroom and what time. ‘I’ll send you the behavior program as an email attachment later today’ wrote my supervisor.

The email never arrived even though I left a voice message and sent two text messages. I reported to the appointed school and classroom on time as directed, approached the teacher, identified myself, and asked if she had a student for me to work with.

She pointed to a boy in the back row who had his head on his desk and was sobbing. I really didn’t know what to do so I just sat next to him and tried to provide some comfort.”



Comments, Discussion?

5.06 Providing Feedback to Supervisees.

- a) Behavior analysts design feedback and reinforcement systems in a way that improves supervisee performance.**
- b) Behavior analysts provide documented, timely feedback regarding the performance of a supervisee on an ongoing basis (See also, 10.05 Compliance with BACB Supervision and Coursework Standards.)**

5.06 Providing Feedback to Supervisees.

- a) Behavior analysts design feedback and reinforcement systems in a way that improves supervisee performance.
- b) Behavior analysts provide documented, timely feedback regarding the performance of a supervisee on an ongoing basis

“On Wednesday I met with an individual that I supervise. She submitted a time log detailing a variety of fieldwork activities for the 2-week period. Some of her activities included reading a variety of texts.

When questioned about a particular text listed in the time log, it became very apparent to me that she did not do the 4.5 hours of reading that was documented for the particular text. We discussed this in a calm and professional manner, but she displayed outward signs of “panic” when she realized that she was caught falsifying her fieldwork time log.

5.06 Providing Feedback to Supervisees.

- a) Behavior analysts design feedback and reinforcement systems in a way that improves supervisee performance.
- b) Behavior analysts provide documented, timely feedback regarding the performance of a supervisee on an ongoing basis

Cont.

After taking the rest of the day to think about it, she informed me that she plans to find another BCBA to provide the remainder of her supervision. Of course, I am comfortable with terminating our supervision contract in this instance; however, I have several concerns related to what my ethical obligations are in this situation.

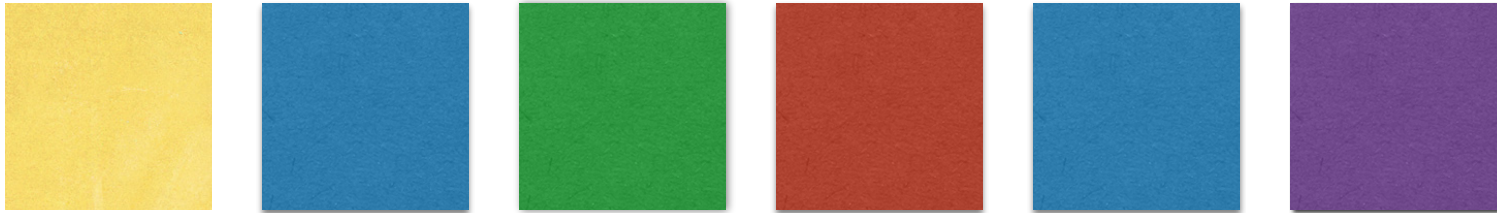
I feel that I should report the supervisee's behavior to someone, but I'm unsure if that is appropriate in the supervisory role. I believe that it is important that she never falsifies any documentation ever again, but I don't think she should be prevented from pursuing her certification if she successfully completes the remainder of her fieldwork in an ethical manner."

Comments, Discussion?

5.07 Evaluating the Effects of Supervision. NEW

**Behavior analysts design systems for
obtaining ongoing evaluation of their own
supervision activities.**

Supervisor Training Curriculum Outline



II. Important Features of Supervision

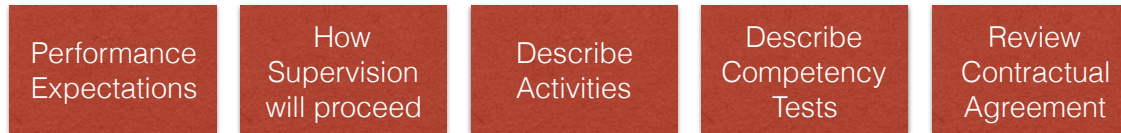
The supervisor should be able to describe or demonstrate the following components of effective, evidence-based supervision:

- Establishment of performance expectations of both supervisor and supervisee
- Description of how supervision will proceed according to the *BACB Experience Standards* (e.g., frequency of individual supervision, group supervision)
- Description of potentially appropriate activities as described in the *BACB Experience Standards*
- Description of competency tests of understanding
- Development and review of contractual agreement of the nature of supervision and performance expectations
- Assessment of initial skills of supervisee
 - Interview
 - Observation
- Behavioral skills training of supervisee

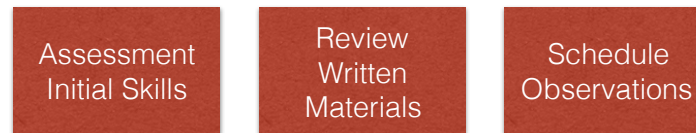
A Feedback, Reinforcement and Evaluation of Supervision **SYSTEM**

(BACB Code 5.04-5.07)

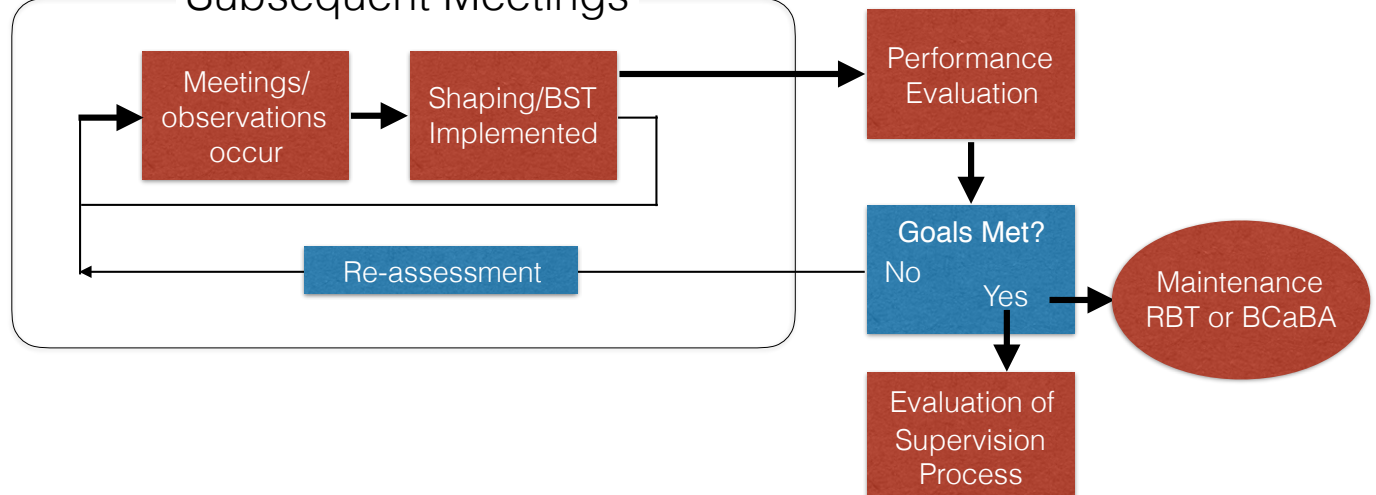
First Meeting



Second Meeting



Subsequent Meetings

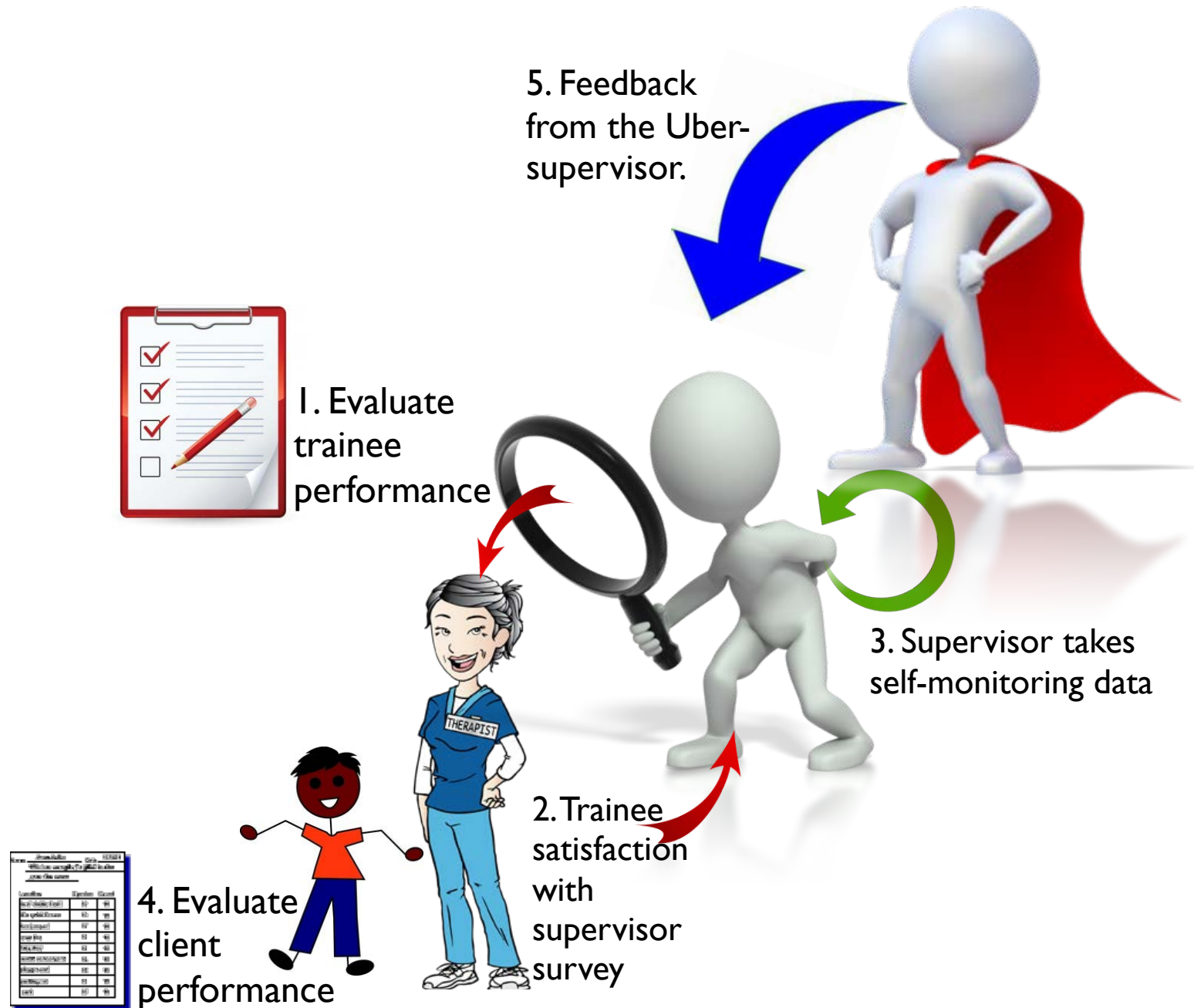


Direct Observation is essential for BST to be effective. Supervisor should take data and meet with supervisee shortly after observation. Feedback is written and graphed

5.07 Evaluating the Effects of Supervision.

1. Evaluate trainee performance via direct observation
2. Evaluate trainee satisfaction with supervisor
3. Supervisor takes self-monitoring data using checklist
4. Evaluate client performance data
5. Feedback from colleague supervisor who observes or *Uber-supervisor* with data collection, video and feedback.

5.07 Evaluating the Effects of Supervision.



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New Topic

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Some Recent Pilot
Research

Behavioral

SO, WHAT *IS* SUPERVISION?

Shaping of a trainee/BCaBA

Expert Shaping

Measured by Topography

Ultimately Measured by **OUTCOME**

Operational Definition: *One Hour* of ...

Behavioral SUPERVISION

- 30-min of direct observation
followed by
 - 10-min of analyzing data/prioritizing
followed by
 - 20-min of expert shaping via BST
- = 60-min of **Behavioral** SUPERVISION

How do we train BCBA's to become good Supervisors?

We send them off to take
8-hrs of training...

But where is the data
showing that this training
actually works?

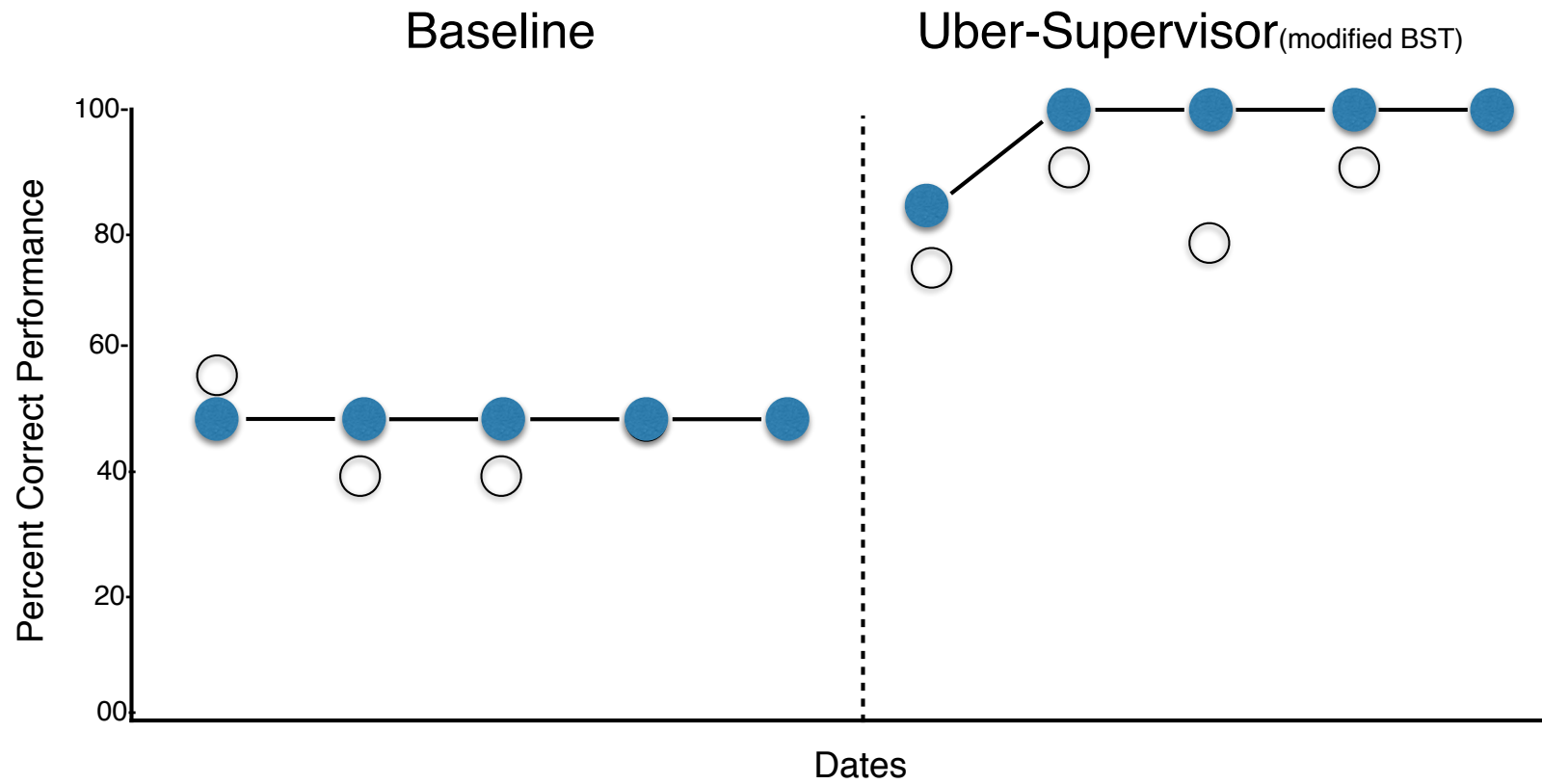


10 Essential Skills for the Supervisor

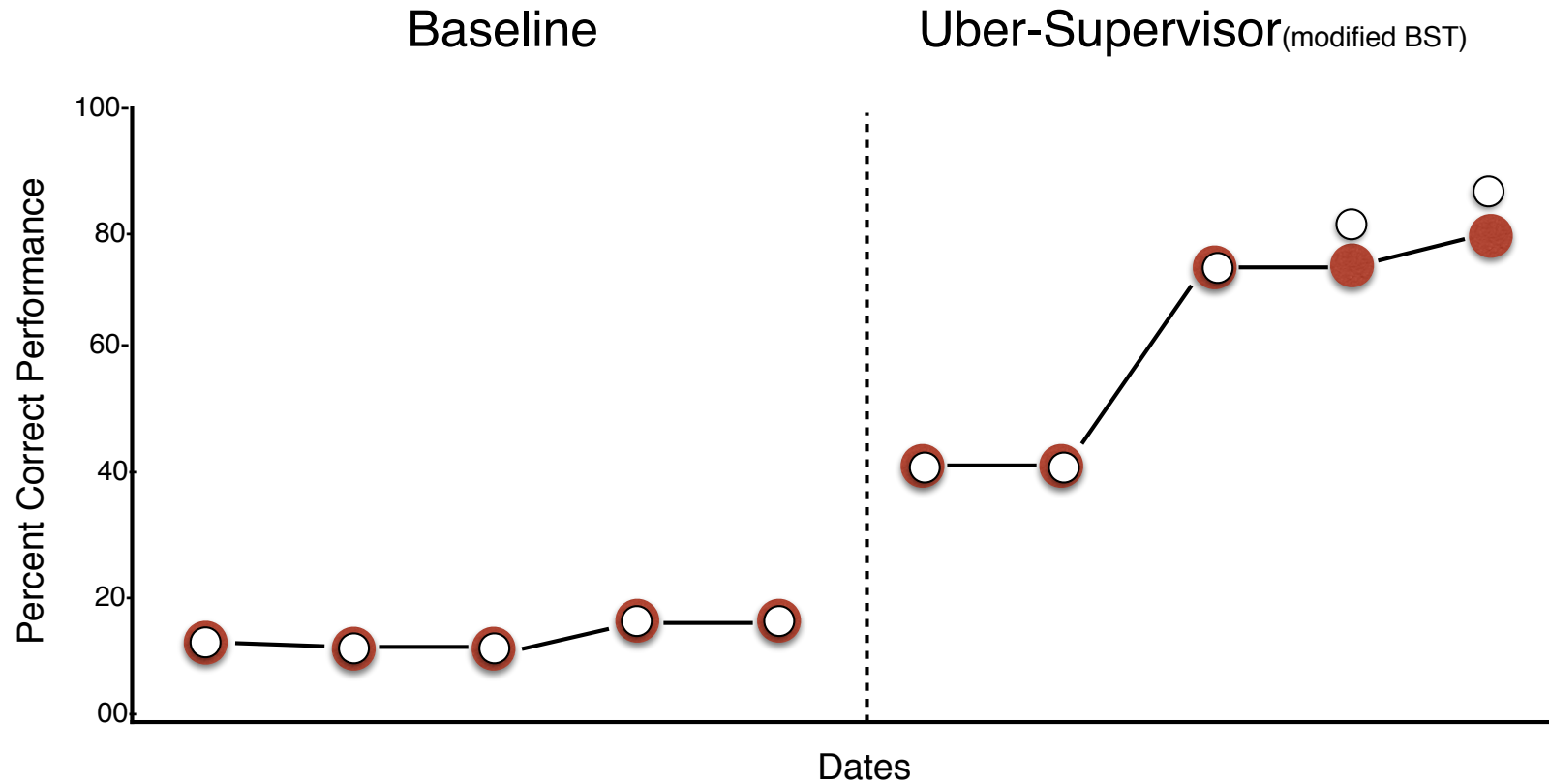
Dates	3/20/15			4/13/15			4/20/15			4/27/15			4/28/15			Comments
	Session 1			Session 2			Session 3			Session 4			Session 5			
Skill	Y	N	N/A	Y	N	N/A	Y	N	N/A	Y	N	N/A	Y	N	N/A	
Observed trainer	A			A			A			A			A			
Identified & documented relevant trainer errors	A			A			A			A			A			
Prioritized corrective feedback	A			A			A			A			A			
Prompted note taking	A			A			A			A			A			
Provided corrective feedback	A			A			A			A			A			
Coached &/or modeled appropriate trainer responses	A			A			A			A			A			
Provided opportunities for role play/practice	A			A			A			A			A			
Provided positive reinforcement	A			A			A			A			A			
Prompted trainer re: Relevant skills		✓	0		✓	0		✓	0		✓	0		✓	0	
Scheduled follow-up appointment	A			A				0		A				✓		
Total # of skills	9			10			10			10			10			
% Correct	90%			100%			100%			100%			100%			
IOA	90%			90%			80%			90%			—			

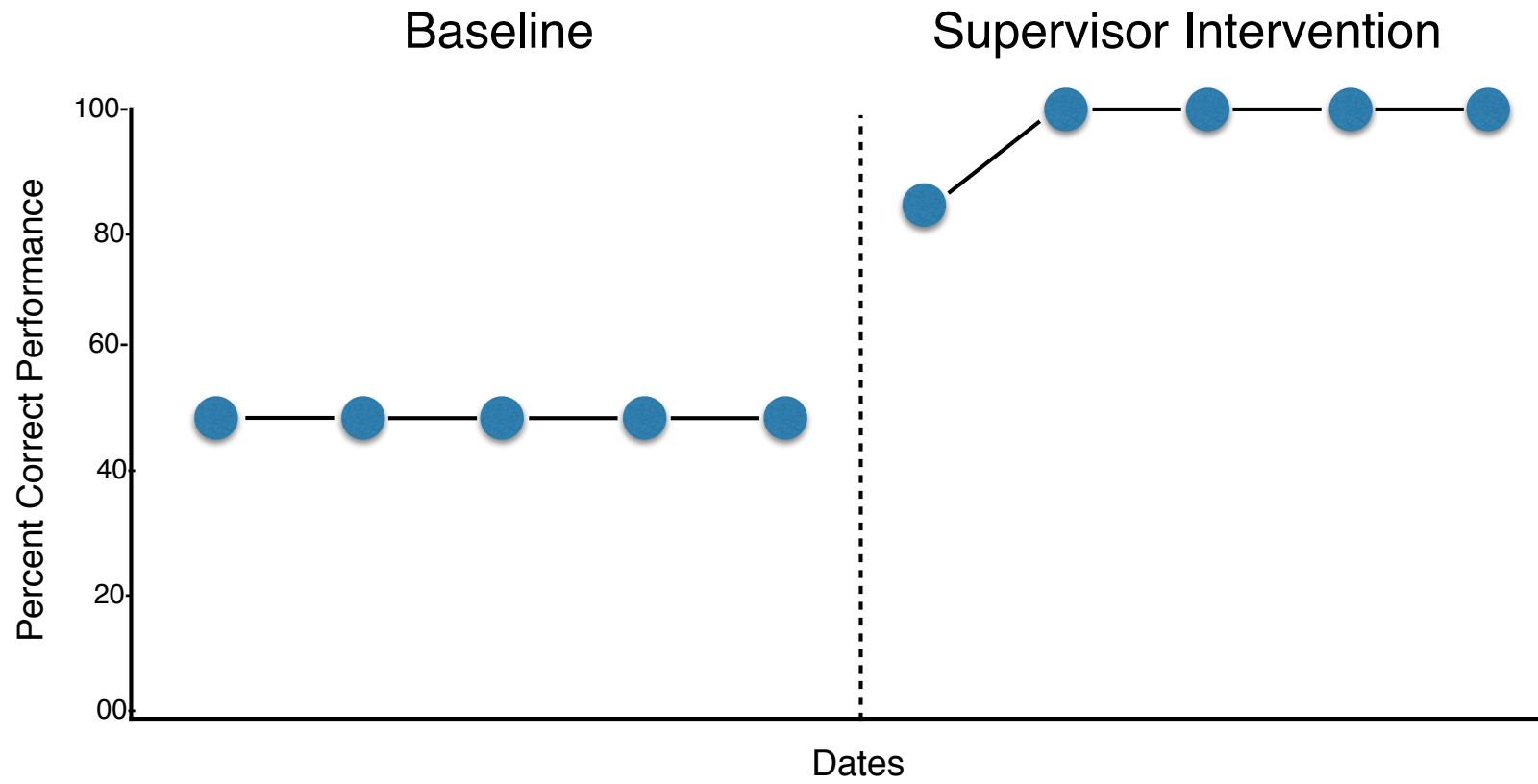
We train BCBA's to become Supervisors the same way *they* train supervisees.

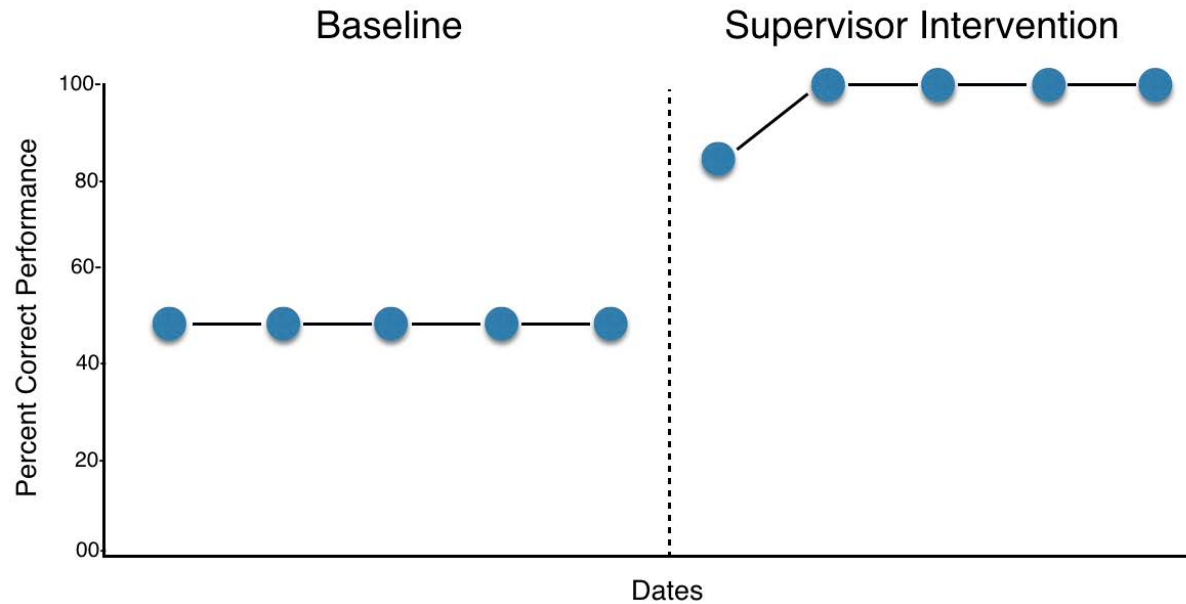
PILOT DATA: IMPROVING SUPERVISOR PERFORMANCE



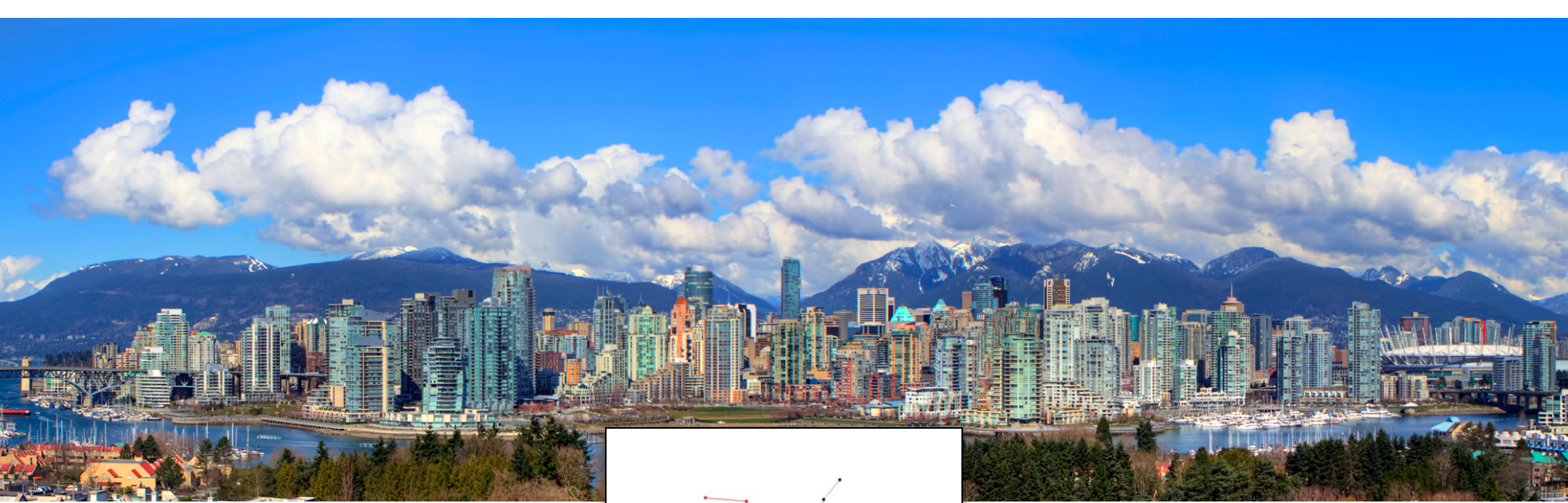
PILOT DATA: IMPROVING *TRAINER* PERFORMANCE







This type of single-case data on BCBA's who want to become Supervisors is essential to building this new area of research on supervision.



Thank You for Inviting Me

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