



**Book of Abstracts**

**EVIDENCE BASED PRACTICE FOR  
PARTICIPATION AND INCLUSION**

**3<sup>rd</sup> QUART Conference**

**Queen's University Belfast**

**20<sup>th</sup> September 2013**

## Programme

- 9.00 Registration
- 9.30- 10.00 Welcome to QUB: **Prof James McElnay**, Vice Chancellor (acting) QUB  
Conference Opening address: **Minister Edwin Poots**, Minister for Health,  
Social Services and Public Safety
- 10.00-11.00 Keynote 1: Let me hear YOUR voice. **Dr Lorri Unumb**, Vice President,  
State Government Affairs, Autism Speaks
- 11.00-11.10 Keynote 2: Personal experiences of transitions to adulthood with ASD:  
**Cillian McKerr**, Postgraduate Student, QUB
- 11.10-11.30 Coffee break
- 11.30-1.00 Keynote 3: Science and the Treatment of Autism: Multimedia Package for  
Parents and Professionals (STAMPPP). Launch. **STAMPPP II team** from NI,  
England, Italy, Iceland, Sweden, Netherlands.
- 1.00-2.00 Lunch, posters and expo
- 2.00-3.20 Parallel sessions 1, 2, and 3: Short paper presentations
- 3.20-3.50 Keynote 4: The use of iOs Apps to enhance communication and social skills in  
children with Autism Spectrum Disorder. **Lisa Ruddy**, PhD Student, QUB
- 3.50-4.30 Panel discussion with all keynote speakers
- 4.30 Conference Close

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## Keynote Address One: The Whitla Hall 10.00 – 11.00

### Let me Hear YOUR Voice: Autism and Politics

Speaker: Dr Lorri Unumb (Lorri.Unumb@autismspeaks.org)

Vice President, State Government Affairs, Autism Speaks; Adjunct Professor, George Washington University Law School

**Abstract:** In 2004, the New York Times wrote that "no disability claims more parental time and energy than autism." Families dealing with autism face many hardships, not the least of which is financial hardship. In America, one reason for the financial hardship is the failure of the health insurance industry to cover treatments for, and sometimes even diagnosis of, autism. Recently, there has been a national movement in the states toward legislating meaningful health insurance coverage for individuals with autism. Since 2007, more than 30 states have enacted legislation requiring coverage for autism spectrum disorders, including benefits for Applied Behavior Analysis. In this session, we will explore how targeted advocacy and the use of evidence led to legal endorsement of ABA in the USA.



**Bio:** Lorri Unumb is a lawyer and the mother of three children, the oldest of whom has autism. In 2005, while working as a law professor, she wrote autism insurance legislation for South Carolina ("Ryan's Law") that passed in 2007 and served as a catalyst for the national movement toward autism insurance reform. In 2008, Unumb became employed by the New York-based non-profit Autism Speaks, where she advocates full-time on behalf of individuals with autism. As head of state government affairs, she has testified 80+ times on health insurance issues in state legislatures around the country. For her advocacy efforts, Unumb has been recognized with the Jefferson Award for Public Service; the Autism Society of America 2008 "Parents of the Year" award (along with her husband); and the BACB's Michael Hemingway Award. Unumb's work has been profiled on CNN, on NPR's "Morning Edition," and in Town & Country magazine, from whom she received one of three 2009 "Women Who Make a Difference" awards.

Unumb teaches a law school seminar at George Washington University called "Autism and the Law." Earlier this year, Unumb and her husband Dan released the first-ever comprehensive textbook on legal issues related to autism, also called "Autism and the Law."

## **Keynote address Two: The Whitla Hall 11.00 – 11.10**

### **Personal experiences of transition to adulthood with ASD**

Speaker: Cillian McKerr (l.mckerr@qub.ac.uk)



**Bio:** I am 21 years old and have just graduated from the University of Ulster at Jordanstown with a degree in Politics with Criminology. I am now enrolled for a postgraduate course in Software Development at Queen's University. At the QUART conference I will be talking about my experiences in the education system as a student with Asperger's Syndrome, and how ABA and the support of some autism voluntary groups are helping me make the most of my potential into adulthood, the job market and beyond.

## **Keynote address Three: The Whitla Hall 11.30 – 13.00**

### **STAMPPP 11 Partners: Science and the Treatment of Autism: Launch and Presentation**

Speakers: Keenan, M., Byrne, T., Martin., N., Jonsdottir, S.L., Schenk, J., Roll-Pettersson, L., Presti, N. & Gallagher, S., (<http://www.stamppp.com/>)

**Abstract:** John F. Kennedy once said, "The goal of education is the advancement of knowledge and the dissemination of truth." Today we share with you a practical example of this sentiment. For the past two years, colleagues from Italy, Netherlands, Sweden, Iceland, Spain, Germany, Norway, have worked on producing a parent-friendly introduction to the application of the science of behaviour analysis for the treatment of autism. Funded by the Leonardo Programme, which is part of the European Union's Lifelong Learning Programme, our goal has been to disseminate accurate information about Applied Behaviour Analysis (see [www.stamppp.com](http://www.stamppp.com)). Currently, 34 States in the U.S. have mandated insurance companies to pay for treatment based on Applied Behaviour Analysis. Our goal has been to help parents in Europe who have no access to professionals trained in Applied Behaviour Analysis. It is hoped that governments in each country eventually will see the potential of using our work, SimpleSteps, to support parent training as an essential component of their autism policies.

**Bio:** Parents of children diagnosed with autism face a bewildering range of 'treatments' for autism. International reviews, however, consistently point to the importance of using evidence-based practice to educate parents and children. A science of behaviour (Applied Behaviour Analysis) underpins the most effective treatments but there is a severe shortage of training courses across Europe to prepare professionals to meet the needs of parents and children (see BACB). To address this concern, and the

resulting myths about Applied Behaviour Analysis that have sprung up, Leonardo, part of the European Commission's Lifelong Learning Programme is supporting an innovative multimedia programme first developed in N. Ireland by local charity Parents' Education as Autism Therapists (PEAT) and Behaviour Analysts from the University of Ulster and Queen's University. Called Simple Steps, this multimedia program uses video material in the form of parental testimonies, animations, demonstrations, and textual material to teach the principles of Applied Behaviour Analysis. The goal is to demonstrate how the practice of science impacts on how one maximises the learning opportunities for children with autism. If we can help parents become proficient in delivering home programs for their children, it will make it easier to coordinate these learning opportunities for the child with those provided within a school. Of course, will parents still need supervised by a professional trained in Applied Behaviour Analysis to international standards.

The project funded by Leonardo from 2008-2010 is called STAMPPP and the goal of the original funding was to update the original Simple Steps and provide translations in German, Norwegian, and Spanish; 1000 free copies were distributed in each partner country. The original project was recognised as an example of excellence by the European Commission and was included as a case study highlighting best practice in Inclusion. In 2011-2013, Leonardo has funded a new round of updates and translations to Simple Steps. As well as updating some sections with new animations, we will be making this resource available online to partner countries. Our partners for this round of funding include Italy, Iceland, Sweden and Netherlands.



STAMPPP Team: (Front row, from left): Gallagher, S., Keenan, M., Booth, N.; (Back row from left): Dillenburger, K., Martin, N., Jonsdottir, S.L., Schenk, J., Moderato, P., Roll-Pettersson, L., Mulcahy, L. (not in picture): Byrne, T.

## Keynote address Four: The Whitla Hall 15.20 - 15.50

### The use of iOS Apps to enhance communication and social skills in children with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

Speaker: Lisa Ruddy PhD Candidate QUB (lruddy03@qub.ac.uk)

Abstract: Since the release of the iPod/iPad (2010) there has been an emergence of largely anecdotal reports of the socio-communicative benefits of using these devices with children who have autism spectrum disorder. There exists, however, little or no evidence base to inform best practice of using apps in ASD intervention. Research in this area is required in order to make scientifically based recommendations for the use of iDevice technology in ASD intervention.

In this presentation I will discuss a small pilot study, currently taking place, which investigates the effects of three apps on social and communicative behavior. A multiple baseline single –system design across behaviours was employed, with apps used to target receptive language, expressive language and social skills. Findings will be presented that illustrate the effect of the use of apps on communication and social skills and I will initiate the discussion of the features that make the use of these apps effective.



Bio: Lisa Ruddy is a graduate of University College Dublin and Queen's University Belfast. She is currently in the second year of her PhD at Queen's University Belfast. In the past two years, Lisa has assisted many parents and professionals with using iPads and apps to support children with autism spectrum disorders. She is a regular contributor to a children's app review site, focusing mainly on apps developed for children on the autistic spectrum.

## Paper Presentations:

**Session 1: The Whitla Hall**

**Chair: Dr Katerina Dounavi**

**14.00 – 14.15**

### **If I can't talk, how can I tell you where it hurts?**

Speaker: Lisa Domican, CEO of Grace App Communication and Mother of 2 children with Autism. (lisa@graceapp.com)

Affiliates: CEO of Grace App Communication and co-creator of The Grace App Picture Exchange System on iOS and now Android tablets and phones.

Abstract: As the mother of 2 children with autism and a serious speech delay, one of the hardest things to cope with is not being able to tell when your child is in pain. It is often assumed that autistic people have a 'high pain threshold' because they seem to be very stoic about levels of discomfort that most would complain about, loudly.

Autistic people are flesh and blood and they feel pain to the same or even a greater degree than anyone else. What they don't naturally is learn how to 'act' like they are in pain. So we have to teach them.

Functional communication systems like the Grace App, are based on identifying needs and wants and using those to motivate a learner to request them, through prompting. E.g., I can see that you like cookies, so I am going put the cookies out of your reach (so you have to engage with me) then prompt you to hand me a picture of a cookie and then give you the cookie. With practice you will learn to recognise many pictures in order to get the things you like.

Teaching someone to demonstrate when they are in pain works on the same principle, but we have to identify it, prompt it and then deliver reward in the form of comfort immediately in order for them to understand the connection. We also need to teach body awareness at the same time, so that the learner can generalise the skill without having to experience pain in every part of their body.

Fortunately, these are very easy skills to teach and with digital technology, we can do it in context whenever and wherever the patient might be experiencing pain.

**Session 1: The Whitla Hall**                      **Chair: Dr Katerina Dounavi**  
**14.20 – 14.35**              **Using Digital tablets technology to prompt and develop independent communication in people with Autism while reducing frustration and improving engagement**

Speaker: Lisa Domican, CEO of Grace App Communication and Mother of 2 children with Autism. (lisa@graceapp.com)

Subtitle: How to identify and understand subtle communicative acts and inappropriate behaviour and learn to replace them with prompted communication using Apps tailored to the individual's real interests and needs.

Abstract: The author developed "The Grace App" a non-speech generating, simple picture exchange system for people with Autism and Speech disabilities to communicate their needs independently without resorting to inappropriate that may make it difficult for the individual to be included.

The presentation will demonstrate that much of the inappropriate behaviour that people describe in people in with autism is actually Verbal Behaviour that has been previously reinforced by consequences. They will learn to follow and record what is important to the individual and use that information to plan and prepare the App and the device chosen to suit, ensuring that correct communication is always safely and consistently prompted and rewarded (while inappropriate behaviour is ignored)

Participants will learn to how and why people with Autism may be communicating already and how best to engage with the learner in order to teach them an alternative that has value to them.

The presentation will demonstrate the basics in implementing a functional requesting system using an App that can be used in all environments. They will also learn how it can enhance quality of life through other fundamental communication goals such as requesting "Help" and understanding "No" and "Wait" receptively.

**Session 1: The Whitla Hall**                      **Chair: Dr Katerina Dounavi**  
**14.40 – 14.55**  
**Mobile Annotation of eVents In Situ (MAVIS)**

Speaker: Rebekah Hunter (rebekahhunter141@hotmail.co.uk)

Abstract: Mobile Annotation of eVents In Situ (MAVIS) is a mobile-based platform that supports real time annotation of events observed during behaviour analysis. The platform is fully customizable and allows for annotation relating to, for example, challenging behaviour or target skills. By providing a flexible touchscreen interface, the platform is targeted at users with minimal technical experience. Users interact with MAVIS through a set of buttons, allowing them to maintain focus on the environment. Consequently, annotations can be reviewed offline to highlight correlations between behaviour causes and effects. The platform also provides services for direct comparison to previous sessions.

## **Session 2: PFC/OG/024**

**Chair: Rose McGaw**

**14.00 – 14.15**

### **Transitions**

Speaker: Elvin Simpson (elvinsimpson@gmail.com)

Abstract: Two years ago I was diagnosed as having Asperger's Syndrome. I was aware that I was different and have always been seeking to understand the ways this difference manifests itself in my behaviour and personality without knowing it was connected to Autism.

In my presentation I look back at my childhood and identify, with hindsight, factors that could be expected to encourage an NT child but which only added to my stress and anxiety levels. Although I should have done well academically, events conspired to make this impossible for me, and resulted in some self-destructive behaviours which contributed to a seemingly inevitable failure.

However, one relationship emerged in a most unlikely fashion which turned things around for me, and enabled me to do averagely well instead of failing spectacularly. This became a springboard for further study in a field which was of consuming interest for me. I look at the reasons this relationship made a difference for me in the absence of the knowledge that I had autism at that time, and relate this to some of the attitudes to aspire to have in caring for and teaching autistic children and adolescents now, particularly those with Asperger's Syndrome.

## **Session 2: PFC/OG/024**

**Chair: Rose McGaw**

**14.20 – 14.35**

### **Women on the spectrum: Are we being under-diagnosed or misdiagnosed?**

Speaker: Deborah Bond (db5677@my.open.ac.uk)

Abstract: As a female recently diagnosed with Aspergers syndrome, autism has become one of my particular interests and I have been avidly researching literature on the area. In this paper I present a brief review of relevant material from my perspective as a female Aspie. I outline how diagnosis has been a very affirming experience for me and how, before diagnosis, I struggled to make sense of my identity and now I have come to value the giftedness that comes with Aspergers and in particular the positive characteristics that come with being a female on the spectrum, despite the daily struggles I have as a result of having Aspergers syndrome. I outline how initially most of the material I found on autism was male orientated and did not make sense for me until I read Aspergirls by Rudy Simone. Suddenly, I had found a book that described me, that I could relate to and which made sense of my life. I reflect on how my personal experience has made me wonder whether the prevalence rates for males and females are accurate or whether many other females are not being diagnosed or are being misdiagnosed. I look at how this could be due to the differences in presentation in females compared with males and the diagnostic tools generally used. I use both what I have read and my own experience of living as a female previously not diagnosed, to try to outline how under-diagnosis and misdiagnoses could readily occur. Finally I consider, from the perspective of someone who lives with Aspergers, how it seems to me that the way autism traits present could be misunderstood as Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, Anorexia Nervosa or Borderline Personality disorder.

**Session 2: PFC/OG/024**

**Chair: Rose McGaw**

**14.40 – 14.55**

**Using ‘TAGteach’ as a teaching tool for ASD**

Speaker: Rose McGaw (mgaw01@qub.ac.uk)

Abstract: This presentation will discuss the use of ‘TAGteach’, a novel teaching method based upon the principles of ABA, as a teaching tool for people with ASD.

‘TAGteach’ is an acronym for ‘teaching with acoustic guidance’. It is a practical example of shaping, where new behaviors’ are taught in a successive, goal-orientated manner.

The procedure, terminology and practical applications of TAGteach will be examined, with particular emphasis given to the behavior analytic principles upon which TAGteach is based. Finally, the potential of TAGteach as a teaching tool for Autism will be discussed, using examples to illustrate this in practice.

**Session 2: PFC/OG/024**

**Chair: Rose McGaw**

**15.00 – 15.15**

**Autism Spectrum Disorder: Public awareness and attitudes in Northern Ireland**

Speakers: Lynn McKerr (l.mckerr@qub.ac.uk) and Julie-Ann Jordan (ja.jordan@qub.ac.uk)

Abstract: In Northern Ireland, the Autism Act (NI) 2011 amended the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 by widening the definition of disability to include individuals who have impairments in social interaction or in forming social relationships; the Act also required the development of a cross-departmental Autism Strategy, which is to be published no less than two years within the passing of the Act (that is, by 2013) and a public autism awareness campaign.

As part of the BASE (Benchmarking Autism Services Efficacy) project, a module on autism was included in the Northern Ireland Life and Times (NILT) survey in 2012. This paper analyses results from this module to provide a timely measure of public awareness of, and attitudes towards, individuals with autism prior to the implementation of the Autism Strategy, and briefly examines the potential direction of future autism awareness campaigns.

### **Session 3: PFC/OG/007**

**Chair: Nichola Booth**

**14.00 – 14.15**

#### **Educational Inclusion for Young People with ASD.**

Speakers: Nichola Booth BCBA & Cormac McReynolds MSc ABA (nichola@peatni.org)

Abstract: Parents' Education as Autism Therapists (PEAT) is a parent led charity in Northern Ireland existing to help children and young people with autism realise their potential by providing behaviour analytic support and training to their parents and carers. PEAT offers a wide range of services including home programme support and supervision, family days and parent and professional training across Northern Ireland. PEAT holds the license for 'Simple Steps' an innovative multimedia parent support package developed by PEAT to inform parents about autism and ABA. This package has been translated into seven European languages to support parents in other European countries through the initial steps of an ABA programme for their child with autism. A new project, 'Educational Inclusion for Young People with ASD', through funding from the Big Lottery will commence in September 2013. This project will aim to identify and support young people with a diagnosis of ASD at risk from exclusion from education be fully integrated back into their educational setting. This project will work directly with the young person in their own setting as well as with the teachers in the school, to ensure that all areas of need are identified and met. The project will also provide social skills groups in five locations across Northern Ireland for young people disenfranchised from education. A 'virtual buddy app' will also be designed to help give the young people independent choices for new or difficult behaviours. Training events will also occur across the year in association with the centre for behaviour analysis at Queens University Belfast.

### **Session 3: PFC/OG/007**

**Chair: Nichola Booth**

**14.20 – 14.35**

#### **Applying the principles of behaviour analysis to increase the independent living skills of a young man with an acquired brain injury**

Speaker: Nichola Booth MSc BCBA (nichola@peatni.org)

Abstract: A six month behavioural intervention programme was implemented by PEAT with a 21 year old man with an acquired brain injury following a car accident based on a recommendation from an independent nurse specialist. The long term objective of the programme was to prepare this young man for semi-independent living away from the family home but his independent living and life skills were not occurring at a sufficient level for this to happen. Following an initial assessment using the 'life skills inventory: Independent living skills assessment tool' with the young man and his primary carer in the family home baseline data were collected on those skills that were essential for independent living. A weekly home visit from PEAT utilising the application of the principles of behaviour analysis helped improve his behavioural repertoire in a number of skills and further input from PEAT was recommended by the High Court Belfast.

**Session 3: PFC/OG/007**

**Chair: Nichola Booth**

**14.40 – 14.55**

**The Efficacy of Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) – based interventions to teach children with ASD to swim.**

Speaker: Catriona Martin (cmartin61@qub.ac.uk)

Abstract: "Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), affects approx. 1 in every 88 children. 49% of autistic children elope or wander on occasions, exposing them to unsupervised dangers, 24% of whom are exposed to situations of 'near-drowning'. This has led to more than 60% of parents of a child with ASD choosing to avoid activities outside of the house. This presentation will explore the design and implementation of research which will explore the efficacy of Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA)-based interventions to teach children with ASD to swim, including desensitising them to the swimming pool environment and the development of water safety skills (targeting skills outlined in the Red Cross Swimming Levels). Using inductive Single System Research Designs, the research will develop effective intervention procedures that will have far-reaching implications for safeguarding children with ASD."

**Session 3: PFC/OG/007**

**Chair: Nichola Booth**

**15.00 – 15.15**

**Green Eggs & Ham: Case Studies on developing Food Tolerance**

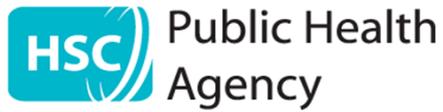
Speaker: Daniel Horan (daniel@teachingandlearningcollaboration.com)

Abstract: After oxygen, water and sleep, a fundamental necessity to sustaining life is food consumption. This aspect of daily living provides a rich context for the emergence of problem behaviour for all families. This appears particularly prevalent for children diagnosed with ASD.

Two young boys with severely restricted diets were provided with a low intensity food expansion program; using shaping, desensitization, and high P/low P procedure. Weekly sessions, along with parent training was implemented. In both cases the range of foods consumed increased, the level of protest, vomit and gagging decreased. The rate of progress, intensity, measurement and generalisation in applied setting will be discussed.

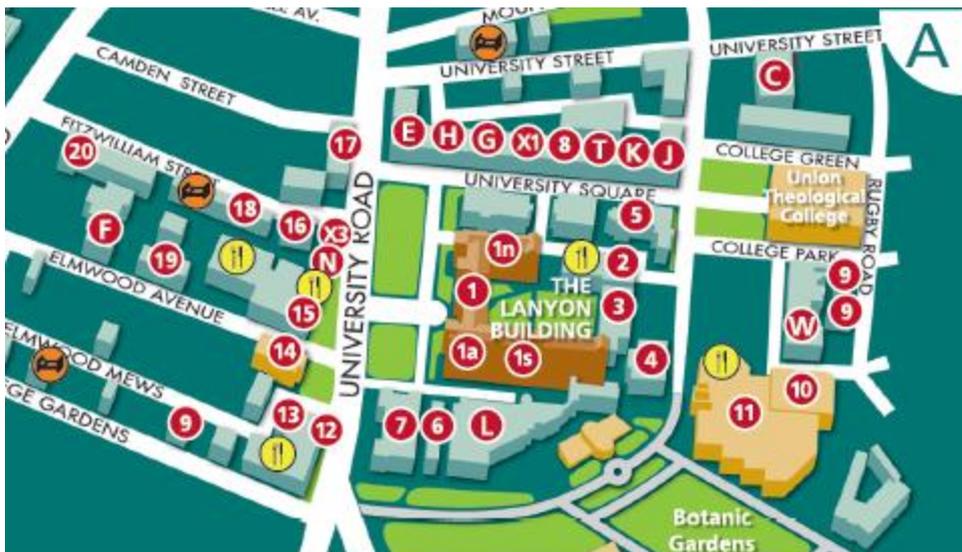
Key Words: food selectivity, Shaping, food tolerance, high P/low P, demand fading, escape extinction, social validity, Dr Sues.

## Sponsors



Student-led activities

## Directions



1 Lanyon Building

2 Peter Froggatt Centre (PFC)

7 Whitla Hall

From the Whitla Hall, to The Peter Froggatt Centre is a short walk, enter through the main entrance of the Lanyon Building, then through the door on the far left. Follow the path across the quad to the PFC on your left. (Signage will be provided en route)