The Use of a Functional Analysis in Conjunction with Precision Teaching Procedures to Eliminate Food-Grabbing Behavior in a Student with Autism

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Matt was a 13-year-old student with autism who exhibited chronic food-grabbing behavior. Prior to baseline, a functional analysis was implemented to determine the function of the behavior. Matt was found to engage in this behavior to get more food. His food preferences were identified prior to the functional analysis. The treatment condition consisted of having additional preferred food available for him to point to and sign, “eat”, then “please.” These signs were a part of his repertoire, but were not signed clearly. By reinforcing his request with food and progressively requiring clearer communication, the food-grabbing behavior was eliminated. During reversal his rate of food-grabbing returned to baseline levels. When treatment was reinstated, his food-grabbing returned to zero. These results are illustrated on the accompanying Standard Celeration Chart. Additional data were collected on the rate of staff-prompted and student-initiated interactions.