

## Back to Basics I: A Mediational Account of Equivalence Relations

In this presentation, I propose a mediational account of so-called “emergent” or “derived” relations that appeals only to behavior at the moment of reinforcement. In verbal humans, such mediating behavior is usually, but not necessarily, verbal. But mediating behavior also occurs in a variety of nonhumans in whom emergent relations have been claimed. The mediational account is consistent with other theories of complex responding, such as naming, but without mentioning untrained relations or proposing a higher-order operant. I consider examples of matching-to-sample experiments with humans and nonhumans and propose that all so-called “emergent” behavior results from direct, though not explicit, training of behavior. I conclude that equivalence can be accounted for in terms of basic behavioral processes: the function-altering effects of reinforcement (see Schlinger & Blakely, 1987, 1994) on the stimulus products of the mediating behavior. The implications of this mediational account are profound: derived relational responding may be an illusion and consequently concepts such as equivalence (including symmetry and transitivity), relational framing, and naming may be unnecessary.

## Back to Basics II: A Mediational Account of Verbal Relations

In this presentation, I propose a mediational account of complex verbal relations that appear to be derived or emergent. I argue that just as with matching-to-sample procedures with humans and nonhumans, (verbal) behavior at the moment of reinforcement (i.e., listening, see Schlinger, 2008) is necessary for what some have termed derived relational responding. If so, then derived responding may be an illusion. A mediational account of complex verbal relations has implications for a wide range of verbal phenomena, including verbal remembering and so-called rule-governed behavior. Just as in Back to Basics I, I make the case that verbal behavioral relations can be accounted for in terms of basic behavioral processes without the need for any new terms, concepts, principles, or theories. The resulting analysis is parsimonious in that the only assumptions made are those of the four-term contingency.