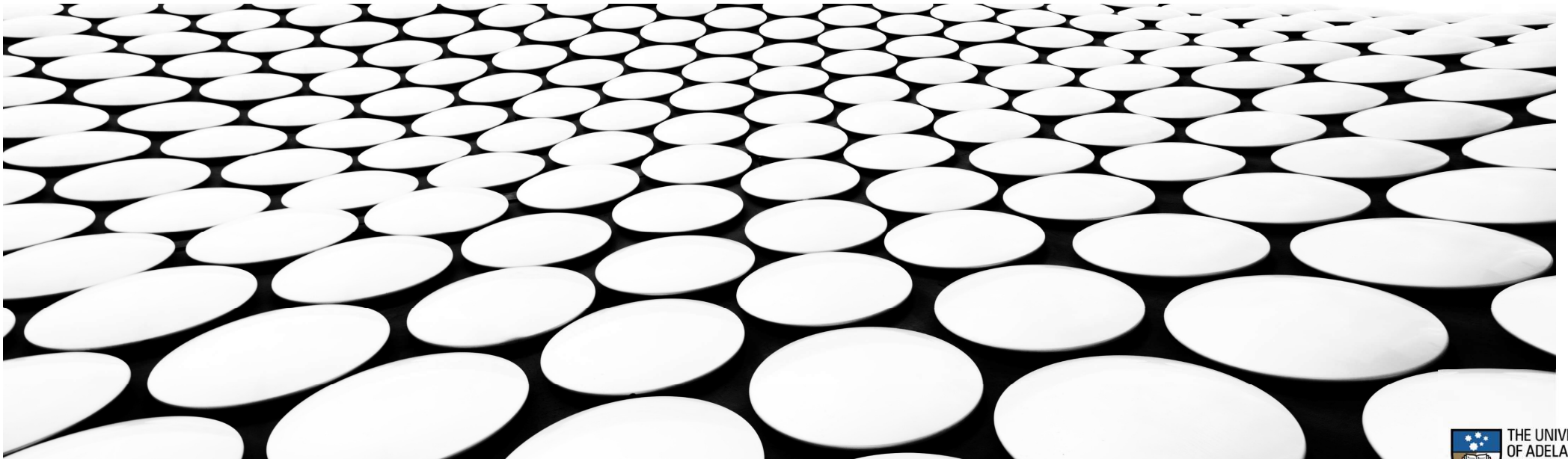

WHEN IS A COPY MORE THAN A COPY?

(BASED ON A TRUE ETHICS-BASED STORY)

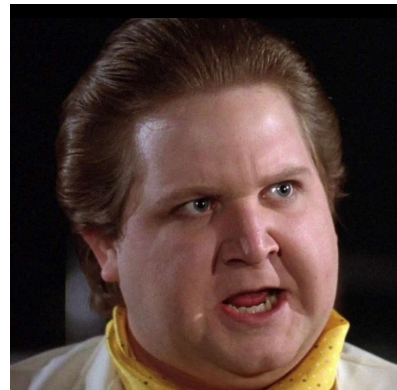
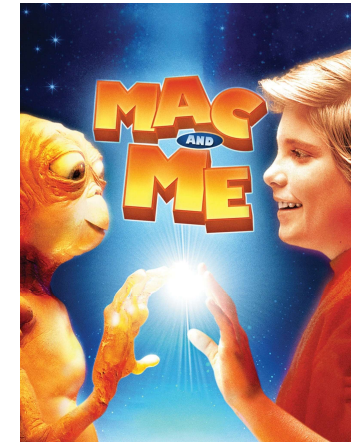
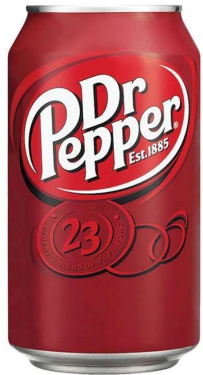
EDUARDO J. FERNANDEZ, PH.D.

SCHOOL OF ANIMAL AND VETERINARY SCIENCES, THE UNIVERSITY OF ADELAIDE



HISTORICAL COPIES

(WE HAVE SEEN PLENTY):



Chairy, I have to warn you about J.D. Vance. This is serious!



<https://c.im/@RomanticSkeptic/112848346556254350>

SO, WHAT IS A COPY, AND WHAT IS PLAGIARISM?

- Plagiarism Definition: “Presenting work or ideas from another source as your own, with or without consent of the original author, by incorporating it into your work without full acknowledgement.” (University of Oxford, 2025)
<https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/guidance/skills/plagiarism>
- In other words, taking **ideas**, not just copying words, constitutes **plagiarism**.
- Plagiarism is more than just copy/paste (although that counts too!)

LIFE MODEL TIMELINE



-Discussions with IAABC (and other organizations/journals) on publication.
-IAABC leaders (Exec. Directors of both Foundation [Rochelle] and Membership [Dot]) and past IAABC Journal Director (Tiro) encourage publishing with IAABC.
-Decision is made to pursue peer-reviewed publication with Journal of Veterinary Behavior.

- Additionally, continued discussion with IAABC Membership Director (Dot) about how to proceed.
- ...and then: FREE Model Publication (March 2025).

LIFE VS FREE MODEL

- LIFE = Least Inhibitive, Functionally Effective
- FREE = **Functional, Reinforcing**, Enriching, **Effective**
 - All that is left for anything possibly new is “enriching”.
 - However, plenty of problems here as well (see later slides).

FREE: FUNCTIONAL

- FREE's emphasis (with only brief reference to Cooper, Heron, and Heward) is on functional assessment.
 - However, functional assessment is never clearly identified, other than to say it is 'systematic'.
 - Systematic how?
 - Cooper et al. (all editions) and the LIFE paper are clear in identifying function through quantitative data (i.e., functional analysis [FA]).
- At best, what we have here is a watered-down echo of the LIFE paper's section, "the importance of function".

FREE: REINFORCING

- They define reinforcement, paraphrased, through Cooper et al. (2nd edition).
- They also, once again, emphasize function (as does the LIFE model).
- However, it's not clear they understand the distinction between respondent and operant processes/procedures (they invoke 'positive conditioned emotional responses' with respect to reinforcers), and therefore, how operant reinforcement is defined functionally.
 - Additionally, they call 'functional reinforcers' consequences that meet an animal's needs.
 - Although also critical to welfare and behavior, this is not how operant reinforcement is defined.
- What we have is a section that mostly identifies good welfare as necessarily = Sr+.
This is neither how to define positive reinforcement or welfare.
 - See LIFE paper section, "increasing choice by inhibiting less" (also, Goldiamond, 1974).

FREE: ENRICHING

- Finally, something new, right? (right?!)
- Except, they define enrichment multiple ways, all of which ultimately make enrichment = everything good.
- Enrichment, particularly in relation to welfare, necessarily means a **tool** (stimulus or event) to produce empirically-based positive change.
 - In relation to training and management, we have a largely definitive review of the topic, cited in the LIFE paper (Fernandez, 2022).
- Their emphasis for enrichment is on choice, which, again, simply echoes the LIFE model.
 - For instance, see LIFE's Figure 2 and the 'increasing choice' section.

FREE: EFFECTIVE

- One of the model's most difficult sections to try and comprehend.
- They define 'effective', as does the LIFE model and others, in terms of having a desired outcome.
- They then proceed to use the entire definition of 'functionally effective' while sidestepping the actual use of those words.
 - The result is something that is a bit...Mr. Pibb-esque. 😞
 - They could have just avoided overcomplicating the issue by citing:

(1) **function** = identification of cause

(2) **effect** = behavior change (through training)

(3) **functionally effective** = training ethically matching behavior change to its cause.

(LIFE Model: Fernandez, 2024, p. 67)

FREE: THE PATHWAY TO POSITIVE BEHAVIOR CHANGE

- The paper's process (and flow chart) for action.
- What honestly had real potential. Except:
 - Each stage is arbitrarily described without a clear process.
 - For instance, they talk about 'functional assessment', but at no point did they talk about any type of data collection.
 - Ultimately, we are left with words like "information gathering" (but what information and how is it gathered?) and "assess plan" (assess how?), and finally, "goal met" or "goal unmet" (by how/what?), but at all points, these are simply words thrown at the reader.
 - At best, what we are left with are that plans (and, presumably, assessments) should not involve positive punishment. So, kudos, I guess?

LIFE MODEL AND FREE MODEL COMPARISONS

CHATGPT ANALYSIS
-GENERATED BY LAUREN NOVACK

Concept	LIFE Model (Published First)	FREE Model (Published Second)	Possible Influence?
Functionality	Defines behavior modification based on understanding function.	Lists "Functionality" as a core pillar, emphasizing the same principle.	✅ Strong overlap
Reinforcement	Prioritizes reinforcement-based training over aversives.	Defines "Reinforcement" as a pillar, ensuring behavior is strengthened positively.	✅ Strong overlap
Enrichment	Discusses environmental and behavioral choices for animal welfare.	Includes "Enrichment" as a core component for improving animal environments.	✅ Strong overlap
Effectiveness	Defines success as ethical, not just effective.	Names "Effectiveness" as a pillar, emphasizing ethical training outcomes.	✅ Strong overlap
Opposition to Aversives	Criticizes LIMA for allowing aversives and promotes force-free methods.	Explicitly prohibits punishment-based interventions, especially shock collars.	✅ Conceptually similar
Choice & Autonomy	Encourages maximizing choices and reducing inhibitive training.	IAABC mandates that trainers provide animals with choice and control.	✅ Similar perspective

QUANTITATIVE COMPARISON (CONT.)

- FREE Model Total References: 22
 - Exact references borrowed: 5 (22.7%)
 - Modified references: 3 (13.6%)
 - Example: They used the second edition of Cooper, Heron, and Heward's (2014) text (I cited the 3rd edition [2020]).
 - Similar references: 3 (13.6%)
 - Example: They use Wittgenstein (1973) to make a similar epistemological statement I make, but with a citation from Popper (1985).
- Net result: 11/22 references exact or near-exact (50%!)

IAABC PUBLIC RESPONSE

International Association of Animal Behavior Consultants's Post



International Association of Animal Behavior Consultants

March 22 at 1:10 AM · 🌐



A Message from the IAABC Board of Directors:

We want to take a moment to directly address some of the responses to our recent launch of the FREE model. Over the past year, we've spent significant time in discussion and review, working to create a framework that reflects our ongoing commitment to animal wellbeing, professional ethics, and the evolving needs of our field. FREE was built with care and intention—not to replace or erase the meaningful work of others, but to build upon it and move the conversation forward. We understand that some of you feel the model echoes existing concepts, and we hear that concern. The truth is, good ideas often grow from shared roots—and FREE, like many frameworks, is part of a broader conversation in our field. We respect and recognize the work that has come before us, and we've never claimed to be the first or only voices in this space. We're listening. We're taking the feedback seriously. And we're engaging with professionals both within and outside our organization to ensure that we proceed with transparency, respect, and responsibility. Thank you to everyone—supporters and critics alike—who are taking the time to engage with us.

Our goal remains the same: to support our members, the animals in their care, and the future of our profession.

IAABC PUBLIC RESPONSE (PART 2)

International Association of Animal Behavior Consultants's Post



International Association of Animal Behavior Consultants

21h · 🌐



Notice of Temporary Retraction: On March 19th 2025, the [International Association of Animal Behavior Consultants](#) published an article under corporate authorship (developed collaboratively and published by the organization) titled "A New Framework: Introducing FREE and the Pathway to Positive Behavior Change." Following questions raised about source clarity and content overlap, the article has been voluntarily retracted as of April 9th, 2025. Our intention is to revisit and resubmit the article for publication at a later date with revisions that include attribution and analysis outlining why we are advancing our own independent framework.

MY RESPONSE (TO PART 2)



Eduardo J. Fernandez

Although I'd like to remain optimistic about this choice, it's also worth pointing out that (a) no responsibility for any of the aforementioned concerns (or even what they are) are made here, and (b) no one from IAABC that was involved in this publication (or even who those people are) has bothered reaching out to me. I'll remain hopeful that this may change, but also skeptical until a time that both these actions have happened.

- For now, this is where we are: a pause.
 - We are left with IAABC not taking direct responsibility, but still a cautiously hopeful message.
 - Perhaps they do reach out, and they do want to push real progress.
 - But that means [doing the work](#) to progress.

WHERE DOES IAABC GO FROM HERE?

- Preferably it starts with reaching out to myself and others.
 - I would be happy to help with legitimate adaptations of the LIFE model.
 - It probably also helps to get options from others outside of their organization.
- Regardless of how IAABC proceeds, transparency in **who** publishes **what** is key.
 - The fact that, publicly, no information has been given on who authored the FREE model is, at best, problematic.
- This is also probably a good time for them to question how they advertise their ‘peer-reviewed journal’.
 - They have an online magazine, not an academic journal.
 - That’s not a problem, if they are honest about what it is.

WHERE DO **WE** GO FROM HERE?

- The most simple and straightforward response: **Healthy skepticism of IAABC**
 - It's good for the reward-based community to hold IAABC accountable.
 - That includes making LIMA popular.
- You could also write the IAABC, including all their Membership board:
 - board@iaabc.org (all board members are CC'd when you address this email).
- Your voice is what helped create this pause:
 - So, keep on voicing! 😊

OTHER ORGANIZATIONS AND CREDENTIALS

- For those looking for/needing credentials, there are options.
- Remember: these organizations rely on **your money** to provide such credentials, which means you have the **power** to hold them accountable.
- Both the Pet Professional Guild (PPG) and the Animal Behaviour & Training Guild (ABTC) have fully adopted the LIFE model, which (IMO) is a great start.
- CCPDT also offers credentialing options.

MOVING FORWARD

- The reward-based training community should look to be vigilant of its own behavior.
 - That includes pointing out when organizations themselves engage in questionable behavior.
- In addition, part of how we move forward is building better bridges for everyone – scientists (and organizations) with practitioners; practitioners with owners/guardians; academicians with all the above.
 - For example: Fernandez and Novack (2025?; book chapter expanding on training ethics in action).
- Progress looks like:
 - Scientists and practitioners working together.
 - Training organizations being transparent and accountable for their actions.
 - A community that is willing to [collaborate](#) and build concepts and practices together.

Thank you!

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Questions?

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