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Eliminating Drooling Behavior in an Adult Diagnosed Mentally Retarded Male

John Allison

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APPROVAL

We, the undersigned members of the examination committee, certify that we have examined the student and that he has met all requirements for the degree Master of Arts with a major in Behavioral Science/Community Counseling; further we have examined him on this date and have determined that he has demonstrated a satisfactory knowledge of his field of specialization and that the Research Project is satisfactory in scope and quality for the degree Master of Arts.

Approved by the Comprehensive Examination Committee:

Patricia L. Lamm

Chairman

Robert J. Shiger

Robert Rothstein

P. H. Dods

Graduate Council Representative

April, 1977

Date

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS OF THE PERMIAN BASIN

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ELIMINATING DROOLING BEHAVIOR IN AN ADULT
DIAGNOSED MENTALLY RETARDED MALE

Submitted to the Graduate School
UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS OF THE
PERMIAN BASIN

JOHN ALLISON
March 21, 1977

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ABSTRACT

This single subject experiment was conducted to determine whether a 23-year-old male could be taught to swallow his saliva, thus eliminating his drooling behavior. The subject had been diagnosed as severely retarded early in life and was reported to have drooled his entire life. The experiment was conducted in the sheltered workshop where the subject is employed, utilizing positive reinforcement in the form of verbal praise, Kennedy half dollars and participation in social events. The subject learned to swallow quickly and easily. His drooling behavior was eliminated and apparent generalizations had positive effects on his work habits, social behavior, and even his attention span. The experiment seems to indicate that the severely retarded can be taught relatively difficult and complicated tasks using positive reinforcement only.