

## Research Not Supporting Authorship

**Bebko, J., Perry, A., & Bryson, S. (1996). Multiple method validation study of facilitated communication: ii. individual differences and subgroup results. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disabilities, 26, 19-42.***

"Potential individual variations in the effectiveness of a shared communication method, facilitated communication (FC), were examined among 20 students with autism and related disorders" (p. 19) who were the students of a regional program specializing in autism, ranging in age from 6 to 21 years. Sixteen staff members at the program who received "a typical 2-day FC training program" (p. 22) served as facilitators. Data collection began "after staff training and 11/2 months of using FC" (p. 26). "To minimize the limits or disadvantages of a single method, we used multiple methods, including auditory or visual input, and simple pointing response to pictures or words, as well as typing" (p. 19)

"Findings differed across methods, but there was little clear support for the validity of FC in enhancing communication over communication that students produced independently. Significant facilitator influence of responses was found, but was far less extensive than in other studies" (p. 20). Especially in the Headphones design, in which "the task for students was simply to point with facilitation to the one of three pictures which corresponded to a word presented auditorily through a small desk-top speaker" (p. 25), "less evidence of facilitator influence was found" (p. 33). A further analysis of students' responses under this design "demonstrated clearly that for all but Student 19 either the students were determining the response being made or that responses were essentially randomly distributed among the alternatives available, either case indicating no facilitator influence (p. 34). "However, an 'abdication' pattern of responding was found for some students, in which high performance observed with independent responding was lessened on trials when FC was introduced" (p. 20).

**Bomba, C., O'Donnell, L., Markowitz, C., & Holmes, D. (1996). Evaluating the impact of facilitated communication on the communicative competence of fourteen students with autism, *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders, 26, 43-58.***

"The purpose of this study was to evaluate facilitated communication (FC) as an augmentative or alternative communication system for 14 students attending the Eden Institute" (p. 43) - "a behaviourally oriented, educational program serving students with autism ages 3 to 21" (p. 46). Three facilitators, "who had at least 2 year's experience working with students with autism" (p. 48), were involved in the study. Two of them "received training in facilitated communication by attending a training workshop conducted by Schubert (1992) of Syracuse, NY" (p. 48) and the other was trained by one of these two.

Using both a standardized vocabulary test and a "protocol of 30 questions designed specifically for this study" (p. 49), a pretest was administered to all participants. The protocol contained questions "whose answers are objective and presumably known to both the facilitator and participant" such as Yes/No questions, object labeling, and simple personal questions (e.g., What is your name?), as well as "those that encouraged open-ended conversation" (p. 49) such as "How do you feel about your parents?" and "How do you feel about being autistic?" (p. 56). Following the pretest, "each participant received 10 weeks of individualized, daily instruction in FC" that "lasted a minimum of 5 minutes and a maximum of 25 minutes" (p. 51). Finally, "[a]t the conclusion of the instructional condition, the pretest was readministered as a posttest" (p. 51).

"For 13 of the 14 participants, pre- and posttest results were identical; no items were answered correctly" (p. 53) for both the vocabulary test items and the protocol question items, revealing that "10 weeks of instruction in FC did not significantly improve the participants' ability to use this system" (p. 53).

**Cabay, M. (1994). Brief report: A controlled evaluation of facilitated communication using open-ended and fill-in questions. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 24, 517-527.**

This study involved "four students enrolled in the day school program" (p. 519), ranging in their age from 9 years to 17 years, with "diagnosis of autism or autistic-like traits" (p. 519). They used FC at school "for 3 months or more" (p. 519). Two facilitators participated in the study - one who "had provided occupational therapy for 2 years to the subjects she facilitated with" (p. 519) and another who "had worked daily in the classroom for 6 months with the subjects she facilitated with" (p. 519).

Ten cards "with fill-in or short-answer questions" (p. 520) and ten blank cards were randomly presented to the subjects in two conditions: one "where the facilitator was aware of which card was presented" and another "where the facilitator was unaware of which card was presented" (p. 520).

This study did not support the validity of FC as, "[w]hile 95% of the responses were correct when the facilitator knew which item was presented, only 19% of the responses were correct when the facilitator was unaware of which item was presented.. Most of the incorrect responses (62%) when facilitators were unaware of what was presented resembled correct answers to possible items. Since the facilitators knew the item pool, this suggests they could have been guessing what the items were and thus influencing the answers accordingly" (p. 523).

**Crews, W., Sanders, E., Hensley, L., Johnson, Y., Bonaventura, S., & Rhodes, R. (1995). An evaluation of facilitated communication in a group of nonverbal individuals with mental retardation. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 25, 205-213.**

The purpose of this study was "to provide an additional quantitative evaluation of FC via use of a message-passing paradigm" (p. 206), in which words, common objects, and numbers were presented both visually and auditorially. The results indicated that six of eight subjects, who were "nonverbal individuals with mental retardation" (p. 206), resided in state facilities, and had used FC for 6 to 9 months prior to this study, "failed to correctly pass any messages (i.e., items) to the facilitators via FC across 18 trials" (p. 211). "Limited positive outcomes were observed in two individuals with both mild mental retardation and cerebral palsy; however, the results were questionable in one subject" (p. 213).

**Eberlin, M., McConnachie, G., Ibel, S., & Volpe, L. (1993). 'Facilitated communication': A failure to replicate the phenomenon. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 23, 507-529.**

This study involved 21 subjects with a diagnosis of Autism or of Pervasive Developmental Disorder, ranged in age from 11.3 years to 20.2 years. All subjects were new to FC and were familiarized to the FC process during the "initial exposure session..[that] lasted between 20 and 30 minutes" (p. 519). Ten persons served as facilitators in this study who "had volunteered for this project and .had expressed enthusiasm about FC" (p. 511). Before the project began, facilitators received 4 hours training by two of the authors who "had attended workshops on FC

conducted by Biklen or his associate Schubert" (p. 517). In addition, "[s]upervision of each facilitator-subject pair was provided by the authors" (p. 518) throughout the project.

A baseline, pre-, and post-test situation utilized two types of dependent measures. One was a standardized vocabulary test, which "begins with 14 individual color pictures requiring expressive identification, then progresses to printed words requiring definitions" (p. 515), and another was a "structured interview questionnaire designed by the authors that asked initially yes/no and simple, concrete answers, progressing to more open-ended questions asking about preferences and feeling states" (p. 515). During the test administrations, "visual and auditory screening procedures were used to insure that the facilitator was unaware of the test questions" (p. 514). "Following the pretest, subjects received 20 hours of FC training (40 half-hour session)" (p. 519).

"[A]fter initial exposure to FC no student demonstrated unexpected literacy or improved communicative ability" (p. 525). Also, "after 20 hours of FC training no student demonstrated emerging literacy skills or communicative competence that exceeded their already established communicated abilities" (p. 526). Finally, the results of the "post-warm-up test" where "the facilitators were able to see and/or hear the questions posed to the client" (p. 520) indicated that "some facilitators influenced the subject's typed responses while facilitating" (p. 526).

**Klewe, L. (1993). Brief report: An empirical evaluation of spelling boards as a means of communication for the multihandicapped. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 23, 559-566.**

This article "deals with the experimental-psychological examination conducted to distinguish between facilitator influence and original productions by patients" (p. 560) - a research carried out in Denmark by Copenhagen County interdisciplinary research group as one of four examinations with 17 patients who "ranged in age from 24 to 43 years, with 9 having cerebral palsy, and 7 on daily convulsion medication" (p. 560). Four of these 17 patients "regretted their earlier consent" (p. 560) and did not participate in this study. Ten facilitators, who "had all used spelling board with the patients in question for a long time" (p. 561), participated in the examination.

Using 15 pictures (12 with "objects within the patients' world" (p. 561) and 3 blank), experimental settings included 3 series: (A) a setting where "both the patient and the facilitator could see the pictures," (B) a setting where "a screen was added .so that the facilitator could not see the pictures being shown," and (C) a setting where the screen remained and "each was shown the pictures but not in the same order" (p. 561).

"There was a distinct relation between picture and answer in almost all cases [(i.e., 95%)] in series A where the facilitators could see the pictures shown to the patients. In series B and C, where the facilitators could not see the pictures seen by the patient, there was a lack of relation between the picture seen by the patient and the answer in almost all cases [(i.e., only 2% of all responses in each setting)]" (p. 562). Moreover, "[i]n series C only two answers out of 108 (2%) were related to the patients' pictures, but 43 out of 108 (40%) were related to the facilitators' pictures" (p. 563), suggesting the facilitators' influence.

Montee, B., Miltenberger, R., & Wittrock, D. (1995). An experimental analysis of facilitated communication. *Journal of Applied Behaviour Analysis*, 28, 189-200.

This study "evaluated the authorship of messages produced through facilitated communication by 7 adults with moderate or severe mental retardation and their facilitators. The clients had been reported to be communicating fluently through facilitated communication" (p. 189) and they "had been using facilitated communication for 6 to 18 months" (p. 191). The study utilized two evaluation formats, naming pictures and describing activities that the client engaged with the research assistant in a separate room for approximately 5 minutes. In both formats, the following three conditions were conducted: "(a) the facilitator and client had access to the same information [(Known condition)], (b) the facilitator did not have access to the picture or activity [(Unknown condition)], and (c) the facilitator was given false information about the picture or activity [(False condition)]" (p. 189).

For the naming pictures format, "the mean percentage of correct responses in the known condition was 75%, and in the unknown and false conditions the mean percentage was 0% and 1.8%, respectively. In 66% of the trials for the false condition, the subjects typed the picture seen by the facilitator" (p. 195). For the describing activities format, "the mean percentage of correct responses in the known condition was 87%, and in the unknown and false conditions the mean percentage was 0%. In 80% of the false condition trials, the client typed the activity that was correct for the facilitator" (pp. 195-196). Overall, "[t]he results showed that the clients typed the correct answer only when the facilitator had access to the same information, never typed the correct answer when the facilitator had no information or false information, and typed the picture or activity presented to the facilitator when it was different from the one experienced by the client" (p. 189).

**Moore, S., Donovan, B., Hudson, A., Dykstra, J., & Lawrence, J. (1993). Brief report; Evaluation of eight case studies of facilitated communication. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 23, 531-539.**

This assessment involved 8 disabled individuals with a diagnosis of moderate to severe intellectual disability, who had used FC for 17 to 33 months, ranged in age from 22 to 41 years, and 4 facilitators who "had been trained by personnel from the DEAL Communication Centre in Melbourne" (p. 534). For each facilitator-client pair, 10 short-answer questions were developed by the facilitator and were asked of the subjects under three conditions. Condition A "contained 5 questions randomly selected from the original 10" that were "asked verbally of the subject by the facilitator" (p. 533). Condition B "contained remaining 5 questions" (p. 533) that were presented as prerecorded questions to both the subject and facilitator via earphones. Condition D "contained all 10 questions randomly ordered" where "the subject heard a question but the facilitator heard only music" (p. 533).

The assessment was discontinued with 2 of 8 subjects due to the lack of meaningful responses during the procedure. For the remaining 6, "correct answers were provided for Condition A. In Condition B there was a small reduction in the number of correct responses, but there were still sufficient correct responses to demonstrate that the introduction of the earphones did not prevent correct responding. In Condition D the failure of any subject to achieve the critical level of four correct responses precludes the drawing of the conclusion that any one of them can communicate using the technique" (pp. 536-537). Based on a significant gap of the performance between Condition A/B and Condition D, facilitators' influence was also suspected for 2 of 4 facilitators.



Regal, R., Rooney, J., & Wandas, T. (1994). Facilitated communication: An experimental evaluation. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 24, 345-355.

"Nineteen participants in a day treatment program for the developmentally disabled participated in this validation study of facilitated communication (FC)" (p. 345). They ranged in age from 23 to 50 years, "5 were autistic, and 4 had cerebral palsy" (p. 348), and all "were rated regular users of this communication method" (p. 347). There were 6 facilitators worked with the 19 subjects in this study. "An information-passing design was used requiring short-term recall of one randomly selected stimulus card at a time. Cards varied by the shape, the color of that shape, and the number of that shape used on each card" (p. 345). The results indicated that "[n]o facilitator and no client performed at levels that exceeded chance expectations" (p. 350), failing "to validate facilitated communication for the group as a whole, any individual facilitator, or any of the subjects" (p. 345).

**Shane, H., & Kearns, K. (1994). An examination of the role of the facilitator in 'facilitated communication', *American Journal of Speech-Language Pathology*, September, 3, 48-54.**

The purpose of this investigation, "initiated by a local attorney in order to obtain information about the subject's (DM's) communication status for the purpose of resolving pending litigation" (p. 49), was "to determine whether messages expressed via FC by a 38-year-old man who was nonspeaking and mentally retarded were produced by this individual or by his facilitator" (p. 48). DM was introduced to FC by a 25-year-old female who "was a supervisor in a sheltered workshop in which DM worked for the past 4 years" (p. 49). The facilitator had successfully completed a "1-day facilitated communication workshop" provided by "personnel from the Syracuse University Facilitated Communication Institute" (p. 49) and "described herself as an experienced facilitator who has assisted several other individuals" (p. 50)

Using familiar settings and conditions that "were identical to those employed during all previous FC events" (p. 50) between DM and the facilitator including a "Compaq 286 computer keyboard and monitor" (p. 50), the experiment was conducted. Testing procedures involved two conditions "in which the facilitator and the subject viewed or heard the same (shared) or different (unshared) information" (p. 50). For a task of labeling color photographs of everyday items, 10 trials were made in shared conditions and 10 trials were made in unshared conditions, in which the facilitator was prevented "from knowing that the picture had been changed, so it appeared to the facilitator as though DM was viewing the same picture she had just viewed" (p. 50). For a task of answering prerecorded questions about shown photographs, questions were "presented through separate headphones" (p. 50) to DM and to the facilitator. A total of 20 trials for this task consisted of 10 shared trials (i.e., DM and the facilitator received an identical question) and 10 unshared conditions (i.e., They received a different question). For a labeling objects task, a half of trials (five items) were done in shared conditions and another half were done in unshared conditions, in which "DM was brought to an adjoining room and shown a common object" (p. 51) followed by rejoining "the facilitator in the test room and was asked to label, through FC, the item he had just seen" (p. 51). Finally, DM participated in two events with an examiner in an adjoining room while "the facilitator remained in the original test setting" (p. 51) (i.e., unshared events) and "was asked to describe what had occurred in the adjoining room through FC" (p. 51). Regarding the labeling photographs task, "[w]hen DM and the facilitator viewed identical pictures and were asked to label them, a correct response was always produced" while "responses in the unshared condition always reflected information contained in pictures viewed only by the

facilitator" (pp. 51-52). Regarding the task of answering questions about photographs, "all typed responses were correct" (p. 52) in the shared condition. All 10 responses under the unshared condition were incorrect, which "always represented answers to questions posed to the facilitator alone" (p. 52). Regarding the object labeling task, correct responses were only produced in the shared condition and "[a]ll responses to the unshared trials were incorrect" (p. 52). Lastly, responses to the unshared events that had occurred in an adjoining room "consisted of an unintelligible string of typed letters followed by one off-target and irrelevant response" (p. 52). Based on several factors such as the fact that "the subject was cooperative, interactive, and friendly" (p. 52) throughout testing, it was believed that "these findings generalize to other more naturalistic communication interactions by this subject" (p. 52).

**Smith, M., & Belcher, R. (1993). Brief report: facilitated communication with adults with autism. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 23, 175-183.**

"The purpose of this work was to explore the use of facilitated communication with adults with autism with no or minimal verbal skills" (p. 176). Eight male adults ranged in age from 19 to 36 who all lived in "group residences for adults with autism" (p. 177) participated in the study. All facilitators attended "workshops held by proponents of facilitated communication" (p. 176) Each subject received 20 to 30 minutes training on facilitated communication for the duration of 6 to 12 weeks with the frequency of 1 to 3 times per week. Within these sessions, subjects were asked to type or copy named letters, hand-printed letters, answers to simple questions (e.g., What is your name?), written answers, and answers to open-ended questions.

"In all instances, typed communications from verbal subjects were at or below the level of their verbal communication.. There was no evidence of unexpected literacy skills. Subjects with no known literacy skills who were thought to be unable to read or write typed only random letters. Subjects with known literacy skills typed words, phrases, or sentences comparable to what one would expect given their literacy skills" (p. 181). "[T]he use of procedures to avoid coactivity" (p. 181) as well as the avoidance of "error prevention procedures" (p. 182) were thought as explanation for the failure of this study to replicate claims about facilitated communication. Szempruch, J., & Jacobson, J. (1993). Evaluating facilitated communications of people with developmental disabilities. *Research in Developmental Disabilities*, 14, 253-264.

"A quasiexperimental message-passing procedure was used to assess the validity of the facilitated communication (FC) by people with autism and mental retardation or with mental retardation" (p. 253). The 23 subjects, ranging in age from 21 to 74 years, had the experience of using FC from 2 to 13 months. For the 6 facilitators participated in this study, "[t]he primary source of training in FC was Syracuse University" (p. 258).

"Message-passing consisted of showing and verbally labeling a picture of a familiar object with the facilitator absent, and subsequent facilitation to generate a label or description of the object. Three-trial blocks were conducted with each participant on two different days. Blocks were conducted in the participants' normal FC setting, with their facilitators of choice, and no special apparatus was used. No participant was able to accurately label or describe the object shown to them with facilitation" (p. 253).

**Wheeler, D., Jacobson, J., Paglieri, R., & Schwartz, A. (1993). An experimental assessment of facilitated communication. *Mental Retardation*, 31, 49-60.**

"This report presents a quantitative study of facilitated communication" (p. 49). Twelve individuals with a diagnosis of autism, ranging in age from 16 to 30 years, participated in the study. They all lived at an institutional autism program where "[t]he use of facilitated communication proliferated rapidly" (p. 50) since a few clinical staff members became interested in it and began to use the technique in 1991. "All participants had been using facilitated communication for at least 5 months and for as long as one year" (p. 50). There were also 9 facilitators involved in the study.

"They were shown pictures of familiar objects and asked to type the names of the objects under three conditions: (a) assisted typing with facilitators unaware of the content of the stimulus picture, (b) unassisted typing, and (c) a condition in which the participants and facilitators were each shown pictures at the same time. In this last condition the paired pictures were either the same or different, and the participant's typing was facilitated to label or describe the picture" (p. 49)

"A total of 180 trials allowed for demonstration of valid facilitated communication: the 10 facilitated condition trials for all 12 subjects (120 trials) and 50% of the distractor condition trials (60 trials: those where the participant and facilitator had different cards). Of these 180 trials, there were no clear correct responses to the participant's stimulus card" (p. 54). Of 120 trials in the facilitated condition, 80 were "incorrect responses that consisted of recognizable object labels that were unrelated to the stimuli" (p. 55). Such incorrect object labeling "also occurred in the distractor condition, with a total of 52 such responses (43% of trials)" (p. 55). "In the trials within the distractor condition when different stimulus cards were shown to the participant and the facilitator, there were 12 responses that were judged to be correct to the card shown to the facilitator . and no responses judged correct to the participant's card. This represents 20% of possible responses.. [which] clearly demonstrate facilitator influence" (p. 55).

