

# Teaching First-year ABA Students to De-escalate Autistic Individuals

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## Background

Individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities are restrained more frequently than their neurotypical peers (Friedman & Crabb, 2018; Kersting et al., 2019; Newcomb & Hogopian, 2018; O'Donoghue et al., 2020). Teaching clinical professionals what steps to take when responding to a de-escalation situation with an individual may avoid the need for more invasive approaches

## Purpose

The purpose of this study was to extend previous research from Hinkle & Lerman (2021) evaluating behavior skills training (BST) to teach first-year behavior analyst students how to respond to behavioral events using de-escalation techniques for autistic individuals

## Participants

- 3 first-year female graduate students

## Dependent Variables

Participant implementation of de-escalation task list  
 Phase 1: Redirection  
 Phase 2: Increase motivation and first/then  
 Phase 3: Remain neutral

## Method

- Nonconcurrent multiple baseline across participants
- 9 role-play scenarios with trained actor

BST was effective in teaching first-year behavior analysis students de-escalation techniques and procedures were rated as acceptable by participants.



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## Conditions

- Baseline: No feedback
- BST: Instruction, modeling, role play with researcher, in-situ feedback
- Post-training: Implementation with actor, in-situ and delayed feedback
- Social validity from participants

## Reliability

- > 30% of sessions, trial-by-trial
- Average IOA= 97%

## Results

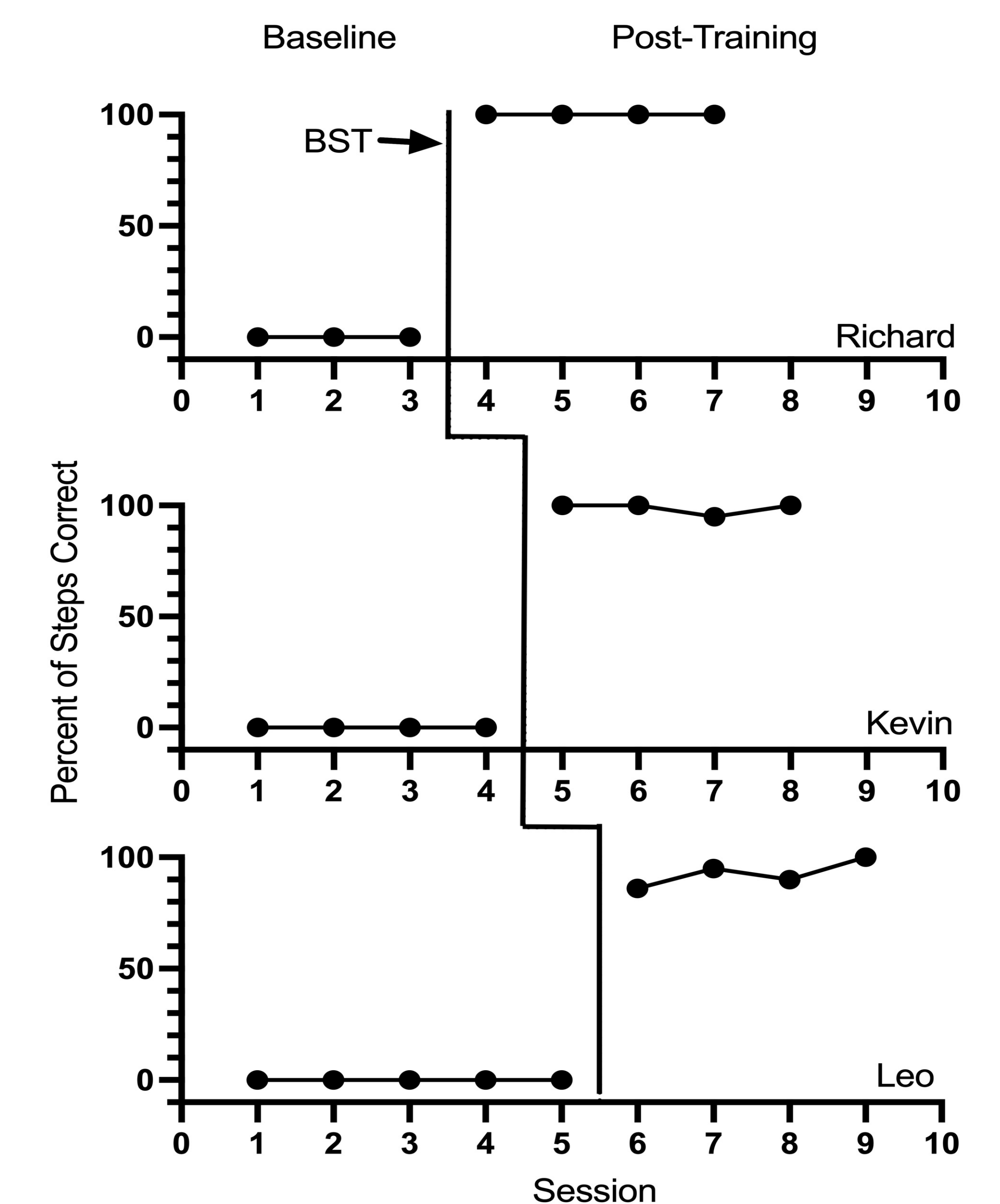


Figure 1. Percentage of steps implemented correctly by participants



## **Abstract**

Within the field of applied behavior analysis, there is a recognized need for increased training for incoming practitioners on de-escalation techniques. Previous research indicates individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities are restrained more frequently than their neurotypical peers. Although individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities are more likely to be restrained, there has been little research conducted on teaching behavior analyst students techniques to gain cooperation during escalated behavioral situations. Additionally, no study has evaluated first year behavior analyst students' performance during these situations. This study addressed these gaps in the literature by evaluating the effectiveness of a concise, practical training for teaching first year behavior analyst students how to gain cooperation when encountering a behavioral situation with an autistic individual. Behavioral skills training (BST) was used to teach three first-year behavior analyst students how to gain cooperation with autistic individuals in behavioral situations and how to respond to potential problem behavior. BST increased correct responding for all participants from zero levels in baseline to near 100% fidelity of implementation. These results indicate that BST is an efficient and effective technique for training first-year behavior analyst students de-escalation skills.



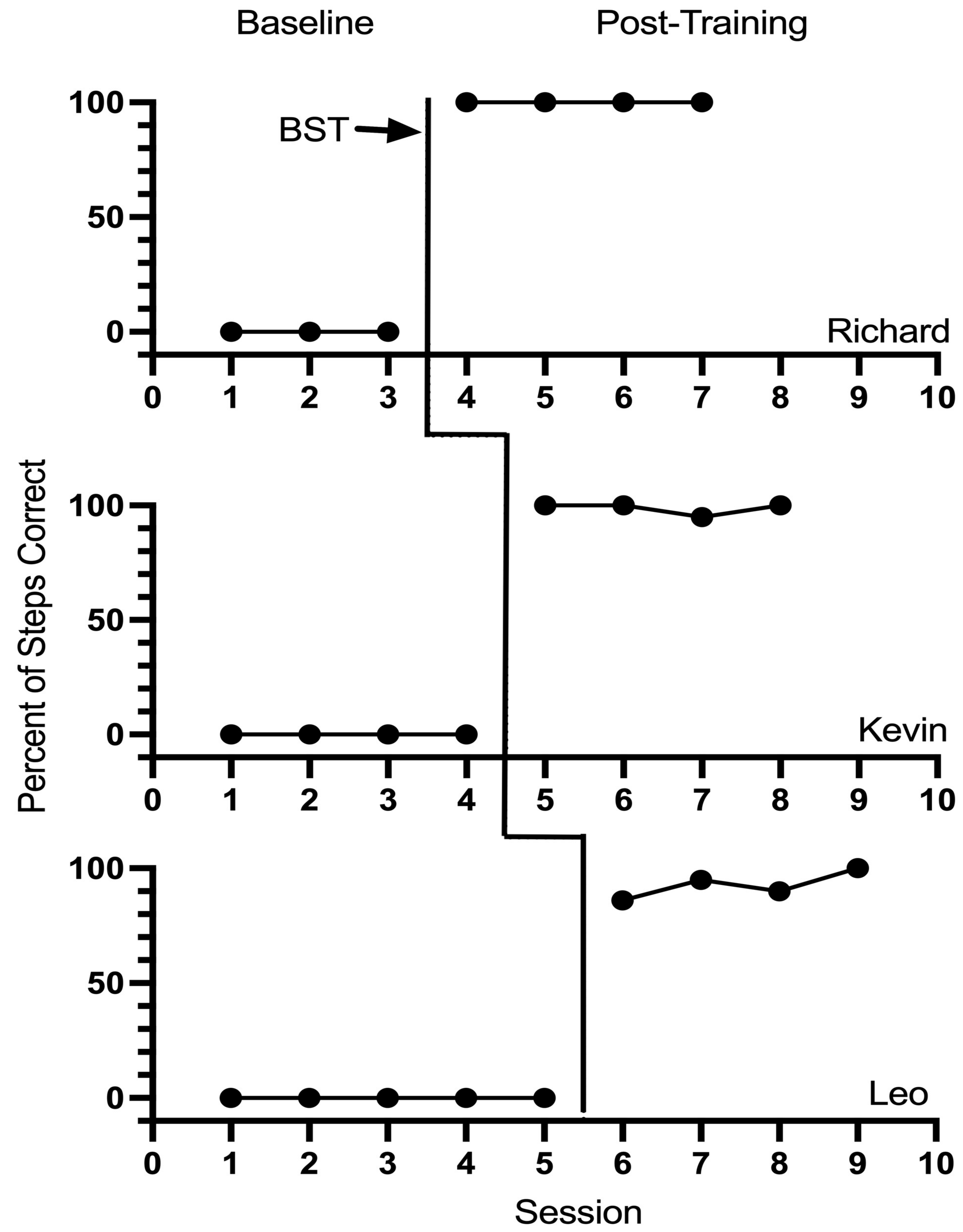


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