

# A Literature Review: What Do We Know About TRAINING Individuals to Conduct Functional Analyses?

Victor Ramirez, Vahe Esmaeili, Ellie Kazemi, Melisa Alonzo, and Grecia Marsillo  
California State University, Northridge (CSUN)

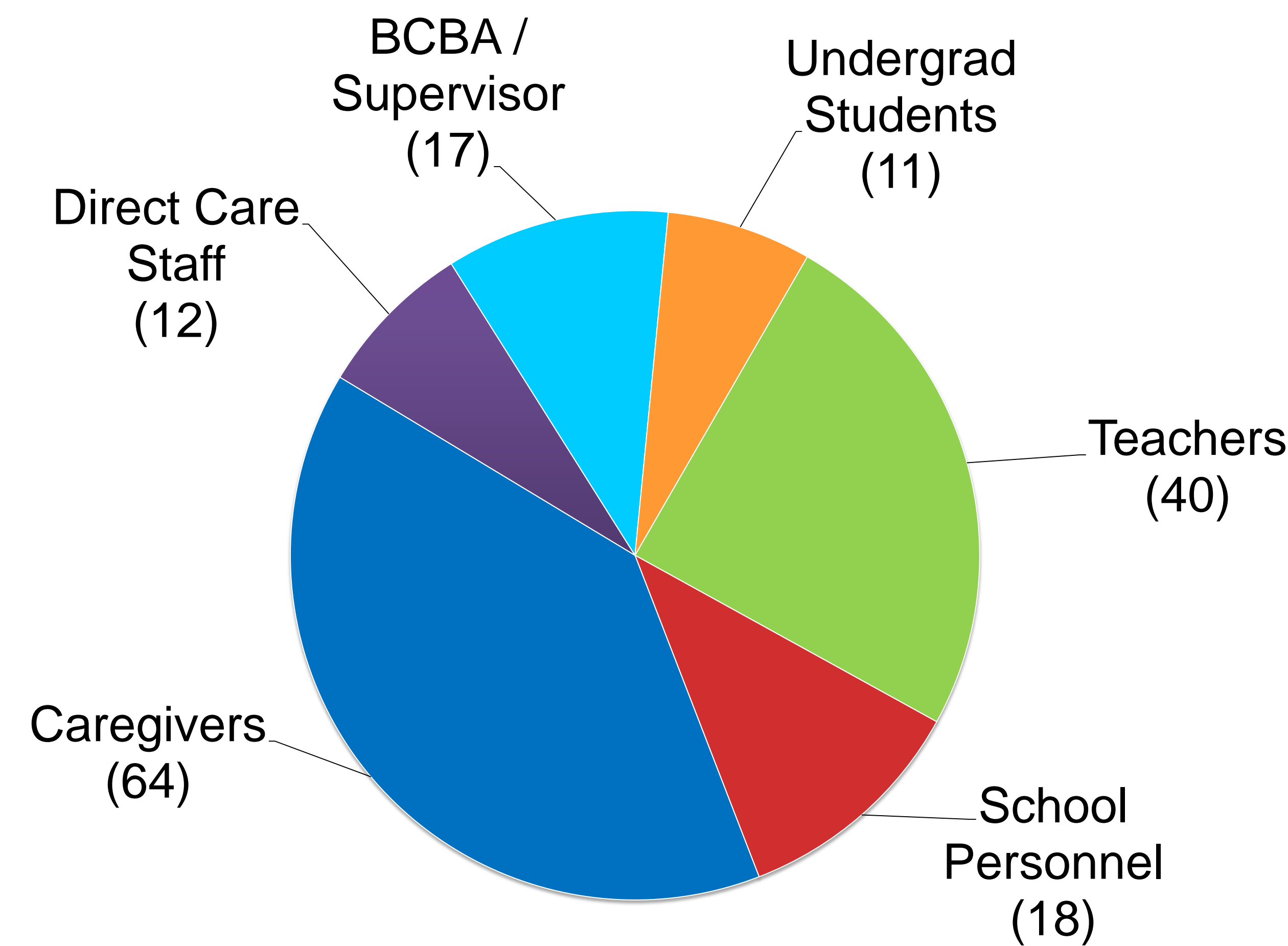
## INTRODUCTION

- Functional Analyses (FA) methodology is best practice when developing behavior analytic interventions
- Practitioners are not utilizing FAs (Roscoe et al., 2015; Oliver et al., 2015)
  - Some explanations for this have been
    - Training Time (Applegate et al., 1999)
    - Expertise Required (Spreat & Connelly, 1996)
- Researchers have set out to show that training can be done with relative ease (Iwata et al., 2000)
- The purpose of this study was to conduct a systematic review to determine what we currently know about training individuals to conduct FA's.

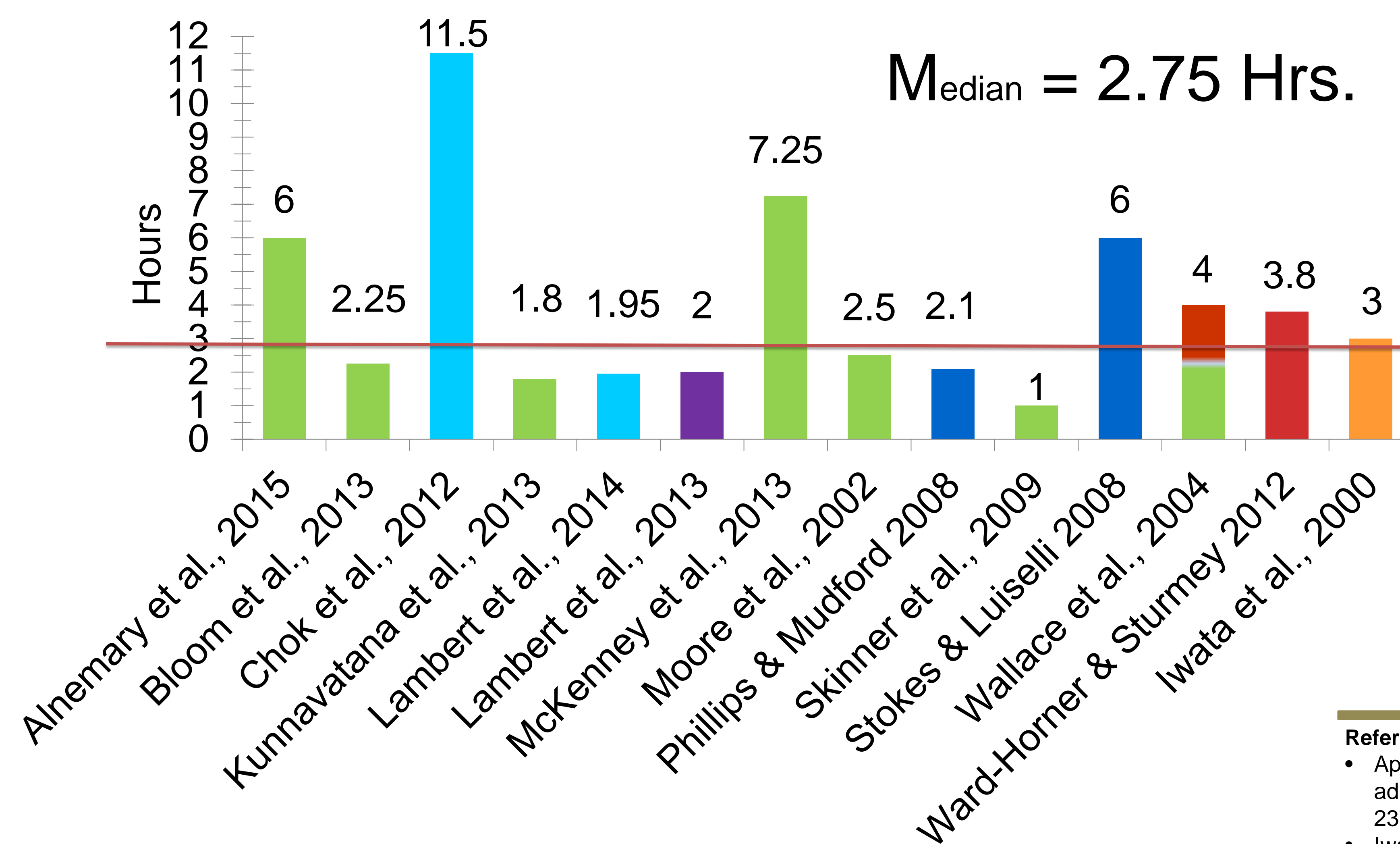
## METHOD

- Keyword search through PsycINFO
  - January, 1994 – July, 2015
  - Functional Analys\* AND train\* OR teach\* AND staff\* OR teacher\* OR parent\* OR caregiv\* OR practitioner\*
  - **Total of 222 articles**
- Inclusionary criteria:
  - English
    - **Total of 204 articles**
  - Trained participants to conduct Functional Analyses
    - **Total of 24 articles**
- Information noted:
  - Participants trained
  - Training time
  - FA clients
  - FA component skills taught
  - Number of participants that reached the author reported mastery criteria
- Interobserver Agreement:
  - Two independent reviewers
  - 100% across all articles

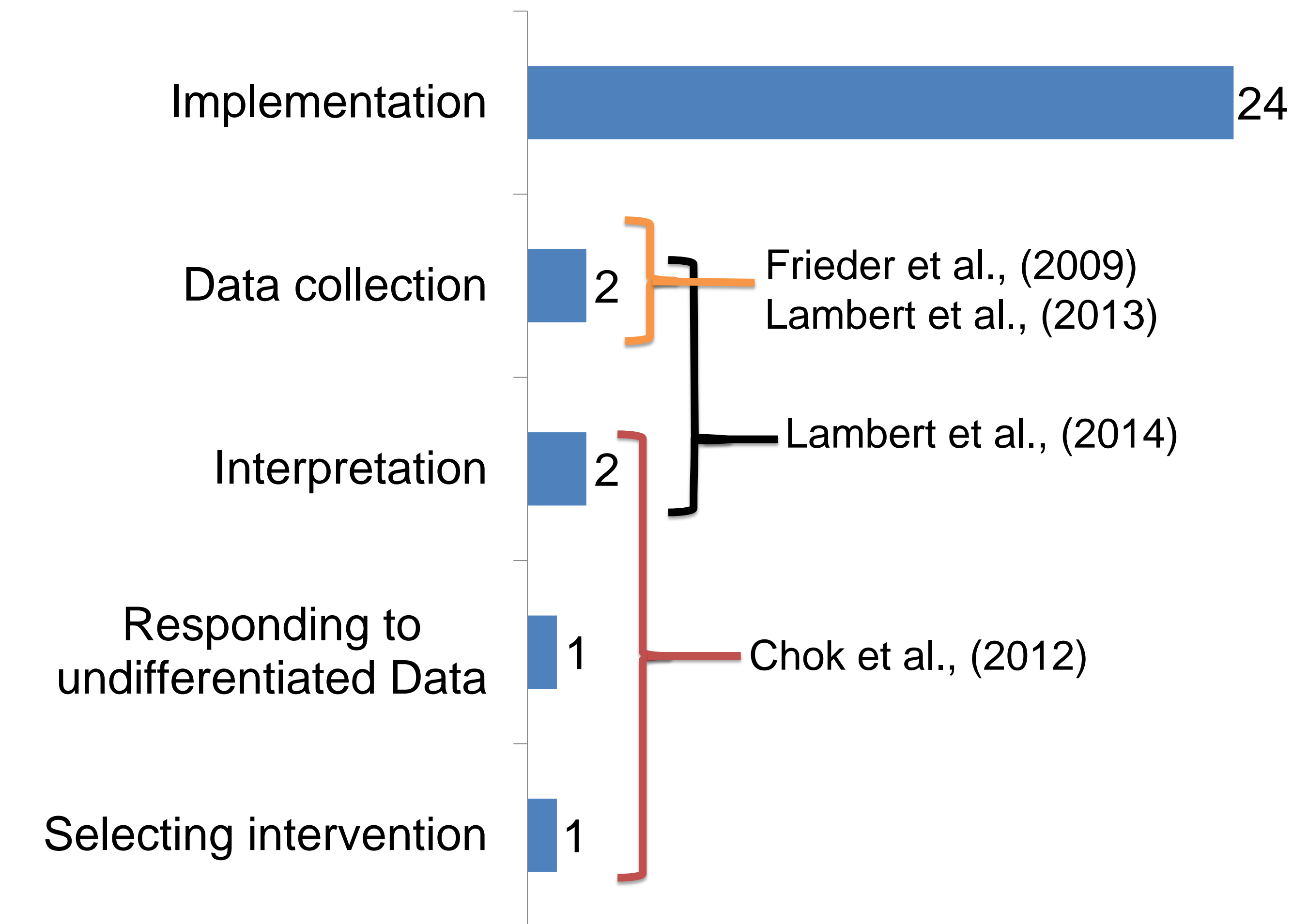
## RESULTS



▲ **Figure 1. Participants trained**



▲ **Figure 2. Average training time for participants to reach mastery**



▲ **Figure 3. FA component skills taught in articles**

## DISCUSSION

- Behavioral Skills Training was the most commonly used and was effective for 94% of participants
- Only 50% of articles included a generalization probe across a child
- Median training time was less than 3 hours
  - Not all researchers are reporting training time
  - Most focused on implementation only
- Researchers have not attempted to train participants to design an FA
- The majority of trainers were doctoral level behavior analyst
- Future research
  - The time needed and the best methods to teach other component skills (e.g., data collection, designing an FA)
  - The effectiveness of training conducted by non-doctoral level BCBAs

### References

- Applegate, H., Matson, J.L., Cherry K.E. (1999) An evaluation of functional variables affecting severe problem behaviors in adults with mental retardation by using the Questions about Behavioral Function Scale (QABF). *Res Dev Disabil.* 20, 229–237.
- Iwata, B. A., Wallace, M. D., Kahng, S. W., Lindberg, J. S., Roscoe, E. M., Connors, J., Worsdell, A. S. (2000). Skill acquisition in the implementation of functional analysis methodology. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis*, 33, 181–194. <http://doi.org/10.1901/jaba.2000.33-181>
- Oliver, A., Pratt, L., & Normand, M. (2015). A survey of functional behavior assessment methods used by behavior analysts in practice. *Journal Of Applied Behavior Analysis*, 48, 817-829. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/jaba.256>
- Roscoe, E. M., Phillips, K. M., Kelly, M. A., Farber, R. and Dube, W. V. (2015), A statewide survey assessing practitioners' use and perceived utility of functional assessment. *Jnl of Applied Behav Analysis*, 48: 830–844. doi: 10.1002/jaba.259
- Spreat, S., Connelly, L. (1996) Reliability analysis of the motivation assessment scale. *Am J Ment Retard.* 100, 528–532.