Matching as a Prerequisite Skill for PECS Communication with a Non-verbal Child Diagnosed with Autism

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Introduction

- *Matching Picture to Picture* was placed in acquisition to prepare the client for a *Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS)* program.
- Client is a non-verbal five-year-old female diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)
- Receives 25 Hours of ABA services per week at FSU's Early Childhood Autism Program (ECAP).
- Prior to this program the client's only form of communication was manding via point and yes/no correspondence through head nodding. She was able to match physical objects to physical objects.
- Initially, Picture to Picture matching was introduced receptively with objective 3 being the only objective.
- Clinicians noticed a deficit in the clients attending and receptive skills and introduced an addendum which changed the procedures to expressive and included a prompt fade and 2 additional objectives

Methods

- **Program: Matching Picture to Picture**
  - After establishing the client's motivation, clinicians presented an array of three cards in front of the client and had her attend to each card.
  - Clinicians would state the S^D, "Match". The client was required to select the card from the clinician and place it on the corresponding card in the array.
  - Systematic prompt fading was used to target the client's attending and discriminative skills
    - **Objective 1:** Two blank cards one target picture
    - **Objective 2:** One blank card, one distractor card, one target picture
    - **Objective 3:** Two distractor pictures, one target picture
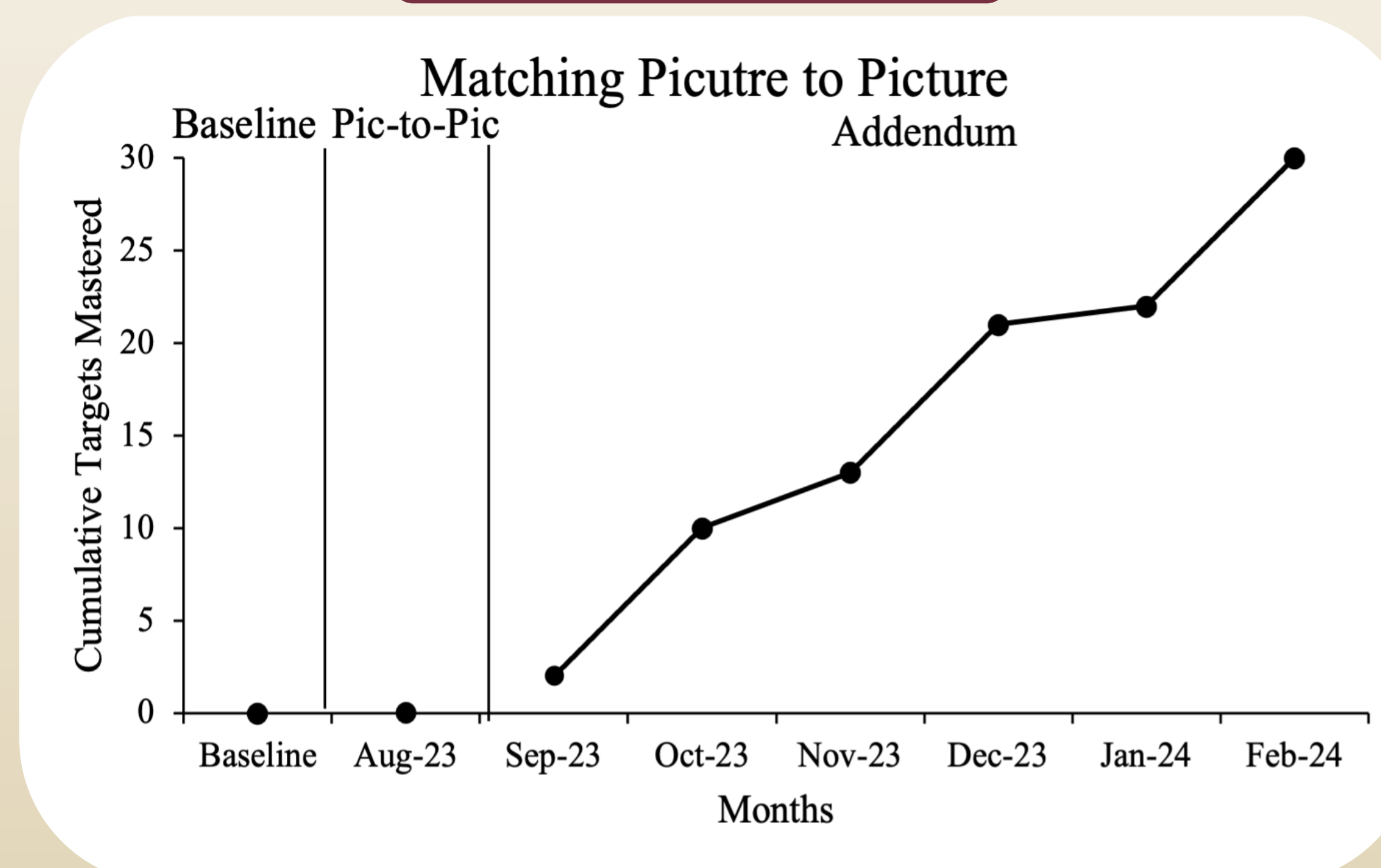
Results

Figure 1: The figure above depicts the clients progress with their matching (picture to picture) program

- After implementing the addendum, the client mastered this program (30 targets) in 5 months and showed steady progress throughout.
- Upon mastery, the client was able to discriminate between an array of three pictured stimuli and place the presented card onto its corresponding card in the array.
- Mastery of this program strengthened her visual performance repertoire and served as a prerequisite for a PECS protocol.
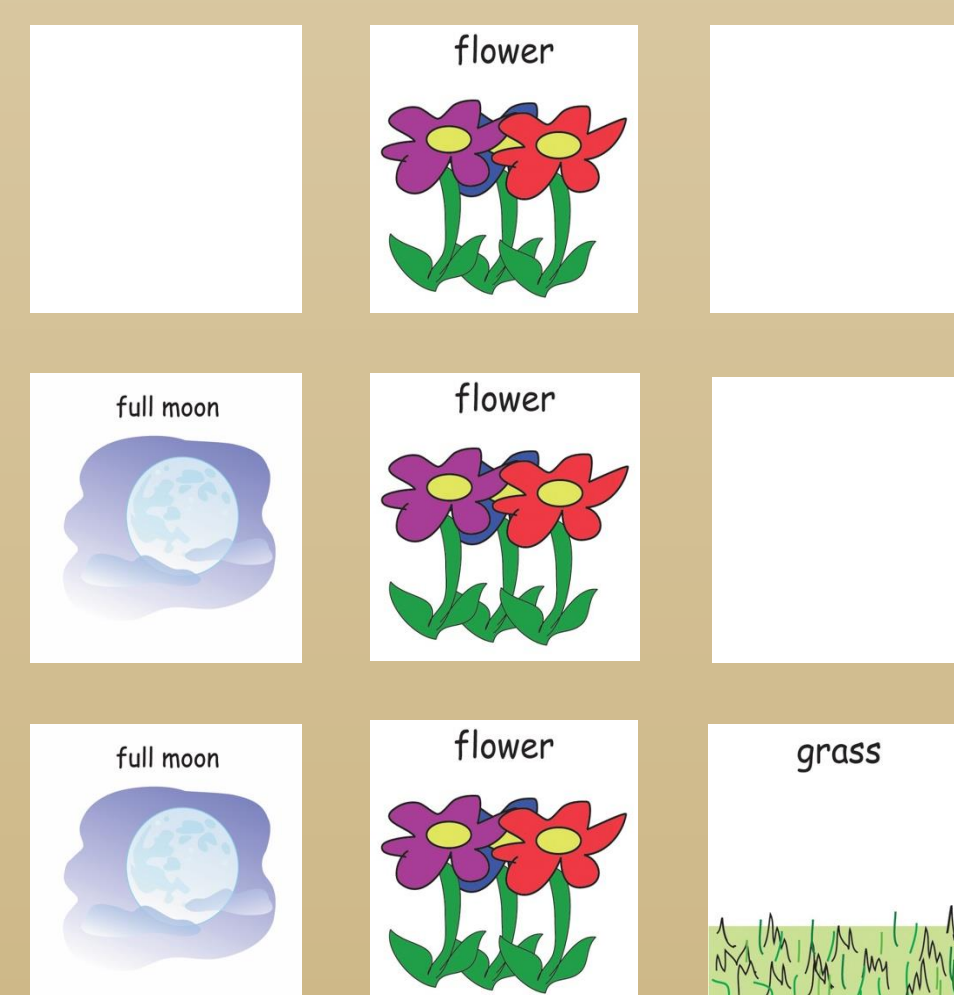
Discussion

- After the client mastered the *Matching Picture to Picture* program, Clinicians introduced a *Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS)* program to establish a form of communication.
- Following the introduction of the PECS program, clinicians observed a deficit in the client's ability to receptively match an item in an array to a sampled picture stimulus.
- This is when clinicians introduced a *Receptive Matching* program. Mastery of both matching programs indicated that the client meets all initial criteria for the PECS discrimination section (Bondy & Frost, 1994).
- Since mastery of the Receptive Matching program, the client has shown mastery in PECS acquisition.
- Clinicians will continue to work with this client to increase her communication skills.

References

Bondy, A. S., & Frost, L. A. (1994). The Picture Exchange Communication System. *Focus on Autistic Behavior*, *9*, 1–19.

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