Announcer ([00:03](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/96D0FP0Juipiv9-HokMmDpYLtw0tzHJT2_oDFljjCWrC5UhPW6m5ru6_mwjianidHUjreOelgWcCjFyEipiA5h0F3Xk?loadFrom=SharedLink&ts=3.37)):

The Missouri State Journal, a weekly program, keeping you in touch with Missouri State University.

Emily Yeap ([00:10](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/96D0FP0Juipiv9-HokMmDpYLtw0tzHJT2_oDFljjCWrC5UhPW6m5ru6_mwjianidHUjreOelgWcCjFyEipiA5h0F3Xk?loadFrom=SharedLink&ts=10.18)):

Science has helped us understand our world better and improve our quality of life. It can also be used for understanding human behavior and trying to influence it to benefit society. That’s the goal of the [Humans Understanding Behavior (HUB) Research Lab](https://www.humansunderstandingbehavior.com/) at Missouri State University. I’m Emily Yeap.

My guest today is [Dr. Jordan Belisle](https://search.missouristate.edu/people/jbelisle), who oversees the lab. He’s also associate professor of psychology at Missouri State University. He joins me to discuss the lab’s work and impact.

Jordan Belisle ([00:39](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/96D0FP0Juipiv9-HokMmDpYLtw0tzHJT2_oDFljjCWrC5UhPW6m5ru6_mwjianidHUjreOelgWcCjFyEipiA5h0F3Xk?loadFrom=SharedLink&ts=39.53)):

The HUB Research Lab is a research lab in the psychology department at the university. It stands for Humans Understanding Behavior. The basic idea is that can we use a science of psychology, a science of behavior analysis to understand our own behavior as humans? And more than that, can we use that science to develop technologies that improve the human experience for people in the world?

Emily Yeap ([01:01](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/96D0FP0Juipiv9-HokMmDpYLtw0tzHJT2_oDFljjCWrC5UhPW6m5ru6_mwjianidHUjreOelgWcCjFyEipiA5h0F3Xk?loadFrom=SharedLink&ts=61.34)):

What types of research takes place in the lab?

Jordan Belisle ([01:04](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/96D0FP0Juipiv9-HokMmDpYLtw0tzHJT2_oDFljjCWrC5UhPW6m5ru6_mwjianidHUjreOelgWcCjFyEipiA5h0F3Xk?loadFrom=SharedLink&ts=64.22)):

Over the last four to five years, we've developed a pretty robust research lab infrastructure. Currently, the research lab is supporting nine graduate assistants in the behavior analysis and therapy program at the university. They're involved in a variety of different projects.

One of our more major projects right now is using a science of behavior analysis to teach complex language and cognitive skills to autistic children in the community, as well as supporting their parents. We're also starting to bring in research on acceptance and mindfulness-based strategies to support parents and children through stress, through coping, through all of the challenges that come with being a member of the disability community in a world that wasn't necessarily designed for you. We're also doing a lot of work in other areas of mental health, supporting individuals with depression, anxiety within special education schools throughout the United States.

Outside of that work, we're also starting to dig into challenges associated with social justice oppression, women's rights, black rights, and can we explore that through a science of human behavior to promote anti-racism, anti-sexism within the communities that we're serving.

Emily Yeap ([02:07](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/96D0FP0Juipiv9-HokMmDpYLtw0tzHJT2_oDFljjCWrC5UhPW6m5ru6_mwjianidHUjreOelgWcCjFyEipiA5h0F3Xk?loadFrom=SharedLink&ts=127.7)):

According to Belisle, his students are the central element in the lab.

Jordan Belisle ([02:11](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/96D0FP0Juipiv9-HokMmDpYLtw0tzHJT2_oDFljjCWrC5UhPW6m5ru6_mwjianidHUjreOelgWcCjFyEipiA5h0F3Xk?loadFrom=SharedLink&ts=131.77)):

The research lab wouldn't function without the students. The areas that we dive into are largely driven by student interests as they come into the lab. And then how can I, as a more senior scientist kind of foster their education and development in that context to get to that point of scientific development that they want to be at by the point that they graduate and ideally doing work that's socially impactful and socially important along the way.

In our work for example with autistic learners, the students are directly involved in running language training sessions. They're delivering mindfulness-based practice directly with children. They're consulting with parents about the experiences with their kids and how to kind of more adaptively respond based on what we're learning in our scientific investigations.

In terms of site consultations, students are meeting directly with sites. They're running remote mindfulness training with clients through Zoom, through telehealth models, which has been a really cool innovation coming out of the lab, especially with COVID 19. And then in terms of our research on social justice issues, they're developing the research topics and within the lab, we've developed a new theory of human language and cognition called Relational Density Theory. And so they're taking that theory and applying it to these very large scale social challenges we're all experiencing today to see if we can evaluate it scientifically and come up with solutions.

Emily Yeap ([03:26](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/96D0FP0Juipiv9-HokMmDpYLtw0tzHJT2_oDFljjCWrC5UhPW6m5ru6_mwjianidHUjreOelgWcCjFyEipiA5h0F3Xk?loadFrom=SharedLink&ts=206.16)):

Belisle explains more about Relational Density Theory, which was originally his PhD dissertation.

Jordan Belisle ([03:32](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/96D0FP0Juipiv9-HokMmDpYLtw0tzHJT2_oDFljjCWrC5UhPW6m5ru6_mwjianidHUjreOelgWcCjFyEipiA5h0F3Xk?loadFrom=SharedLink&ts=212.31)):

When we think about the way that people think about the world, interpret their world, we're never really interacting with the world as it really exists, we're interacting with our world through language. And so can we kind of break language into its component parts and really kind of dissect how that affects the way that people interact with their world? The theory basically borrows from principles in theoretical physics, ideas such as resistance. So are there certain beliefs, ideas that seem to be highly resistant to change or counter information, or do we see how ecosystems of like disinformation and misinformation can support the evolution of new beliefs can be harmful for example, to groups of people. And so kind of evaluating whole information ecosystems in this way to make predictions about how people will respond in the context of new potentially competing information that challenges their already existing beliefs about the world.

Bringing students into the fold, they've really challenged us to do is kind of push this theory into those areas of like social justice. The purpose of science has always been to challenge the status quo. So here we are at Missouri State University, I think doing exactly that. And when a robust theory comes along, that allows you to deal with information in new and novel ways, shouldn't we be applying that to try to save the world.

Emily Yeap ([04:45](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/96D0FP0Juipiv9-HokMmDpYLtw0tzHJT2_oDFljjCWrC5UhPW6m5ru6_mwjianidHUjreOelgWcCjFyEipiA5h0F3Xk?loadFrom=SharedLink&ts=285.15)):

That was Dr. Jordan Belisle, associate professor of psychology at Missouri State. Find out more about the HUB Research Lab at humansunderstandingbehavior.com. I’m Emily Yeap for the Missouri State Journal.

Speaker 1 ([04:59](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/96D0FP0Juipiv9-HokMmDpYLtw0tzHJT2_oDFljjCWrC5UhPW6m5ru6_mwjianidHUjreOelgWcCjFyEipiA5h0F3Xk?loadFrom=SharedLink&ts=299.98)):

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