



**Illinois Wesleyan University**  
**Digital Commons @ IWU**

---

John Wesley Powell Student Research  
Conference

1998, 9th Annual JWP Conference

---

Apr 18th, 1:30 PM - 2:30 PM

## Reinforcer Elasticity and Unit Price Theory

Dorianne E. Cantrall  
*Illinois Wesleyan University*

James Dougan, Faculty Advisor  
*Illinois Wesleyan University*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/jwprc>

---

Cantrall, Dorianne E. and Dougan, Faculty Advisor, James, "Reinforcer Elasticity and Unit Price Theory" (1998). *John Wesley Powell Student Research Conference*. 4.  
<https://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/jwprc/1998/posters2/4>

This Event is protected by copyright and/or related rights. It has been brought to you by Digital Commons @ IWU with permission from the rights-holder(s). You are free to use this material in any way that is permitted by the copyright and related rights legislation that applies to your use. For other uses you need to obtain permission from the rights-holder(s) directly, unless additional rights are indicated by a Creative Commons license in the record and/ or on the work itself. This material has been accepted for inclusion by faculty at Illinois Wesleyan University. For more information, please contact [digitalcommons@iwu.edu](mailto:digitalcommons@iwu.edu).

©Copyright is owned by the author of this document.

Poster Presentation 22

REINFORCER ELASTICITY AND UNIT PRICE THEORY

Dorianne E. Cantrall and James Dougan\*

Department of Psychology, Illinois Wesleyan University

The assumption that laboratory behavioral experiments are economic systems allows the analysis of economic concepts in animal research. Among the economic theories that are studied in the laboratory is the unit price theory. According to unit price theory, the quantity which an animal consumes is related to the unit price of the commodity, where unit price equals (cost x effort/size x probability). The present experiment varied both cost and size, in an effort to test predictions of unit price theory. The results have implications for behavioral economics, and unit price theory in particular.