

Verbal Behavior- Milestones Assessment & Placement Program



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A Behavioral Approach to Language Assessment

- * Assessment is based upon B.F. Skinner's Analysis of Verbal Behavior
- * This analysis can provide us with valuable assessment and intervention strategies
- * It is **critical** to conduct an **accurate** assessment of a child's current skills and needs.
- * It can be quite complicated given the variety of language problems experienced by children on the autism spectrum.



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Agenda

- * VB-MAPP Overview
- * Milestones Assessment
 - * Level 1
 - * Level 2
 - * Level 3
- * Barriers Assessment
- * Transition Assessment
- * Task Analysis and Skills Tracking
- * Implementing Assessment
- * Analysis of Assessment



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The Purpose of a Language Assessment

- Determine **operant** level of a child's verbal (and related) skills
- Compare to "neuro-typical" language development data
- Identify language acquisition & learning barriers
- Identify if and where to begin intervention
- Establish Treatment Plan goals
- Design an individualized intervention program
- Determine best teaching strategies
- Monitor if the intervention is effective



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Verbal Operants Assessed on the VB-MAPP

- Mand
- Tact
- Listener
- Echoic
- Imitation
- Copying a Text
- Intraverbal
- Textual
- Transcriptive



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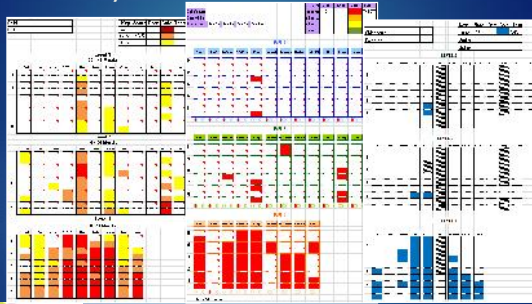
Verbal Operants

- Skinner (1957) calls this collection of language skills "*The Elementary Verbal Operants*"
- The *elementary verbal operants* are separate repertoires and functionally independent at the time of acquisition, and each must be taught
- Speaker and listener skills are separate repertoires and each must be taught
- More complex language, such as conversations and language related to social skills, is comprised of these basic elements



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Validity of our Assessments



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VB-MAPP Overview

- * Five components of the VB-MAPP:
 - * **Milestones Assessment** contains 170 verbal behavior milestones across 3 developmental levels (0-18 mos., 18-30 mos., 30-48 mos.), and 16 different verbal operants and related skills
 - * **Barriers Assessment** examines 24 common learning and language barriers faced by children with autism and language delays
 - * **Transition Assessment** contains 18 measurable areas to provide an objective evaluation of a student's skills and learning capabilities to identify the setting that they may best learn in
 - * **Task Analysis and Skills Tracking** provides a further breakdown of the 16 different skill areas in the form of a checklist for skills tracking
 - * **Curriculum Placement & IEP Goals** directly linked to the assessments above and provides specific direction for each of the 170 milestones and helps design a balanced intervention program



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Development



- * The VB-MAPP spans a 30 history of research and development by Mark Sundberg
- * In 1998 together with James Partington Dr. Sundberg created The Assessment of Basic Language and Learning Skills (ABLLS) which:
 - * 'Lacked developmental appropriate scope and sequence'
 - * 'Never meant to be utilized as curriculum'
 - * 'Provides no guidance for what order to target objectives'



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Methods of Measurement

- ▶ For educational purposes the goal is to as efficiently and effectively as possible sets developmentally appropriate goals and objectives. Information on a specific student can be gathered in a variety of ways
- Includes:
 - Interviews with parents, teachers, or service provider
 - Observation of the student in natural setting
 - Specific assessment of the skill (especially true for Barriers portion)



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Measurement Methods Used to Assess Milestones

- **Formal Testing (T):** Specifically presenting the child with a task and recording the response
- **Observation (O):** Watching for the skill to occur in environmental settings without formal presentation
- **Either Formal Testing or Observation (E):** assessor can determine which of above to use
- **Timed Observation (TO):** Target response must occur within a fixed amount of time



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Milestones Assessment

- The Milestones Assessment is:
 - Developmentally appropriate in scope and sequence
 - Criterion referenced assessment
 - Broken into 3 developmental levels
 - Level 1; 0-18 months
 - Level 2; 18-30 months
 - Level 3; 30-48 months
 - The scores for each skill are balanced across each level
 - There are 5 items and 5 possible points for each skill area



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Milestones Level 1

0-18 months

- Instructions for scoring begin on page 27 of the Guide book
- The task for the person performing the assessment is to identify a baseline for each skill
- If a test item is clearly a part of the child's skillset, score that as a 1 and move on
- If the child is reaching a level of acquisition, but may not completely demonstrate a skill, more direct testing is warranted



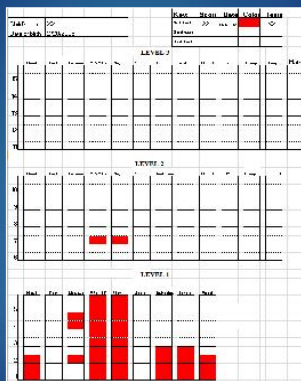
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Level 1 Skill Areas

- Mand
- Tact
- Listener
- Visual Perceptual Match-to-Sample
- Play
- Social
- Imitation
- Echoic
- Vocal



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Milestones Level 2

18-30 months

- * Instructions for scoring begin on page 47 of the Guide book
- * In Level 2 new skill sets are represented
- * These areas were not present in Level 1 because **most** typically developing 18 month children have yet to acquire them
- * It is hoped by presenting these in Level 2 it will be clearer what to focus on for a child scoring in each of the levels



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Level 2 Skill Areas

- * All skill areas from Level 1 except Vocal with the addition of:
 - * Listener Responding by Feature, Function & Class (LRFFC)
 - * Intraverbal (IV)
 - * Classroom Skills
 - * Group Skills
 - * Linguistic Structure



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Level	Area	Score	Area	Score	Area	Score	Area	Score	Area	Score
Level 1
Level 2



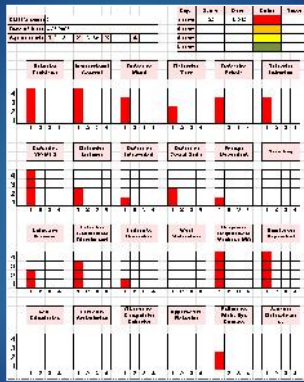
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Barriers Assessment

- Tool designed to identify and score 24 different learning and language acquisition barriers
- Once a specific barrier has been identified, a more detailed descriptive and/or functional analysis of that problem is required
- There are many ways that a verbal repertoire or related skill can become defective
- Individualized analysis are necessary to determine the nature of the problem, and what intervention program might be appropriate



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Barriers Assessment

- ▶ Common Learning and Language Acquisition Barriers:
 - Instructional control (Escape/avoidance)
 - Behavior problems
 - Defective mand, tact, intraverbal, motor imitation, listener discrimination
 - Defective echoic
 - Prompt Dependent
 - Scrolling Responses
 - Weak or atypical motivation



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Where did these Barriers Originate?

- ▶ Their Environment.
 - ▶ i.e., If a child cannot effectively mand:
 - ▶ Other behavior will begin to serve as the mand function
 - ▶ Extinction sets in and reinforcers narrow
 - ▶ The child starts to need adults less and less to get needs met
- ▶ Dr. Sundberg argues that **WE** helped create 23 out of 24 Barriers!



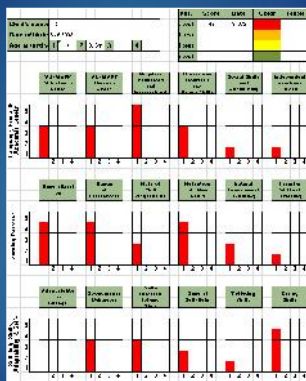
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Transition Assessment

- Can provide a measurable way for a child's IEP team to make decisions and set priorities in order to meet the child's educational needs
- Comprised of several summary measures from other parts of the VB-MAPP, as well as a variety of other skills that can affect transition including:
 - Overall score on the Milestones
 - Overall score on Barriers
 - Negative behaviors
 - Classroom routines and group skills
 - Social skills
 - Academic independence
 - Generalization
 - Variation of reinforcers
 - Rate of skill acquisition
 - Retention
 - Natural environment learning
 - Transfer skills
 - Adaptability to change
 - Spontaneity
 - Independent play
 - General self-help
 - Toileting skills
 - Eating skills



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Interpreting VB-MAPP Results

- Step 2
 - Look at the scores in each skill area and their relation to the student's performance in other areas
 - Are there strengths in one area that could benefit the student?
 - Weaknesses that need to be addressed?
 - I.e., if a student has a strong receptive repertoire but weak echoic, you may want to look at PECS



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Interpreting VB-MAPP Results

- Step 3
 - Look for balance across all of the skill areas (mand, tact, listener, etc.)
 - The Milestones Assessment is designed to be able to quickly read a profile by looking for a general balance of one repertoire in relation to another
 - A student is out of balance if they have 100 listener skills but only a few mands-Focus would need to be on manding



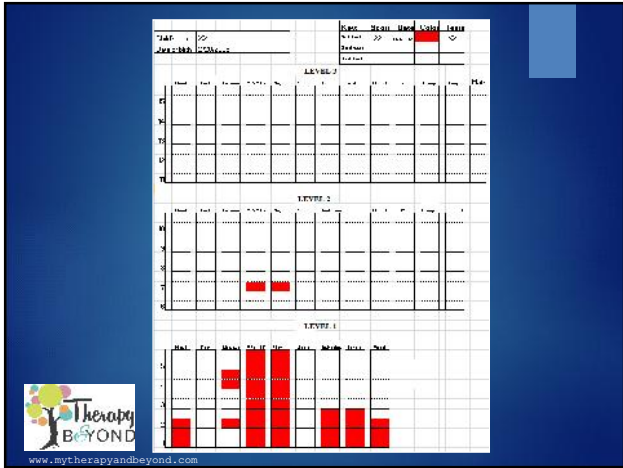
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Scores Within Level 1

- ▶ Focus should be on establishing:
 - Mands
 - Echoics
 - Motor Imitation
 - Listener Discriminations
 - Tacts
 - Visual Perceptual & Matching Skills



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Level 1 Learners

- Play and social skills should be a major part of intervention
- Teaching style may be more 'intensive'
 - Higher number of trials
 - Carefully arranged contingencies
 - Prompting
 - Prompt Fading
 - Shaping
 - Transfer of Stimulus Control
 - Use of Motivation
 - Differential Reinforcement

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Sample IEP Goals-Level 1 Learner

'...Johnny will _____, with 90% accuracy across 3 consecutive days.'

- Emit 10 different mands with/without desired item present
- Spontaneously emit (without prompt- "what do you want") average of 50 or more mands per day
- Tact 50 items
- Tact 10 actions
- ID 50 items in messy array of at least 8
- Perform 20 specific actions on command
- Match 100 non-identical objects or pictures in array of 10
- Imitate 25 two-component actions
- Echo 50 V-C combinations of 2 syllables or more or full words
- Mand to peers 5 times per day

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Scores Within Level 2

- Still an early learner, but is beginning to show solid learning and language skills
- Focus should be on systematically expanding existing skills in a variety of ways



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Level 2 Learners

General target areas forming core of intervention should be:

- Expand the scope and size of mand, tact, and listener repertoires (teach more nouns, verbs, adjectives)
- Develop two- and three-step motor imitation and instruction following
- Beginning LRFFC
- Beginning intraverbal skills
- Develop social and verbal interactions with peers
- Develop group and classroom skills
- Learning in less restrictive settings



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Sample IEP Goals-Level 2 Learner

'...Johnny will _____, with 90% accuracy across 3 consecutive days.'

- * Mand for 50 different missing item with only verbal prompt ("what do you need?")
- * Spontaneously mand for other people to perform 10 specific actions in natural environment(game, play)
- * Tact and LD 250 items
- * Tact and LD 25 actions
- * ID 10 different colors or shapes in array of 5
- * Match 200 non-identical objects or pictures in array of 10, containing 3 similar items
- * Select correct item from messy array of 10 given 200 different fill-ins or WH questions for FFC
- * Answer 200 fill-in and WH questions involving noun and verb (intraverbal)
- * Respond to mands from peers 10 times per day



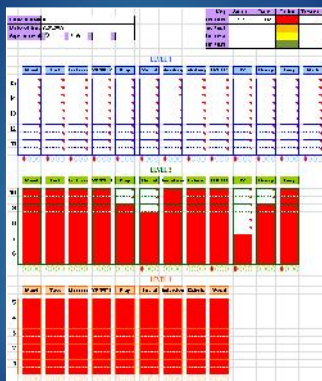
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Scores Within Level 3

- * A student who is reaching the milestones in Level 3 is demonstrating a solid foundation of skills that will allow for more advanced language, social, and academic instruction
- * Level 3 begins at the developmental equivalent of 30 months of age when children have acquired **TONS** of language
 - * Hundreds of mands, facts and listener responses
 - * Easily learning new words on a daily basis
 - * Mands are spontaneous, frequent, and controlled by child's personal motivators-especially those that relate to verbal information (asking questions)



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Level 3 Learners

General target areas forming core of intervention should be:

- Expand the content of what the child talks about by teaching new mands, tacts, and LD responses
- Expand sentence size by teaching child to modify basic nouns and verbs with adjectives, prepositions, pronouns, adverbs...
- Develop more complex mands- such as mands for information & involving parts of speech
- Teach intraverbal behavior (how to talk about things not present)
- Learn to use verbal skills in socially appropriate ways
- Develop social and verbal interactions with peers
- Increase frequency & complexity of peer social interaction
- Movement to less restrictive educational setting



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Sample IEP Goals-Level 3 Learner

!...Johnny will _____ with 90% accuracy across 3 consecutive days!

- Spontaneously mand for information at least 50 times a day with at least 4 different question words (what, where, who, which, when, can, do...)
- Tact specific aspects of at least 25 different items when given at least 4 randomly rotating verbal questions
- Complete or continue 25 patterns or sequences with at least 3 parts
- Select correct item from messy array of 10 for 500 different WH questions for FFC of at least 100 different items
- Answer 2 questions about a story after being read a short passage from a book for 50 different passages
- Answer 500 different intraverbal questions
- Take turns and share reinforcers with a peer an average of 10 times a day
- Spontaneously engage in at least 4 verbal exchanges with a peer an average of 15 times per day
- Sit in a 20 min group session involving 5 children without disruptive behavior and answer 10 intraverbal questions



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Questions & Comments



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