

TRI-STATE WEBINAR SERIES

Using Verbal Behavior Strategies in Your Classroom

Presented by: Deb Rauner and Rhonda Ayres



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Tri-State Autism Spectrum Disorder Webinar Series

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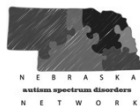


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Presenter Information

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Learner Objectives

1. Individuals will learn about each verbal operant.
2. Understand how to mix trials during instruction.
3. Examine assessment and curriculum programs (ABLLS, VB-MAPP and AFLS).
4. Understand how to use Verbal Behavior Strategies to teach any subject or curriculum.

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Presentation Summary

- Verbal Operants
- Using Discrete Trials to teach Verbal Operants
- Mixing Trials
- Verbal Behavior Assessment and Curriculum
- Using Verbal Behavior to teach any subject



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USING VERBAL BEHAVIOR STRATEGIES IN YOUR CLASSROOM



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Verbal Behavior and the “Learning to Learn” Concept

Teaching should result in the acquisition of generalized skills that allows the learner to learn from his/her everyday experiences.



Behavioral Classification of Language Verbal Operants

MAND: (Request) Asking for things that you want.

ECHOICS: (Vocal Imitation) Repeating precisely what is heard, usually immediately.

MOTOR IMITATION: Copying someone's motor movements .



Behavioral Classification of Language Verbal Operants

RECEPTIVE LANGUAGE / LISTENER

RESPONDING: Following instructions or complying with the request (mands of others).

TACTS: (Label) Naming or identifying objects, actions, events, relations, properties, etc.

VISUAL PERCEPTUAL SKILLS AND MATCHING:

Attends to, responds & matches visual stimuli



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Behavioral Classification of Language Verbal Operants

FEATURE, FUNCTION & CLASS: Responding to items in the environment when provided a description of them.

INTRAVERBAL: Answering “wh” questions or having a conversation so that what you say is determined by what the other person says



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VERBAL OPERANT NOTES

1. A word is not defined by its form. The definition of a word is determined by its functional category, e.g. candy (different as a tact, mand, etc.)
2. Many children with autism do not have verbal repertoires that include responses in each of the categories for the same word (topography).



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VERBAL OPERANT NOTES

3. This happens because the categories are functionally independent and the responses (words) may not transfer across the categories without explicit training.
4. A common profile of children with autism includes a large receptive repertoire, many tacts, and very few mands and almost no intraverbals. Failing to have responses in all of the categories leads to less than adequate and useful verbal repertoire.



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Mands

Mands: A verbal response that is reinforced by a characteristic consequence and is under the control of motivation variables; a request for a reinforcer

“What do you want?---> Reinforcer Named ---> Specific Rf Given

- Manding should be the first type of language to teach because it directly benefits the student.
- Manding should be targeted regardless of the student’s current skill level.



Reasons for Teaching Mands

1. Immediate benefit for the student.
2. Can help in the acquisition of other language skills.
3. Will help reduce inappropriate behaviors.
4. Allows trainers to be paired with successful communication.
5. Teaches a child that verbal behavior is valuable; the other repertoires teach what to say once the learner “wants to talk”.



Rules for Teaching Manding

- Teaching must occur in the natural and everyday environment where the motivation is typically strong.
- Capture and contrive as many opportunities per day to teach mands.
- Get the best quality response with the least amount of prompting.



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Rules for Teaching Manding

- Prompt the mands initially to teach the child that it is easy to get things with verbal behavior.
- Be a “giver” not a “taker”.
- Select words for mands that are reinforcers.
- Consistency in methods across all staff is essential with lots of opportunities for generalization.



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Imitation: Following a nonverbal model (doing what another person does)

“Do this”+ physical action----> Copying the action----> Rf given

Key Points:

- Usually imitation with objects (hammering a block) is easier than an action with out an object (clap your hands)
- Do several different imitations with the same item so that student doesn't think that there is only one thing you can do with an item.
- Use response-specific praise, “Good clapping!”



Echoic Skills

Increasing Vocal Play: Reinforcing any identifiable sounds the student makes

- The purpose of increasing vocal play is to strengthen vocal cords and to increase the probability of establishing echoic control.

Automatic Reinforcement Procedure: When you repeatedly pair a targeted sound with a reinforcer, the sound should become a reinforcer itself.

- Teaches cause and effect with vocalizations.



Echoic Skills

Vocal Imitation: Imitation of vocal sounds or words (repeating what another person says)

“Say (vocal sound/word) ----> Child repeats the sound/word ----> Rf given

- When beginning this session, staff may want to focus on sounds that the student already babbles or words that represent reinforcing items.
- It is important to reinforce the highest quality response; keep in mind the individual student skill level. Be familiar with what they are capable of doing.



Visual Perceptual Skills & Matching

Match to Sample Skills: *A non-verbal response requiring placing a given item with another similar item.*

“Match” (while giving an item/picture to a student) ---> Places it with similar item--->Rf

Teaching Strategies:

-Matching skills should be targeted as a priority for any student who has not generalized this essential skill.

-Randomly switch the placement of the items so that the student learns to scan.



Visual Perceptual Skills and Matching:

- The array of choices should be very dissimilar to begin with but then have more similar items as you progress.
- Use response-specific praise. “Good, you matched the cars.”
- Avoid physical prompts. Good prompts are gestural, reducing the array, imitative and positioning.



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Question?

Which operant is it where the individual makes requests for items or information?

- A. Automatic Reinforcement Procedure
- B. Motor Imitation
- C. Manding
- D. Echoics



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Answer:

The correct answer is C; manding. Remember Manding is the most important verbal operant. It is the one that we need to make sure we are focusing on throughout the day.



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Receptive/Listener Responding Skills:

Responding nonverbally to verbal instructions

Types of Receptive/Listener Responding Skills:

1. Following instructions given contextual clues.
Example: Following the direction “Sit down” at the table to eat lunch.
2. Following instructions out of context (compliance skills).
Example: Following the direction “Clap hands” as you demonstrate the action.
3. Receptive Discrimination. Example: Being able to touch a spoon from an array of items when given the direction, “Touch spoon.”



Receptive/Responding Skills

Following instructions and compliance skills:

Verbal direction -----> Nonverbal Response -----> Rf

- Non-Context receptive skills (compliance skills) should be targeted once a student has some imitation skills and preferably some visual performance skills.
- Try not to physically prompt. If you have to physically prompt, then fade into an imitative prompt, ASAP.



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Receptive Discrimination/Listener Responding Skills

“Touch ___(name of item)” ---> Points, touches item ----> Rf

- When selecting items for receptive discrimination tasks, start with dissimilar items in class and appearance. Later, move towards more similar items and increase the number of items in the array.
- When selecting items for receptive discrimination tasks, start with objects then move to pictures.



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Receptive Discrimination/Listener Responding Skills

- After the student knows about 10 items in receptive discrimination tasks, start using a variety of commands, such as “Point to”, “Show me”, “Where’s the”.
- When choosing tasks for instructions, start with actions. When choosing tasks for receptive discrimination, start with nouns, then move to verbs, adjectives and prepositions.



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Tact Skills

Tact: A verbal or signed label of an item

Example: Adult holds up a cookie and says, “What is it?” and the student signs cookie or says cookie.

“What is this? (with object or picture) ---> Says or signs item ---> Rf



Tacting Strategies

1. Start with items that the student mands for or was able to receptively discriminate.
2. Start with objects and move to pictures. Introduce novel “same” pictures or objects of the targeted item.
3. Start with nouns, then move to actions, adjectives and features.
4. The goal is spontaneous tacting so fade out the “What is it?” prompt as quickly as possible.



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Receptive Skills by Function, Feature and Class

RFFC: Nonverbally indicating (through pointing, etc.) one item out of a number of items, based on a verbal Sd giving the function, feature or class of the item (i.e., “Touch the one you eat.”)

“Touch the one that (function, feature, class)--->
Points to item/picture---> Rf

- **RFFC** should be targeted once a student has 50-100 receptive discriminations and tacts, including nouns and verbs



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Function, Feature and Class Training

In RFFC training, the student is asked to identify something based on features of the item, its function or its categorical class.

- **Functions:** Things that you can do with an object.
- **Features:** Descriptions or common characteristics of objects such as its parts.
- **Class:** General categories in which many items can be grouped together.



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Intraverbals

Intraverbal: A verbal response controlled only by a verbal Sd that does not match the response.

Types of Intraverbals:

- **Fill in the blank (i.e., fill-ins)** Example: “Twinkle, twinkle, little _____”

“(Say line from a phrase/song and leave off the last word)” -->Fills in word -->Rf



Intraverbals

Types of Intraverbal Trials:

- Answering questions: Example: “What lives on a farm?”

“Question” -----> Answers question -----> Rf

-Very early intraverbals may be targeted once a student has some imitation/echoics/mands. Other intraverbals should be targeted when student has hundreds of tacts, is beginning to use them spontaneously, has a large base of RFFC skills and is learning new skills/words within a few trials.



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Intraverbal Teaching Hints

- Vary the wording of the Sd.
- Expand the topic beyond the original intraverbal Sd so as to resemble a conversation.
- Intersperse mand, tact, receptive and intraverbal trials so that the trials more closely approximate typical interactions between speakers and listeners.



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Mixing Trials

- The concept of mixing trials is unique to verbal behavior. Verbal behavior programs do not use the strategy of mass trials (same trial repeated many times in a row).
- Verbal behavior programs
 - mix trials by type (mand, tact, imitation, etc.)
 - mix trials by complexity (easy trials mixed in with new tasks or more difficult tasks)



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Mixing Trials

Advantages:

- Requires the student to listen intently to the directions
- Teaches flexibility
- Expands vocabulary by using all operants
- Limits boredom
- More “fun” for the student and staff
- More spontaneous language



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Video Clip Discussion

In this next video clip Teresa has the verbal behavior tasks on colored cards. She uses a different colored card for each verbal operant. She mixes several different operants within different tasks as she works with the student.



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Mixing Trials Example



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Question?

True or False?

Verbal behavior teaching strategies present instruction in a mass trial format.



Answer:

The correct answer is False. Verbal behavior programs use the mixed trial teaching format.



Assessment and Curriculum: The ABLLS-R (The Assessment of Basic Language and Learning Skills-Revised)

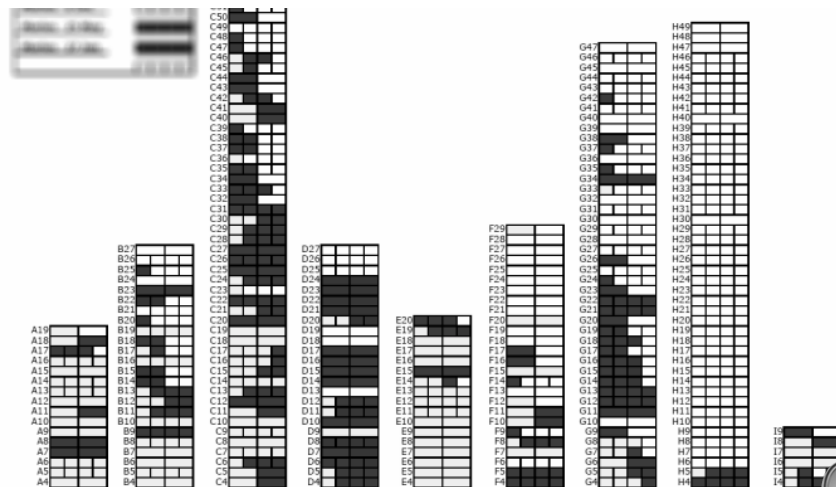


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The ABLLS-R

1. Assessment & Curriculum Guide 1998/2006
2. Scoring Instructions and IEP Development Guide 1998/2006
3. Teaching Language to Children with Autism or Other Developmental Disabilities 1998

ABLLS-R GRID



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Why Should I Use the ABLLS?

(Rationale)

- To help identify language and other critical skills in need of intervention necessary for a child to become more capable of learning from his everyday experiences
- To provide a method for identifying a child's specific skills in a variety of learning domains
- To provide a curriculum guide
- To provide a method for visually displaying the acquisition of new skills
- It is important to know what a child can and cannot do in order to know which skills should be the focus of current instruction

ABLLS Protocol

- **Basic Learner Skills** (Sections A-P)
- **Academic Skills** (Sections Q-T)
- **Self-Help Skills** (Sections U-X)
- **Motor Skills** (Sections Y-Z)



Assessment and Curriculum: VB-MAPP : Verbal Behavior Milestones Assessment and Placement Program

There are 5 components

- Milestone Assessment: contains 170 verbal milestones across 3 developmental levels (0-18 months, 18-30 months, 30-48 months) & 16 different verbal operants & related skills
- Barriers Assessment: examines 24 common learning & language barriers faced by children with ASD
- Transition Assessment: evaluates a child's ability to learn in a less restricted educational environment across 18 different skills

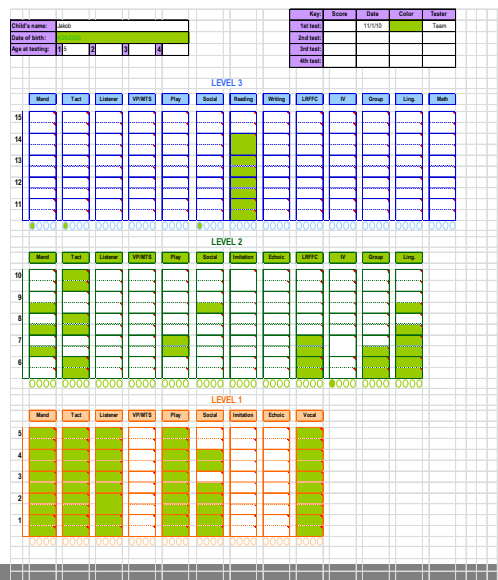


VB-MAPP

- Skills Task Analysis and Tracking: provides a further breakdown of the different skill areas in the form of a checklist for skills tracking
- Placement and IEP Goals: provides recommendations for program development based on the VB-MAPP profiles & the specific scores for each of the 170 milestones & the 24 barriers. In addition over 200 IEP objectives directly linked to the skills & barriers assessments & a verbal behavior intervention program are provided



Milestones mia mapp interpretation



VB-MAPP

- Based on Skinner's (1957) analysis of verbal behavior
- Based on typical language development milestones
- Milestones can help to avoid focusing on minor steps, and targeting skills for intervention that are developmentally appropriate
- Field test data from approximately 75 typically developing children and over 200 children with ASD
- Based on the body of research that provides the foundation of Behavior Analysis



Assessment and Curriculum: AFLS (Assessment of Functional Living Skills)

Skills in Six Areas:

- Home Skills
- Basic Skills
- School Skills
- Community Skills
- Vocational Skills
- Independent Living Skills



Using Verbal Behavior to teach Any Curriculum/Subject Matter

Verbal Behavior strategies can be used to teach any subject matter:

- Behavioral teaching strategies (reinforcement, pairing, prompting, shaping, error correction, errorless learning)
- Use of discrete trials
- Collection of data
- Presenting tasks using all verbal operants
- Mixing trials by type and complexity



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Teaching Subjects Using Verbal Behavior

Verbal Behavior to Teach Academic Skills: Do all of these at once. Using different language/learning skills at the same time aids in acquisition and retention.

- 1. Work on *Matching* the words:
- 2. Work on *Sorting* the words:
- 3. Work on *Receptive Discrimination* with the word
- 4. Work on *Labeling* the word
- 5. If appropriate, give the students the *Definition* of the word and see if:
 - They can point to it from a few choices on the table
 - They can identify it with no visual cues present



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Teaching Subjects Using Verbal Behavior

Teaching Social Skills

1. **Pick a social skill to teach**
 - How to greet someone
2. **Matching:** Can be pictures or words/phrases for students who are readers
 - Match people waving, shaking hands, saying hi, saying hello on the phone
3. **Sorting:** Can be pictures or words/phrases for students who are readers
 - Sorting pictures of appropriate greetings and inappropriate greetings (putting head down, no eye contact, growling, swatting at person)



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Teaching Subjects Using Verbal Behavior

Teaching Social Skills

4. **Receptive Discrimination:** Can be pictures or words/phrases for students who are readers
 - Point to the picture or phrase that shows waving, shaking hands and other specifics or simply show the one who is greeting someone else.
5. **Motor/Vocal Imitation:**
 - "Do this" (wave, smile, shake hands) or "Say this" (Hi, Hello, Nice to meet you).
6. **Tacting:**
 - "What is he doing?" as you look at pictures, videos, phrase cards (Waving, Smiling, Saying hello, Greeting someone)



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Teaching Subjects Using Verbal Behavior

Teaching Social Skills

7. Intraverbals:

- Tell me some ways to greet someone.

8. Of course you can use **manding** while reinforcing for correct responses to the above.



Video Clip Discussion

Teresa is presenting social skills tasks on how to greet others in a verbal behavior format with two students.



Video Clip on Social Skills Instruction Using Verbal Behavior Strategies



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Question?

- **True or False?**

Verbal behavior teaching strategies can only be used with the ABLLS-R/VB-MAPP.



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Answer:

The correct response is False. Add verbal behavior strategies to all your instruction throughout the day for impressive results.



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THANK YOU!

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