


ABA

- **ABA stands for Applied Behavior Analysis. It is the science of studying behavior and applying data supported techniques to increase or decrease behaviors that are meaningful to the student and the student's social environment.**

Pennsylvania Verbal Behavior Project, 2008

Why Verbal Behavior?



- **Verbal Behavior utilizes the effectiveness of ABA and takes it to another level that our students with autism or other developmental disabilities require to be considered fully functional communicators.**

Verbal Behavior

- "Verbal Behavior (VB) has, without question, proven itself the most behaviorally advanced and effective approach to ABA. It has moved ABA beyond the rote, repetitive, table learning of its past and developed it into a natural relationship, holistic learning program. A good ABA/VB program is designed to teach your child the reasons behind the give and take that is so important in connecting with the social world. It is connecting your child with this natural societal reinforcement that will motivate him to make beneficial relationship and learning choices beyond the teaching setting."

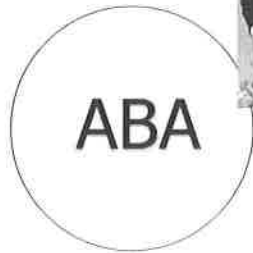
Schramm, 2006

What is the Verbal Behavior Approach?



(Carbone, 2007)

Let's Break It Down...



ABA

- ABA stands for Applied Behavior Analysis
- It is a systematic change of behavior based on observable and quantifiable behaviors (McCoy, 2010)
- It is the science of studying behavior and applying data supported techniques to increase or decrease behaviors that are meaningful to the student and the student's social environment (Pennsylvania Verbal Behavior Project, 2009)



ABCs of Behavior



Antecedent

Behavior

Consequence



Antecedent – the stimulus that occurs prior to the behavior

Behavior – a description of the response in terms of what the behavior looks like

Consequence – the immediate outcome of the behavior

(Weitzman, 2010, Aspy and Grossman, 2010)

EXAMPLE:

- Antecedent: Teacher asks child to "touch head"
- Behavior: Child touches head
- Consequence: Child receives candy



4 Main Purposes of Behavior



- 1: ATTENTION
- 2: ACCESS TO TANGIBLE
- 3: AVOIDANCE or ESCAPE
- 4: SELF - STIMULATION

(Schramm, 2006, Aspy and Grossman, 2007)

ATTENTION

If the child throws his plate on the floor to gain mom's attention, mom should NOT give the child any attention at that point. Instead, plenty of attention should be given when the child is eating appropriately.



(Schramm, 2006)

ACCESS TO TANGIBLES

- If the child throws the plate on the floor in attempt to get the toy on the counter, then the function is most likely access to tangibles. Mom should NOT give access to the toy at this point. Instead, mom should prompt appropriate asking for the toy in whatever modality the child can perform (vocally, sign, PECS, AAC)

AVOIDANCE or ESCAPE



- If throwing the plate on the floor was used to avoid an instruction (i.e. "Say plate"), then the purpose of this behavior is most likely escaping the instruction. Mom should NOT reinforce this by taking the instruction away and should instead continue to present the instruction until the child complies. Mom can then reinforce the compliance.

(Schramm, 2006)

SELF-STIMULATION

These behaviors are reinforced naturally and may be difficult to effect as you are not the one who is reinforcing them. The reason the child is throwing the plate on the floor may be because he likes the sound it makes when it hits the floor. Buying a mat to reduce the sound or having paper plates could help reduce the behavior.



(Schramm, 2006)

Determine the Function of the Behavior

When you see a behavior that you do not want to see again, you must decide what purpose the behavior is serving.

Ask yourself 3 questions...

1. What was the behavior that you did not like? Be specific!
2. What was happening in the environment just **before** the behavior.
3. What changed in the environment directly **after** the behavior.

Schramm Workshop, 2008

Strategies for Behavior



(Faint, illegible text and diagrams are visible in this section)

Consequences

1. Reinforcement:

a consequence that results in **INCREASING** the future rate of the behavior it follows

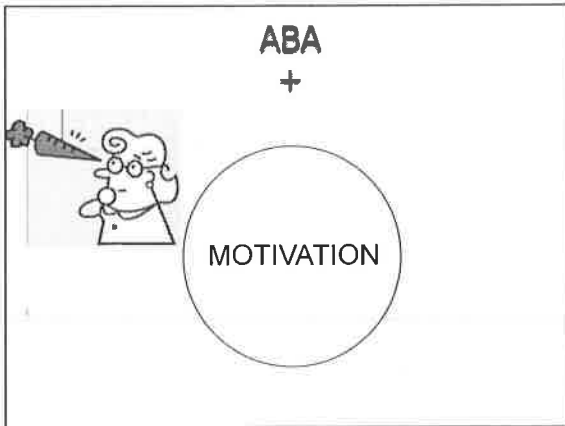



2. Punishment:

a consequence that results in **DECREASING** the future rate of the behavior it follows



(Pennsylvania Verbal Behavior Project, 2009)






“The VB approach to ABA is more than merely teaching communicative intent. One of its most important advancements involves understanding how to capture and use a child’s naturally occurring MOTIVATION to give him a reason to learn the skills you want to teach him” (Schramm, 2006).

Motivating Operation (MO)

- An MO is a stimulus that has temporarily increased the value of a reinforcer. (Michael, 2000)
- “Motivation” can serve as a good replacement word for how motivating operations work to help the child. (Schramm, 2006)



Motivating Operations (Motivation)



you can use to teach:

- 1: Restriction of Reinforcement
- 2: Errorless Learning
- 3: Mixing and Varying Tasks
- 4: Alternating Task Difficulty
- 5: Decreasing Inter-trial Intervals
- 6: Fluency
- 7: Free Samples
- 8: Response Effort

(Schramm, 2006)

MOs you can use to teach (continued)

- 1: Restriction of Reinforcement

Control of reinforcement serves as an MO for learning. If you allow your child to have free access to reinforcing items and activities it will decrease the value of those items for when you want them to use to teach.



(Schramm, 2006, Aspy and Grossman, 2007)

MOs you can use to teach (continued)

- 2. Errorless Learning

The reinforcement you are using will have greater value if the teaching system you are using focuses on success. This will make the idea of avoidance or escape less valuable than the reinforcer you are working with.

Errorless learning will be covered more later, but here is a sneak peak and a good resource to check out



(Carbone, 2007, Schramm, 2006)

MOs you can use to teach (continued)

● 3: Mixing and Varying Tasks

Switch it up! Mixing the types of tasks you present will not only keep the child interested, but will also decrease the likelihood that the child is answering based on a pattern rather than focusing on the question itself.

We do NOT want this from the teacher OR the student!!



(Carbone, 2007, Schramm, 2006, Winterling, Dunlap, & O'Neil, 1987)

MOs you can use to teach (continued)

● 4: Alternating Task Difficulty

Increase the value of your reinforcer by continually mixing between easy and difficult skills. This will keep the average difficulty of the teaching session lower and the reinforcer level high.



We DO NOT want this



(Carbone, 2007, Schramm, 2006, Horner, Day, Sprague, U. Brian, & Heathcote, 1991)

MOs you can use to teach (continued)

● 5: Decreasing Inter-trial Intervals

Keeping the trials fast paced will keep the child focused on the reinforcement you are offering versus searching for an outside reinforcement.



(Schramm, 2006, Carnine, 1976)

MOs you can use to teach (continued)

● 6: Fluency

Quick and accurate responses should be expected and differentially reinforced. This will not only avoid teaching the child to be slow in responding, but will also encourage the child to work harder and be more attentive, leading him to his reinforcer.



(Schramm, 2006)

MOs you can use to teach (continued)

● 7: Free Samples



Giving the child a free sample of the reinforcer will encourage a greater interest in that item. Consider it a preview to the upcoming movie you want to see.

(Carbone, 2007, Schramm, 2006, DeLeon, Neidert, Anders & Rodriguez-Catter, 2001)


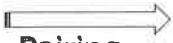

MOs you can use to teach (continued)

● 8: Response Effort

If the response required is too high, then the child is likely to not try. However, if the reinforcer appears attainable, the child will be more likely to work for it. If you wanted a chocolate chip cookie would you be more willing to walk to the cabinet to get it or drive 10 minutes for it?



(Schramm, 2006)

Pairing

Establishing yourself as a reinforcer!

- People can establish themselves as reinforcers by pairing themselves with the delivery of good things.
- Positive praise should be paired with the delivery of reinforcers so that it can become reinforcing to the child.

(Schramm, 2006, Weitzman, 2010)


“Our goal.....

is to be the human

chocolate chip cookie! -Siri Ming



Tips for Pairing



- Remember that reinforcement is “free” when you are pairing, as long as no problem behavior occurs.
- Pair your voice and child’s name with reinforcement.
- Be aware of the child’s behavior and signs of interest.
- Reinforce all interaction and engagement, including approach behavior such as eye contact, smiles, laughs, walking/running to you.
- Narrate the activities rather than instruct.
- Evaluate yourself often: does the child run to you or away from you?
- Withhold reinforcement when undesired behaviors occur.

Tips for Pairing cont.

- Do not turn reinforcing activities into a task.
- Avoid associating yourself with aversive events.
- Avoid statements such as "stop", "no", and "don't".
- Avoid asking questions (remember these are demands).



(Pennsylvania Verbal Behavior Project, 2009)

7 Steps to Instructional Control

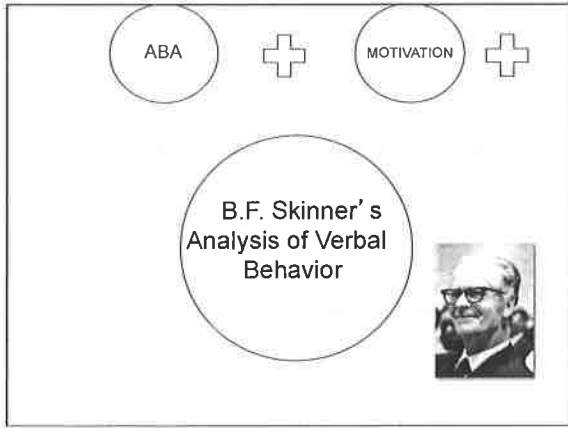
1. Show your child that you are the one in control of the items he wants to hold or play with and that you will decide when and for how long he can have them.
2. Show your child that you are fun. Make each interaction you have with him an enjoyable experience so that he will want to follow your directions to earn more time, sharing these experiences with you.
3. Show your child that you can be trusted. Always say what you mean and mean what you say. If you instruct your child to do something, do not allow him access to reinforcement until he complied with your request. This step allows for prompting him to completion if necessary.

Schramm, 2006

7 Steps to Instructional Control (cont.)


4. Show your child that following your directions is beneficial and the best way for him to obtain what he wants. Give your child easy directions as often as possible and then reinforce his decisions to participate by following them with good experiences.
5. Provide consistent reinforcement. In the early stages of earning instructional control with your child, reinforce after each positive response. Eventually change to an ever-increasing variable ratio of reinforcement.
6. Demonstrate that you know your child's priorities as well as your own.
7. Show your child that ignoring your instructions or choosing inappropriate behavior will not result in the acquisition of reinforcement.

Schramm, 2006



Behavioral Classification of Language (Verbal Operants)


- 1: Mand
- 2: Motor Imitation
- 3: Verbal Imitation
- 4: Receptive Language
- 5: Tact
- 6: Receptive by feature, function and class (RFFC)
- 7: Intraverbal
- 8: Textual
- 9: Writing



(Hedge, 2010, McLaughlin, 2010, Esch, 2010, Frost and Bondy, 2006, Schramm, 2006, Carbone, 2007)

MAND

- A mand is a request (you say it because you want it)
- It is the easiest and most important to teach because of the built in motivation. Motivation leads to higher levels of manding (Sweeney-Kerwin, Carbone, O'Brien, Zecchin, Janecky, 2007, Pistoljevic, Cahill, Casarini, 2010).
- What better motivation to teach a child to communicate than by giving them the power to acquire the things they actually want!



MOTOR IMITATION

- Any movement a person makes to copy or imitate another person.
- I have found motor imitation to be one of the most fundamental skills in teaching a child to learn. If the child does not understand you want them to attend to what you are doing and do what you are doing, then teaching them to copy our words or actions to teach language or skills is virtually impossible.



My mouth's not getting warm, but thanks to my new friend, I can play "Monkey see, Monkey do" again.

VERBAL IMITATION

- Also referred to as an echoic
- A listener repeats exactly what was said to them



(Schramm, 2006)

RECEPTIVE LANGUAGE

- The ability to follow directions or to comply with requests (Schramm, 2006)
- You do what someone asks you to do
- Correct speaker behavior requires correct listener behavior (Stemmer, 2000)

This video shows a teaching session with receptive identification and motor imitation.



TACT

- Also referred to as labeling
- The ability to verbally identify (or sign) anything in the environment that you come in "conTACT" with.
- You say it because you see, hear, smell, taste, or feel something.



(Schramm, 2006)

Receptive by feature, function and class (RFCC)

- The ability to not only listen and respond to requests, but also to distinguish items by the item's description. (Schramm, 2006)
- Example: Show me the one that flies in the sky.



Intraverbal

- Conversation, answering a question, responding when someone else talks (you say it because someone else asked you a question or made a comment) (Schramm, 2006)
- One of the higher level skills in the classification of language for children with autism.



TEXTUAL and WRITING

- **TEXTUAL:** the reading of written words
- **WRITING:** handwriting words and letters; can also including typing

(Schramm, 2006)

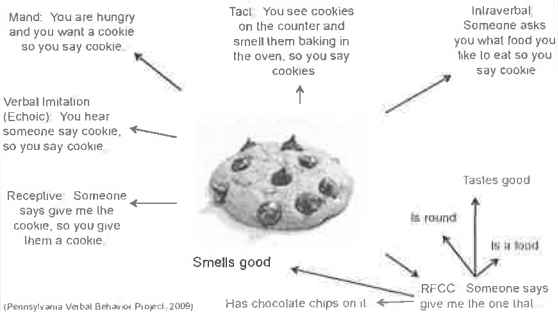


Teaching all of the meanings of the words

- Just because a child can say "cookie" does NOT necessarily mean that child knows all of the meanings for cookie.
- Take a minute and think of everything you can about a cookie....



Teaching all of the meanings of the words



What is Errorless Learning?

“Errorless learning is the process of always adding enough prompts to your SP to keep a child successful but systematically reducing the amount of prompt used to help the child become more independent over time” (Schramm, 2006, p.152)



Check out Christina Burk’s website for additional information and resources on Errorless Learning and other Verbal Behavior information. (<http://www.christinaburkaba.com/>)

Teaching Target Skills

- 1: After presentation of the demand, immediately present a prompt (0 second prompt delay)
- 2: Fade prompt by delaying for 2-3 seconds or fade some dimension of an effective prompt
- 3: Require some easy and mastered skills
- 4: Present the original demand and probe by waiting 3 seconds for the response to occur
- 5: Differentially reinforce as appropriate (Carbone, 2007)



In other words....

- Prompt
- No Prompt
- Distractor
- Check ✓

Errorless Teaching Procedure Example



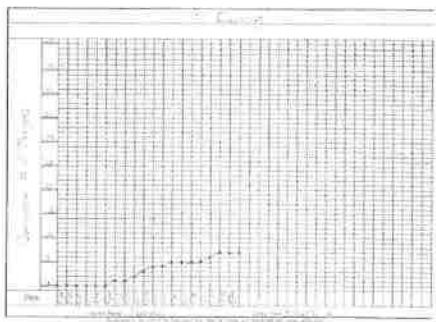
SP (instruction) with prompt:
 Teacher: "What is it?" "Cookie"
 Response:
 Child: "Cookie"
 SP (instruction) with no prompt:
 Teacher: "What is it?"
 Response:
 Child: "Cookie"
 Distractor Trial:
 Teacher: "Do this" (while clapping hands)
 Response:
 Child: Imitates response of clapping hands
 Check:
 Teacher: "What is it?"
 Child: "Cookie"

Pennsylvania Verbal Behavior Project

The Pennsylvania Verbal Behavior Project is a wonderful resource. They provide a handbook that can be downloaded for free and provides a wealth of information. Check out the video below for more information.



Data – Based Decision Making



ABLLS-R: The Assessment of Basic Language and Learning Skills

- Contains a task analysis of many of the skills necessary to communicate successfully and to learn from everyday experiences
- Criterion-referenced information regarding a child's current skills, and provides a curriculum that can serve as a basis for the selection of educational objectives
- Examines 25 categories of behavior across a wide range of skills sets
- Examines skills so that teaching can occur in increments that are manageable and likely to result in meaningful, and permanent gains for the child

<http://www.behavior-consultant.com/whatablls.htm>

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

- The VB-MAPP is a criterion-referenced assessment tool, curriculum guide, and skill tracking system that is designed for children with autism, and other individuals who demonstrate language delays. The VB-MAPP is based on B.F. Skinner's (1957) analysis of verbal behavior, established developmental milestones, and research from the field of behavior analysis.

Resources and Organizations

- <http://verbalbehavior.pbworks.com>
- <http://www.dr-carbone.net/>
- <http://www.behaviorchange.com/>
- <http://www.difflearn.com>
- <http://www.abainternational.org/>
- <http://www.autism.org/>
- <http://www.autismspeaks.org/>

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