

## DEFINITIONS of KEY TERMS

**VERBAL OPERANTS** (the functional units of language analyzed by Skinner in 1957), A Behavioral classification of language into the categories of:

**RECEPTIVE:** A person's UNDERSTANDING of what is said to them (e.g. following directions, identifying items).

**MIMETIC/ECHOIC:** Verbal behavior whose form is controlled by someone else's verbal behavior with 1:1 correspondence. Basically, REPEATING precisely what is heard, usually immediately.

**MANDS:** Verbal behavior in which the form of the response is controlled by the motivational or aversive condition that determined the behavior. Basically, REQUESTING objects, assistance, information, removal of stimulus, etc.

**TACTS:** Verbal behavior under the control of the nonverbal environment. Basically, LABELING nouns, adjectives, pronouns, actions, relations etc.

**INTRAVERBALS:** Verbal behavior under the control of other verbal behavior that is strengthened by social reinforcement, **without any visual stimuli present**. Basically, having a CONVERSATION or answering questions about something not present (i.e. talking about a bike without seeing a bike or a picture of a bike).

**INTENSIVE TEACHING:** Using Discrete Trial Training (DTT), to teach a target objective. DTT is the use of several discrete trials within a teaching situation. Mostly associated with teaching at the table however can perform intensive teaching away from the table as well.

**NATURAL ENVIRONMENT TEACHING (NET):** Focuses on the child's immediate interests and requests as a guide for instruction. It's conducted within the child's typical daily environment, rather than strictly at the table. The techniques used in DTT can also be used within the NET in many ways.

**MOTIVATIONAL OPERATION (MO)/ESTABLISHING OPERATION (EO):** The use of *MOTIVATION* for items or the use of motivational moments to drive teaching (Michael, 1982). An MO is a state of deprivation or aversion that:

1. Temporarily increases the value of some stimulus as a reinforcer and
2. Temporarily increases the likelihood of occurrence of all behaviors that have led to access to that reinforcer in the past.

The science of Applied Behavior Analysis with emphasis on Verbal Behavior captures (identifies) and contrives (creates/manipulates) MOs in order to increase a child's functional use of language.

**PROBES:** The first 15-20 minutes of a teaching session "tests" the child's current objectives. Can only take one "cold probe" per day for each objective. Use the "no's" from the probes to determine what objectives you need to intensively teach during your session. Can not probe more than once a day because the objective was "taught" or "worked on" earlier that day. If an

objective scores a “yes” on the probe for three (some families do 5) days in a row across at least 2 different therapists, it is considered a “mastered” objective and new objectives are added.