



Abstract

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Presentation 1: Generative Verbal Learning and Children with Autism

Typically developing children demonstrate an explosion of language skills between the ages of 2 and 3 (Hart & Risley, 1995). A child acquires new speaker and listener skills daily, often without direct training or reinforcement, and even by simply observing others speak. However, many children with autism struggle with, or fail to make this critical linguistic leap. The cause of this problem could be related to a child's inability to benefit from generative verbal learning. Generative verbal learning occurs when existing verbal skills enable the acquisition of other verbal skills, without direct teaching or reinforcement (Alessi, 1987; Rosales-Ruiz & Baer, 1997; Stewart, McElwee, & Ming, 2013). The current presentation will suggest that bidirectional naming (Horn & Lowe, 1996) and joint control (Lowenkron, 1998) provide a plausible and parsimonious interpretation of how generative and incidental verbal learning can produce emergent and derived verbal relations. The applications of this analysis to teaching generative learning repertoires to children with autism or other intellectual disabilities will be discussed.

Presentation 2: Using the VB-MAPP to Identify and Develop Generative Learning Repertoires

An account of generative learning that is based verbal behavior (e.g., Horne & Lowe, 1996; Greer & Ross, 2008; Skinner, 1957) can provide a valuable framework for the assessment and treatment of generative learning problems demonstrated by children with autism. A typically developing child acquires many different types of generative skills that collectively allow for the rapid and efficient acquisition of language. Children with autism often fail to acquire these specific skills. The VB-MAPP contains a number of milestones that can be identified as measures of generative learning. These generative learning milestones will be described, along with suggestions for ways to develop an intervention program for children demonstrating weak or impaired generative learning abilities.