



Language and Cognition in Individuals with Autism

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When we talk about Applied Behavior Analysis therapy for the treatment of individuals with ASD, we are usually referring to a group of techniques based on a science called behavior analysis. This science evolved from the experimental work of B.F. Skinner who attempted to isolate the environmental variables responsible for how individual organisms learn. Applied behavior analysts have used these same principles to develop lessons to teach young children with autism skills they have not learned from their typical interactions with caregivers.

To better create and organize lessons for the children we serve, we must understand how typically developing children learn. In this talk, I will describe the general contingencies that lead to the development of vocal language in typical children, as well as some related behavior analytic research addressing the contingencies necessary for the development of language and cognition in children diagnosed with autism.

- Students will learn the hierarchical model of language development proposed by Horne and Lowe (1996)
- Students will understand how the integration of different verbal operants may lead to the emergence of new behavior
- Students will be able to define cognition as problem-solving