Frequently asked questions about the
Verbal Behavior Milestones Assessment and Placement Program (VB-MAPP)

For what ages can this assessment be used?
The VB-MAPP can be helpful for an individual of any age whose language skills are not commensurate with the language skills of a 4-year-old typically developing child. Keep in mind that a typically developing 4-year-old has some very sophisticated language skills. The Barriers Assessment and the Transition Assessment components in the VB-MAPP may reveal problems that affect individuals of any age, such as prompt dependency, difficulty adapting to change, or when demands weaken their motivation.

Can the VB-MAPP be used for individuals with other developmental disabilities?
The VB-MAPP can be helpful for any individual who demonstrates language delays, regardless of the disability.

How does the VB-MAPP compare to other assessments?
There are two studies that compare commonly used assessments for children with autism or other developmental disabilities with the VB-MAPP. A study by Esch, LaLonde, & Esch, J. W. (2010) reviewed 28 commonly used assessments for the treatment of autism and concluded, "Most speech-language assessments in widespread use today evaluate response topographies (forms of responses) alone, without regard for a functional analysis of the causal variables" (p. 166). For example, 26 of the 28 assessment programs reviewed failed to provide a measure of a student's ability to mand. These authors point out that the VB-MAPP contains a functional analysis of language, and includes a mand assessment component.

A similar study by Gould, Dixon, Najdowski, Smith, & Tarbox (2011) is also available (with that journal's subscription) and compares 30 assessments, including the ABLLS-R, Bayley, Brigance... and the VB-MAPP. These authors reviewed the 30 assessments in the following categories: comprehension, targets child development, considers behavior function not just topography, link from the assessment to curricula targets, and useful for tracking child progress over time. The authors concluded: "After reviewing the assessments described above, only four meet our original five criteria most closely: the VB-MAPP, Brigance IED-II, VABS-II, and CIBS-R."

Are there video demonstrations of how the VB-MAPP is being used?
If you are interested in seeing how the VB-MAPP is being used by other professionals and parents, there are presentations available on-line.

In Home Programs: See the presentations by Mary Barbera, M.A., BCBA on YouTube titled "Mia's Journey, the Verbal Behavior Approach." Or, "The Verbal Behavior Approach: Home Programming for Children with Autism," available at www.fit.edu/bst/programs/autism/index.php

In Schools: See the presentation by Amiris DiPuglia, M.D., BCBA from the Pennsylvania Training and Technical Network. Dr. DiPuglia, Michael Miklos, M.A., BCBA and Dr. William Galbraith have done an impressive job of setting up special education classrooms throughout the state of PA. They have outcome results demonstrating meaningful gains, and use the VB-MAPP throughout their system of 125+ public school classrooms. Through the Florida Institute of Technology see "Large Scale Implementation of the Verbal Behavior Model" www.fit.edu/bst/programs/autism/index.php .

Has the VB-MAPP been used in research?
The VB-MAPP has been used as an outcome measure in studies published in the Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis (JABA), The Analysis of Verbal Behavior Journal (TAVB), and Education and Treatment of Children (ETC). It has also been used in several studies presented at conferences.

Does the VB-MAPP have reliability and validity?
The VB-MAPP has been shown to obtain 97% reliability as demonstrated in a study by Michael Miklos, Amiris DiPuglia, and Mark Sundberg (in press). Validity for the intraverbal section of the VB-MAPP is demonstrated in a study by *Sundberg and Sundberg (2011) "Intraverbal behavior and verbal conditional discriminations in typically developing children and children with autism."*

Is the VB-MAPP standardized? The VB-MAPP is a criterion-referenced assessment - it is not a standardized (norm referenced) assessment.

How long does it take to conduct the assessment? The amount of time it takes to conduct the VB-MAPP depends on the level of the individual being tested, his or her cooperation, availability of materials, and the skill level of the assessor. In general, for a trained assessor it will take approximately 2-3 hours for a child who scores at Level 1 (beginner), 4-5 hours for a child at Level 2 (intermediate), and 8-10 hours for a child scoring at Level 3 (advanced).

Who can conduct the assessment?
In order to conduct this assessment it is essential that the tester have a basic understanding of behavior analysis, and Skinner's (1957) analysis of verbal behavior. For example, in order to assess a child's mand repertoire, the tester must understand what a mand is, and how the mand is related to motivating operations (MOs). Furthermore, being aware of the subtleties of the various types of prompts, and being able to determine if a response is controlled by inadvertent prompting, is helpful for determining exactly what skills a child has truly mastered. The more skilled a person is in these areas the more they will get out of the assessment.

I'd like to teach others how to use the VB-MAPP. Are there powerpoints and handouts I can use?
There are training powerpoints and printable handouts authored by Steve Celmer and Meredith Geier from one Virginia school district using the VB-MAPP system-wide. See:
http://www.stevencelmer.com/Other%20pages/VB-MAPamP%20Training.html>

Are there translations of the VB-MAPP in other languages available?
The VB-MAPP will soon be available in Italian and French. If you would like to receive a notice about the VB-MAPP translations join the VB-MAPP Facebook and we will post information as it becomes available.

Are there on-line courses available to learn how to do the VB-MAPP?
There are on-line courses on Verbal Behavior assessment and intervention available from the Florida Institute for Technology. These courses offer CEU's for Board Certified Behavior Analysts
http://www.fit.edu/bst/ceu/distinguished.php#Sundberg
There is also a two-hour on-line VB-MAPP course for scoring the assessment offered by
www.autismtrainingsolutions.com

Are there specific materials that should be used to conduct the assessment?
The materials recommended to conduct the assessment can often be found in classrooms and/or home. There is a suggested materials list in the VB-MAPP Guide. There is also a VB-MAPP Kit available through Different Roads to Learning www.difflearn.com

Is there a data collection system available for the VB-MAPP?
There is a data collection system called the Verbal Behavior Analysis Teaching and Tracking system which is available through Autism Concepts www.concepts.com, see the VBATT.

Are there downloadable materials from the web that can be used?
There are several websites that offer free downloadable pictures that can be used for teaching skills such as tacting/labeling, listener/receptive, matching to sample, listener responding by feature, function and class (LRFFC), and some websites offer clever ideas and tips for both assessment and intervention. For example see - http://www.practicalautismresources.com/printables or browse the links at www.marksundberg.com

How can I arrange a training for our agency/school?
The author of the VB-MAPP, Dr. Mark Sundberg, presents at conferences, and does 2-3 day trainings that are either private or open to the public (see the schedule at www.marksundberg.com). If you are interested in arranging a training send your request to Contact@MarkSundberg.com If Dr. Sundberg is not available during your preferred time period, we can suggest other behavior analysts who might be available.

Are there review copies available?
AVB Press has a 30-day return policy that makes it possible for you to review both the VB-MAPP Guide and Protocol. For the return policy go to http://www.avbpress.com/info.html You can also review parts of the books by using the "Look Inside" feature at www.AVBPress.com and clicking the book you are interested in.

Are desk copies available for college instructors teaching from the VB-MAPP?
Desk copies are available for professors who are using the VB-MAPP in a college course. In order to receive an instructor's desk copy, send your request to admin@AVBPress.com and provide the following information: College where course is being taught; professors name; course name and number; start date of the course; mailing address; and your email for shipping confirmation and tracking.

Can I use a school/agency Purchase Order (PO) to purchase VB-MAPP's?
AVB Press accepts Purchase Orders. Information for placing a PO is in the Purchase Order tab at www.AVBPress.com, along with a signed W-9 for your new vendor set up. AVB Press DUNS: 832135870 and CCR CAGE: 5QKR9.

References

Esch, B. E., LaLonde, K. B., & Esch, J. W. (2010). Speech and language assessment: A verbal behavior analysis. *The Journal of Speech-Language Pathology and Applied Behavior Analysis*, 5, 166-191.

Gould, E., Dixon, D. R., Najdowski, A. C., Smith, M. N., & Tarbox, J (2011). A review of assessments for determining the content of early intensive behavioral intervention programs for autism spectrum disorders. *Research in Autism Spectrum Disorders*.

Sundberg, M. L., & Sundberg, C. A. (2011). Intraverbal behavior and verbal conditional discriminations in typically developing children and children with autism. *The Analysis of Verbal Behavior, 27*, 23-43.