



WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

Department of Psychology

## Using Protocol Analysis to Compare Novice and Advanced Clinicians' Clinical Decision Making Specific to Interpreting VB-MAPP Results



*CEU's Available*

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The Verbal Behavior Milestones Assessment & Placement Program (VB-MAPP) is a commonly used assessment tools for identifying language deficits experienced by individuals on the Autism Spectrum of Disorders (Dixon, Belisle, Stanley, Rowsey, Daar, & Szeke, 2015). Nonetheless, there is no formal study into the performance of advanced clinicians when analyzing compiled VB-MAPP results. The main purpose of the present research is to illustrate the adaptation of Protocol Analysis to yield objective data on how master clinicians consider and discuss VB-MAPP results. Protocol analysis is a research tool that originates in cognitive psychology and is not widely employed by behavioral researchers. [Office1] This appears to be due in part to the necessary, preliminary step of demonstrating that protocol analysis is both philosophically harmonious with behaviorism as well as able to adhere to the customs of behavioral studies (e.g., Inter-Observers Reliability). Despite such challenges, the study confirms that protocol analysis can be operated up to the standards of contemporary behavioral publications and generates data that is entirely consistent with B.F. Skinner's intended approach for studying advanced verbal repertoires. Results indicated recurring differences between the novice and master clinician participants, also providing evidence of external validity for the present approach to examining expert performance in clinical diagnostics.



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