

Case Studies in Language Support  
For Children with  
Reading Difficulties

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**Children's Mercy**  
**HOSPITALS & CLINICS**  
————— **Kansas City** —————

## Case Study #1:

A. was a 10 year old male, originally referred to our clinic for stuttering. At the time of the initial evaluation for stuttering, he was under consideration for an IEP at school for “reading difficulties” and “other areas of language learning”. No speech/language therapy was received at school. He was placed on my caseload and received fluency therapy for a six month period of time. Due to continued concerns with reading fluency and reading comprehension, the CELF-4 was administered to assess language skills. The following results were obtained:

Core Language Score	88
Receptive language Index Score	85
Expressive Language Index Score	89
<b>Language Content Index Score</b>	<b>76</b>
Language Memory Index Score	90

Subtest Scaled Scores were as follows: Concepts and Following Directions – 8, Recalling Sentences – 7, Formulated Sentences – 10, Word Classes (Receptive) – 7, Word Classes (Expressive) – 7, Word Classes (Total) – 7, Word Definitions – 7, **Understanding Spoken Paragraphs – 4** (Scaled Score Average Range is 7 – 13)

Although his overall scores were in the low average range, his Understanding Spoken Paragraphs score was concerning and indicated that he may benefit from the Visualizing and Verbalizing treatment program (Nanci Bell). An additional six month treatment period was added, one session per week for a total of 25 sessions. A. initially was not able to visualize what he read or heard with a complete visual image or answer comprehension questions about it. He had difficulty describing images initially and was unable to recall stories in sequence or answer questions about them. By the end of treatment, he reported that “I see what I read”, has gotten better at “the ability to do it (visualizing)”, and before treatment his mind was “blank” sometimes and now there were “not as many blanks” when reading or listening, only when he was unsure of the language or vocabulary.

The CELF-4 was re-administered following Visualizing and Verbalizing treatment. There was a one year time difference between pre and post testing. The following results were obtained:

Core Language Score	<b>104</b>	(88 – increase of <b>16</b> SS points)
Receptive language Index Score	<b>113</b>	(85 – increase of <b>28</b> SS points)
Expressive Language Index Score	<b>99</b>	(89 – increase of <b>10</b> SS points)
Language Content Index Score	<b>98</b>	(76 – increase of <b>12</b> SS points)
Language Memory Index Score	<b>106</b>	(90 – increase of <b>16</b> SS points)

Case #1 (continued)

Subtest scores ranged from scaled scores of 8 – 12, increases of 2 – 5 scaled score points, with **Understanding Spoken Paragraphs improving from 4 to 8.**

Results from a 12 year old male following 21 sessions of Visualizing and Verbalizing treatment are reported below:

CELF-4	pre-treatment	post-treatment
Core Language	81	90 (increase of 9 points)
<b>Receptive Language</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>102 (increase of 19 points)</b>
<b>Expressive Language</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>83 (increase of 22 points)</b>
Language Content	62	80 (increase of 18 points)
Language Memory	86	90 (increase of 4 points)

Understanding Spoken Paragraphs subtest went from a scaled score of 2 to 5. This subject is now attending a junior college.

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Demonstration of Visualizing and Verbalizing activity using the V/V workbook. See Visualizing and Verbalizing story handout made available for educational purposes.

12 structure words:

Notes:

\* These types of activities can be done in small groups or with a whole class, shared with parents or resource teachers.

## Case Study #2:

Jay (“fictional name”) is a 13 year old boy identified with profound dyslexia in second grade. He also had trouble with grammar and morphology. He had both types of dyslexia, Phonological Processing and Rapid Naming. By parent report and teacher observation, Jay had normal receptive and expressive language skills. SLP not involved in his IEPs. He passed hearing and vision screens. Reading Testing at start of third grade:

### Woodcock Reading Mastery Test

Word ID	SS 60	GE 1.9
Word Attack	SS 60	GE 1.5
Word Comprehension	SS 68	GE 1.0
Passage Comprehension	SS 32	GE K.6

### IEP Goals and Performance at start of Third Grade

Read 28 wpm.	Goal: 48 wpm in one year.
Wrote a story with 14 correct word sequences.	Goal: 24 sequences in one year.
Read 80% Dolch Level 2 sight words.	Goal: 95% accuracy on Dolch Level 3.

He received an IEP in areas of reading, reading fluency and written language from 3<sup>rd</sup> through 7<sup>th</sup> grade. In addition, mother obtained 300 hours of private tutoring in Wilson Language from a SLP. Wilson language therapy is a multisensory program that addresses reading accuracy, fluency, vocabulary, written language and comprehension.

### Problems Jay reported or SLP/Tutor observed:

#### 1. Confusion of parts of speech such as adjectives and adverbs.

Jay indicated that these “concepts” did not make sense. Suffixes /ist/ and /est/ sounded the same. Jay did not understand comparatives( /er/ and /est/) and a person who does a job (motorist, artist).

#### 2. He confused suffix endings such as /y/, (classy, messy) /ly/ (slowly), and /ty/ (safety) with the long e sound in syllables =y as in crazy, and funny.

As a result, he did not apply correct spelling for these suffixes, nor did he know when to change the /y/ to /i/ before the suffix.

**3. He confused suffixes and sounds, not knowing how to find the base word and read it or apply spelling rules.**

a. **Examples of confusing suffixes: /us/, a syllable, and /ous/, a suffix.** For example, in minus , /us/ is a syllable, and in joyous, /ous/ is a suffix.

b. **He was also confused by endings that could either be a syllable or a suffix such as /ent-ant/ and /ence-ance/.** Examples: Suffixes: differ/difference, persist/persistent, versus, a group of letters within a word having similar sounds, such as /ince/ imbalance, and /int/ proficient.

**4. He did not know how to spell the sounds at the ends of words.** (i.e.) There are three spellings for /er/ in a multisyllabic word, /er/, /ar/ and /or/. All three are pronounced /er/ in the last syllable of a multisyllabic base word. However, /er/ can also be a suffix added to a base word, and is spelled er.

As SLPs, we understand concepts of speech sounds, morphology and grammar. We can help teachers as questions arise. The examples presented in this case study are just a few reasons why SLPs should participate in the care of children with reading disorders.

Notes:

Please email Dr. Cynthia Jacobsen at [cjacobsen@cmh.edu](mailto:cjacobsen@cmh.edu) if you would like additional notes regarding Case Study #2 after the session presentation.

### Case Study #3

B. was 11 years, 3 months at the time of his language evaluation. He had a history of a language disorder and an IEP which included goals for reading comprehension, interpreting literal and inferential material and paraphrasing main ideas. He did not have any language goals on his IEP addressed by a speech language pathologist. Parents were interested in additional ideas for language and reading goals. The CELF-4, Language Processing Test-3 (LPT3) and The Test of Narrative Language (TNL) were administered to assess language skills. Initial results were as follows:

#### CELF-4

Core Language Score	90
Receptive Language Index Score	93
Expressive Language Index Score	81
Language Content Index Score	80
Language Memory Index Score	92
Working Memory Index Score	102

His lowest subtest score was Understanding Spoken Paragraphs, with a Scaled Score of 4. When asked about one story describing how some school children put out a small fire in a park on a field trip, he said the story was about “someone’s comb that caught on fire” and when questioned more, he said, “Oh, I mean the story was about someone’s brush that caught on fire.” The title of the story was “A Brush with Fire”.

#### LPT 3

Total Standard Score = 96, Percentile = 18

Language therapy including Visualizing and Verbalizing treatment and expressive language activities was recommended for reading and language comprehension and expression and he was placed on my caseload. He received therapy once weekly for 12 months.

The CELF-4 was re-administered following treatment. The following results were obtained:

Core Language Score	93	(90 – increase of 3 SS points)
Receptive Language Index Score	102	<b>(93 – increase of 9 SS points)</b>
Expressive Language Index Score	85	(81 – increase of 4 SS points)
Language Content Index Score	90	<b>(80 – increase of 10 SS points)</b>
Language Memory Index Score	94	(92 – increase of 2 SS points)
Working Memory Index Score	n/a	(102 – did not re-adm. WM subtests)

Subtest Understanding Spoken Paragraphs Scaled Score = 6, up 2 points from 4.

### Case #3 (continued)

The LPT 3 was re-administered with the following results:

Total Standard Score = 101 (**increase of 15 SS points from 86**)

Percentile = 53 (up from 18)

Demonstration of an Expressive Language activity taken from a variety of sources:

Steps include:

1. Have student tell story about personal event, such as vacation, birthday party, Halloween, sports event, etc.
2. While listening, take notes on small post-its.
3. Review story, while going through structure cards and include additional information added on different color post-its.
4. Arrange post-its in chronological order on paper with beginning, middle and end. See if there are any gaps. Are there lots of post-its at the beginning and middle and only one at the end? Add where needed.
5. Have student draw a picture of the event. \*Optional step, but you usually get a lot of details that they haven't talked about. Label the picture and add those details on post-its and add to the story.
6. Have student "cartoon" out the story. \*Optional step, but some need help making the notes into sentences and adding transitional words (next, later, while, etc.).
7. Final step, have student write or dictate the whole story. Compare the end result with the original post-its to show them how much they have added to the story to make it complete.
8. Use a picture dictionary for any unknown words. Sometimes these show up on a picture and when asked to label the picture, they aren't sure of the correct word.

Notes:



## References

### Tests

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