
Parent Training to Enhance Narrative Language Development in Children with Intellectual Disabilities

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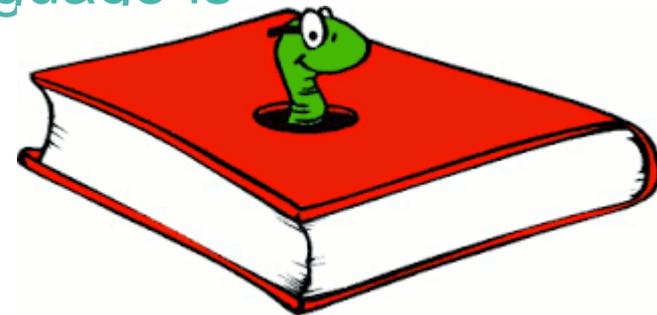
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My Research Agenda

- I studied narrative language intervention in language impaired children and adolescents for many years. It is highly successful but lacks fidelity outside of the classroom.
- Parents need to be involved. I began researching “train the trainer” studies
- I also began conducting studies with two sets of children: those with language impairments alone and those with language impairments coexisting with intellectual disabilities.

What is Narrative Language and Why Study It?

- Narratives are stories that have elements like characters, setting, problems, and solutions.
- We use these to relate events in our lives.
- Research has shown a strong connection between narrative skills and comprehension and writing.
- Being able to use narrative language is linked to academic success.



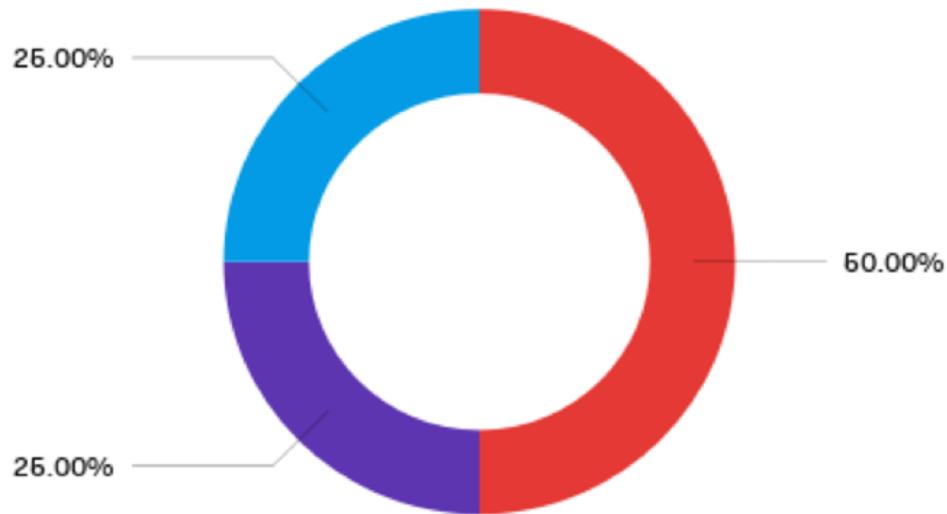
The Study



- Sixteen children and their parents participated.
- Children were pretested on several measures for receptive and narrative language abilities.
- Children ranged in age from 5 to 14.
- The study lasted for 8 weeks with a follow-up at 16 weeks.

Prior to the study

Prior to this study parents were asked, how much knowledge they had of narrative language.



■ No knowledge ■ Below average ■ Average ■ Above average





Parent Training

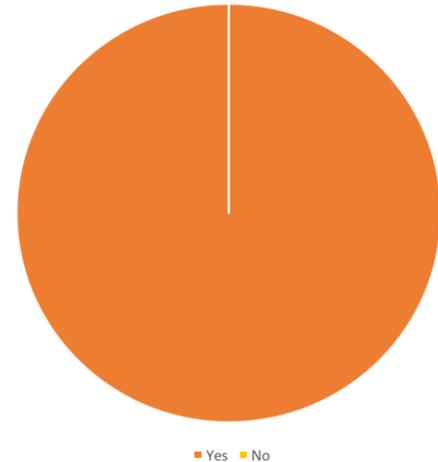


- Parents were trained in a single, in-person group session on the many elements of narrative language, including story grammar elements (character, setting, events, culminating event, feelings).
- Parents were given materials to use and the books were readily available (*Rainbow Fish/ Strega Nona*).
- Two books were used, each for 4 weeks.
- Parents had to “check in” every Wednesday.

Results

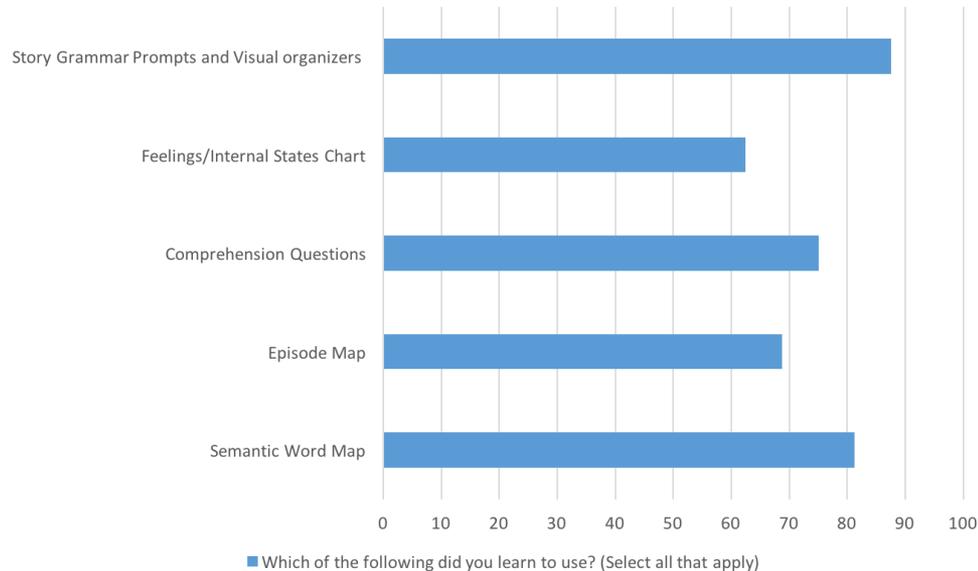
- Post testing was conducted using measures from pretest and one of the books used in the training (*Rainbow Fish*).
- Parents were given a survey to complete via Qualtrix and interviewed.
- Small but promising results were seen in narrative language in the children.
- Excellent results were shown in the survey and response from interview.

As a result of the training, did you learn techniques for supporting your child in retelling a story?



Results

Which of the following did you learn to use? (Select all that apply)



- Parents indicated they learned a new tool that would help them in increasing language and literacy skills.
- Parents wanted more information about books to choose and how to modify materials.
- Follow up at 16 weeks via survey showed parents were time challenged to follow through this summer and would start in the fall.

Challenges

- For children with ID, 8 weeks is not long enough to see a sustainable change.
- Post testing should have been conducted with the parent and not a graduate student.
- A wide variety of interest and cognitive levels was a challenge in finding consistent materials.



Implications

- Parent training has positive outcomes but needs to be delivered in a way whereby parents can revisit the material that is taught (e.g. recorded material).
- Materials for this particular population need to be tailored to interest and cognitive level.



Discussion



- Parents can be involved in training and are helpful in augmenting communication.
- Components of narrative language intervention need to be introduced many times; a multiple-week approach to intervention is beneficial.
- Training must be specific and individualized.
- Books should be chosen according to the levels of needs of the children
 - Books should also be chosen based on the expectations and goals on the IEP
 - Books can also be chosen so that they compliment content being taught in the classroom.

Following the study

Parents were asked whether or not the methods learned throughout the course of the study would help them in augmenting their children's narrative language.

“Yes, any time we can learn one little way to help him learn, then that is a major event!”

“I do think so. Not just in reading, but I am starting to question more things with her just in the course of conversation and daily life.”

“Yes, I will use the grammar marker and allow him to look at the books/material prior to reading it with him. We review homework and try to apply the same techniques.”

“My child and I will get more used to talking about the story, instead of just reading the story.”



Further Research



- Current online study features narrated PowerPoints and pre-selected stories for parents to use at home to increase narrative language in children with Down Syndrome.
- Parents complete online surveys each week of the study to track children's progress.
- <https://lumnarrativelangstudy.wordpress.com/>

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