

Spoken Language Difficulties: Listening and Speaking

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading this chapter, you should be able to:

- 11.1 Explain theories describing spoken language difficulties
- 11.2 Describe the components of the language system
- 11.3 Outline the challenges of teaching language in the general education classroom
- 11.4 List components of the language system
- 11.5 Identify types of language problems
- 11.6 Explain the difficulties of students who are English-Language Learners (ELL)
- 11.7 Define early literacy and oral language
- 11.8 Discuss how to assess oral language
- 11.9 List teaching strategies to improve spoken language difficulties
- 11.10 Describe problems in listening
- 11.11 Describe problems in speaking
- 11.12 Identify computer technology to help teach speaking

Part IV considers the major areas of learning that affect children and youth with learning disabilities and related mild disabilities: (1) spoken language (Chapter 11), (2) reading (Chapter 12), (3) written language (Chapter 13), and (4) mathematics (Chapter 14). In each of these chapters, there are 2 major sections: the “Theories” section describes the concepts underlying the chapter’s area of learning, and

Language shapes the way we think, and determines what we can think about.

—Benjamin Lee Whorf

STANDARDS Addressed in This Chapter:

CEC

Council for Exceptional Children Initial Level Special Educator Preparation Standards as approved by the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education

CEC Initial Preparation Standard 1: Learner Development and Individual Learning Differences

- 1.0—Beginning special education professionals understand how exceptionalities may interact with development and learning and use this knowledge to provide meaningful and challenging learning experiences for individuals with exceptionalities.
- 1.1—Beginning special education professionals understand how language, culture, and family background influence the learning of individuals with exceptionalities.
- 1.2—Beginning special education professionals use understanding of development and individual differences to respond to the needs of individuals with exceptionalities.

CEC Initial Preparation Standard 3: Curricular Content Knowledge

- 3.0—Beginning special education professionals use knowledge of general and specialized curricula to individualize learning for individuals with exceptionalities.
- 3.1—Beginning special education professionals understand the central concepts, structures of the discipline, and tools of inquiry of the content areas they teach and can organize this knowledge, integrate cross-disciplinary skills and develop meaningful learning progressions for individuals with exceptionalities.
- 3.2—Beginning special education professionals understand and use general and specialized content knowledge for teaching across curricular content areas to individualize learning for individuals with exceptionalities.
- 3.3—Beginning special education professionals modify general and specialized curricula to make them accessible to individuals with exceptionalities.

CEC Initial Preparation Standard 4: Assessment

- 4.0—Beginning special education professionals use multiple methods of assessment and data-sources in making educational decisions.

- 4.1—Beginning special education professionals select and use technically sound formal and informal assessments that minimize bias.
- 4.2—Beginning special education professionals use knowledge of measurement principles and practices to interpret assessment results and guide educational decisions for individuals with exceptionalities.
- 4.3—Beginning special education professionals in collaboration with colleagues and families use multiple types of assessment information in making decisions about individuals with exceptionalities.
- 4.4—Beginning special education professionals engage individuals with exceptionalities to work toward quality learning and performance and provide feedback to guide them.

CEC Initial Preparation Standard 5: Instructional Planning and Strategies

- 5.0—Beginning special education professionals select, adapt, and use a repertoire of evidence-based instructional strategies to advance learning of individuals with exceptionalities.
- 5.1—Beginning special education professionals consider an individual's abilities, interests, learning environments, and cultural and linguistic factors in

the selection, development, and adaptation of learning experiences for individuals with exceptionalities.

- 5.2—Beginning special education professionals use technologies to support instructional assessment, planning, and delivery for individuals with exceptionalities.
- 5.3—Beginning special education professionals are familiar with augmentative and alternative communication systems and a variety of assistive technologies to support the communication and learning of individuals with exceptionalities.
- 5.4—Beginning special education professionals use strategies to enhance language development and communication skills of individuals with exceptionalities.
- 5.6—Beginning special education professionals teach to mastery and promote generalization of learning.
- 5.7—Beginning special education professionals teach cross-disciplinary knowledge and skills such as critical thinking and problem solving to individuals with exceptionalities.

For students, Common Core Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects can be found at: www.corestandards.org.

the “Teaching Strategies” section describes methods for improving skills in that area of learning.

The three chapters on language constitute an integrated segment. Each chapter focuses on a different form of language, from spoken language (Chapter 11) to reading (Chapter 12) to written language (Chapter 13). Their organic unity comes from the underlying integrated language system.

This chapter highlights spoken language, which includes listening and speaking. In the “Theories” section, we review (1) the integrated language system; (2) language as a communication process; (3) how children acquire language; (4) the components of the language system; (5) types of language problems; (6) English-language learners; (7) early literacy and oral language; and (8) assessing oral language.

11.1 Theories Describing Spoken Language Difficulties

Language is recognized as one of the greatest of human achievements—more important than all the physical tools invented in the past 2,000 years. The acquisition of language is unique to human beings. Although other animals have communication systems, only humans have attained the most highly developed system of communication—speech. Language fulfills several very human functions: It provides a means of communicating and socializing with other human beings, it enables the culture to be transmitted from generation to generation, and it is a vehicle of thought.

Understanding language learning is critical for understanding learning disabilities and related mild disabilities. We know that language is essential for development, thinking, and human relationships; yet many aspects of language remain mysterious. How is language acquired by the child? What are the links between language, reading, and cognitive and social learning? How does a language impairment affect learning? Language researchers continue to investigate these complicated issues (Stone & Carlisle, 2006; Stillman & Scott, 2006).

Did You Get It?

The power of speech and language are, comparatively speaking, greater than _____.

- a. the wheel
- b. the automobile and Internet
- c. the four greatest physical inventions in history: the wheel, the plow, the printing press, and the telephone
- d. all human inventions of the past two millennia combined

11.2 Spoken Language, Reading, and Writing: An Integrated Language System

Language appears in several forms: (1) *spoken language* (listening and speaking), (2) *reading*, and (3) *writing*. These forms of language are linked through an underlying integrated language system. The interrelationships of spoken language, reading, and writing serve to build the core of the language system. As children gain competence and intimacy with language in one form, they also build knowledge and experience with the underlying language core, which are then carried into learning language in another form. What the child learns about the language system through oral language provides a knowledge base for reading and writing, and what the child learns about language through writing improves reading and spoken language. Further, when a child exhibits language difficulty in one form, the underlying language deficit often reappears in other forms. For example, a child who has a language delay at age 3 may have a reading disorder at age 8 and a writing disorder at age 14 (Mather & Goldstein, 2008; Tomblin, 2006; Lyytinen, Ekland, & Lyytinen, 2005).

Early experiences in listening and talking provide the foundation for reading and writing. Through experience with oral language, children learn the linguistic structures of language, expand their vocabularies (or semantic knowledge), and become familiar with different types of sentences (syntactic knowledge). Examples include oral language experiences of hearing stories, songs, and rhymes, and recognizing repeated refrains in books. The knowledge of sentence sequences or the formation of plurals carries over to reading and writing (Jennings, Caldwell, & Lerner, 2010; Adams Foorman, Lundberg, and Beeler, 1998).

By becoming familiar with the sounds of language, children develop a language base for reading. Poor readers often lack an awareness of the sounds of language and they will need specific practice with phonological awareness to establish the basis for word-recognition skills in reading (Adams et al., 1998; Blachman, Tagel, & Ball, 2004; Moats, 2000).

In summary, language is an integrated system, and many areas of learning depend upon mastery of language. As the child matures, language plays an increasingly important part in the development of the thinking processes and in the ability to grasp abstract concepts. Words become symbols for objects, groups of objects, and ideas. Language permits human beings to speak of things unseen, of the past, and of the future.

11.2a Forms of the Language System

The language system encompasses the language forms of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The acquisition of these language skills follows a general sequence of development: (1) listening, (2) speaking, (3) reading, and (4) writing. As shown in Figure 11.1, the different language forms have an underlying language core that integrates the four forms of language. Moreover, experiences with each form of language strengthen the underlying language core, which in turn improves the individual's facility in other language forms.

Historically, as civilization evolved, oral language systems for listening and speaking developed hundreds of thousands of years before the creation of written systems for reading and writing. In fact, in historical terms, the written form of language is relatively recent; even today, many societies in the world have only a spoken language and no written language.

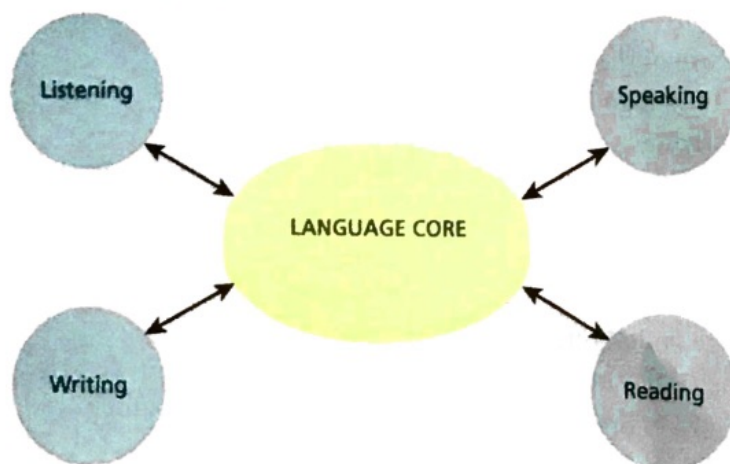
Because the oral skills of listening and speaking are developed first, they are considered the primary language system. Reading and writing are considered the secondary language system because we are dealing with a symbol of a symbol. Whereas the spoken word is a symbol of an idea or a concrete experience, the written word is a symbol of the spoken word. Helen Keller's primary language system was finger spelling because she learned it first, and Braille was her secondary system. Student Stories 11.1, "Language and Learning," illustrates Helen Keller's first experiences in language learning.

Two of the four forms of the language system can be categorized as input or *receptive language modes*, and the other 2 are output or

primary language system
The child's first language, usually oral language. In relation to bilingual students it can refer to the student's native language.

secondary language system
A student's second language, not the student's native language.

FIGURE 11.1
Language Forms and the Integrated Language Core



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STUDENT STORIES 11.1

Helen Keller: Language and Learning

One of the most dramatic illustrations of the dependency of thought on language is the experience of Helen Keller as she became aware that things have symbolic names that represent them. The impact of this discovery, made at age 7, changed her behavior from that of an intractable, undisciplined, animal-like child to that of a thinking, language-oriented human being.

Her teacher, Anne Sullivan, described the events (Keller, 1961):

I made Helen hold her mug under the spout while pumped. As the cold water gushed forth, filling the mug, I spelled “w-a-t-e-r” in Helen’s free hand. The word coming so close upon the sensation of cold water rushing over her hand seemed to startle her. She dropped the mug and stood as one transfixed. A new light came into her face. She spelled “water” several times. Then she dropped to the ground and asked for its name and pointed to the pump and the trellis and suddenly turning around she asked for my name. . . . All the way back to the house she was highly excited, and learned the name of every object she touched, so that in a few hours she had added 30 new words to her vocabulary (pp. 273–274).

Helen Keller also described the transformation caused by her own awareness of language:

As the cool water gushed over one hand she spelled into the other the word *water*, first slowly, then rapidly. I stood still, my whole attention fixed upon the motion of her fingers.

Suddenly I felt a misty consciousness as of something forgotten—a thrill of returning thought; and somehow the mystery of language was revealed to me. I knew then that “w-a-t-e-r” meant the wonderful, cool something that was flowing over my hand. That living word awakened my soul, gave it light, hope, joy, set it free. . . . I left the wellhouse eager to learn. Everything had a name, and each name gave birth to a new thought, (p. 34).

Helen Keller had learned that a word can be used to signify objects and to order the events, ideas, and meaning of the world about her. Language had become a tool for her to use.

REFLECTIVE QUESTION

1. For Helen, what was the importance of learning that words signify objects?

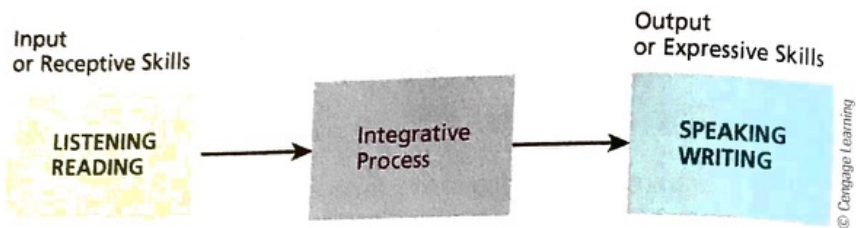
expressive language modes. Listening and reading are input or *receptive skills*, feeding information into the central nervous system. Speaking and writing are output or *expressive skills* in which ideas originate in the brain and are sent outward.

One implication for teaching is that abundant quantities of input experience and information are needed before output skills can be effectively executed. This principle has been concisely stated as “*intake before outgo.*” Students should not be assigned to produce output, such as a written theme or an oral report, before they have been exposed to adequate input experiences, such as discussions, graphic organizers, field trips, or reading. These experiences will enhance the productivity of the output. The integrating mechanism between the input and the output is the brain, or the central nervous system. Figure 11.2 shows the relationship between the four language forms.

11.2b Language as a Communication Process

Language provides a way for people to communicate with one another. There are also other methods of communication, such as gesturing, using body language, and using sign language. The communication process between two people consists of sending a message (*expressive language*) and receiving a message (*receptive language*). As Figure 11.3 illustrates, Person A, who is transmitting an idea to Person B, must convert her idea into language symbols.

FIGURE 11.2
Relationship of the Four Forms of Language



She encodes (or converts) the message into either sound symbols (speaking) or visual graphic symbols (writing). Person B, who receives the message, must then convert the symbols back into an idea. He decodes (converts) either the sound symbols (listening) or the visual graphic symbols (reading).

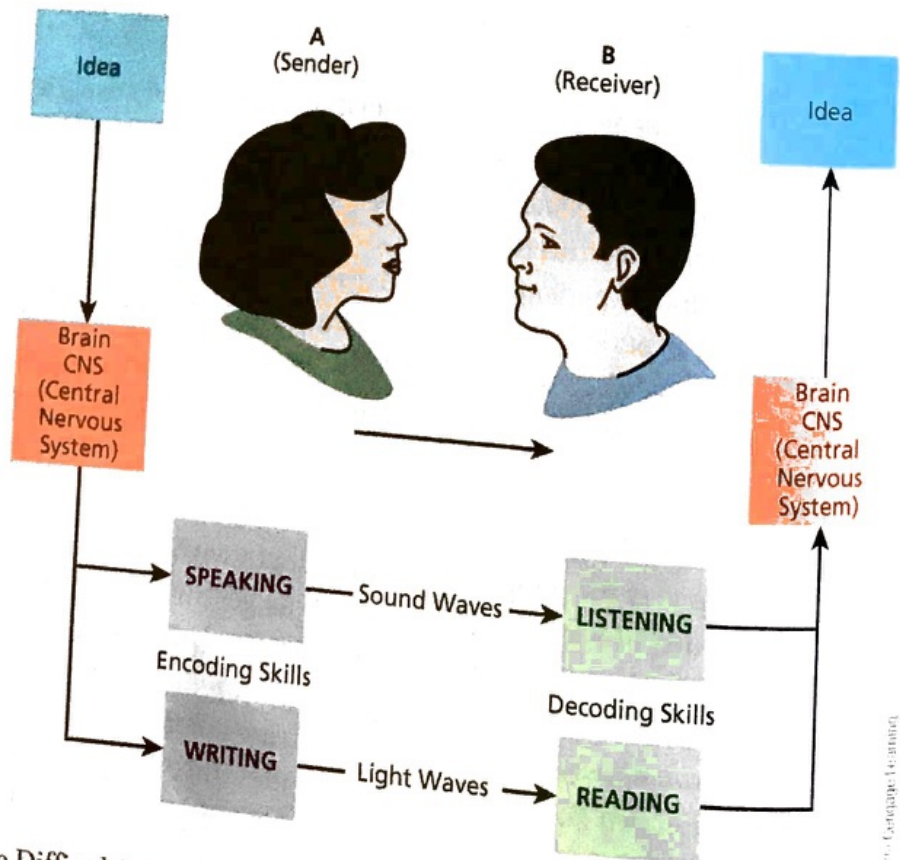
A breakdown can occur anywhere in this process. For example, in the expressive portion of the communication process, the impairment could be in formulating the idea, in coding it into spoken and written language symbols, or in remembering the sequences of previous speaking or writing. In the receptive portion of the communication process, the impairment could be in the reception and perception of the symbols through the eye or ear, in the integration of these stimuli in the brain, or in the recall or memory as it affects the ability to translate the sensory images into an idea. Understanding the communication process helps teachers deal with the communication problems of students with language disabilities.

Did You Get It?

What is the sequence of language acquisition and skill development for all children, in all societies and cultures?

- a. speaking to listening to writing to reading
- b. speaking to listening to reading to writing
- c. listening to speaking to reading to writing
- d. listening to speaking to writing to reading

FIGURE 11.3
Model of the Communication Process



11.3 Teaching Language in the General Education Classroom

Many children in general education classrooms have problems with spoken language. Students with learning disabilities and other related disabilities often have coexisting language difficulties. General education and special education teachers can assist these students in general education classrooms. Including Students in General Education 11.1, "Teaching Language," provides some ideas for helping students with language.

11.3a How Do Children Acquire Language?

Most children acquire language before they reach school age; they understand and respond to the language of others in a meaningful way. However, up to 8% of children exhibit deviations and delays in language development and require additional time and teaching to internalize the language system (Tallal, 2000; Tallal et al., 1997). Several different views of how children learn language are (1) imitation and reinforcement (2) innate factors, and (3) social factors.

- **Imitation and reinforcement.** This is a behavioral view of language learning, which suggests that young children try to imitate the sounds they hear in their environment and they are reinforced for their language attempts. Children begin to learn language when adults reward the child for their language attempts with attention and praise. Student Stories 11.2, "Peter's First Word," describes how Peter learned his first word.
- **Innate factors.** The innate view of language learning is that the task of learning human language is so complex that some important aspects of language cannot be learned but are innate within the brain and that children are biologically predisposed to learn and use language. In all cultures, children have the ability to perform this feat in their native language at about the same chronological and developmental stage. The innate view

Including Students in GENERAL EDUCATION 11.1

Teaching Language

- Encourage students to use spoken language during the class session. Provide students with many opportunities for speaking, explaining, and giving their own points of view.
- Find areas of interest that students want to talk about. Promote discussion groups on topics of interest.
- Students can explain to classmates the steps in an activity. Have students explain how to do something or demonstrate how to make something.
- Students have many interests that they like to talk about. Provide opportunities for students to talk about themselves and their interests.
- Teach vocabulary that is related to an area of study. Have students talk about the meaning of words in a content area.
- Provide good language models. The teacher should encourage a give-and-take discussion about a topic of interest.
- Use role-playing and acting out of stories. Often areas of the curriculum provide opportunities to role play and act out stories. For example, what might a character in history say about some topic?
- Encourage students to talk about their interests, such as movies, television shows, books, sports, music, or hobbies.

STUDENT STORIES 11.2

Peter's First Word

Peter's mother was worried about her 22-month-old son who was not, as yet, saying words.

During a Thanksgiving dinner, Peter was sitting in a high chair at the family gathering of about 25 people. When Peter gestured that he wanted to get up, his mother said the word *up*, and Peter tried to imitate the sound. When Peter attempted to utter the sound, the group decided to encourage his vocalizations, so all 25 people stood up and in unison said "up." Peter looked around

and was delighted with the response he had generated. He uttered the sound "up" again and again, each time eliciting the same response from the group. By the end of the Thanksgiving meal, Peter had learned his first word, "up."

REFLECTIVE QUESTION

1. How did positive reinforcement help Peter learn his first word?

suggests that in learning language, the child does not merely learn a set of sentences, but rather internalizes the total language system (Tomasello, 2003; Chomsky, 1965). In terms of teaching, the innate view implies that a child's language will naturally develop and flourish if the child is given a stimulating language environment.

- **Social factors.** Another perspective of the way in which children acquire language is through social interactions within interpersonal relationships with more knowledgeable language users. The reciprocal interactions between the child and the parent and between the child and other people are essential for language learning. The acquisition of language is promoted in a natural environment where human relationships help the child become an active processor of language (Vygotsky, 1997).

In terms of teaching, the social factors involved in language learning are emphasized as the child and adult develop a reciprocal relationship, influencing each other in the communication process. In terms of teaching, the adult plays a mediating role, shaping learning opportunities to bring them to the attention of the young child. For example, 18-month-old Sarah knew the word *plane* and the phrase *all gone*. While Sarah was sitting at the kitchen table with her mother, an airplane flew over the house. Her mother, initiating a conversation, pointed up questioningly as the plane flew overhead, and Sarah said, "Plane." When the noise disappeared, her mother continued the conversation, asking, "What happened?" Sarah replied, "Plane all gone," along with a gesture of extended hands to show "all gone." With her mother's guidance, Sarah produced her first sentence.

Did You Get It?

Having _____ would not be considered an effective way to teach and/or promote spoken language in a general education classroom.

- a. a student explain the steps needed to hang a picture on a wall
- b. a student tell the class what she did over the weekend
- c. a student speak about his favorite topic and refraining from giving his own opinions and views
- d. two students act out the words to a song they know as they sing

11.4 Components of the Language System

Basic linguistic concepts and terms comprise the components of language. They include (1) phonology, (2) morphology, (3) syntax, (4) semantics, and (5) pragmatics. In this section, we discuss each of these language components and how they affect language learning and language difficulties.

11.4a Phonology

Phonology refers to the speech sounds in a language. The smallest unit of sound in a language system is a phoneme. Different languages and dialects use different phonemes. The word *cat* contains three phonemes: *k-a-t*. Phoneme recognition is extremely important in oral language and reading. Phonics is the recognition, analysis, and synthesis of phoneme elements in written words. Learning phonics is difficult for some children because they have poor phonological awareness or recognition of phoneme sounds.

11.4b Morphology

Morphology refers to the meaning units in language. The smallest unit of meaning is a morpheme. Different languages indicate meaning changes through different morphological forms. For example, in Standard English, the word *boy* is one morpheme or meaning unit; and the word *boys* contains two morphemes or meaning units (*boy* plus plurality). A child who has not internalized the morphemic structure of Standard English—for example, a student whose native language is Spanish—might say, “There are three boy.”

Children who are unaware of exceptions to morphemic rule may overgeneralize. For example, they might formulate the past tense of *fight* and *go* as *fighted* and *goed*. Typical preschool and first-grade children have well-established rules of morphology and can apply their morphological rules to nonsense words. For example, researcher Berko (1958) showed each child a drawing of a birdlike creature and said, “This is a *wug*.” Next, she pointed to a drawing with two of these creatures and asked each child to complete the sentence, “There are two _____.” By applying the morphological rule for plurals, typical children were able to give the answer of *wugs* by adding the phoneme /z/.

11.4c Syntax

Syntax is the grammar system of a language—the way the words are strung together to form sentences. Different languages have different syntactic or grammatical systems. In the English language, unlike some other languages, word order is extremely important to convey meaning. Thus, “John pushes a car” differs in meaning from “A car pushes John.” A child with a syntactic language disorder may not have learned how to order words in a sentence. Further, in English, we can transform the order of the words—still keeping the same subject—to generate a new meaning. The sentence “Mother is working” can be transformed to generate “Is Mother working?” A child with a syntactic language difficulty may be unable to generate such sentence transformations. For example, when children with language disorders are asked to repeat the question form of “Is the boy running?” many simply repeat the simple declarative form “The boy is running.”

The active form of a sentence—“Mother bakes cookies”—is easier to comprehend than the passive form, “The cookies are baked by Mother.” Children

components of language

The language system includes phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics.

phonology

The linguistic system of speech sounds in a particular language. The word *cat*, for example, has three sounds (or phonemes).

phoneme

The smallest sound unit of a language system.

phonics

An application of phonetics to the teaching of reading in which the sound (or phoneme) of a language is related to the equivalent written symbol (or grapheme).

morphology

The linguistic system of meaning units in any particular language; for example, the word *played* contains two meaning units (or morphemes): *play* + *ed* (past tense).

morpheme

The smallest meaning unit of a language system.

Standard English

The linguistic system of English recognized by the literate culture and used in school.

syntax

The grammar system of a language; the linguistic rules of word order; the function of words in a sentence.

with language disabilities may not understand a passive sentence. To illustrate, when first graders are shown two pictures, one of a cat chasing a dog and the other of a dog chasing a cat, and are asked to point to the picture called “The cat is chased by the dog,” many children choose the incorrect picture because they do not understand the passive form of the sentence.

11.4d Semantics

semantics

A linguistic term referring to the vocabulary system of language.

Semantics refers to the vocabulary system or word meanings in a language. Pupils who have meager vocabulary understanding or usage and those who have difficulty relating a string of words to a meaningful association may have a semantic language disorder. While morphology, phonology, and syntax components normally become firmly established during the preschool years, the development of vocabulary (the semantic component) continues throughout life.

A student with a semantic disorder may understand a concept but may not possess the appropriate word to express it. For example, referring to twins, one boy with language problems talked about the “two girls with the same face.” He did not know the word *twin* to communicate his idea.

11.4e Pragmatics

pragmatics

The social side of language; the social context and social customs surrounding language.

Pragmatics refers to the social side of language, how the speaker uses language in his or her environment. Pragmatics takes into account factors such as the relationship between speaker and listener; the speaker’s assessment of the listener’s degree of knowledge about the subject; behaviors, such as taking turns in conversation, staying on topic, and asking pertinent questions; the individual’s involvement in the conversation; and eye contact. Some students have more difficulty in the social use of language and are less effective in their communication attempts. They may interrupt the speaker more frequently in order to insert their own ideas in the conversation (Orlich et al., 2013; Wong and Donahue, 2002).

Another element of the language system is *intonation*, or the sound patterns of spoken language, including *pitch* (melody), *stress* (accent), and *juncture* (pauses). The intonation system of each language is different.

When listening to the intonation pattern of infants, one cannot distinguish the babbling of a 3-month-old Chinese baby from that of a Dutch or an American baby of the same age. By the age of 6 months, however, the intonation of the babbling is similar to the intonation of the language in the infant’s immediate environment; the babbling is in Chinese, Dutch, or English. The “native language” of a 6-month-old baby can be identified through tape recordings of the baby’s babbling. The baby’s babble consists of the intonation patterns and the phonemes of the native language.

Did You Get It?

According to the _____ view of language acquisition and development, language is such a complex undertaking that specific aspects of language must be preprogrammed in the brain rather than being learned.

- a. innate
- b. wired
- c. naturalistic
- d. extrinsic

11.5 Types of Language Problems

Many children with learning disabilities and related mild disabilities have speech and/or language difficulties. They do not do well in situations that require extensive language interactions and conversations, and they are also less skillful in maintaining a conversation. About 88% of preschool children (ages 3 through 5) who receive special education services are classified with speech or language impairment (U.S. Department of Education, 2012). In addition, speech and/or language disorders are a common co-occurring condition for older students with disabilities. Adolescents and adults with learning disabilities often continue to have poor oral language and communication skills (Vogel & Reder, 1998).

In this section, we discuss (1) language disorders versus speech disorders, (2) delayed speech, (3) problems with phonological awareness, (4) temporal acoustical processing, (5) rapid automatized naming and word finding, and (6) language disorders. The National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities, a website that describes spoken language problems, can be found at <http://www.nichcy.org>.

11.5a Language Disorders Versus Speech Disorders

Language disorders differ from speech disorders. Speech disorders are abnormalities of producing sounds, such as (1) articulation difficulties (e.g., the child who cannot produce the *r* sound and says “wabbit”), (2) voice disorders (e.g., a very hoarse voice), or (3) fluency difficulty (e.g., stuttering). Language disorders are much broader and encompass the entire spectrum of communication. Types of language disorders are described in the following sections.

11.5b Delayed Speech

Children with a language delay may not speak at all, or they may use very little language at an age when language normally develops. For example, the 4-year-old child who has not yet learned to talk has a language delay. At least 8% of children fail to develop speech and language at or near the expected age (Tallal, 2000; Tallal et al., 1997). Examples of a speech delay can be found in Student Stories 11.3, “Marsha: A Child With a Language Delay” and in “I Have a Kid Who...” at the end of this chapter.

Otitis media is a relatively common childhood condition that can seriously impair language learning in children. Otitis media involves an infection of the middle ear that can cause temporary hearing loss. Even if the hearing loss is temporary and mild, it can lead to language delay if it occurs at stages that are critical to language learning in young children.

11.5c Poor Phonological Awareness

Phonological awareness refers to the child’s ability to focus on and manipulate phonemes (or the sounds of language) in spoken words. As noted earlier, phonemes are abstract units of language, the smallest units constituting spoken language. Learning to reflect about the phoneme sounds of language is different from learning to understand and use language. Many children who have difficulty in learning to read are not sensitive to the phoneme sounds of language

speech disorders

Disorders of articulation, fluency, or voice.

language disorders

The term that refers to children with a language delay or language disabilities.

language delay

Slowness in the acquisition of language. The child with a language delay may not be talking at all or may be using very little language at an age when language normally develops.

otitis media

Middle-ear infection that may cause temporary hearing loss and may impede language development.

STUDENT STORIES 11.3

Marsha: A Child With a Language Delay

Marsha is 4 years old and has a language delay.

Marsha's early development was typical in terms of motor development. She walked at 11 months old, she learned to ride her tricycle early, and she enjoys playing with her dolls, blocks, and puzzles. Marsha's language development, however, has been very slow. She did not use single words until age 3. Her speech now consists of one- or two-word phrases. Marsha understands the speech of others, she can follow directions that are given to her, and her receptive language is good—she understands the language of others. Her parents enrolled her in the school's

special early childhood program. The speech/language therapist, the preschool teacher, and her parents are collaborating using a technique called *naturalistic language teaching*. When Marsha says, "Go" and points to the door, her teacher expands her language by asking, "Go out now?" Marsha repeats the expanded phrase, saying, "Go out now."

REFLECTIVE QUESTION

1. What kind of language problem does Marsha have? What strengths does Marsha have?

and words (Blachman, Tangel, & Ball, 2004; Mann & Foy, 2003; Lyon, Shaywitz, & Shaywitz, 2003). Table 11.1 illustrates the number of phonemes in several common words.

Successful beginning readers must be aware of phoneme sounds within words to appreciate that the words *cat* and *bat* differ in a single phoneme sound. Children with poor phonological abilities are unable to tap out the number of sounds within a word, such as *mop*. As children become aware of the phonological system, they can gain entry into the alphabetic system, in which letters of the alphabet represent speech sounds. Written English is an alphabetic system. Research shows that there is a link between the lack of phonological awareness and poor reading in alphabetic languages, such as English, Swedish, Spanish, French, Italian, Portuguese, and others (Lundberg, 2002). (Some written languages, such as Chinese, are pictorial—the printed characters reflect ideas, not sounds.)

The National Reading Panel is a research group that was established by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development to assess the status of research-based knowledge on the effectiveness of teaching children to read. The website for the National Reading Panel report is <http://www.nationalreadingpanel.org>.

TABLE 11.1

Number of Phonemes in Several Common Words

Word	Number of Phonemes
Oh	one
Go	two
Check	three
Stop	four
Checkers	five
Shaque	three

TABLE 11.2

Phonological Awareness Tasks

Task*	Activity
1. Phoneme segmentation	How many phonemes are in the word <i>ship</i> ?
2. Phoneme isolation	Tell me the first sound in <i>paste</i> .
3. Phoneme blending	What word is <i>s/k/u/l</i> ?
4. Phoneme identity	Tell me the sound that is the same in <i>bike, boy, bell</i> .
5. Phoneme categorization	Which word does not belong: <i>bus, bun, rat</i> ?
6. Rhyming	Did you ever see a fly kissing a <i>tie</i> ?
7. Phoneme deletion	Say <i>smile</i> without the <i>s</i> .

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*Listed from the easiest to the most difficult.

After an exhaustive search of over 100,000 research-based studies, the National Reading Panel (2000) reached the following conclusions about phonological awareness. Phonological awareness

- can be taught and helps in reading,
- is effective in kindergarten and first grade,
- helps older students, all socioeconomic status (SES) groups, and bilingual students,
- can be successfully taught by many different methods,
- is usually used for an average instructional session of 25 minutes,
- can be taught by classroom teachers, and
- can be used along with printed letters.

Table 11.2 shows examples of several phonological awareness tasks that teachers can use in instruction (Adams et al., 1998; Blachman et al., 2004; Coyne, Kame'enui, & Simmons, 2001). An informal test of phonological awareness is provided in Table 11.3.

For formal tests of phonological awareness, see Table 11.4.

11.5d Temporal Acoustical Processing

Temporal acoustical processing offers an explanation for why some children do not develop speech and language at or near the expected ages. Some children find it difficult to process sounds quickly enough to distinguish rapid acoustical change in speech. During the course of normal language, the speech sounds come in too fast for these children to recognize and decipher. A series of studies conducted by Paula Tallal and her colleagues over many years suggests that children who have delays in speech and language development may have difficulty with rapid temporal integration of acoustically varying signals and serial memory. These deficits impact central auditory processing in the millisecond time range (Hall et al., 2002; Tallal, 2000; Tallal et al., 1997).

temporal acoustical processing

The ability to process sounds of language rapidly enough to distinguish speech sounds and words.

11.5e Rapid Automated Naming (RAN) and Word Finding

Some children with a language delay have difficulty with rapid automatized naming (RAN) and word finding. These children cannot quickly and automatically name objects and are slow at recalling the correct words. For example, when given the task of naming pictures as they are shown, these children cannot

rapid automatized naming (RAN)

The ability to quickly and automatically name objects and pictures of objects.

word finding

Recalling the correct words

TABLE 11.3**Informal Test of Phonological Awareness**

Give the child two demonstration items to help the child understand that task. For example, say the word *playground*. Then ask the child to say the word. Then ask the child to say the word again, but not to say *play*. Then give the child the word *snowflake*. Then ask the child to say the word. Then ask the child to say the word again, but not to say *snow*. Then give the child the following test.

Item	Question	Correct Response
1. Say the word <i>toolbox</i>	Now say it again but do not say /box/	tool
2. Say the word <i>compute</i>	Now say it again but do not say /com/	pute
3. Say the word <i>telephone</i>	Now say it again but do not say /tele/	fone
4. Say the word <i>surface</i>	Now say it again but do not say /sur/	face
5. Say the word <i>boat</i>	Now say it again but do not say /b/	oat
6. Say the word <i>feet</i>	Now say it again but do not say /f/	eat
7. Say the word <i>make</i>	Now say it again but do not say /m/	ache
8. Say the word <i>start</i>	Now say it again but do not say /s/	tart
9. Say the word <i>please</i>	Now say it again but do not say /p/	lease
10. Say the word <i>clean</i>	Now say it again but do not say /k/	lean
11. Say the word <i>sting</i>	Now say it again but do not say /t/	sing
12. Say the word <i>play</i>	Now say it again but do not say (/)	pay
13. Say the word <i>stock</i>	Now say it again but do not say /t/	sock

Scoring: Give one point for each correct answer.

Score	Expected Level
1-3	kindergarten
4-9	Grade 1
10-11	Grade 2
12-13	Grade 3

rapidly say the names of the pictures. Slowness in word finding and naming is an accurate predictor of later reading and learning disabilities. Slowness in naming is probably caused by memory retrieval problems, which make it difficult to access verbal information (Dejong & Vrielink, 2004; Catts, 1993; German, 2001).

Problems with naming and slow word retrieval affect adolescents and adults with learning disabilities and related mild disabilities, as well as children. Word-finding problems can be lifelong sources of difficulty in reading, learning, and using expressive language.

There are various resources that address word-finding problems. In a study published in 1998, Meyer and colleagues described useful instructional methods for dealing with word-finding problems in children. Word-finding strategies for adults can be found in the book *It's on the Tip of My Tongue* by Diane German (2001). The Word Finding Intervention Program (German, 1993) is a word-finding teaching program for children. Additional information is available at the Word Finding website at <http://www.wordfinding.com>. (See Table 11.4.)

11.5f Language Disorders

Language disorders are sometimes referred to as *acquired aphasia* or *developmental aphasia*. The term *acquired aphasia* is a medical term used to identify adults who lose the ability to speak because of brain damage from a stroke, disease, or accident. In contrast, the term *developmental aphasia* is used to describe children who have severe difficulty in acquiring oral language (Kuder, 2003). Children can have difficulty with (1) receptive language disorders or (2) expressive language disorders.

Receptive language disorders refers to difficulty in understanding language. Receptive language is a prerequisite for the development of expressive language. A child with receptive language problems may be able to understand single words, such as *sit*, *chair*, *eat*, and *candy*, but will have difficulty understanding a sentence using those words, such as “Sit on the chair after you eat the candy.” Some children understand a word in one context, but they are unable to relate it to another context. The word *run* may be understood as a method of locomotion, but the child may not understand the meaning when the word is used in reference to baseball, a faucet, a woman’s stocking, or a river.

Expressive language disorders refers to difficulty in producing spoken language. Children with expressive language disorders may depend on pointing and gesturing to make their wants known. These children can understand speech and language produced by others, they do not have a muscular paralysis that prevents them from talking, and they do well on nonverbal tasks. Yet these children have difficulty in producing speech or in talking.

Several clinical conditions are related to expressive language. One such condition is *dysnomia*, a word-finding problem or a deficiency in remembering and expressing words. Children with *dysnomia* may substitute a word, such as *thing*, for every object they cannot remember, or they may attempt to use other expressions to talk around the subject. For example, when asked to list the foods she ate for lunch, one 10-year-old girl used circumlocution in describing a tomato as a “round red thing that rhymed with potato,” but she was unable to remember the word *tomato*.

Did You Get It?

According to the U.S. Department of Education (2012), approximately _____ in ten of all preschool-aged children who are receiving special education services have at least some form of speech impairment.

- a. 2
- b. 4
- c. 7
- d. 9

developmental aphasia

The term used to describe a child who has severe difficulty in acquiring oral language. This term implies that the disorder is related to a central nervous system dysfunction.

receptive language disorders

Difficulty understanding oral language or listening.

expressive language disorders

Difficulties in using language (or speaking).

dysnomia

A deficiency in remembering and expressing words. Children with *dysnomia* may substitute a word like *thing* for many objects when they cannot remember the name of the object. They may attempt to use other expressions to talk around the subject.

11.6 English-Language Learners (ELL)

English-language learners (ELLs) are students for whom English is not their primary language. ELL students are not proficient in English, and they use their native language. They encounter many difficulties in classes taught entirely in English. In today’s diverse society, an increasing number of students come from homes in which a language other than English is spoken. In fact, ELL students



represent one of the fastest growing groups among the school-age population (Samson & Lesaux, 2009). ELL students speak over 350 different languages, but Spanish is the language spoken by nearly 77% of ELL students, or approximately 3 million students (Samson & Lesaux, 2009).

These children are sometimes referred to as bilingual students, but children who are truly *bilingual* understand and use 2 languages well, both their native language and their second language. In fact, research shows that true bilingual abilities are associated with a higher level of cognitive attainment. Bilingual acquisition involves a process that builds on an underlying base for both languages. The duality of languages does not hamper overall language proficiency or cognitive development for bilingual children (Miller, Heilmann, & Nockerts, 2006; Hakuta, 1990; Jiménez, 2002).

The problem for many ELLs is that they have limited English proficiency and they have difficulty understanding and using English. Some ELL students speak only in their native language; others use both English and their native language but still have considerable difficulty with English. A child's native language provides the foundation upon which English-language skills are built. Students who use their native language effectively are likely to acquire and use English appropriately, but students who have problems in their native language


also experience problems in English as a second language (Miller et al., 2006; Lundberg, 2002). Research shows that a student may acquire conversational English in six months but may not have the language proficiency to support the complex demands of academic development in English. Reaching that proficiency level may take up to two years or more (Jiménez, 2002; Ortiz, 1997).


Some students who are ELLs also have learning disabilities or related disabilities. These students must cope not only with learning English, but also with their underlying disabilities. When students have a language disorder in their primary language, the language problem will also be reflected in the second language (Samson & Lesaux, 2009; Miller et al., 2006).

Teachers must be particularly sensitive to the needs of English-language learners and recognize that achieving proficiency in English requires time. These teachers need competencies in both special education and in teaching students with limited English proficiency. Teaching Tips 11.1, "Effective Practices for Supporting English-Language Learners," provides some suggestions for ELLs who have learning disabilities.

11.6a Learning a Second Language

There are four methods for teaching a second language: *ESL*, *bilingual*, *sheltered English*, and *immersion* methods.

 **TeachSource Video Case Activity**



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Watch the TeachSource Video Case entitled "Culturally Responsive Teaching: A Multicultural Lesson for Elementary Students." In this video, the teacher leads the class in talking about their diverse multicultural backgrounds. They talk about the countries they came from, the food in their culture, the people, and the language they spoke in their country. The multicultural discussion is then woven into a writing lesson on coming to America.

QUESTIONS

1. How can a discussion about multicultural backgrounds of children in the class be used to teach language skills?
2. What subjects could students from diverse cultures talk about?

- The English as a Second Language (ESL) method is used in classes that have students who come from many different language backgrounds. Students learn through carefully controlled oral repetitions of selected second-language patterns.
- Bilingual instruction is used when all of the students are from one language background. Students use their native language for part of the school day and use the second language (English) for the other portion of the school day. Instruction is provided in 2 languages. Academic subjects are often taught in the native language and the student receives oral practice in English. The objective of the bilingual program is to strengthen school learning through the native language and gradually to add the secondary language. An underlying philosophy is that students will recognize and respect the importance of their native culture and language in American society.
- Sheltered English is a method of teaching children who have some proficiency in English by having students learn English more rapidly through instruction with printed materials that are written in English, typically used for a content-area subject. The rationale for this approach is that spoken language is fleeting and inconsistent over time. In written language, the text is stable and does not pass the learner by. With written text, students can reread and reconsider what is being learned. For children whose native language is Spanish, the students continue to use Spanish for part of the day, while English is used in teaching certain subjects with written materials, such as reading or social studies. Wide reading of high-interest stories in English helps develop English-language competence.
- Immersion instruction is a method in which students are *immersed* in, or receive extensive exposure to, the second language. In fact, where there is no formal instruction for a person learning a second language, this is essentially what occurs. Individuals learn through this type of repeated exposure as they live daily in the mainstream of the dominant-language society. Immersion is the instructional method for schoolchildren in Canada, where it is used to teach French to English-speaking children by enrolling them in French-speaking immersion schools (Fortin & Crago, 1999).

TEACHING TIPS 11.1



Effective Practices for Supporting English-Language Learners

- Be responsive to cultural and individual diversity.
- Teach English-language reading to develop English-language competence.
- Become familiar with assessment tools, and acceptable accommodations.
- Encourage collaboration between home and school.
- Develop cooperation between general educators and special education teachers.

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English as a Second Language (ESL) method

A method of teaching English to students whose native language is not English.

bilingual instruction

A teaching approach in which students use their native language for one part of the instructional day and English for the other part of the instructional day

sheltered English

A method of teaching children who have some proficiency in English to learn English more rapidly by having them use materials written in English.

immersion instruction

An approach to teaching a second language in which students receive extensive exposure to a second language

11.6b Disproportionality

The disproportionate representation of English-language learners has long been a concern in discussions of educational equity. The issue is that culturally and linguistically diverse students are disproportionately enrolled in special education. Research shows that ELL students have a greater chance of being identified as a student with a disability, often within the category of learning disabilities (De Valenzuela, Copeland, Huaqing, & Park, 2006). To form a more just and equitable society for all students, it is important for the educational system to correct the inequities of ELL students.



Did You Get It?

Three students whose primary languages are Spanish, Vietnamese, and Igbo, respectively, and who now live and learn in the United States are _____ students.

- a. ELL
- b. ELF
- c. LEFL
- d. SLE

11.7 Early Literacy and Oral Language

early literacy

The child's early entrance into the world of words, language, and stories. Literacy emerges in children through simultaneous experiences with oral language, reading, and writing.

Early literacy refers to the child's early entrance into the comprehensive world of words, language, books, poetry, and stories. The importance of providing young children with a rich literary environment and helping children become aware of print, words, and the sounds of language is essential to the world of language. The early literacy philosophy encourages young children to enjoy experiences with stories and books, and it encourages early writing (Strickland & Shanaham, 2004). It is especially important that children with learning disabilities and related mild disabilities be given an abundant and rich literature environment. From an early age, they should hear stories, tell stories, and even write journals and stories. Story reading helps build oral language experiences. Predictable books that have a pattern or refrain should be used and children should be encouraged to repeat the predictable elements. It is also important to read and reread favorite stories and have the children listen to them on CDs or tapes while following along in their books. Teaching Tips 11.2, "Activities to Promote Early Literacy," describes methods that foster early literacy.

TEACHING TIPS 11.2

Activities to Promote Early Literacy

- **Promote Oral Language Activities.** Give children many opportunities to talk and use language.
- **Surround children with a Literacy Environment.** Have many books, stories and poems for the child and discuss them.
- **Concepts about print.** Show the children that print has meaning, that it is read left to right, top to bottom, and that words are separated by white spaces.
- **Use word and sound games.** Teach rhyming games. Use nursery rhymes, poetry.
- **Build alphabet knowledge.** Help children to recognize letters of the alphabet. Have children write letters of the alphabet.
- **Help children to recognize letter-sound correspondence.** Help children know the relationship between letters and sounds.
- **Encourage early writing.** Have writing materials available. Let children scribble, draw pictures, or write letters.
- **Help children build a reading vocabulary.** Compile a collection of their favorite words.

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Did You Get It?

The early literacy philosophy stresses which aspect of the use of stories and books?

- a. lenience
- b. stringency
- c. rigor
- d. enjoyment

11.8 Assessing Oral Language

The purpose of assessing oral language is to determine what language abilities the child has acquired, what language problems the child exhibits, and how well the child uses language functionally. Assessment information should be a guide in planning the teaching. Assessment should consider the two sides of oral language: listening and speaking. Language assessment measures include (1) informal measures and (2) formal tests.

11.8a Informal Measures

Often the most valuable information is obtained by observing as the child uses language functionally in a real environment, such as a class or recreational setting. When rating scales are used in assessment, an informant (usually a parent) provides information about the child's language development and usage. Informal assessment measures are not standardized but offer valuable information about the child's language ability.

An informal measure of listening can be obtained by assessing the child's ability to understand a story that the teacher reads aloud. This listening test is often used as part of an informal reading inventory (IRI) (see Chapter 12, "Reading Difficulties"). The procedure requires the teacher to read aloud stories that are graded for difficulty level. Then the child is asked comprehension questions to determine how well he or she understands this material (Jennings et al., 2010; Spinelli, 2006).

11.8b Formal Tests

Formal tests are standardized instruments for gathering information about oral language development. Formal test results are often included in the child's individualized education program (IEP). Table 11.4 lists some examples of formal language tests.



Early literacy refers to the child's entrance into the world of words.

Robert Berner/Photo Edit Inc.

TABLE 11.4**Oral Language Tests**

Test	Age or Grade Tested	Publisher
General Oral Language Tests		
• Clinical Evaluation of Language Fundamentals—Revised (CELF-R)	Grades K–12	Harcourt Brace http://www.harcourt.com
• Detroit Tests of Learning Aptitude—4 (DTLA-4)	Ages 6–17	Pro-Ed http://www.proedinc.com
• Oral and Written Language Scales (OWLS)	Ages 3–21	AGS http://pearsonassessments.com
• Test of Adolescent Language—3 (TOAL-3)	Ages 12–18	Pro-Ed http://www.proedinc.com
• Test of Language Development—3: Intermediate (TOLD-3: Intermediate)	Ages 8.5–12.1	Pro-Ed http://www.proedinc.com
• Test of Language Development—3 (TOLD-3: Primary)	Ages 8–11	Pro-Ed http://www.proedinc.com
Listening Tests		
• Listening Comprehension Scales—Oral, Written, and Language Scales (OWLS)	Ages 5–21	AGS http://www.pearsonassessments.com
• Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test—II	Ages 2–18	AGS http://www.pearsonassessments.com
• Test de Vocabulario en Imágenes Peabody (Spanish version of the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test—III)	Ages 2.5–18	AGS http://www.pearsonassessments.com
Phonological Awareness Tests		
• Comprehensive Test of Phonological Processing	Ages 5–21	Pro-Ed http://www.proedinc.com
• Lindamood Auditory Conceptualization Test	Preschool–adult	Riverside http://www.riverpub.com
• Phonological Awareness Test	Ages 5–9	http://
• Test of Phonological Awareness	Grades K–2	Pro-Ed http://www.proedinc.com
Word-Finding Tests		
• Test of Word Finding—2	Ages 6.5–13	Pro-Ed http://www.proedinc.com
• Test of Adolescent and Adult Word Finding	Ages 12–80	Riverside http://www.riverpub.com

Did You Get It?

The Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test—II is an assessment battery that tests and evaluates abilities in which context?

- writing
- listening
- reading
- memorization

11.9 Teaching Strategies to Improve Spoken Language Difficulties

In this section, we focus on strategies for listening and speaking. Oral language has two contrasting sides: understanding oral language (listening) and producing oral language (speaking).

Did You Get It?

Oral language has two distinct and contrasting components. One of these components, the understanding of oral language, focuses on

- a. listening.
- b. interpreting.
- c. processing.
- d. filtering.

11.10 Listening

Listening is an often-neglected element of language learning. Students are typically expected to acquire the ability to listen without special instruction. However, many students do not acquire functional skills in listening by themselves. Over half the people referred to medical hearing specialists for suspected deafness have no defect in hearing acuity and no organic pathology that would cause their seeming hearing impairment. In this section, we suggest some strategies for listening in the areas of (1) listening comprehension, (2) phonological awareness of language sounds, (3) understanding words and building a listening vocabulary, (4) understanding sentences, (5) listening comprehension, (6) critical listening, and (7) listening to stories.

11.10a Listening Means Comprehension

Listening is a basic skill that can be improved through practice. An explanation for poor listening is that students today are so bombarded with constant sound that they learn to “tune out.” Students who are skillful at not listening should be taught to “tune in.”

Listening differs from hearing, which is a physiological process that does not involve interpretation. One can *hear* a foreign language with good auditory acuity but be unable to *listen* to what is being said. In contrast to hearing, listening demands that one select appropriate meanings and organize ideas according to their relationships. In addition, listening calls for evaluation, acceptance or rejection, internalization, and, at times, appreciation of the ideas expressed. Listening is the foundation of all language growth, and the child with a deficit in listening skills will have difficulty with all the communication skills.

There are significant differences between listening and reading. The reader can reread and study the material, but the listener hears the material only once and then it is gone. (Of course, using a recording device modifies this difference.) Readers can regulate their own speed, going slower or faster as their purpose and the difficulty of the material dictate, but the listener’s speed of listening is set by the speaker. The listener has additional clues from the speaker’s

voice, gesture, appearance, and emphasis, but the reader cannot derive such supporting information from the printed page. The listener–speaker combination also offers more opportunity for feedback, questioning, and a two-way discussion than reading offers.

When teachers ask students to *listen*, they do not want them simply to *hear* or to recognize the words being spoken. Students who are directed to listen are expected to comprehend the communication message being sent.

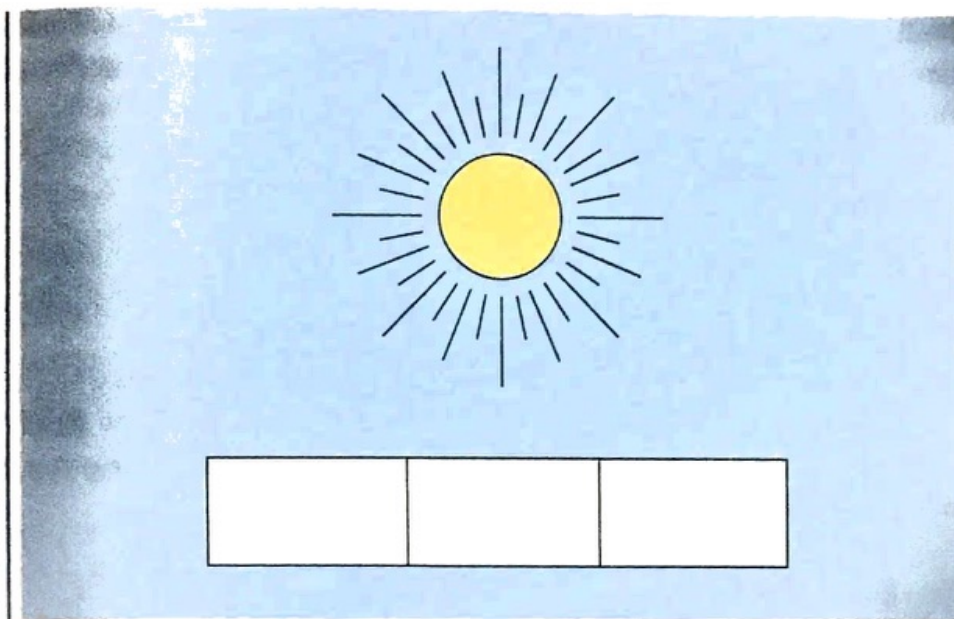
Teaching strategies for each of the following listening skills are described in the next sections.

- Phonological awareness of language sounds
- Understanding words and building a listening vocabulary
- Understanding sentences
- Listening comprehension
- Critical listening
- Listening to stories

11.10b Phonological Awareness of Language Sounds

Precursors for learning to read include recognizing phonemes, which are the sounds of our language. To be successful during the beginning stages of reading, children must hear individual phoneme sounds of the language and be aware that the words they are hearing are composed of individual sounds. Abilities in phoneme awareness prepare children for learning phonics.

1. **Nonsense.** Have children listen to and detect the slight change in the name of a familiar story or poem, such as “Baa, Baa, Purple Sheep” or “Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Car.”
2. **Clapping names.** Ask children to clap out syllables in names and words. For example, clap “Jenn-if-er” (three claps) or “Zip-pi-ty-doo-dah” (five claps).
3. **Finding things: Initial phonemes.** Use real objects or pictures of objects. Say the name of the object and ask children which picture or object begins with the same sound. For example, the initial consonant *m* may be presented with *milk*, *money*, *moon*, *man*, and *monkey*.
4. **Take away a sound.** Have children say their names or a word without the initial sound. For example, say, “___enjamin.” Children in the group must identify the whole word.
5. **Troll talk: Blending games.** The troll talks funny, saying the sounds of words separately. The children must guess the word by blending the sounds. For example, the troll utters the phonemes “ch-ee-z,” “p-e-n,” “f-u-n,” or “What is your n-a-m?” The children blend the sounds and identify the word.
6. **Nursery rhymes.** Read nursery rhymes or Dr. Seuss books to children. Look at the pictures and emphasize the rhyming elements. Children enjoy the many repetitions of nursery rhymes. Occasionally leave off the word that is the rhyming element and have the child say the word: “Jack and Jill went up the ___.”
7. **Using visual cues to segment speech sounds.** To help children recognize the speech sounds in words, put a picture representing a short word on a card. Draw a rectangle underneath the picture and divide it into the number of phonemes in the word. Have the child say the word slowly, putting a counter in each square as each sound is articulated. Figure 11.4



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FIGURE 11.4
A Segmenting Card for
Speech Sounds

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illustrates a segmenting card for the word *sun*. To use a segmenting card, obtain counters such as buttons or pennies. Place a picture with a short word on a card. Use words with the same number of letters as sounds (e.g., *cap*, *run*, and *lamp*). For sound counting, say the word slowly and have the child put down a counter for each sound. One set of cards can have both pictures and words, and another can have only the pictures (Blachman, 1997; Blachman et al., 2004).

8. **Rhyming riddles and games.** The teacher selects a group of words, one to rhyme with *head* and the other to rhyme with *feet*. Then the teacher asks a riddle so that the answer rhymes with either *head* or *feet*. The children then point to the part of their body that has a name that rhymes with *head* or *feet* to answer the riddle. For example, "When you are hungry, you want to ____." The children point to their *feet* because *eat* rhymes with it. Repeat by naming other parts of the body to elicit words that rhyme with *hand* or *knee* or with *arm* or *leg* (Jennings, Caldwell, & Lerner, 2010). Make up riddle rhymes and encourage students to make up others. One such example is, "I rhyme with *look*. You read me. What am I?" Have students listen to a series of three words, such as *ball*, *sit*, and *wall* or *hit*, *pie*, and *tie*, and tell which two words rhyme.
9. **Deleting sounds.** In this activity, children learn to take a word apart, remove one sound, and pronounce the word without that sound. For example, to remove a syllable: "Say *playground*. Now say it without *play*." It is more difficult to remove a phoneme: "Say *ball*. Now say it without the *b*." "Say *stack*. Now say it without the *t*."
10. **Beginning sounds.** Give three words like *astronaut*, *mountain*, and *bicycle*. Have the students tell which word begins like *milk*. Ask the children to think of words that begin like *Tom*, to find pictures of words that begin like *Tom*, or to find pictures of words that begin with the sound *T*. Show them three pictures of different objects (for example, a pear, a table, and a car) and ask the students to select the picture of an object with a name that begins like *Tom*.

- 3. Function words.** Function or structure words establish structural relationships between parts of a sentence and grammatical meaning. They include noun determiners, auxiliary verbal forms, subordinators, prepositions, connectors, and question words. These words cannot be taught in isolation; they must be taught within a sentence or phrase. You might, for example, teach words such as *on*, *over*, *under*, *behind*, *in front of*, *beneath*, *inside*, and *in* by placing objects *in* a box or *under* a chair while saying the entire phrase to convey the meaning.
- 4. Riddles.** Have students listen to a sentence and fill in the word that fits. For example, for the word *sled*, you might say, "I am thinking of a word that tells what you use to go down a snowy hill."

11.10e Listening Comprehension

Listening comprehension is similar to reading comprehension, but the information is received by hearing rather than by reading language.

- 1. Following directions.** Students listen to a set of directions for making something. Have the materials ready and ask students to follow the directions step by step.
- 2. Understanding a sequence of events.** Students listen to a story and are then asked to picture the different events in the order in which they happened. Pictorial series, such as comic strips, can help illustrate the events of the story, and you can mix the pictures and ask the students to place the series in the proper chronological order.
- 3. Listening for details.** The teacher can read a story aloud and ask detailed questions about it. Phrase questions to ask *who*, *what*, *when*, *where*, and *how*. The teacher can also read aloud an instructional manual on a subject, such as how to care for a new pet, and then ask students to list all the things that should be done.
- 4. Getting the main idea.** The teacher reads aloud a short but unfamiliar story and asks the students to make up a good title for the story. The teacher also reads aloud a story and asks the students to choose the main idea from 3 choices.
- 5. Making inferences and drawing conclusions.** The teacher reads part of a story that the students do not know and stops at an exciting point to ask the students to guess what happens next.

11.10f Critical Listening

Good listening means not only understanding what is said, but also being able to listen critically and to judge and evaluate what is being said.

- 1. Recognizing absurdities.** Tell a short story with a word or phrase that does not fit the story. Ask the students to discover what is funny or foolish about the story. For example, you could say, "It rained all night in the middle of the day," or "The sun was shining brightly in the middle of the night."
- 2. Listening to advertisements.** Have the students listen to advertisements and determine *how* the advertiser is trying to get the listener to buy the products. Adolescents enjoy detecting propaganda techniques.

11.10g Listening to Stories

Story reading is a useful strategy for building oral language experiences. Frequently reading stories to small groups of children with language problems

helps them to acquire language, figure out grammar, and learn the structure of stories (Jennings et al., 2010). Read stories frequently (at least once each day) to small groups of five to seven children. Involve all the children in the story by asking questions appropriate to their individual levels of language acquisition. Select predictable books (ones that have a pattern, refrain, or sequence) to read aloud, encouraging the children to repeat the predictable element. Select well-illustrated books (ones with many illustrations closely tied to the text) to read aloud. Throughout the story, ask the children thought-provoking questions. Read and reread favorite stories and let the children listen to them on CDs or tapes while following along in their books. Children can also watch a DVD of some stories.

Did You Get It?

What skill is frequently overlooked and neglected because a young child is "expected" to acquire it without the need for formal instruction?

- a. reading comprehension
- b. dictation
- c. listening
- d. imitating

11.11 Speaking

The activities in this section focus on speaking and include (1) stages of oral language development, (2) activities for natural language stimulation, (3) activities for teaching oral language, and (4) activities for improving the oral language of adolescents.

11.11a Stages of Oral Language Development

A general overview of a child's oral language development provides a perspective for viewing language deviations. A child's first attempt to use vocal mechanisms is the birth cry. In the short span of time from the birth cry to the full acquisition of speech, the child goes through several stages. Visit the student website for this text to see speech and language milestones for ages 1–6.

Babbling Vocalization during the first nine months of life is called *babbling*. During this stage, children produce many sounds, those in their native language as well as those found in other languages. Infants derive pleasure from hearing the sounds they make, and making such sounds gives them the opportunity to use the tongue, larynx, and other vocal apparatuses and to respond orally to others. Children who are deaf begin the babbling stage but soon stop because they receive no satisfaction from hearing the sounds they produce. Parents of children with language disorders often report that their child does not engage in the activities of babbling, gurgling, or blowing bubbles. These children should be encouraged to engage in such oral play to help them have the normal experiences of language acquisition.

Jargon By about 9 months, the babbling softens and becomes *jargon*. Children retain the phoneme sounds that are used in the language they hear. Their vocalizations reflect the rhythm and melody of the oral speaking patterns of others

around them. Although their intonational patterns may be similar to those of adults, children do not yet use words at this stage; it is as though they are pretending to talk. The parents of children who are diagnosed as having language disabilities often report that their children missed this stage of development.

Chinese children have been observed to have a mastery of basic Chinese intonation patterns by 20 months of age, a feat that is very difficult for an English-speaking adult to accomplish. Yi was a baby from China who was adopted at 10 months of age. Her adoptive parents became concerned about a possible language disorder because she displayed no signs of language play and did not engage in jargon. The problem was happily solved when the family had lunch at a Chinese restaurant. As soon as Yi heard people talking in Chinese, she spontaneously began “talking” in jargon, using Chinese sounds and intonational patterns.

Single Words Single words, such as *mama* and *dada*, normally develop between 12 and 18 months of age. The ability to *imitate* is evident at this stage, and children may well imitate sounds or words that they hear others say or that they themselves produce. Parents often report that their child with language disabilities did not engage in verbal imitation and repetition activities.

Two- and Three-Word Sentences Two- and three-word sentences, such as *Baby eat*, *Daddy home*, and *Coat off*, mark the next stage and follow the use of single words. Once children begin to use language, their skill in producing speech increases at a remarkably rapid pace.

Between 18 months, when a toddler first produces a two-word utterance, and age 3, many children learn the essentials of English grammar and can produce all linguistic types of sentences. The child’s oral language development at age 3 appears to be almost abrupt; the child has an extensive vocabulary and uses fairly complex sentence structures. During this stage, reports become rather hazy—partly because things develop so rapidly and partly because as observers, we do not understand the underlying mechanism of language acquisition. By the time children enter school at age 6, they are fairly sophisticated users of the grammar of their native language.

11.11b Problems in Language Acquisition

Most children acquire spoken language in a relatively natural and easy manner, without a need for direct teaching. Many children with learning disabilities and related mild disabilities, however, do not go through the typical developmental stages of language acquisition and exhibit difficulty in acquiring one or several properties of language. Some have difficulty with the phonology of language—differentiating and producing the appropriate sounds. Others have difficulty remembering words or structuring morphological rules. Some have difficulty with grammar or syntax and in putting words together to formulate sentences. Still others have a semantic difficulty in vocabulary development.

11.11c Activities for Natural Language Stimulation

Teachers, parents, and family members can take advantage of many opportunities in the daily life of a child in school or at home to provide natural language stimulation (Lerner, Lowenthal, & Egan, 2003).

1. **Expansion.** This is a technique to enlarge and enhance the child's language. In the conversation that follows, the adult expands a child's limited utterance.
Child: "Cookie."
Teacher or parent: "'Cookie? I want cookie.' Well, here it is!"
2. **Parallel talk.** In this technique, the adult tries to help language development by supplying language stimulation, even when no speech is heard. As the child plays, the teacher or parent guesses what the child is thinking and supplies short phrases describing the actions, thereby placing words and sentences in the child's mind for future reference. For example, if the child is banging a block on the floor, the teacher might say, "There's a block. If I hit the block on the floor, it makes a noise. A big noise. Bang, bang, bang. Block. My block. Bang the block."
3. **Self-talk.** In this technique, teachers model language by engaging in activities that do not directly involve the child. As teachers complete their own tasks and work in close proximity to the child, they can capitalize on opportunities to use meaningful language stimulation that the child can hear. For example, while cutting some paper, the teacher might say, "I have to cut the paper. Cut the paper. I need scissors. My scissors. Open, shut the scissors. Open, shut. I can cut, cut, cut."

11.11d Activities for Teaching Spoken Language

Activities for teaching spoken language skills include (1) building a speaking vocabulary, (2) learning language patterns, (3) formulating sentences, and (4) practicing spoken language skills.

Building a Speaking Vocabulary Some children with language disorders have an extremely limited vocabulary and a very specific, narrow, and concrete sense of the meaning of words. Throughout their lives, people have a much larger listening vocabulary than speaking vocabulary. Young children are able to understand words long before they are able to produce and use them. Children with a language disorder may be able to recognize words when they hear them, but they may be unable to use those words. Adults with known brain injuries may lose their ability to remember words easily as a result of damage to the language area of the brain. This condition, as noted earlier, is *dysnomia*, meaning the inability to remember the names of objects. Children may substitute another referent like *thing*, *whatsit*, or *that*, or a gesture or pantomime for the word they cannot bring to mind. The following activities can help children use words and build an accessible speaking vocabulary.

1. **Naming.** Have the children name common objects in or outside the room (chair, door, table, tree, or stone). Have a collection of objects in a box or bag. As each is removed, have the children name it. Have the children name colors, animals, shapes, and so forth. A collection or a file of good pictures of objects provides excellent teaching material. You can make pictures more durable and washable by backing them with cardboard and covering them with a self-adhesive transparent covering.
2. **Department store.** The game of department store (or hardware store, supermarket, restaurant, shoe store, etc.) gives the children an opportunity to use naming words. One child plays the role of the customer and gives orders to another, who is the clerk. The clerk collects pictures of the ordered items and names the items while giving them to the customer.

3. **Rapid naming.** Give the students a specified length of time, such as 60 seconds, to name all the objects in the room. Keep a record of the number of words named to note improvement. You can also ask the students to rapidly name objects in pictures. Another variation could be related to sports, the outdoors, pets, and so forth.
4. **Missing words.** Have the students say the word that finishes a riddle. For example: "Who delivers the mail? (*mail carrier*). I bounce a _____. (*ball*)" Read a story to the children, pausing at certain places to leave out words. Have the children supply the missing word. The use of pictures helps in recalling and naming the object.
5. **Word combinations.** Some words can best be learned as part of a group. When one member of the group is named, the children may be helped to remember the second; for example, *paper-pencil*, *boy-girl*, *hat-coat*, and *cats-dogs*. Series such as days of the week and months of the year may also be learned in this fashion.
6. **Troublesome words.** Be alert for troublesome words. When you note such a word, you may be able to give an immediate lesson on it and then plan for future exercises using that word.

Formulating Sentences Some children are able to use single words or short phrases but are unable to generate longer syntactic units or sentences. In acquiring language, children must learn to internalize sentence patterns so that they can generate new sentences. Some linguists have said that the child becomes a sentence-producing machine. To achieve this state, the child needs many skills, including the ability to understand language, to remember word sequences, and to formulate complex rules of grammar.

1. **Provide experiences with many kinds of sentences.** Start with the basic simple sentence and help the child generate transformations. For example, 2 basic sentences can be combined in various ways:

Basic sentence: "The children play games."

Basic sentence: "The children are tired."

Combined sentences: "The children who are tired play games."
"The children who play games are tired."

Sentence pattern variations can also be practiced:

Statements

Children play games.

Games are played by children.

Questions

Do children play games?

Are games played by children?

2. **Demonstrate structure words.** As mentioned earlier, words such as *on*, *in*, *under*, and *who*, which show the relationship among parts of the sentence, are best taught within the sentence. Close observation reveals that many children have hazy concepts of the meanings of such words. You can help students understand these concepts if you ask them to put blocks *in*, *on*, or *under* a table or chair, and then ask them to explain what they did.



Children with problems with spoken language need intervention to build their facility with spoken language.

Nick White/Photodisc/Getty Images

Words such as *yet*, *but*, *never*, and *which* often need clarification. Give a sentence with only the key or class words and then ask the students to add the structure words, as in this example:

“Jack—went—school—late.”

“Jack went to school, but he was late.”

- 3. Substitute words to form sentences.** Have students form new sentences by substituting a single word in an existing kernel sentence. For example:

“I took my *coat* off. I took my *boots* off.”

“The child is *reading*. The child is *running*. The child is *jumping*.”

- 4. Play a detective game.** To help students learn to formulate questions, hide an object and have students ask questions concerning its location until it is found.

Practicing Spoken Language Skills Students with a deficiency in spoken language need practice and many opportunities to use words and formulate sentences. The following activities can help students to practice their speaking skills.

- 1. Use spoken language activities.** A number of activities can be used to practice spoken language, such as conversations; discussions; radio or television broadcasts; show-and-tell sessions; puppetry; dramatic play; telephoning; choral speaking; reporting; interviewing; telling stories, riddles, or jokes; giving book reports; and role-playing.
- 2. Discuss objects.** Help the students tell about the attributes of an object—its color, size, shape, composition, and major parts—and to compare it with other objects.
- 3. Use categories.** Place items in a box that can be grouped to teach categories, such as toys, clothes, animals, vehicles, furniture, and fruit. Ask the students to find the ones that go together and tell what they are. You can vary this activity by naming the category and asking the students to find and name the items or by putting items together and asking which do not belong.
- 4. Finish stories.** Begin a story and let the students finish it. For example: “Betty went to visit her aunt in a strange city. When the plane landed, Betty could not see her aunt at the airport _____.”

11.11e Activities for Improving the Oral Language of Adolescents

Direct instruction in language also helps improve the communication skills of adolescents. Sometimes students at the middle school or high school levels appear, at first, to have adequate oral language skills, so their true needs are often overlooked. In addition, the secondary school curriculum emphasizes performance in written language more than in oral language, so their deficiencies may go undetected. On closer observation, however, we find that the spoken language of many secondary students is meager. Many of the methods described earlier work for adolescents, and the following methods are also useful.

- 1. Learning strategies.** Instruction in learning strategies is particularly useful for adolescents. They should be involved in setting the goals they are trying to reach and in selecting learning strategies to reach these goals. Self-monitoring, verbal rehearsal, and error analysis are the kinds of strategies that have been helpful in reading, and they can also be used for improving their spoken language.

2. **Building vocabulary.** Adolescents can expand their oral vocabularies by classifying and organizing words. For example, they can build lists or hierarchies of words on a topic. For example, for the topic of space exploration, they might use words that classify space vehicles, space inventions, first events that occurred in space, and so on. There are several approaches to this activity. The teacher can supply the words for classifying, the students can supply the words, or the teacher can provide a partial classification system and the students can complete it.
3. **Reciprocal questioning.** This is a variation of reciprocal teaching. Instead of the teacher asking the questions, the students ask the questions. The technique encourages the development of questioning skills.
4. **Sentence combining.** Say 2 short sentences aloud and ask students to think of all the ways in which the sentences can be combined into one sentence.
5. **Reviewing a group discussion.** Have students hold a short discussion on an assigned topic. After the discussion, ask them to analyze the effectiveness of the discussion. Did they stay on the topic? Did they allow others to talk? Did they direct the conversation to the right people? Did they follow through when a point was made?
6. **Explaining how to play a game.** Many students with learning disabilities have difficulty giving explanations and need practice in this activity. Such practice could consist of having students explain to another person how to play a game, how to make something, or how to do something. The recipient of the explanation can be a peer or a younger child. The students could first engage in verbal rehearsal to practice the explanation and then try to be sensitive to whether the listener understands and is able to respond to questions. Examples of subjects for explanation include the rules of a video game, how to cook and peel a hard-boiled egg, or how to play checkers or bingo.

Did You Get It?

At approximately 9 months, children are expected to progress out of the "babbling" stage. If they are displaying age and developmentally appropriate levels and skills, they should begin replacing babble with

- a. syntax
- b. chatter
- c. jargon
- d. vernacular

11.12 Assistive and Instructional Computer Technology for Oral Language

Computer technology can be helpful in teaching oral language skills. A few select computer software programs are described in this section. Before using these in the classroom, you may wish to review the National Educational Technology Standards for Students to determine how they can best be incorporated into your teaching. These standards were developed by the International Society for Technology in Education, <http://www.iste.org>.

- **Earobics.** This educational software program teaches auditory and phonological awareness skills. It uses a CD-ROM and six interactive games that teach oral language skills. Earobics has small positive effects on alphabets and potentially positive effect on reading fluency, according to the What Works Clearinghouse. (<http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwclintervention> report), Publisher: Cognitive Concepts, Inc., <http://www.cogcon.com>.

Did You Get It?

An effective computer-based learning program that presents six interactive games designed to teach oral language skills, focusing primarily on the development of auditory and phonological awareness, is

- Earobics
- Auditory Olympics
- Run, Jump, and Listen
- Ear I Am

I Have a Kid Who...

NOAH: A Child With a Language Delay

Noah G., age 5 years 6 months, was in kindergarten when his parents were contacted about problems he was having in school. The kindergarten teacher said that Noah did not seem to get along with the other children in class. He had no friends, would often strike out and hit his classmates, and was especially disruptive during the conversation time and story periods. He refused to participate in class activities, such as the puppet show that was being prepared for presentation to the parents. The kindergarten teacher said that when she did not know what Noah wanted, this situation often provoked a tantrum.

Mrs. G. said that Noah does not want to go to school and that it is sometimes difficult to get him to go to his class. In describing his developmental history, Mrs. G. said that Noah was born 6 weeks prematurely, weighing 4 lb 5 oz., and that he had been placed in an incubator for a short period. He was a colicky baby and had difficulty nursing. His motor development was average; he crawled at 8 months and walked alone at 12 months. Language development, however, was slow. He spoke his first word at 24 months and did not begin speaking in sentences until age 4. Because he could not communicate with others, he often resorted to pointing and grunting to make his desires known, and frequently Noah had temper tantrums when others did not understand what he wanted. Noah does not get along well with his 2 older sisters. Both sisters are very verbal and do not give Noah much chance to talk. When Noah is asked a question, his sisters answer before he can respond. Mrs. G. said that the doctor suspected a hearing loss when Noah was younger. He had many colds as a toddler and had a condition the doctor called *otitis media*, with fluid behind the

eardrums. The doctor put tubes in Noah's ears when he was 4, and his hearing tested normal after this procedure.

The speech teacher observed Noah during class and reported that he played alone most of the time. During the storytelling period and show-and-tell time, he wandered about the room. Often, when another child was playing with a toy, Noah would grab it. If the other child did not give the toy up readily, Noah would hit his classmate until he got it. He listened very little and did not talk to other children in the class. He seemed to tire of one activity very quickly, and would move on to another.

During the multidisciplinary evaluation, the speech teacher checked Noah's hearing with an audiometer, and his auditory acuity was normal. The school psychologist tested Noah with an IQ test, the Wechsler Preschool and Primary Scale of Intelligence-Revised. His full-scale IQ score was in the normal range (FSIQ 101), with his performance IQ score (PIQ 119) substantially higher than his verbal IQ score (VIQ 84). The IEP team identified Noah with a speech delay.

The case conference team recommended that Noah be placed in a developmental kindergarten and receive language therapy from the speech-language pathologist in the school, who would also collaborate with Noah's parents and kindergarten teacher to develop language activities for the home and the developmental kindergarten.

QUESTIONS

1. Why do you think Noah had temper tantrums?
2. What were Noah's strengths?
3. What were Noah's weaknesses?

Chapter Summary

- Components of the language system include phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics.
- English-language learners are students whose first language is not English and who exhibit limited English proficiency. Some children are both English-language learners and also have a learning disability or a related disability.
- Many children have problems in listening and understanding what they hear.
- Problems in listening include phonological awareness of language sounds, understanding words, and building a listening vocabulary, understanding sentences, critical listening, and listening to stories.
- Problems in speaking involve delayed speech, lack of phonological awareness, problems with temporal or acoustical processing, receptive language disorders, and expressive language disorders.
- Computer technology can be helpful in teaching oral language skills.

Questions for Discussion and Reflection

1. Describe the communication process. Discuss the kinds of problems that a student may encounter in communicating.
2. What are the components of language? Give an example of each. What kinds of problems can a student with learning disabilities or related mild disabilities encounter with each component of language?
3. Describe a few of the problems faced by students who are English-language learners.
Describe a few practices that have been shown to be helpful for English-language learners.
4. What is meant by the term *early literacy*? Describe a few methods that foster early literacy.
5. What is phonological awareness? Why is it important for young children to develop skills in phonological awareness?

Key Terms

- bilingual instruction (p. 323)
components of language (p. 315)
developmental aphasia (p. 321)
dysnomia (p. 321)
early literacy (p. 324)
English as a second language (ESL) method (p. 323)
expressive language disorders (p. 321)
immersion instruction (p. 323)
language delay (p. 317)
language disorders (p. 317)
morpheme (p. 315)
morphology (p. 315)
otitis media (p. 317)
phoneme (p. 315)
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pragmatics (p. 316)
primary language system (p. 310)
rapid automatized naming (RAN) (p. 319)
receptive language disorders (p. 321)
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Standard English (p. 315)
syntax (p. 315)
temporal acoustical processing (p. 319)
word finding (p. 319)