Name xxxxxxxxx   **Date** 3/29/09

Case Study #1 Typical Language Development

The purpose of the first case study is to examine the components of typical language development and practice analyzing information in the areas of receptive and expressive language that includes fluency, phonology, semantics, syntax, morphology, pragmatics, and discourse.

Developmental Analysis
This section demonstrates your ability to distinguish between receptive and expressive language as well as the components of language including the form (phonology, morphology, syntax), the meaning (semantics), the function (pragmatics), and the fluency (discourse).   Your analysis should show that you understand the distinction between speech articulation and other more complex language differences.

Phonology (receptive and expressive)

Phonology is the study of sounds in language. Individual sounds within language are called phonemes, of which there are forty-four within the English language. Receptive language, when it comes to phonology, involves being able to distinguish between different sounds and also being able to put the sounds together into comprehensible words. Expressive language, when it comes to phonology, involves the ability to put different words and sounds together to communicate effectively. According to the case study, five of the kindergarten students were struggling with literacy components, which include phonics. Specifically, these five students had lower scores in sound/letter identification and rhyming words until the teacher modified her instruction and class activities to include more work on oral language development
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Morphology (receptive and expressive)

Morphology is the study of morphemes, or word parts, that make up a whole word. A morpheme is the smallest unit of meaning within our language that can change the entire meaning of a word when added or taken away. Morphology is utilized in the understanding of tenses, suffixes, prefixes, plurals, and compound words. According to the case study, the five students who are struggling with literacy components are likely to be struggling with morphology. For example, it is very likely that these students tend to over-generalize grammar rules by saying such words as "foots," "mouses," or even phrases such as "I goed," or "We buyed." Such mistakes exemplify difficulty with expressive language because the idea is not being communicated with correct grammar. On the other hand, these students may be having difficulty understanding what certain tenses or other word changes mean, causing them to misinterpret directions or confuse meanings of stories.

Syntax (receptive and expressive)

Syntax within language involves grammar and word order within sentences. Without proper understanding of syntax, students may have difficulties with receptive language because they might not understand why something is worded a certain way. On the other hand, students may have difficulties with expressive language because they have not yet grasped the rules of grammar in their writing or speech. When this problem occurs, the students will come across obstacles in expressing what they mean and they will not be completely understood by the listener or reader. The five children in this case study are behind their peers in oral language skills, meaning they are very likely finding it difficult to understand the rules of syntax while reading, listening, writing, or speaking.

Semantics (receptive and expressive)

Semantics is vocabulary, or word meaning. It has been found that young children have a tendency to understand vocabulary more easily and quickly than they are to express it. When semantics is first taught to young children, it is contextualized, meaning it is concrete, and later becomes more and more decontextualized, or abstract. An example of decontextualized vocabulary would be words concerning the future, past, ideas, or concepts. The five children in this case study who are struggling with oral language skills could very well be having difficulty expressing their thoughts using appropriate vocabulary. They may become frustrated because they are unable to find the words they want to express what is on their mind. These students may also be struggling with comprehension of certain words that they have never heard before or which simply have not been internalized. Through practice, the students will be able to develop a more sophisticated understanding of semantics for their age level.

Pragmatics (receptive and expressive)

When it comes to language, pragmatics is the purpose, goal, and intent of communication. Pragmatics regarding expressive language would entail asking questions, expressing wants and needs, using persuasion, and teaching information. On the other hand, pragmatics regarding receptive language would entail understanding and learning answers to questions, learning new information, and being able to make connections between information. The students in this case study could have been having difficulty with receptive language because they are unable to determine the intent or purpose of communication directed toward them because they do not pick up on intonation or expression. Similarly, these students may not be able to accurately communicate to others because of their difficulties with pragmatics.

Discourse & Fluency (receptive and expressive)

Discourse involves the way in which sentences are organized into paragraphs, stories, ideas, and other bodies of written information. The five students in this case study are in kindergarten which means that they are about five or six years old. At this age, they are not expected to be able to write complete sentences or paragraphs but they should be learning the basics of this skill. In order for these students to develop skills in discourse, they will need to

develop their skills in fluency. Fluency involves the ability to effectively express and communicate ideas and information verbally to others. Students with difficulties in fluency either are unable to clearly articulate their thoughts verbally or are unable to completely understand what is being communicated to them. Holding conversations between students and between the teacher and students in the classroom can be a great way to practice these communication skills.

Cultural or Experiential Factors

The impact of cultural or experiential factors can be complex and subject to personal bias and interpretation. The section emphasizes the importance of posing questions and hypotheses that lead you to culturally sensitive responses as an instructional planner. Avoid blame or judgment; demonstrate insight into cultural experiences.

As a teacher, it would be completely unreasonable to assume that every student who walks through the classroom door has grown up with the resources necessary to build a foundation for skills in reading and speech. Students within a class can be extremely diverse regarding ethnicity, ability, socioeconomic status, and family structure. Depending on all of these factors, a student may or may not be advanced or even proficient in certain skills. By the same token, it would also be unreasonable to assume that one's students are completely blank slates waiting to be taught all skills. There is a happy medium that must be found and room must be left for consideration and modification for those students needing additional support. Those students who are growing up in homes where books, newspapers, or magazines cannot be found are at a disadvantage because they are less likely to be read to or to try to read on their own. It is extremely important for young children to be exposed to such opportunities so that they can develop reading comprehension skills and concepts about print. Lastly, it is also important for teachers to keep in mind that they might have a student in their classroom who is learning English as a second language which means there may not be a great deal of access to reading material in English at home.

Impact on Learning

Receptive and expressive language can impact academic and social/emotional development. In this section, you should make inferences based on your readings of the texts and journal articles. Academic areas can include reading, writing, mathematics, or other language based subject areas. Social/emotional development can include interactions with peers, teachers, and family members. It can also impact the ability of a student with exceptional learning needs to express one's needs and feelings and thus influence his/her behavior.

When a student is having difficulty with receptive and expressive language, many aspects of their education can be severely affected. A student who has insufficient receptive language skills is unable to fully understand spoken and written directions, questions being asked, the purpose of assignments, and information being taught. Any student in any classroom will come across all of the above and will have to master these abilities in order to be successful. In a math class, for example, students will have to listen to and read instructions for problems, understand word problems, and also interpret spoken lessons to solve equations. At the same time, a student must also be able to develop expressive language skills to be successful in different classes. Most

obviously, reading and writing courses require receptive and expressive language skills because students need to be able to understand what they are reading and be able to express their thoughts through their writing.

In addition to class work, students' receptive and expressive language skills also affect their intrapersonal skills among peers, teachers, and family. When a student is unable to understand directions, they may become frustrated with their teacher or parent trying to explain what the student is supposed to do. The relationships can become strained which can inhibit the student's learning and understanding of the subject area. Within the classroom, unfortunately, students who lack sufficient receptive and expressive language skills may be subject to teasing and bullying from their peers. Individuals with minor difficulties and also exceptional learning needs may be teased because they have fallen behind and are clearly not on the same level of understanding as their peers. Those students with exceptional learning needs may not be able to communicate to the teacher that they do not understand and can become frustrated, causing them to act out. Sometimes, a student who acts out in class may be doing so as a cry for help or a sign that they do not comprehend what is going on and are unable to verbalize their difficulties.

Strategies for Intervention

In this section, you should specify strategies that teachers, other professionals, paraprofessionals, and family members can use to strengthen language development through direct instruction or support the student through the use of accommodations/ modifications that can enhance language abilities. In this section, include citations (APA style) from the readings of the text and journal articles.

There are many strategies that teachers, other professionals, paraprofessionals, and family members can use to build on students' language development in the classroom and at home. If a student is having obvious difficulties with language development, teachers or professionals such as speech pathologists can administer certain tests such as the MONDO oral language assessment or they can collect information using an Oral Language Progress Checklist, (Special Connections, Scene 1). Once such tests are administered and a conclusion is made, the teacher can follow up with curriculum modification or accommodation that will be appropriate for the type and severity of disability or difficulty the student may have. For those who are having difficulty with language development, the teacher should advise family members to expose the child to oral and written language as much as possible. These children should be encouraged to practice reading aloud with family members to practice expressive language skills and should also be read to so that they can enhance their receptive language skills.

Within the classroom, the teacher can enhance his or her students' already existing language skills through direct instruction strategies such as reading aloud, sharing, and "small targeted group instruction," (Special Connections, Scene 3). When students are asked to share their work, the students sharing are working on expressive language skills and those who are listening and then asked to respond are working on both their receptive and expressive language skills. When teachers use this strategy, it is important that all students are able to play both roles. Reading passages aloud also allows students to work on both receptive and expressive skills because they need to follow along with what is being read and they need to be able to verbalize what they are reading. When it comes to "small targeted group instruction," teachers are able to focus on the abilities of their students in small groups which may be easier than working with the entire class. Sometimes, students need the individual attention from the teacher and other professionals so that they can work on the areas in which they are lacking the most.