Enhancing Language and Communication for Children and Adolescents through Storytelling and Vocabulary Enrichment

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www.elciss.com
Background to ELCISS:

- Little clinical research into adolescent language impairment

- Little information exists on the nature and prevalence of language impairment in secondary school students

- Limited speech and language therapy in secondary schools in the UK (Leahy and Dodd, ‘02) and beyond (Larson et al., ’93)

- This lack of service has been acknowledged in a government report on specialist services to children with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) in the UK (Bercow, 2008)
“…services tended to ‘disappear’ over time…on transfer to secondary school.

Indeed we found minimal evidence of services for young people at secondary school and beyond.”

“Secondary schools have been ignored for a long time.

There is very little outside help for students with language problems.

You really have to have huge problems, be at the very bottom, to get any help at all, and even then it is very little.”

Special Educational Needs Coordinator, London
What do we know?

‘becoming a native speaker is a rapid and highly efficient process, but becoming a proficient speaker takes a long time’

(Berman, 2004, p. 10)
Some interesting differences have been identified by Nippold (1998) in later language development in the processes important for language development including:

- differences in *language input*
- *metalinguistic* competence
- *abstract* understanding
- taking other people’s *perspective*
Sources of input for language learning. For the majority of preschool children, the primary source of input for language stimulation is **spoken communication**.

For most school-age children, **written communication** plays an increasingly important role.

At around 10-12 years, children’s reading skills enhance language and facilitate the learning of complex vocabulary, syntax, and figurative meanings.

The ability to read fluently and accurately allows acquisition of new linguistic information and world knowledge.

This enables the student to pursue personal interests and enhances language development allowing for greater individualistic development.
The second contrast in processes between early and later language development concerns the role of **metalinguistic awareness**, the ability to reflect upon and analyse language as an object in itself.

Language development (as well as literacy) in the school age child is heavily dependent upon metalinguistic competence (van Kleeck, 1984; 1994), and children of around 6-7 years begin to use their metalinguistic awareness across all linguistic domains: phonological, morphological, syntactic, semantic and pragmatic (Gombert, 1992).
School age children are often required to use their metalinguistic competence to identify homophones (see, sea) (semantic awareness) as well as to judge the grammaticality of certain sentences (syntactic awareness).

Metalinguistic awareness enables the student to determine the meaning of figurative utterances such as metaphors and idioms, by allowing them to analyse the word or phrase within the linguistic context and checking their interpretations using the non-linguistic context and world knowledge (pragmatic awareness).
The child’s increasing ability to think abstractly is another contrast between early and later language development.

As children move from primary to secondary school, there is a gradual transition from concrete to abstract reasoning.

This increasing ability to think abstractly is reflected in language development. School age children are able to acquire new words that represent abstract concepts (for example, democracy, welfare).

They become less literal in their interpretations of language and are able to consider non-literal meanings more readily.
A school age child for example, will be able to heed his parent’s warning to ‘pull up his socks’ and work harder whereas the younger child will be more prone to make a literal interpretation by pulling up his socks.

Children of around 7 and 8 years are able to tell and laugh at jokes and riddles whose humour stems from phonological, lexical or syntactic ambiguity whilst the student of 13 years is able to understand the more sophisticated ambiguity and double meanings used in advertising.
Another important contrast between early and later language development, one that is related to abstractness and crucial to aspects of pragmatic development, is the ability to take the social perspective of other people.

School age children are more aware of thoughts, feelings and needs of other people and of the consequences of their own communicative behaviours.

They show greater ability to adjust the content and style of their speech to different communicative contexts and will for example demonstrate code switching through selective use of slang language with peers but not with parents and teachers.
There are also some unique differences that occur in the secondary school context that provide additional challenges for our young people.
There are many demands placed on the school age child in middle and secondary schools. These include:

- dealing with multiple teachers with varied teaching styles and modes of communication
- using already automatized skills (e.g. reading fluently) to gain information from written material
- working independently with little help from the teacher
- completing homework and assignments independently
- expressing oneself in writing in various formats
- taking notes independently
- using self and comprehension monitoring and metacognition to prioritise classroom work
mastering increasingly decontextualised and abstract materials
integrating information from a variety of sources
expressing oneself in writing in various formats
using logical and critical thinking to evaluate information
being able to use working memory to process large pieces of information and follow complex multi-step instructions
being able to retrieve prior knowledge and integrate and use them in one task simultaneously (for example, use of punctuation, spelling conventions, format of writing a business letter)

It is important to consider how these differences inherent in the secondary school context and in the requirements of later language learning impact on the student with language and communication difficulties.
Early language and communication impairments DO NOT disappear and often persist into adolescence and adulthood (Conti-Ramsden et al., 2001; Stothard et al, 1998; Clegg et al., 2005; Snowling et al., 2006)

These difficulties can significantly restrict the achievements of students academically and socially in school, and has implications for the young person’s quality of life and life opportunities.
Language impairments are often persistent and pervasive.

Children with SLI are at increased risk for literacy and academic difficulties, both decoding and comprehension (Bishop and Adams, 1990; Catts, 1993; Joffe, 1998; Dockrell & Lindsey, 2000; Snowling et al, 2000; Catts et al., 2001; Clegg et al, 2005)

They continue to have significant language difficulties into adolescence and adulthood (Hall & Tomblin, 1978; Aram et al., 1984; Beitchman et al., 1996; Stothard et al., 1998; Conti-Ramsden et al., 2001; Clegg et al., 2005)
They show lower **self perception, self esteem, confidence** (Dockrell & Lindsey, 2000; Lindsey et al, 2002) – these studies focus on school-age children, limited info on older child and adult.

They show higher incidence of long-term **behavioural and social difficulties** (Botting et al., 2000); reported difficulties making friends (Clegg et al., 2005).

Few studies have followed up **vocational outcomes** high dismissal from work and high incidence of manual and unskilled labour (Clegg et al, 2005).
In a follow up study of the social, emotional, academic and vocational outcomes of 16 young adults (16-19 years) diagnosed with SLI in their preschool years compared with age-matched controls through questionnaires and semi-structured interviews, we found (Joffe, Proom and Mitchell, 2006):

- The SLI group performed significantly lower than controls on receptive grammar and vocabulary and expressive grammar.

- They were significantly poorer on single word reading, non-word reading and reading comprehension.

- The SLI group rated their specific communication behaviours significantly lower than the controls.
Michael Rutter and colleagues report on a landmark 28-year follow up of individuals with an early diagnosis of severe LI. Their findings show (Howlin et al., 2000); (Clegg et al., 2005):

- By the time that they reach adulthood, individuals with a severe LI show even more **social impairment** than they did in middle childhood.

- Mean scores on receptive vocabulary at age 36 was at the 12-year level.
As social demands increased with age, **social deficits** became more apparent.

At the 36-year follow-up, the average reading level was about 9 years.

There were increasing similarities with age between SLI and autism which arose because the **social and communicative deficits** in the SLI group became more manifest.

The SLI group showed ‘**theory of mind**’ deficits that were similar to those seen in individuals of normal IQ with autism.
Conti-Ramsden and Durkin (2008) conducted an interesting study to explore behavioural independence in young people, as this is a key element of adolescent development.

- The study explores the impact of language ability on independence.

- They report data from a longitudinal and follow-up study of 120 adolescents with a history of specific language impairment (SLI), as well as from a cross sectional study of a comparison group of 118 typically developing (TD) young people.
Parental and self-report measures were used to examine independent functioning related to everyday living at the end of compulsory education (16 years of age).

Results showed that adolescents with SLI are less independent than their TD peers.

Level of independence is associated with poor early language and poor later literacy skills.

They concluded that language and literacy play a larger role in adolescent independent functioning than nonverbal abilities in both TD adolescents and adolescents with SLI.
Johnson et al (2010) recently reported a 20-year follow up of a group of children with language impairments

The aims of this study were to:

- profile the family, educational, occupational, and quality of life outcomes of young adults at 25 years of age ($N = 244$) from the Ottawa Language Study, a 20-year, prospective, longitudinal study of a community sample of individuals with ($n = 112$) and without ($n = 132$) a history of early speech and/or language impairments

- to use data from earlier phases of the study to predict important, real-life outcomes at age 25.
Results of the study include:

- At age 25, young adults with a history of language impairments showed poorer outcomes in multiple domains (communication, cognitive/academic, educational attainment, and occupational status) than their peers without early communication impairments and those with early speech-only impairments.

- However, those with language impairments did not differ in subjective perceptions of their quality of life from those in the other 2 groups.
Objective outcomes at age 25 were predicted differentially by various combinations of multiple, interrelated risk factors, including poor language and reading skills, low family socioeconomic status, low performance IQ, and child behavior problems.

Subjective well-being, however, was primarily associated with strong social networks of family, friends, and others.
Speech, language and communication impairments impact on ALL aspects of the education curriculum AND the child’s overall development: academic, physical, social, psychological, emotional, vocational
Many children with language and communication difficulties are taught in **mainstream schools** (Lindsay et al., 2005) - about 2 students in every class - **Inclusion policy**

- This puts an **additional burden on teaching staff** required to deliver the curriculum

- We don’t know a lot about **what works** with regards to Speech and Language intervention in secondary school

- This makes it difficult to **rationalise** for more support

- Urgent need to develop a **strong evidence-base** for intervention with older children
An effective way of supporting language and communication in this group is needed taking into account:

- limited SLT resources
- limited assessment tools
- age of the children
- educational context
- pervasiveness of impairments
- impact across education curriculum and beyond, i.e. home environment, peer interactions
What are the most effective ways of working with children with language impairments in the secondary school context?
What is the evidence base for working with older students with speech, language and communication needs?

VERY LIMITED

BUT there is emerging evidence....
Some evidence suggests that intervention with secondary school-age children is effective (Larson et al., 1993).

- **Leahy and Dodd, 2002**: improvement across measures of language after three different intervention programmes: phonological awareness, language comprehension and expressive language.

- **Stringer, 2006**: secondary school-aged students with language disorder and behaviour difficulties benefited from group therapy focusing on *narratives* and *social skills*.

- **Joffe, 2006**: language impaired secondary school students improved on areas of language after a short intervention targeting *storytelling* and *vocabulary* training.
Joffe, 2008; 2009: narrative and vocabulary enrichment intervention delivered to secondary school-aged students with language impairments by teaching assistants with SLT support. Benefits reported by TAs, school SENCO’s, children and in some tests of language (www.elciss.com)

Ebbels and colleagues, 2001; 2007; 2009, 2012: In a series of therapy studies with secondary school-aged students with severe language impairments, improvements are reported in a number of grammatical and syntactic areas (passives, wh-questions, past tense morphology, verb argument structure) and in word finding abilities.
Randomised control trial funded by the Nuffield Foundation
www.elciss.com
AIMS

- To profile the language abilities of a group of year 8 (12-year old) students in mainstream secondary school with below or low average educational attainment in English at KS2 (year 6)

- Train teaching assistants (TAs) to deliver language intervention support (vocabulary and narrative) to secondary school students with Language Impairments (LI)
AIMS

- Explore the effectiveness of three language intervention programmes delivered by Teaching Assistants in schools:
  - narrative programme
  - vocabulary enrichment programme
  - combined narrative and vocabulary enrichment programme

- Whole School training and awareness raising of Speech, Language and Communication and SLCN
Why Storytelling?

- an integral part of our everyday life

- universal, forms part of our common humanity

- Narrative ability is required in the school context, in social settings as a means of gaining peer group acceptance

- The UK National Curriculum places great emphasis on speaking fluently and appropriately in different contexts and adapting language for a range of purposes and audiences

- Children are constantly exposed to stories in various forms (cartoons, TV programmes, movies, and books).
It is particularly in secondary school, as adolescents are encouraged to integrate their linguistic and cognitive skills into coherent meaningful discourse, that the requirements for storytelling become most evident.

It is no longer appropriate at this stage to target separate areas of language in isolation.

Individuals with LI have been found to have significant difficulties with storytelling (Liles, 1993).

Narrative ability has been found to be a significant predictor of later academic performance (Fazio, Naremore, & Connell, 1993) and has been recommended as a tool for identifying communicative competence (Botting, 2002).
Why Vocabulary enrichment?

- The growth of vocabulary is an important aspect of development during the adolescent period (Nippold, 1998; ‘04)

- It is estimated that children need to acquire about 3000 new words per year

- Vocabulary knowledge has been viewed as a central role in cognitive development, particularly in the development of literacy (Cunningham and Stanovich, 1997)

- Research has shown that early vocabulary knowledge predicts later success in reading and writing
Vocabulary at age 5 was found to be a very strong predictor of the qualifications achieved at school leaving age and beyond (Feinstein and Duckworth, 2006).

Vocabulary training is an important therapeutic objective considering that during the school years, children encounter new words of increasing complexity and abstractness with little direct time devoted to vocabulary instruction in school (Dockrell and Messer, 2004).
Why use Teaching Assistants?

- Students with SLCN are increasingly being taught in mainstream schools
- Responsibility for meeting their needs is on teaching staff
- Other adult/s in the classroom take on supportive and teaching roles
- They often work with students with SENs, but receive little support or attention
- The needs of the most vulnerable students may often be dependent on the least trained member of the team: the Teaching Assistant (TA) (Jarvis, ‘03)
Emergent role of TAs: dynamic and rapid (Armstrong, 2008)

England: 2005: a ratio of 1 TA to 2.9 teachers

Rapid transformation in role:

classroom helper teaching support (Groom, 2006)

TAs have an important role but one that is not fully recognised or supported (Armstrong, 2008)
How we recruited the children?

2 stage process

Educational Test in English at 11 years: 3 areas – Reading, Writing, Spelling

Standard assessment tests (SATS) are national assessments for all pupils in the UK given at 7-years); 11-years, 14-years in English, Maths and Science

Direct assessment of non-verbal ability and language
PARTICIPANTS

- 21 Teaching Assistants from 21 secondary schools in two London regions

- 358 secondary school students (12;6 years; SD = 3.8) with primary **language impairment** were randomly assigned to one of 4 intervention groups:
  - **GROUP 1**: storytelling programme (N = 89)
  - **GROUP 2**: vocabulary enrichment programme (N = 89)
  - **GROUP 3**: a combination of both types of training (N = 88)
  - **GROUP 4**: a delayed group – control group (N = 85)
STUDENT PROFILES

- Mean age: **12.08** years

- Male : Female  226:132 (63% : 37%)

- Only **3.4%** of this group have a Special Educational Needs statement, i.e. a **legal requirement for additional specialist support**

- **60%** - scored below average in the English class-based test

- **40%** - scored low average in the English class-based test
**Non verbal abilities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wechsler Intelligence Scale Subtests</th>
<th>Standard scores (mean = 10, SD = 3)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Picture Completion</td>
<td>8.2 (2.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Picture Arrangement</td>
<td>7.5 (3.6)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Block Design</td>
<td>7.1 (3.1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coding</td>
<td>8.5 (2.9)</td>
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<td>Digit Span</td>
<td>8.5 (2.7)</td>
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</table>
### Language abilities

#### Understanding Vocabulary – single word level

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Range</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>British Picture Vocabulary Scale</strong></td>
<td>85.1 (12.3)</td>
<td>44-144</td>
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<tr>
<td>Standard scores (average = 100, SD = 15)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Test of Word Knowledge (TOWK)</strong> receptive vocabulary</td>
<td>7.5 (2.2)</td>
<td>3-17</td>
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<td>average = 10, SD = 3:</td>
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## Expressive Language abilities

**Expressive Language (average = 10, SD = 3)**

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<tr>
<th>Test of Word Knowledge – expressive vocabulary</th>
<th>5.7 (1.7)</th>
<th>range: 3-13</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Clinical Evaluation of Language Fundamentals – Recalling Sentences</strong></td>
<td>6.3 (2.8)</td>
<td>1-15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CELF - Formulated Sentences</strong></td>
<td>6.0 (3.0)</td>
<td>1-14</td>
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</table>
## Language abilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Multiple Meanings/Figurative Language</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>Age Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Test of Word Knowledge – multiple contexts</td>
<td>6.1 (2.1)</td>
<td>3-12</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOWK – figurative language</td>
<td>6.1 (1.8)</td>
<td>3-13</td>
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Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (Goodman, 1997): behavioural screening tool exploring behaviour, emotions and relationships

- **Hyperactivity Scale**: restless, overactive, cannot stay still for long; “constantly fidgeting, easily distracted

- **Emotional Symptoms Scale**: often complains of headaches, stomach-ache or sickness, has many worries, often unhappy

- **Conduct Problems Scale**: often has temper tantrums, is obedient, fights with other children or bullies them, lies
Peer Problems Scale: solitary, tends to play alone, picked on or bullied by other children, gets on better with adults than with other children

Prosocial Scale: considerate of other people's feelings, shares readily with other children, helpful, volunteers to help others

Scoring:

In typical population, 80% of children in the community are normal, 10% are borderline, and 10% are abnormal
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Borderline Abnormal</th>
<th>Abnormal</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>STUDENT (N = 348)</td>
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<td>Total Difficulties</td>
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INTERVENTION

- Delivered in groups by TAs trained by the research team

- Each session: approximately 45 minutes given 3 times/week over 6-week period = total of 18 sessions

- TAs were given a 41/2 -day training

- Ongoing support and detailed therapy manuals were provided

- Standardised and non standardised measures of language were taken at pre and post intervention to assess change
Underlying Principles Across Both Interventions

- **Explicit understanding of aims** and learning objectives of the programme – including reasons for their participation
- Role and impact of **language and communication**
- **Self generated** aims, targets and outcomes
- **Evaluation** of strengths and areas of need – self and other
- Focus on **facilitation and elicitation**
- Emphasis on **independent thinking** and **problem resolution**
- **Group interaction skills** – respect, integrity, acceptance, flexibility and confidentiality
- **RELEVANCE** and application – transfer and generalisation
- Emphasise **FUNCTIONAL** outcomes
Guidance given to TAs conducting the programmes

- Encourage **self monitoring** and **evaluation**
- Ask **focused questions**
- Build on the **students’ experiences**
- Make the sessions as **functional and real** as possible
- Emphasise **independent learning** – make relevance explicit
- Keep the students **motivated**
- Students generated **group rules**
Narrative Intervention

- Understanding and telling stories
- focus on **story structure** and story description using a **story planner**
- Different narrative genres
- Story sequencing
- Role of active listening
- Dramatic effects in storytelling – use of linguistic and paralinguistic features
RATIONALE FOR THE PROGRAMME

Learning about how to **listen** and **tell stories** will enhance performance in the following ways in the following contexts:

- In the classroom
- In the playground
- At home
- In social settings
- Participating in sports and other hobbies

- Make the rationale behind the intervention explicit
The narrative intervention included the following types of narratives:

- **Script**: (a general description of what usually happens in an event, e.g. directions, a recipe, science experiment)
- **Fictional**: (a made up story which draws on some knowledge of the event in the story either through general event knowledge, memory of a single episode or memory of another fictional story)
- **Personal**: (an account of specific events that have been personally experienced)

A range of narrative genres were used including stories from books, television, films, magazines, poems, and songs.
EMPHASIS ON ACTIVE LISTENING

- What are features of active listening that effective communicators use routinely and unconsciously?

- Allow students to identify good examples of active listening and where this breaks down

- Discuss the repercussions of these breakdowns
Use of a **story planner** to introduce the idea that every story has a **story structure** with key elements.

- Planner can be used in **all classes** – oral and written work.
- And to prepare **homework**.

- Help **identify the elements** of a story. Provide support in identifying what makes a **good** beginning, middle and end to a story and facilitates the **production of interesting, coherent and well-structured stories**.
Vocabulary Enrichment Intervention

- Key **concepts** and **vocabulary** through word associations, categorisation, mind mapping and word-building
- Word etymology, synonyms, antonyms, **multiple meanings**, definitions
- Idiomatic and **figurative** language
- **Dictionary** and **Thesaurus** Use

Narrative and Vocabulary Enrichment Intervention

- Combination of areas covered in both programmes
Vocabulary enrichment programme: Encouraging independent vocabulary and concept learning in children in the education context
Vocabulary learning is NOT an all or nothing activity.

Emphasis of the programme was teaching vocabulary, and giving as much information about the word and concept so that the student forms a deep and solid understanding of the word.

The deeper the understanding, the easier s/he will find to store and remember it as well as retrieve it when needed.
Themes and Concepts of the Vocabulary enrichment programme included:

- Who/what are we? – Living and Non-living organisms
- Who are we? – The Human Body
- Where do we live? - Planet Earth and the Solar System
- What do we do? - Occupations
- What do we feel? – Emotions
- How do we keep ourselves & our world health – Healthy Living
- Idiomatic language and multiple meanings
The Vocabulary enrichment programme incorporated:

- Word Etymology
- Word families
- Identification of literal versus idiomatic expressions
- Independent word learning strategies
- Word categorisations
- Use of word maps
- Use of the dictionary and thesaurus
- Strategies for word finding
Teaching Vocabulary in the way we typically learn words...

- Direct Instruction
- Contextual Abstraction
- Morphological Analysis

Nippold, 2007
STRUCTURE OF WORDS

PREFIX

ROOT

SUFFIX
**Example 1:** knowing the meaning of the *root* of the word.

If you were reading a text, and came across the unfamiliar word, ‘carnivore’, you could try and see if you were able to recognise any part of this word. Part of this word is ‘carn’ and the meaning of this root word is *meat*.

So ‘carn’ = ‘meat’. This may help you take a guess at what this word means. A carnivore is an animal that eats meat.

Think about another related word with which you are familiar and eat quite often, i.e. *chilli con carne*! Same root and similar meaning, a type of meat dish. Can you see the pattern?

From ELCISS resources
WORD DETECTIVE

When encountering a new word that you do not know, play the detective and try the following steps:

1. LOOK AT THE WORD CAREFULLY AND SAY IT ALOUD.
   BREAK IT UP INTO ITS INDIVIDUAL SYLLABLES AND SOUNDS.

2. SAY THE ENTIRE SENTENCE ALOUD.

3. LOOK AT THE WORD IN MORE DETAIL. DO YOU RECOGNISE A PART OR PARTS OF THE WORD (ROOT, PREFIX, SUFFIX)?

4. WHAT PART OF SPEECH IS THE WORD (NOUN, VERB, ADJECTIVE, ADVERB, PRONOUN, PREPOSITION, ARTICLE)?

5. USE THE IMMEDIATE LINGUISTIC CONTEXT: LOOK AROUND THE WORD AT THE OTHER WORDS IN THE SENTENCE AND AT THE OTHER SENTENCES IN THE PARAGRAPH.
Word finding Strategies

- Can be helpful in providing cues for students who cannot RETRIEVE the word

‘I don’t know the words but I can hum the tune.’
Strategies to help with word finding

- Phonemic (sound) cueing
- Semantic (meaning) cueing
- Description
- Circumlocution
- Visualisation
- Use of gesture
- Pointing
- Writing
- Drawing
- Substituting another word that means the same
- Using sentence completion
Results of the intervention

- Our pre- and post-intervention outcome measures included standardised and non-standardised measures of narrative and vocabulary abilities.

- Little changes in performance on the standardised measures.

- However, significant improvement was noted on non-standardised measures of narrative and vocabulary at t.
The vocabulary group and combined group performed significantly better than the controls on vocabulary measures.

No difference between the narrative group and control group on the vocabulary measures.

The narrative group and combined group performed significantly better than the controls on narrative measures.

There is no significant difference between the vocabulary group and control group on the narrative tasks.
Thus we have found **differential effects** on the non-standardised measures of narrative and vocabulary after the intervention with non-standardised measures.

Standardised measures were not sensitive enough to pick up these changes.
Group by time interaction effect \([P = .007]\); **vocabulary & combined groups** performed better than **control** at time 2
Group/time interaction effect \[P = 0.022\]; combined group performed better than control at time 2
Group/time interaction effect \[P = .012\], **vocabulary and combined groups** better than **control group** at time 2
Group/time interaction effect (P = .035): **Narrative group better than control** at time 2 (P = .033); Similar trend for combined group, just short of significance (P = .087)
Group/time interaction effect (P<.0001): **Narrative group** better than **vocabulary group** and control at time 2 (P=.034)

**Object Story Narrative Task**
Now let us look what the children themselves have said about the programme...
“It helped me to bring out my language properly and I enjoyed it too.”

“I really like this. It turns my day around. It made me happy.”
I really liked the story telling best, it helps me with my talking and I hope we are going to do it again.”

That lesson has made my day. I don’t get to do this in class. I can’t get to express myself in class.”
Things I liked about the sessions...

- I liked it because it’s a **fun** way of learning
- We do **group** work
- You get more say
- It was a **smaller group**
- It is easier to talk
- People **take notice** of what we want
- **Learning** about things in more detail
Things I liked about the sessions…

• Didn’t have to worry about getting something wrong
• We learned a lot of things that are useful
• I felt confident and started socialising more
• Working in a team
• Learned many things I didn’t know before
The ELCISS Sessions have helped me with:

- Making up stories more exciting
- New **word meanings** in English and Science
  - Talking to people
  - My **confidence**
  - In the **future** with work
  - Everything
- Write better stories with descriptive language
  - **Socialising**
  - **Concentrate** better
  - Understanding other people
"The training has given me the knowledge and understanding to effectively support students with language and communication impairments. It has also given me greater insight into understanding the difficulties students encompass in all aspects of their everyday lives.

I have been able to give students the strategies they need to make learning more accessible to them and to make learning fun. The students involved have benefited greatly from being part of the programme and being part of a small group learning new skills.

Some have gained more confidence in social situations and are happier in class because of this. Others have gained academically as well. This can be seen in their achievements on the progress tracker for their year group."

Sharon, TA; Redbridge
“The intensive training not only taught me about the difficulties children have with their language and communication but also gave me the skill to deliver the therapy sessions with confidence.

The students taking part really enjoyed their time in our sessions and they knew they were learning as well. They loved being part of a small group where they were able to ‘express themselves’ as one student told me. They knew that if they said something wrong they would not be laughed at. They got the chance to discuss and to evaluate what we were doing.

These are the children that are great at fading into the background so as not to be noticed and asked to contribute. Not only has this project helped the children taking part I feel it has helped all the children I support in lessons.” Pat, TA; Barking & Dagenham
“It (ELCISS) has been a turning point in my career, the fantastic training has given me an in-depth understanding of the needs of students with SLCNs.

I have witnessed the impact this therapy has had on these students. In addition to enhancing language and vocabulary skills; elciss has helped with the broader, sometimes immeasurable aspects of education such as debating, problem solving, accepting their own and others’ differences through effective communication.

It has shown that the most **disengaged students**, that are all too typically seen on the wrong side of the classroom door, have embraced the opportunity to access learning through communication, verbal participation, effective visual resources and the use of all the senses, to name but a few strategies.”

Tracey, TA; Barking & Dagenham
Perspectives from Local Authority representatives

“The impact of ELCiSS has been far reaching with large numbers of TA’s trained to deliver SLT programmes. There will be a huge knock on effect for us as the confidence of our TA’s has increased to such an extent that we will be able to develop their skills of delivery even further and pass their knowledge and experience onto other members of staff. It has raised the profile of SLCNs in schools not only with the TA’s but also with whole school staff, which will have an effect on the perception of SLCNs as a whole school issue”.

Mandy, Redbridge LEA
“It has had a positive impact in raising the profile of speech language and communication skills in secondary school for children and young people whose needs have long been neglected or unidentified. It has had a noticeable impact on staff skill, knowledge and confidence. Pupils have responded positively to the materials and are using the strategies and skills taught in the wider context. Parents report positive progress in communication and confidence. It has highlighted the SLCNs of pupils previously identified as having behavioural or literacy difficulties. It has created an interest that will accelerate the process of change…” enhancing their life opportunities.”

Karen, Barking & Dagenham LEA

SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS OF FINDINGS

Children identified in secondary school with language and communication difficulties showed:

- Poorer expressive than receptive abilities

- Difficulties with expressive syntax and integration of all language components (CELF FS and RS)

- Difficulties with idiomatic language, figurative understanding and multiple meanings

- Broader difficulties noted: hyperactivity, behaviour prosocial behaviour, emotional, peer relations
SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS OF FINDINGS

- Our findings indicate exciting and positive impacts of the intervention from the perspectives of the students, TAs, teachers, schools, Local Authorities

- Differential effects were found as a result of the intervention

- The Wider whole school training programme is in progress and teacher response and uptake is very positive

- Measurement: standardised and non standardised

- Measurement: diagnostic vs outcome measures

- Broader outcomes across settings

- Sustainability

- Social and life skills
FUTURE PLANS

- Development of new programme on **social communication and life skills** with excluded students and young offenders – targeting behaviour and language

- Outcome Measures - Development of the **POAT** tool (with Nabiah Sohail) – Profiling Outcomes Across Time

- Work directly with teachers and teaching assistants **IN the classroom** to enhance learning and language and observe generalisation of skills and transfer to functional daily aspects of living
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- And their families

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