NARRATIVE INTERVENTION IN A CHILD WITH AUTISM: PRELIMINARY RESULTS
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Introduction

- Narratives are a primary form of communication
  - Strong narrative skills are important for academic and social success
  - Used to inform, socialize, entertain, and summarize (McGregor, 2000)

- Children with autism display deficits in telling personal and fictional narratives (Capps, Losh, & Thurber, 2000; Losh & Capps, 2003; Loveland, McEvoy, & Tunali,1990; Tager-Flusberg, 1995)
  - Shorter with less complex syntax and syntactic diversity (Capps, et al., 2000; Tager-Flusberg, 1995)
  - Contain twice as many morphological errors (Capps, et al., 2000)
  - Use a narrower range of evaluative statements (Capps, et al., 2000)
  - Lack causal statements (Capps, et al., 2000; Tager-Flusberg, 1995)
  - Include more bizarre, inappropriate, and irrelevant utterances (Loveland et al., 1990)

- Narrative Intervention
  - No research on improving narrative skills of children with autism
  - However, narrative intervention has targeted these populations:
    - Children with language disorders (Hayward & Schneider, 2000; Klecan-Aker, 1993; Swanson, Fey, Mills, & Hood, 2005)
    - Children with reading disabilities (Westerveld and Gillon, 2008)
  - Previous studies focused on teaching story structure & story grammar components

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Previous Intervention Research</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Activities</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Re-telling &amp; generating stories</td>
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<td>Role playing stories</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sorting &amp; sequencing components</td>
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<td>Identifying missing components</td>
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<td>Peer feedback</td>
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Purposes

- To determine the influence visual support has on the inclusion of story components in personal narratives
- To compare the complexity of personal narratives with differing visual supports

Method

Participant

- Boy (9;11 years)
- Autism diagnosed in 2001
- Applied Behavior Analysis treatment 2001-2005
- Current speech-language treatment at school & a university clinic
- No previous therapy focusing on narrative skills

Analysis

- Narratives transcribed
- Inclusion of story components: who, where, activity, problem, response, solution
- Complexity, cohesion described and judged

Procedure

- Story re-tell of activity to familiar listener naïve to activity
- Participated in four activities
  1. No visual support (baseline)
  2. Photographs
  3. Line drawings
  4. No visual support (post-testing)
- Generic prompts provided as needed
- Video/audio recorded activities and stories
Results

Story Components

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Story Component</th>
<th>Baseline</th>
<th>Photos</th>
<th>Line Drawings</th>
<th>Post-Testing</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Who</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Yes (elliptical)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solution</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes/No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
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Complexity and Cohesion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Complexity</th>
<th>Cohesion</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Complete sentences and causal element with photographs</td>
<td>Lack of referencing with visual support</td>
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<tr>
<td>More prompting needed without visual support</td>
<td>Conjunctions in re-tell with photographs</td>
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<td>Increased mazing with photographs</td>
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Interpretations

- Photographs helped child with autism:
  - Include more story components
  - Produce a more complex and cohesive story
- Line drawings interfered with producing a better narrative
  - Included only objects used in activity
  - “Who” depicted once at beginning
- More prompting needed in absence of visual support

Future Directions

- When teaching narration include explicit instruction of story components
- Eliminate visual support during re-tell so child does not rely on support
- Explore other features in narrative intervention in children with autism

References


