A MULTIMODAL APPROACH TO ORAL NARRATIVE DEVELOPMENT

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A MULTIMODAL APPROACH TO ORAL NARRATIVE DEVELOPMENT

A Project

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iii
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Abstract

of

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by

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A child’s oral narrative abilities are an expression of his/her overall language development and an early predictor of future literacy skill. Until recently, many speech-language pathologists focused exclusively on the fictional story format as means to assess and remediate oral narrative development. Research suggests that while fictional narratives are critical for academic success, it is personal narrative that develops first, builds overall language skills, and supports social interactions with others. In addition, those who work with children with oral language disorders are often unsure of how to target narrative skills—including where to begin, how to proceed and how to support a child’s unique learning needs.

Speech-language pathologists, teachers, and parents need a guidebook that outlines how to approach personal and fictional narratives. The guidebook developed through this project focuses on evidenced-based, multi-modality (e.g., kinesthetic/tactile, visual, auditory) practices to support the diverse learning needs of children with language and/or learning problems. A short-term series of anthropological observations with 2 children, each with a history of language
difficulties, suggested that a multimodality approach to oral narrative acquisition has promise and deserves further exploration in the future.

Candace L. Goldsworthy, Ph.D., Committee Chair

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Date
DEDICATION

To David – with much love and gratitude
Your support has inspired my evolution.
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dedication</td>
<td>vii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgements</td>
<td>viii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapters</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project focus</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. THE IMPORTANCE OF ORAL NARRATIVE DEVELOPMENT</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language delay and oral narrative skill</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theory of mind and oral narrative development</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of narrative skills</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal versus fictional narratives</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral narrative and its relationship to academic performance</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral narrative intervention past and present</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. THE CASE FOR A MULTIMODAL APPROACH TO NARRATIVE DEVELOPMENT</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple modality teaching methods</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The auditory modality &amp; general recommendations for interacting with children</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The visual modality</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The kinesthetic modality</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. APPLICATION OF MULTIMODAL APPROACHES FOR PERSONAL AND FICTIONAL ORAL NARRATIVES</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section I: General approaches to maximize learning</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repetition</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sequential presentation</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conversation and collaboration</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contextualized teaching</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent/caregiver involvement</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ix
Section II: A multiple modality approach to personal narratives.......... 49
    Auditory and general methods .............................................. 50
    Visual methods ..................................................................... 54
    Kinesthetic methods ............................................................. 58
Section III: A multiple modality approach to fictional narratives...... 59
    Auditory and general methods .............................................. 59
    Visual methods ..................................................................... 62
    Kinesthetic methods ............................................................. 66
5. METHODOLOGY ........................................................................ 68
6. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION .................................................... 73
   Conclusion ............................................................................. 81
Appendix A. Narrative, Language and Theory of Mind (ToM) Developmental Milestones .............................................................. 83
Appendix B. Cause and Effect Charting ........................................... 86
Appendix C. Quick Reference to a Multimodal Approach to Oral Narratives.. 87
Appendix D. Tell Me a Story: A whole child approach to narrative development ........................................................................ 94
References .................................................................................. 189
Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Narratives define human experiences; they influence our relationships and shape cultures. At first thought, the ability to tell a story seems to be a fairly mundane task, requiring only the memory of events and the language to relate them to a listener. Research has established that this is not the case. Children with limited language development, due to lack of exposure, various diagnoses or for no apparent reason, have difficulty acquiring narrative language as it requires a foundation of diverse oral language skills to be present. The ability to construct a coherent narrative and express it to a listener is the result of an elaborate interlacing of diverse developmental skills acquired throughout childhood (Bishop & Dolan, 2005; Davies, Shanks & Davies, 2004; Kim, 1999; Norbury & Bishop, 2003; White & Low, 2002). An array of emerging linguistic, social and cognitive abilities must be at a child’s disposal, in order to construct their first stories, which are attempts to share life experiences and his/her knowledge of the world to others (McCabe, et al., 2008; Soto, 2006).

All narratives are not created equally. It may first appear that the ability to share a story about one’s life, a form of personal narrative, or create a tale from imagination, an example of fictional narrative, require the same developmental skills for mastery, but this is not the case (McCabe, et al., 2008). Personal narratives develop earlier and are more closely aligned with a child’s emerging conversation abilities. The relationship between personal narrative and discourse scaffolds a child’s social interactions and appears to generalize to functional communication, in
other words, fosters a child's overall oral language. Fictional narratives are the offspring of language-based skills as well as other competencies. A child's capacity to participate in discourse matures along with cognitive abilities associated with Theory of Mind (Welch-Ross, 1997), including the ability to take another's point of view, a particularly important skill for fictional narrative mastery.

Previous research established that children who struggle with developing language are also at a disadvantage acquiring narrative skills, in addition to age-appropriate reading and writing abilities (Bishop & Donlan, 2005; Miniscalco, et al., 2007). Davies, Shanks, & Davies (2004) concluded that children with a history of delayed language development commonly struggle with understanding and telling stories. The authors suggested that targeting narrative weaknesses for remediation has multiple benefits for students. Such intervention not only had positive impacts on narrative skills, but it improved a child’s “ability to participate in, and benefit from, mainstream classroom activities” (p. 271).

Simply put, narrative language does not develop in isolation (McCabe, 1992; McCabe & Rollins, 1991; Soto, 2006). A child’s narrative abilities have been used as a measure of a child’s oral language development, or “communicative competence,” for many years, but research produced over the past two decades has revealed the predictive nature of a child’s narrative abilities in determining his/her later literacy success (Celinska, 2004; Davies, Shanks & Davies, 2004; McCabe & Rollins, 1991; McCabe, et al., 2008; Miniscalco, et al., 2007, p. 666). Story recall was found to be one of the “strongest single predictors” of later reading ability among kindergarteners (Snow, et al., 1998, p. 117). In addition to reading and writing,
narrative competence supports a child's overall academic competency by encouraging the development of problem solving and analytical thinking, as well as much needed social skills involved in the exchange of ideas between the student, his/her peers and teachers (Roney, 1996). Additionally, California state educational standards require narrative competency throughout the grades, beginning in preschool and continuing through high school (California Reading and Language Arts Standards). The present commitment of school districts, at the behest of state and federal legislators, to assess a child's narrative skills via high-stakes, standardized testing targets a child's proficiency in both personal and fictional narrative forms (McCabe, et al., 2008).

As research establishes the predictive relationship between oral narrative and literacy skills, the question for professionals and parents becomes—how can we support the narrative development of children at risk? McCabe, et al. (2008) reported multiple reasons for targeting personal narratives for those with language development difficulties, and suggested that explicit teaching of fictional narrative is recommended due to academic demands, as generalization from one narrative form to another should not be expected.

In terms of methodology, research supports a multimodal approach to narrative remediation. Children are more apt to learn and retain new information when a variety of teaching modalities are used, including: visual (Heath & Wolf, 2005), auditory (White & Low, 2002), and kinesthetic (Moschovaki, Meadows & Pellegrini, 2007) modalities. Equally important, children benefit from a teaching style that incorporates the following methods: 1) sequential presentation (Morena,
2006), 2) repetition (Justice & Kaderavek, 2002), 3) conversation and collaboration (Doyle & Bramwell, 2006; McGee & Schickedanz, 2007) and 4) contextualization of language concepts (Goldsworthy, 2008).

Lastly, studies demonstrate that partnering with caregivers encourages carryover into the child’s daily life, particularly when working on personal narrative forms, due to its relationship with conversation and functional language (McCabe & Rollins, 1992; McCabe, 1992).

**Project focus**

The goal of this paper and project is to offer: 1) reasons for addressing narrative intervention and 2) effective, accessible, creative means of approaching narrative remediation. The role oral narratives play in cognitive, linguistic and literacy learning will be discussed in a review of the literature. The project itself includes a step-by-step guidebook for speech-language pathologists, teachers and parents to use to target fictional and personal oral narrative development. Intervention procedures are based upon evidenced-based, multi-modality (e.g., kinesthetic, visual, auditory) practices, in order to support the diverse learning needs of children with and without language and/or learning problems.

The guidebook will feature three sections. The first portion of the book will address the development and remediation of personal narratives, while the second will address fictional narrative acquisition and treatment. Each section will include various activities and suggestions for developing narrative skill by employing multiple modalities including auditory, kinesthetic and visual modes. The final portion of the book will address suggested methods of adult/child interaction in order
to maximize learning outcomes. An Appendix will provide examples of different concepts and materials referenced in the guidebook, and visual representations of materials will be included when possible. This book is meant to be a starting place and inspiring guide for therapists, teachers and parents for addressing narrative goals.

This introduction provided the reader with an overview of the topics to be discussed further in the following chapters. Chapter 2 will place narrative language into the context of oral language, literacy and theory of mind development.
Chapter 2

THE IMPORTANCE OF ORAL NARRATIVE

Oral narrative is part of an oral to written language continuum (Goldsworthy, 2007). In her book *Language Games to Play with your Child*, McCabe (1992), used the analogy of a French braid to describe language development. She proposed that it is made up of “multiple strands, including phonology, semantics, syntax and morphology, discourse, and emergent literacy” (p. 1). A child must acquire all of these facets of language at a specific time in order to produce age appropriate language and literacy skills. An abundance of research establishes the predictive nature of oral language development in a child’s later academic success (Bishop & Donlan, 2005; Davies, Shanks, & Davies, 2004; Silliman & Scott, 2006).

As a result, attention naturally turns toward investigating how to best support oral language skills in the early childhood years in order to ensure positive academic outcomes (McCabe, et al., 2008; McCabe & Rollin, 1992). Recently, inquiries have focused on oral narrative skills and their ability to represent a child’s overall language and learning abilities (Celinska, 2004; Norbury & Bishop, 2003; Speaker, Taylor, & Kamen, 2004; Westerveld & Gillon, 2008).

In order to produce an age-appropriate oral narrative, a child must employ developmentally appropriate language, cognitive and social skills (Norbury & Bishop, 2003). A child needs to create rudimentary narratives as early as kindergarten—such as sharing thoughts about a past event or explaining how to perform a simple task (California Department of Education, 2007). Even the simple question “What happened?” to a crying child requires some narrative skill on the
part of the child. As Hewitt (1994) noted, narrative intervention offers the perfect framework for language practice, as it resembles functional, conversational skills within a structured story format.

As the child advances through school, mastery of more complex narrative forms becomes a concern. In a national drive for greater school accountability and quantifiable data on the performance of American students, states began to adopt "high-stakes" testing. High-stakes testing, a requirement of the No Child Left Behind Act, demands that students demonstrate proficiency in narrative writing and interpretation (McCabe, et al., 2008).

The remainder of this chapter will further discuss the development of narrative language skills by placing it in a broader context, and explain its relationship with other cognitive and linguistic skills. Discussion will focus on the following topics: 1) language delay and oral narrative skill, 2) theory of mind and oral narrative development, 3) development of narrative skills, 4) personal and fictional narratives, and 5) oral narrative intervention past and present.

Language delay and oral narrative skill

"Narrative development is an area where weaknesses seem to persist over many years in late-talking children" (Miniscalco, et al., 2007, p. 676). As a result, poor narrative skills may be found in a variety of child populations. Miniscalco and colleagues (2007) reported that children with language delays at 2.5 years, due to autism, language impairment and/or attention deficits, continue to struggle with narrative tasks at 7–8 years of age. Children may also demonstrate limited language
development due to a lack of exposure to language and/or early educational
opportunities resulting from low socioeconomic status (Roseberry-McKibbin, 2008).
In fact, the specific etiology of childhood language disorders is largely unknown
(Rice, Warren, & Betz, 2005), however, research acknowledges that many of the
above populations benefit from narrative intervention (Bishop & Donlan, 2005;
McCabe, et al., 2008).

Language deficits appear to fundamentally disrupt a child's ability to
reconstruct stories by hindering his/her memory for story events, or event encoding
(Bishop & Dolan, 2005). Bishop and Dolan (2005) suggested that children with
expressive SLI demonstrated poor encoding of story details despite having normal
intelligence quotient (IQ) scores. The authors reported that a child's language
deficit may be more significant than IQ during story recall tasks, even when
information is presented in a non-verbal way via pictures. It appeared that a child
recalled a story more successfully when he/she understood whole event sequences.
The authors concluded that finding ways to “encourage the child to process the
causal information that is implicit in the story” supported story recall and related
skills in children with SLI (p. 41). Simply, explicit teaching of cause and effect
sequences within stories may be a means to stronger narrative understanding and
creation.

Theory of mind and oral narrative development

Theory of mind (ToM) refers to a person's ability to conceive of the mental
states of others, interpret intentions and predict behaviors as a result (Astington,
1994). ToM shapes a child’s social communication, generally referred to by speech-language pathologists and other professionals as pragmatics. ToM typically develops throughout childhood, maturing at approximately 11 years of age. It has a role in play development, including fostering joint-attention and general social interactions (Welch-Ross, 1997), laying the foundation for dialogic activities and narratives. ToM develops naturally for typically developing children but needs to be explicitly taught to children with ASD and many children with language disorders (Bishop & Dolan, 2005).

Theory of mind development may support story recall (Bishop & Dolan, 2005). Wellman and Lagattuta (2000) asserted that when a child has difficulty understanding another’s point of view and motivations it negatively impacts his/her ability to encode cause and effect sequences. Children with language disorders, such as SLI, may also demonstrate difficulty with encoding events within stories impeding their ability to recall them later (Bishop & Dolan, 2005). Conversely, children who discuss “cognitive states” within stories often used more complex grammar structures, including complement and subordinate adverbial clauses, associated with better story recall.

ToM appears to be necessary for the creation of fictional and personal narratives. During narrative creation, particularly fictional narrative, a storyteller must include the points of view and intentions of characters within a story (Astington, 1994; Hewitt, 1994). Typically developing children learn implicitly that fictional stories are based on characters and their feelings and share information
about emotions and motivations when retelling stories (Hewitt, 1996). This is not the case for children with language learning problems. Explicit teaching as to the role emotions and motives play in stories, and the need to include such information during story retell, seems necessary for those with language disorders, especially children on the autism spectrum. In addition, a speaker needs to understand the listener's perspective to make certain his/her ideas are being received and understood to share a personal experience or participate fully in conversation.

Development of narrative skills

The earliest signs of narrative language emerge around 22 months of age, after a child has acquired a small bank of words and begins to put words together (McCabe & Rollins, 1992). These budding narratives are the child's first attempts to reference his/her past. McCabe & Rollins (1992) observed the following narrative of a 23-month old: "Member my book? My babysitter b(r)oke it" (p. 46). This example includes a single event structure typical of a child almost 2 years of age. It is not until 3 years of age that two events appear. Between 5 to 6 years old, we see the emergence of "true" or "classic" narratives, including multiple story events, greater linguistic complexity to support the retelling of past life events, and other narrative styles (McCabe & Rollins, 1992; Saracho & Spodek, 2006). McCabe & Rollins (1992) describe the typical 5-year old narrative style as ending at the climax, when the story ends with the most dramatic event being told, but very little descriptive or emotional content.
Previous research suggested that the acquisition of narrative skills occurs throughout childhood into adolescence (Lysaker, 2006; McCabe & Rollins, 1992; Norbury & Bishop, 2003). Norbury and Bishop (2003) outlined which story grammar, or structural elements are present in a typically developing child’s narratives. The authors stated that most 5 year olds in their sample group were able to provide an initiating event of a story, while only half were able to supply the attempts made by the characters in the story and only 20% were able to supply a conclusion. The study suggested that at 9 years of age children demonstrate much improved story grammar, but continued to have difficulty providing a story’s conclusion. At 10 years of age, children in the sample group still had not mastered the higher-level adult language storytelling skills, including correct pronoun agreements. All of the above suggest that oral narrative goals are long-term and mastery occurs over an extended period of time and encompasses a diverse range of linguistic, cognitive, and social abilities.

**Personal versus fictional narratives**

**Personal narratives.** McCabe and her colleagues (2008) described a personal narrative as “a recount of a real past experience” (p. 194). Proficiency in the personal narrative form is necessary for a child’s social and academic success (McCabe, et al., 2008). The ability to relate a sequence of life’s daily events is an important skill that impacts a child’s relationships and interactions with others across settings (Doyle & Bramwell, 2006; McCabe, et al., 2008; Westerveld & Gillon, 2008; White & Low, 2002). This narrative form in particular has been referred to as an important
building block to teaching writing in elementary schools. McCabe, et al. (2008) reported that personal storytelling is viewed as dialogic activity that supports the development of conversational and functional language. The authors suggested that children with language impairments are more skilled at this narrative format due to the frequent need to tell personal stories (McCabe & Rollins, 1992). As a result, the authors suggested that personal storytelling is the more advantageous place to begin narrative remediation.

*Gender differences in sharing personal stories.* Fivush (1998) suggested there are differences in how boys and girls share personal stories. The author found that girls recall more about their stories, provide more contextual information, including temporal-spatial and evaluative context, and include emotional content to a greater degree. Parents also explore a child's past events differently with their children; both mothers and fathers tended to elaborate, confirm and explore emotions to a greater extent with their daughters than with their sons. Fivush noted that gender differences in narrative development emerge early in the child’s life.

Context appears to play a critical role for boys when sharing personal narratives. Fivush stated that “reminiscing...resembles personal disclosure” and that boys are more apt to share personal information with people they are close to whereas girls are comfortable disclosing information in many situations with various listeners (p. 98).

*Fictional narratives.* A fictional narrative is a “composition or recall of a previously heard or read story” (McCabe, et al., 2008, p. 194). If personal narrative development results from the growth of conversational and functional language then
fictional narratives are the outcome of these communication skills already having been established. Bamberg's (2002, as cited by McCabe, et al., 2008) research into early fictional narratives using wordless books revealed that early fictional narratives within the sample group evolved from adult-child discourse about the story, rather than from the child's own mental interpretation of the pictures presented. This suggested that the ability to independently tell a fictional story emerges later than a child's ability to converse with others.

**Oral narrative and its relationship to academic performance**

Oral language abilities, including oral narratives, make up the foundation on which literacy skills are built. Stated differently, those who have difficulty acquiring language are at-risk of experiencing problems learning to read and write (McCabe, et al., 2008). Snow, Burns and Griffin (1998) reported that diagnosed language impairments, decreased overall language development, and low expressive vocabulary are all associated with later reading deficits. Narrative language, a marker of a child's overall language competence, is also an early predictor of literacy problems. The authors also stated that story recall in kindergarten students is one of the signs of a child's future literacy abilities, along with phonological awareness, confrontational naming and other leading indicators.

In Snow, Burns & Griffin's 1998 report *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children* for the National Research Council, the authors cited studies showing that children with SLI appear to enter school "less knowledgeable about print and story structure" than their typically developing peers, but their deficits
were found not to be “associated with the child's exposure to and participation in literacy activities” (p. 165). This suggests that children with early language difficulties benefit from explicit training in emergent literacy tasks along with language intervention.

Narrative competency itself is required in order to succeed in school. Story writing and comprehension exercises are prevalent throughout a child's educational experience. Interactions with peers and teachers throughout school years also require the ability to tell and interpret stories. As mentioned previously, the current focus on state standardized testing, and ever-higher academic standards, requires students to be competent in both personal and fictional narrative forms (McCabe, et al., 2008).

Oral narrative intervention past and present

Achieving competency in one form of narrative does not equate to competency in other forms. Mastery of the personal narrative form does not directly result in generalization to fictional narrative forms (McCabe, et al., 2008). Previous research, assessment, and remediation in the field of speech pathology has primarily focused on the use of fictional narratives in order to address a child's narrative weakness, without significant attention to whether one type of narrative is more developmentally advantageous or is more beneficial to the child in terms of overall language acquisition.

For many years importance has been placed on the ability to retell a story about a shared book, or make up a story about characters in a sequence of pictures
McCabe and her colleagues asserted that instruction in fictional narrative structure should be pursued, but with the understanding that its impact is limited in scope as their creation is required only in the clinical and educational environments. The authors reported that the results of their study and others reveal there is "only a minimal to nonexistent relationship between performances in the two (narrative) genres" (p. 201). Therefore, generalization from fictional to personal narrative would not be expected. Put another way, the authors suggested that by targeting fictional narrative for remediation only the child's ability to create more complete fictional stories may be strengthened.

On the other hand, McCabe, et al. (2008) outlined multiple reasons to target personal narrative development over fictional forms. The authors suggested that personal narratives scaffold a child's functional and social language, so critical for those with language impairments. These researchers reported that personal narratives appear to be earlier forming and more closely resemble daily interactions with others, and, therefore, are more apt to generalize.

McCabe, et al. (2008) urged professionals to focus on a child's overall communication and social functioning when creating goals for personal narrative building. The authors offered the following 3 therapy goals:

1. Foster personal narrative discourse by teaching children with SI to use narrative structure to organize their thoughts during discussion
   a. Teach a basic narrative structure using the temporal, sequential terms first, next, then, last and apply them to discourse.
b. Once the above structure is mastered, teaching the following concepts can enhance a child's narrative discourse: description, emotion, and causal factors.

2. Parent elaboration of their child’s personal narratives
   a. Educate parents on the narrative structure being taught and the concept of elaboration to support carryover into daily parent-child exchanges.

3. Generalization of narrative structure to different contexts
   a. Once a child masters using a personal narrative structure during conversation with the clinician, a child practices his/her acquired skills on others.

The preference for personal storytelling has also been emphasized for written language tasks as well. Calkins (1994) encouraged educators to use personal narrative, over fictional formats, in the teaching of creative writing. By writing about their experiences children learned that their lives and perceptions mattered.

For all of these reasons, personal narratives appear to be the logical place to begin remediation when addressing narrative language deficits.

This is helpful news for clinicians, teachers and parents who wish to support the linguistic and communication progress of a child. By teaching each type of narrative with different goals in mind, a child with language difficulties can gain significant ground in the development of the diverse language skills needed for school and life (McCabe, et al., 2008).
While this chapter provided an overview of the origins and importance of narrative language, the following chapter will build a case for a multiple modality approach to teaching narrative language concepts.
Chapter 3
THE CASE FOR A MULTIMODAL APPROACH TO ORAL NARRATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Not all research has embraced a completely developmental approach to the acquisition of oral language skills. Some believe that children gain language competency to a greater extent from their daily social interactions and interpretation of their personal experiences than exclusively from maturation patterns (Bruner, 1973, as cited by Hoodless, 2002). A review of literature on oral narrative development suggests a child's environment plays an essential role. Torr (2007) noted that when a child engages in conversation during book reading activities she learns that "knowledge is gained through a collaborative process" (p. 90). The author shared that through building verbal partnerships a child gained language competency and ultimately narrative mastery. Speaker, Taylor and Kamen (2004) also advocated for verbal collaboration during shared book reading. They suggested that by cultivating an interactive storytelling environment, one in which a student actively listens and provides input, mean length utterance, grammatical structure and sentence complexity significantly improve. The authors found that "the quality of that participation...serves to enhance language usage" (p. 11).

All of this supports the idea that environmental factors play a very significant role in language learning and serves as a reminder to clinicians, educators and caregivers of how much their interactions may enrich a child's language. With this in mind, how do we create an environment that scaffolds a child's narrative language acquisition?
Traditional teaching methods in the school setting have relied primarily on the student’s ability to listen and read to learn (Lavoie, 1989). This style of teaching has produced adequate results for most typically developing students (Moreno, 2006), but places those with language and/or learning problems at a great disadvantage (Lavoie, 1989). Moreno (2006) suggested that new concepts are more easily acquired and retained when a multimodal approach is used. More precisely, recall of information improves when it is presented through multiple modalities in a “sequential rather than simultaneous” manner (p. 150). Similarly, other research indicates that narrative concepts appear to be learned and stored when different modalities are used in a sequential manner. Kim (1999) employed this method of sequential modality presentation when she had preschoolers in her study first participate in storybook reading (primarily a listening/auditory task), then had the children play with dolls to reenact the story read (primarily a visual and kinesthetic task) and, finally, had the children verbally retell the story.

As Kim and others demonstrated, the professional and caregiver can create a structure and progression to narrative interactions in order to encourage learning. When we use a multiple modalities approach, we provide multiple exposures to narrative concepts. We place those concepts within context, in order to scaffold the learning process of children with language and/or learning problems (Goldsworthy, 2008). Children are more likely to understand and retain information when this type of approach is taken.

It is important to keep in mind that each child is unique, and that each one has his/her own learning strengths. As a clinician, teacher or caregiver becomes
familiar with a child's abilities he/she will make use of the child’s strongest modalities in order to address specific goals. For this reason, the remainder of this chapter discusses methods for working with children with or without language disorders on narrative language goals by targeting the auditory, visual and kinesthetic modalities.

MULTIPLE MODALITY TEACHING METHODS

Many of the ideas below were developed in order to address overall language development. However, when oral narrative is targeted, oral language development is also targeted. In addition, certain forms of oral narrative, specifically personal narratives (McCabe, et al., 2008), are found to support oral language abilities, therefore building one appears to support the other.

The auditory modality & general recommendations for interacting with children

When we speak to a child, we are presenting auditory information for him/her to receive and process. Put more simply, we are talking and they are listening. As we teach narrative language, we need to model language for a child to hear and mimic. The auditory modality often compliments other modalities—a child may be listening, but he/she is also seeing what is around him, and may be moving his/her body, too. Taken from the child’s point of view: Where should his/her focus be? It is critical to remember that the auditory signal is fleeting, and often difficult for a child with a language disability to “hold onto” long enough for successful
learning (Goldsworthy, 2007; Lavoie, 1989). Professionals, teachers and caregivers can take steps to limit distractions by addressing the sensory needs of children and/or limiting access to sensory distractions, but we can also use different intervention techniques to enhance auditory information and to get our message across.

Since the auditory modality is a mainstay of teaching, the suggestions below also fall under the category of "general recommendations" as well and apply to any interaction with children with language and/or learning difficulties. These approaches maximize the impact of auditory information and allow a child to better attend to, and benefit from, interactions with you.

Suggestions for clinicians, teachers and caregivers for presenting auditory information to children with narrative language difficulties include:

Get on the child's eye level

Information has greater impact when the clinician, teacher or caregiver physically gets down to the child's eye level when speaking or interacting (Pepper & Weitzman, 2004). This technique not only allows a child to better receive messages being shared, but it allows the clinician, teacher or caregiver to better understand what is holding a child's interest. Getting down on a child's level encourages an adult to "follow the child's lead" (discussed further below) during play, book reading, conversation activities, and increases the likelihood of communication between child and adult (p. 33). Children with language delays sometimes experience problems maintaining attention as a result of concomitant diagnoses, such as attention deficit
disorders, and/or in part to their lack of success learning language (Goldsworthy, 2008). Placing yourself at the child's eye level improves your chances of catching and keeping a child's attention during interactions, and improves the auditory signal for the child.

*Increase Your Affect*

*Increasing affect* refers to using "vocal inflections, dramatization and personal involvement comments" (Moschovaki, Meadows & Pellegrini, 2007, p. 406) in order to emphasize meaning or target information. Increased affect is used to great effect during therapy activities, including conversation, storytelling and book reading (Paul, 1995). Dramatic oral storytelling, the act of verbally telling a story without the use of pictures or printed words to compliment delivery, is a successful way of increasing a child's utterance length, vocabulary and correct grammar use (Speaker, Taylor & Kamen, 2004) and increases recall of story events and other story grammar elements, such as setting, characters and conclusion (Isbell, et al., 2004). When therapists, teachers and caregivers tell a story or read a book aloud in a dramatic manner, the emotional and sequential content of information is emphasized and children become more involved in the story.

*Slow down your speech*

Decreasing speaking rate allows a child with language difficulties more time to process incoming information and, as a result, may encourage greater participation in an activity (Paul, 1995). Slowing speech often promotes more precise
articulation from the adult speaker, which provides a clearer model for a child to emulate.

Follow the child’s lead

Pay attention to what draws your child’s interest. These are opportunities to communicate and can be launching places for narrative development. In their book, *It Takes Two to Talk*, Pepper and Weitzman (2004) shared the numerous ways, and benefits, of taking advantage of communication opportunities in order to promote language development. This approach works with children of all ages with different diagnoses and language learning difficulties. A child’s verbalizations and body language, particularly his/her eye gaze, communicate focus. During shared book reading or conversation, following a child’s lead translates into recognizing opportunities to respond to and expand on a child’s experiences. For example, if a child is gazing at a book illustration, the clinician can comment on what draws the child’s interest, pause to allow for the child to comment, respond to any comments and expand on them.

Model language for the child

When supporting a child’s language development, one of our main goals as professionals and caregivers is to model language. “Matching” our language to the language level of the child aids in this effort (Pepper & Weitzman, 2004). If a child is producing 2-3 word utterances, provide a model that he/she can attempt to imitate. To enrich the exchange, expand on the initial utterance. For example, if a child
points to a picture of his/her father in a work clothes and says, “Daddy work!” the
clinician may consider providing the following response:

Child: “Daddy work!”

Clinician: “Daddy is working.”
(Pause for a response, if none given, continue.)
“Hi, Daddy!” (Say something a child may say. Pause for response.)
“He is building a house. Look, he is wearing a yellow hat!”
(Expand language by adding to the child’s initial thought.)

This approach can be incorporated into oral narrative development activities.
The professional and/or caregiver scaffold a child’s narrative language abilities by
fostering discourse that integrates the following steps: 1) repeatedly exposing a child
to narrative concepts, 2) commenting on his/her ideas, and 3) expanding on his/her
language.

Repetition

We can nurture a child’s oral narrative development by providing multiple
exposures to narrative concepts. Presenting information repeatedly over time is very
beneficial for a child with language learning difficulties (Borgia & Owles, 2007;
Lavoie, 1989). As a story becomes more familiar, a child is better able to recall it and
share ideas about it (White & Low, 2002). Witte-Townsend (2004) suggested that
repeat readings of favorite stories allows a child to assign deeply personal meanings
to stories, aids his/her development of self and relationship to others, and helps
him/her formulate ideas about the world. Research proposes that many different
populations, in addition to the language disabled, benefit from multiple readings of
the same book. Children from multicultural backgrounds also benefited from
repeated readings of the same story for the same reasons (Meier, 2003), and children born into poverty, in particular, benefit greatly from regular exposure to the rich language found in children's literature (Trelease, 2001).

Repeat book readings provide children with multiple exposures to important ideas and novel vocabulary, not otherwise available during daily life (Justice & Kaderavek, 2002; Trelease, 2001). This allows children to process new ideas over time that may initially be missed during first or second readings, and encourages intellectual discussions that may only occur due to story familiarity. In fact, child engagement and recall of story details increases proportionately to the number of times a book is read (Pappas, 1991). Doyle and Bramwell (2006) theorize that the "familiarity of a known story offers children a safe place to practice new skills, such as retelling a story or trying out a new vocabulary word" (p. 556).

That said, repetition must facilitate real learning. Welch-Ross (1997) found that when mothers simply repeated the same information without expanding on it, or enhancing an idea with additional information, learning about a targeted concept was less effective. Merely rereading the same book again and again will not enrich a child's language abilities. It is how a book is read that makes all the difference (McGee & Schickedanz, 2007).

A teacher who used repeated, dialogic readings of books in her classroom noted its positive impact on child involvement and narrative language abilities,

It's the multiple readings that really opened the children up and helped them develop vocabulary in meaningful ways. Being able to know what is coming next in the story during the repeated readings empowers them and, of course, helps them retell the story (K. Robinson, personal communication, May 29, 2003 as cited by Doyle & Bramwell, 2006).
Discussion-infused reading supports narrative development (Doyle & Bramwell, 2006). In order to optimize language learning during book reading, the use of dialogic reading is recommended and detailed below.

**Adopt a dialogic or conversational style of reading and questioning**

Reading a book to a child is a social activity (Doyle & Bramwell, 2006). Incorporating discussion into book reading activities reinforces the concept that narrative language is built upon a social connection between listener and storyteller. Posing questions about characters or events during reading increases engagement in the story and encourages more complex and complete story retelling by children (Doyle & Bramwell, 2006). Book reading is an important activity for all children, but particularly for those with language learning difficulties (Justice & Kaderavek, 2002). Unfortunately, Justice and Kaderavek (2002) found that children with language disorders may feel overwhelmed by such a language-intensive task. Nurturing a collaborative atmosphere during book sharing is critical for children with language development problems. When reader and listener cultivate a conversational, interactive relationship during reading activities, rather than an adult-driven, directive one, a child is apt to feel more empowered to try out new, challenging language skills.
Read aloud regularly to your child

As mentioned previously, reading aloud to a child provides a wealth of opportunities for language building and exposure to narrative structure (Trelease, 2001). Children do not produce language spontaneously. They learn through a process that includes a tremendous amount of daily exposure to people around them using language and encouraging them to imitate what they hear. Imitation is fundamental to learning language, and shared book-reading presents numerous opportunities for imitation of grammar structure as well as novel vocabulary. The positive impact of book reading in the home extends beyond oral language acquisition. Shared book reading is also an example of incorporating print into a household, which positively influences later literacy development (Snow, Burns & Griffin, 1998).

Children with language disorders (Speaker, Taylor & Kamen, 2004), and those with little exposure to rich language at home (Trelease, 2001), particularly benefit from shared book reading. Children with language learning problems need many opportunities to listen to language, and shared book reading exposes a child to diverse, written language (Snow, Burns & Griffin, 1998). Bui (2002) states that reading aloud to children, especially those with learning disabilities, supports their understanding of a story.

If a child's home environment is not a source of diverse language, or if caregivers are unable to read, audio recordings of books may provide needed support (Trelease, 2001). Often, the same dialogic interactions may take place between caregiver and child when listening to recorded books.
"Foster a personal narrative discourse" (McCabe, et al., 2008, p. 201)

We exchange narratives with each other throughout our day. Even the simple inquiry in passing, "What have you been up to lately?" is an opportunity to respond with a brief narrative about life. When children are unable to organize ideas they would like to share, they can be taught to make use of basic narrative structure and temporal language (e.g., first, next, last) during their discussions with others (Kamhi and Johnston, as cited by McCabe, et al., 2008). Researchers suggest that once a basic narrative structure is mastered in conversation, children can add richness to their narratives by describing events and discussing causal and emotional factors.

The visual modality

Many children with language and/or learning disability rely on visual cues in an attempt to keep up with social and academic activities going on around them (Goldsworthy, 2008). This mode of learning can be a very useful tool for teaching narrative language and it should be incorporated into activities as much as possible.

It is important to remember that visuals support learning, but may not be enough for children with language disorders. Bishop and Donlan (2005) found that children with SLI continued to have poor memory for story events, even with visual support (e.g., pictures). This suggests these children may benefit from repeated exposure to narrative concepts using a multi-modal approach.

Suggestions for clinicians, teachers and caregivers for presenting visual information to children with narrative language difficulties include:
Visual Aids

Pictures, text and other visual materials have been successfully used to increase language production and story comprehension (McGee & Schickedanz, 2007; Melzi & Caspe, 2005; Reese, 1996). Visual aids that enhance the teaching of oral narrative concepts may include: illustrated children’s literature (Justice & Kaderavek, 2002; Torr, 2007); wordless books (Jalongo, et al., 2002; Melzi & Caspe, 2005; Reese, 1996; White & Low, 2002), family photographs (Goldsworthy, 2008); and/or drawings (Franke & Durbin, 2006; Ukrainetz, 1998). Discussing illustrations during shared book reading supports critical thinking (Borgia & Owles, 2007) as well as vocabulary building (Reese & Cox, 1999). For example, simply describing what a dragon looks like to a child may not be as engaging, or salient, as introducing an image of one to aid in explanation. Reading a story about a dragon and using the illustrations as a topic of conversation about what a dragon looks like creates more of an impact. Simply, visuals can promote discourse and lay the foundation for narrative achievement (McCabe & Rollins, 1991; McCabe, et al., 2008).

Pictography

Ukrainetz (1998) advocated the use of “stick writing” or “picture writing,” a form of pictography, as a means of encouraging more developed storytelling, as well as increasing story detail. The author shares those children who find writing challenging to produce and to decipher benefit from “sketch writing.” Quick sketches made by the child, or dictated to a peer or adult listener, scaffold the child’s story building and retelling. Sketch writing allows a child to focus on important narrative
concepts, such as sequencing of events, vocabulary and sentence grammar without being tied to the written word.

*Picture books and wordless books*

Research supports using children's literature to address language development difficulties (Justice & Kaderavek, 2002; Torr, 2007). As mentioned previously, it supports the development of oral language, oral narrative and literacy skills. Books without written text, or *wordless books*, can be useful tools when targeting narrative skills. That said, White and Low (2002) reported that wordless books may be a confusing format, since many adults and children are unfamiliar with their use. The authors suggested that by training adults to “preview,” or look through the book and get a sense of its progression prior to sharing it with a child, better outcomes result. After previewing, caregiver stories are more cohesive and children are more verbally involved and demonstrate stronger story comprehension.

Finally, books that are predictable, repetitive, or have interactive parts, including “lift-the-flap” books or those with “slots” where items are removed and inserted, are especially good at encouraging interaction with a child (Goldsworthy, 2008; Justice & Kadervek, 2002).

*Make something*

Heath and Wolf (2005) suggested that teaching students how to seriously undertake making something—to assume the role of artists—nurtures the growth of visual knowledge, and this understanding and sensitivity expands linguistic skills.
The authors noted that "visual focus, with its keen attention to detail, technical tools and terms, and the manipulation of props, along with a variety of media" becomes a catalyst for language progress (p. 45). Learning how to "see" something through the lens of compositional elements, including color, form, value and likeness expands a student's thinking about the world around him/her, as well as how he/she wants to verbally interpret it. Put simply, making things encourages greater attention to detail that creates an impulse to share more complex ideas. The very steps taken to make something can be a rich source for building a personal narrative. The content of a painting, or series of paintings, can be a vehicle to construct either a fictional or personal story. In the regard to the previous example of introducing the idea of a dragon with imagery—once a child knows what a dragon is, he/she can expand on his/her knowledge by creating his/her own dragon. Heath and Wolf (2005) suggested that adding artistic creation into learning encourages greater student verbal interaction, including greater language complexity. In terms of narrative goals, a visual exploration can be the launching point for story development.

*Take something apart*

Likewise, taking things apart, whether it be a Mr. Potato Head (2008) toy or an old clock, can also present opportunities for dialoguing and collaboration between child and adult, and it provides opportunities for story retell. Exploration and discovery often leads to a desire to sharing ideas and problem solving. Deconstruction and reconstruction are both concrete means of teaching the sequential, temporal language of narratives (e.g., first, next, then, last).
Putnam (1991) taught kindergarteners about the life of bees using a multimodal approach; the children listened to information, discussed ideas, pantomimed the activities of the beehive and important vocabulary. Following enactment of bee life, the class charted a timeline of bee existence, in order to scaffold student learning. The chart provided by Putnam is provided below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Worker Bees</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Egg</td>
<td>21 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Larva</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pupa</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bee</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clean up job</td>
<td>5 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housekeeping job</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nursing job</td>
<td>7 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Builders</td>
<td>3 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guard duty</td>
<td>4 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nectar collector</td>
<td>Rest of life</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Construct a “cause and effect chart” to support story retell. Bishop and Dolan (2005) reported that when children understand whole event sequences they retell stories more successfully. One way to support a child’s understanding of event sequences is by teaching cause and effect chains within stories. This can be done with both personal and fictional narrative forms. Cause and effect charting may also be a helpful approach to addressing social story outcomes.

Have your child share a personal story and then write down or draw their actions and the reactions that followed. Discuss possible alternative outcomes when
appropriate. Before charting out cause and effect sequences, take some time to teach the concepts *cause* and *effect*. Once a child has mastered the idea of cause and effect, chart out story cause and effect sequences on paper. Appendix B provides examples of cause and effect charting for fictional narratives. Visual charting helps a child understand what information is important in the story and scaffolds his/her retelling by proving a visual for sequencing facts, ideas or events.

**The kinesthetic modality**

Movement and gesture are included in the definition of the word *play* (Saracho & Spodek, 2006). From a developmental perspective, play, including reenactments of real and imagined events, makes important contributions to a child’s cognitive and language growth. Play enables a child to process information about the world around him. Saracho and Spodek (2006) noted that “when children participate in role play, they enrich their social language as they use different conversation patterns” and, in turn, “language nurtures social and symbolic play” (p. 715). Given the integral function language development and dialogic abilities perform in the development of narrative language, play is an important platform on which to build a child’s stories. Kim (1999) suggested that when children compliment storytelling activities with pretend play, including the use of manipulatives (e.g., dolls), their narrative recall and social-cognitive development is positively impacted. The author states that play and storytelling are foundational activities from which narrative language and perspective taking emerges. Play
encourages children to formulate story sequences, giving rise to the verbalization of their experiences.

Suggestions for clinicians, teachers and caregivers for incorporating *kinesthetic* activities into therapy for children with narrative language difficulties include:

*Encourage basic narrative language using gestural cues or sign language*

Providing simple, predictable language during activities may encourage a child with little language to begin to participate in narrative exercises. Gestures, including sign language or a modified form of sign, can accompany the spoken word in order to magnify the importance of, and anchor in memory, abstract temporal concepts or less salient terms, such as *first, next, then* and *last* (Goldsworthy, 2008). Encouraging a child to sign with you when using the terms *first, next* and *last* gives a measure of success to the child during a challenging oral language task.

*Acting out a story*

Dramatic play during book reading supports narrative language acquisition (Kim, 1999). Discussion during shared book reading can enrich a child's symbolic play by using toys at hand to reenact events and character emotions (Rowe, 1998). Acting out and discussing emotional language in a story allows a child to develop a deeper understanding of his/her own socio-emotional interactions and the perceptions of peers (Doyle & Bramwell, 2006), and improves his/her comprehension of the story and its characters' actions. Play activities provide children with multiple
opportunities to interact with story events and increases their story recall (Kim, 1999).

Putnam (1991) supported the dramatization of nonfictional topics with school age children. She finds that having students act out real events or concepts from history, such as civil rights, scaffolds their understanding of information. Putnam also suggests that enactments of important vocabulary from expository texts, for example terms relating to the life of bees, including hive, drone, pollen, can significantly increase students' understanding of the material being shared or read in class. This approach applies easily to both personal and fictional narrative building and can be used to address a child's language goals.

Using scripted body gestures

Using body gestures to accompany playful speech is a helpful means of marking the place and importance of words spoken (Goldsworthy, 2007). During repeated reading or storytelling, children will begin to help tell the story along with you when gestures and words become predictable. Gestures can serve as a cue as to which events and words come next and by doing so scaffold a child's memory for events and language. An exceptional example of dramatic storytelling along with the use of body gestures is Michael Rosen's performance of his children's story We're Going on a Bear Hunt found on YouTube. The video can be found at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=ytc0U2W4Az4s (or by searching on-line for: Michael Rosen, Going on a Bear Hunt, YouTube).
While this chapter made a case for the use of a multiple modality approach to narrative goals, the following chapter will outline specific ways to address the two main forms of narratives focused on in this project, *personal* and *fictional*. The next chapter will also discuss important teaching concepts critical for making progress with students at-risk for poor oral narrative development.
Chapter 4
APPLICATION OF MULTIMODAL APPROACHES
FOR PERSONAL AND FICTIONAL NARRATIVES

Previous chapters identify the reasons and methods for addressing a child’s oral narrative development. This chapter synthesizes those ideas and proposes specific means of addressing personal and fictional narrative development within a therapeutic setting based on current research. The suggested methods can be employed in the classroom with small groups, one-on-one in the clinical setting or at home between a caregiver and child.

This chapter is divided into three sections. The first portion of the chapter will briefly discuss how to adopt a teaching style that applies the following concepts: 1) sequential presentation, 2) repetition, 3) conversation and collaboration, 4) contextualized teaching, and 5) the importance of caregiver involvement. The second section will discuss targeting personal narratives from a multi-modality perspective, while the final section will address using the same means to teach fictional narratives. At the conclusion of sections three and four is a table listing methods for addressing oral narrative skills using a multiple modality framework.

SECTION I: General approaches to maximize learning

Clinicians, educators and caregivers can increase the odds of a child adopting new narrative language skills when they incorporate the following approaches into interactions: 1) repetition, 2) sequential presentation, 3) contextualized teaching, 4)
conversation and collaboration, and 5) the importance of parent or caregiver involvement.

**Repetition**

Most typically developing students can learn by merely listening and reading, however this method of teaching does not adequately serve children with language and/or learning problems (Lavoie, 1989). One approach to teaching children who need additional learning support is to utilize multiple modalities. As outlined previously, a multimodality methodology provides a clinician, teacher or caregiver with alternative means to teach narrative language concepts. In addition, a multimodal approach naturally gives repeat exposures of storytelling components and ideas in a manner that maintains a child's interest.

Repetition, from a narrative, multiple modality perspective, translates into teaching the same story concepts from a variety of angles and modalities in order to scaffold learning. This is a dynamic process. It provides opportunities for a child and adult to collaborate and determine, together, where their interactions should lead next. For example, a session targeting personal narrative may initially consist of an informal conversation about a sequence of events. Story events may then be acted out by child and adult, and then depicted in quick drawings. Finally, the story may be written down by the clinician and compiled in a book in order to share with others. This may take place over several sessions—each session reviewing what has been explored previously and building from that point on. The adult scaffolds the child's narrative development by providing language when necessary,
discussing/exploring concerns of the child and letting the child help determine the course of discussion, story-building and activity progression.

Anyone who works with children is familiar with their attachment to specific picture books. Adults may tire after numerous readings of the same story, but these interactions are rich opportunities for fictional narrative development. Chapter 2 discusses the benefits of repeated book readings in-depth. Simply, the more familiar children are with a story, the better they are at recalling and sharing ideas about it (White & Low, 2002). Research asserts that repeat book readings enriches a child's vocabulary (Justice & Kaderavek, 2002), while allowing him to assign personal meanings to stories, and nurturing his/her sense of self and relationship with others (Witte-Townsend, 2004). These deeply personal and emotional interpretations of stories scaffold story recall (Doyle & Bramwell, 2006). In addition to the stories themselves, children's books support learning through their imagery, which helps children interpret the stories read to them. Multiple exposures to the same picture book empower a child who does not read yet to use imagery to tell the story in his/her own words.

Research suggests that complementing repeated readings or storytelling activities with play and other narrative activities encourages better story recall and sharing of ideas (Kim, 1999; White & Low, 2002). For example, sessions focusing on fictional narrative concepts may begin with shared book reading with conversation that relates story events and emotions back to the child's own experiences. The initial reading may be followed by a reenactment of story events by the child or with manipulatives, using the story's illustrations for guidance. Another session may
include rereading of the book with further discussion, followed by drawing of the main characters or important story events. Children may be taught story grammar terms one at a time, over time, and the terms can be discussed in the context of each repeated book reading.

With each exposure to story concepts, through multiple modalities, a child becomes intimately familiar with the anatomy and functioning of a story, thereby becoming an empowered participant and creator, rather than a passive listener. The matrix at the end of this chapter provides suggestions on multiple modality activities, which in turn incorporates repetition into session interactions.

Sequential presentation

As noted, a multimodal approach to narrative development provides children with repeat exposures to story concepts. To bolster learning, a sequential presentation of activities is advised (Moreno, 2006). People have better recall of information when it is delivered sequentially, one modality at a time. Sequencing can be incorporated into narrative building, and activities can be ordered with an eye to which modality is being utilized, allowing for better learning, as well as expansion and enrichment of narrative concepts.

Recent studies serve as models for planning sessions. For example, Kim's (1999) study method included sequential modality activities. First, she had preschoolers participate in storybook reading (primarily an auditory task). Next, she had children reenact the story by playing with dolls (primarily a visual and kinesthetic task) and, lastly, she asked the children to verbally retell the story.
Bui's (2002) study of narrative skill development addressed personal narrative development with older students using sequential modality presentation. The best performing of her sample groups, the "integrated story-grammar instruction" group, used a predictable series of activities in order to anchor narrative concepts. Initially, the adult and student established what it meant to recall and reflect on personal experiences. Once those ideas were understood, each student recalled and reflected on one experience each week (primarily an auditory and discussion task). Emotions and possible solutions were explored. Students then created pictures of their experience and wrote a sentence to accompany the image (primarily a visual task). One story grammar element was introduced per week and applied to the student's story (primarily an auditory and discussion task). Story grammar concepts were anchored through identifying elements within other stories read to them (primarily auditory task). The sequence of activities concluded by having each student draw a picture for each story grammar element and write a corresponding sentence (primarily a visual and kinesthetic task). After learning all story grammar elements, the student collaborated with the clinician to map a story using all elements taught previously. This last step involved all modalities, and was scaffolded by all the exercises that went before.

**Conversation and collaboration**

Conversation is, by nature, an exercise in collaboration. Working together empowers the child to share new ideas, try out new words and explore emotional or experiential connections to stories read. In short, collaboration through conversation scaffolds oral language development, including narrative building. When we
successfully incorporate the interests of students into narrative activities, children become energetic, enthusiastic partners in their learning.

Justice and Kaderavek (2002) reminded us that children with language disorders can be overwhelmed by language-intensive tasks, such as constructing narratives and book reading. Adopting a collaborative atmosphere during language activities is essential for children with language deficits. As noted in Chapter 2, dialogic activities allow speaker and listener to build an interactive relationship during reading activities, rather than an adult-driven, directive one. In a collaborative environment, the child is apt to feel more empowered to try out new language skills.

_Dialogic book reading._ Doyle and Bramwell (2006) find that incorporating discussion into book reading activities reinforces the concept that narrative language is built upon a social connection between listener and storyteller. The authors confirmed that dialogic activities are best done in small groups. When small, shared book-reading groups function as safe environments for children to develop social skills and positive relationships with books. As noted in previous chapters, both social interaction and book reading lay the foundation for narrative language acquisition. By posing questions about characters, setting or story events throughout a reading encourages engagement and more complex and complete story retelling by children.

Some considerations when using dialogic book reading:

1. _Bring the child’s experience into book reading._ Relate the feelings and experiences of the story to a child’s feelings and experiences. Torr (2007)
explored *intertextuality* during book reading, and found that when a child's ideas are encouraged and incorporated into readings they learn that language use and knowledge building is a collaborative process. Observe the child's offerings, these tell you what is most salient to him/her. Pause during readings to see what a child may want to contribute to the reading.

a. **Questioning:** Encourage children to connect their experiences to a reading through questioning. If the story's character is *grouchy*, ask if a child has felt that way before. Consider the following prompts offered by Doyle and Bramwell (2006):

i. “Does anyone know what it means to feel grouchy?”

ii. “Have you ever felt grouchy?”

iii. “How can you tell when someone is grouchy?”

iv. Another style of questioning may include commenting on the illustration and asking for input: “They are tiny, aren’t they?” or “I like those colors. Can you see the pattern on there?” (Torr, 2007, p. 83–84)

2. **Social-emotional story selection:** Doyle and Bramwell (2006) suggested adults choose stories that are pro-social in nature and engender positive group interactions. The authors offer examples of books that function in this manner, including, Robert Kraus’ *Leo the Late Bloomer*, Maurice Sendak’s *Where the Wild Things Are* and Janell Cannon’s *Stellaluna.*

*Personal narrative discourse.* Discussion can easily be translated into personal narrative goals. McCabe and her colleagues (2008) suggested that we
"foster a personal narrative discourse," or in other words, explicitly teach and incorporate narrative structure into daily discussions (p. 201). Children can make use of basic narrative structure and temporal language (e.g., first, next, last) to aid their progression through discussions with others (Kamhi & Johnson as cited by McCabe, et al., 2008). After a child is comfortable using basic narrative language, he/she and his/her adult discussion partner can work on description of events and exploration of cause and effect as well as emotions and motives of people within the story.

Possible prompts during personal narrative discourse might include:

1. Share a negative situation you have experienced and ask if they have had the same thing happen to them. Below are possible examples of questions used to get a child to share about his/her experiences. As a rule, yes/no questions are not the best form of questioning to use when eliciting narratives, however, success has been found when discussion topics are powerful for the child.

   a. "Once I went to the doctor and had to get a shot. It hurt when the doctor poked me with a needle. Have you ever been poked by anything?" (McCabe, et al., 2008)

   b. Other prompts may include:

      i. "Once, I was chasing my dog. I was running really, really fast, and I didn't have shoes on. I almost tripped! Instead, I stubbed my toe and my toe started to bleed! Have you ever hurt yourself?"
ii. “When I was little, I had a favorite toy and I played with it all the time. One day, my brother sat on it and broke it. I was so mad! Have you felt mad?

2. Share a simple, personal experience and draw 3–4 quick sketches to correspond with events. Talk about the experience using basic narrative, temporal terms (e.g., first, next, last). Ask the child to share a similar experience and have them draw pictures to represent salient events, or support him by drawing pictographs as they share.

   a. Durbin and Franke (2008) shared a brief, personal story about getting an ice cream cone and then dropping it. They created pictographs of events as they tell the story in order to introduce personal narrative structure to children.

   b. Caregivers may be very helpful sources of information about the child’s experiences. They may be able to explain what the child is trying to share, and caregivers can be encouraged to collaborate on narrative building. They can collaborate with their child at home by talking about daily events and creating pictographs of a child’s experiences.

**Contextualized teaching**

The term context refers to a framework. When we contextualize narrative concepts, we make them more accessible by building upon a foundation of current knowledge. For example, introducing the concept of character can be done after reading a story involving a discussion of who was in the story. The child is already
familiar with the characters of the story and adding the label “character” is building on his/her present knowledge. This approach can be referred to as contextualized teaching and it buoys a child’s learning by anchoring abstract concepts, makes the child more successful during activities by allowing him to use prior knowledge and gives more meaning to knowledge being acquired.

Bui (2002) provided us with an example of contextualized (and multimodal) teaching. The author reports that children with and without learning disabilities not only learned story grammar concepts and comprehended stories better by using this sequence of activities, they retained that information over time.

1. Start with informal discussion about something that happened to the child. 
   *This creates a framework, or context, on which to build.*

2. Create an illustration to represent the story. *This allows a child to successfully put his/her knowledge to work, continuing to develop and use the story’s context.*

3. Have the child or adult construct a sentence or two to represent the story. 
   *This activity continues to develop the child’s context for the narrative concepts to be taught next.*

4. Build upon the child’s knowledge of his/her story’s structure by explicitly teaching one story grammar concept (e.g., character, event) at a time. *This step is taught within the context of the previous steps and, as a result, makes the story grammar element more accessible, less obscure, to the child.*

5. Introduce the idea that story grammar elements are universal and found in all stories. Read a story to the child and, collaboratively, determine the
targeted story grammar concept within another story. *This activity allows a child to recognize a narrative concept by drawing on prior knowledge.*

6. **Note:** This style of teaching takes time. The sequence of events outlined above may take several sessions, and a review of the child's knowledge of previous steps is usually required, particularly with children with language and/or learning difficulties.

Think of contextualized teaching like building a home. The skeletal frame of a house can be compared to the initial discussion of a personal story. As child and adult collaborate, developing a richer understanding of the story through complementary activities as they go, the house takes shape through the construction of a roof, walls, doors and windows. Our work begins with broad strokes, becoming more refined and detailed as exposure to the story and the child's narrative competence increases. Superimpose this teaching model onto any narrative goal. The matrix at the end of this chapter provides ideas for narrative activities with a focus on tapping multiple modalities, but it also provides opportunities to contextualize narrative teaching by building upon a child's prior knowledge of a story.

Finally, it is important to mention that school age children benefit from the use of curriculum during language development activities. This is particularly true when addressing oral narrative goals. Students with language deficits can use extra exposures to classroom reading material and increase their understanding of story components and meanings when language goals are based on the reading materials from school.
Parent/caregiver involvement

A child's primary and most influential conversation partner is his/her caregiver. Collaborating with caregivers can improve language outcomes (McCabe & Rollins, 1992). When caregivers regularly expand upon their child’s utterances about past experiences that child is more apt to possess stronger narration skills (McCabe & Peterson, as cited by McCabe & Rollins, 1992). This is particularly true for personal narrative acquisition. As mentioned in previous chapters, the ability to share stories about oneself is related to conversational skill, and caregivers can be encouraged to use techniques to enrich interactions at home. More specifically, caregivers can facilitate narrative development by discussion topics that focus on times when the caregiver and child were apart. Research suggests that these conversations are “real communication exchange(s)” and appear to encourage more verbal responses from children (p. 25). Caregivers can create rich linguistic environments by interlacing narrative interactions with other language activities, including book reading or sharing nursery rhymes.

During shared book reading, caregivers can allow a child to lead by letting the child “read” using the pictures, reading to the child and pausing to discuss story elements that are of interest to the child. These activities and others present numerous opportunities for a child to share ideas as well as listen to and attempt to use novel vocabulary.
SECTION II: A multiple modality approach to personal narratives

Children tell stories, as we all do, to share with others and interpret the world around them (Franke & Durbin, 2006). Targeting personal narratives first makes sense as they develop earlier than fictional storytelling and scaffold overall oral language acquisition (McCabe, et al., 2008). It is our challenge as clinicians, teachers and caregivers to scaffold a child’s early attempts to talk about his/her life. A multi-modality approach helps us accomplish this goal. It provides the adult with various means to engage a child, explore an idea and, when successful, it compels a child to verbally share ideas and try new vocabulary.

What to talk about?

Where to begin? How to inspire a child to share? McCabe and Rollins (1992) suggested that many of the earliest child narratives focus on negative past events, such as injuries, or other real past experiences. The authors successfully elicited narratives by asking children if they had ever gone to visit the doctor or if they had ever been “jabbed by anything” (p. 35). Another fruitful topic prompt is bee stings. McCabe and Rollins (1992) also emphasized that preschool children produce stronger narratives when their caregivers consistently extended conversation about past events that interest the children, for example, accidents at nursery school. The salient quality of such topics and an adult’s willingness to extend conversation can be a positive starting place for personal narrative development.

Other topics that take into account a child’s egocentric viewpoint may also be positive places to begin narrative building, including: engaging multi-step tasks (i.e.,
craft projects or cooking activities) or favorite activities, stories about his/her family, vacations and other experiences. Any topic about a child’s life that holds the child’s interest over time, can be used to construct personal narratives.

Auditory and general methods

Talking about an experience is a good place to start when building a personal narratives as such storytelling supports dialogic behavior (McCabe, et al., 2008; McCabe & Rollins, 1992). Orient yourself to the child or children in such a way that allows them to hear you and you can see what holds their attention.

Get ready to interact. Integrate the following approaches into your activities (defined and explained in Chapter 2):

1. Get on the child’s eye level by sitting next to them or having them in your lap.
2. Increase your affect so words stand out and carry emotional meaning.
3. Model language for the child/children, and slow your speech down slightly, so each word is clear, beginning to end.
4. Don’t rush the child when he/she is telling his/her story. Work at his/her pace.

McCabe and Rollins (1992) suggested that a child’s story is a “meaningful expression of who the child is and what he or she has experienced” (p. 15). Giving ample time to share is especially important when working with children who have language disorders. To the extent you build rapport with a child, the more willing a child will be to share his/her experiences with you.

Expand and explore. Maintain topics and investigate a child’s ideas. Repeat new words again, use them alone and in full sentences. Caregivers and teachers can be useful sources of information when searching for personal narrative topics.
1. Adopt a conversational/dialogic style of interaction during personal narrative building by discussing topics of interest to the child as opportunities arise, exploring events and emotions, and asking open-ended questions rather than yes/no questions (e.g., “What did you do when you bumped your knee?” vs. “Did it hurt?”) while still maintaining the progression of teaching sessions.

   a. “Foster a personal narrative discourse” McCabe, et al. (2008) suggested that professionals can aid children who have difficulty organizing their thoughts during conversation by applying narrative structure concepts to discourse. This includes explicit teaching of the temporal, sequential terminology first, next, then, last (p. 201). Once children master the basic narrative format, the authors suggest adding greater complexity to personal narrative discourse through introducing other concepts, including: event or character descriptions, emotions, inclusion of causal factors.

   i. Create reasonable expectations for your client. Fivush (1998) suggested there are differences in how boys and girls share personal stories. The author found that girls recall more about their stories, provide more contextual information, including temporal-spatial and evaluative context, and include emotional content to a greater degree. In addition, context appears to play a critical role for boys when sharing personal narratives. Fivush stated that “reminiscing...resembles personal disclosure” and that boys are more apt to share personal
information with people they are close to whereas girls are comfortable disclosing information in many situations with various listeners.

2. *Follow the child's lead:* Talk about what interests the child. Focus less on correcting the child's perception of events and more on exploring ideas and encouraging language to express a thought.

   a. *Think collaboration* instead of domination by looking for opportunities to allow the child to contribute and guide the direction of interactions—follow the child's interests while guiding story structure. This approach is particularly critical when working with children with language and/or learning disabilities, or children with little language (Justice & Kaderavek, 2002). See the first portion of this chapter for information about incorporating conversation and collaboration into interactions.

   1. *Pause* for responses
   2. *Watch and listen* for what holds a child's interest
   3. *Encourage a child's contributions* by exploring and expanding upon the child's ideas

3. *Use basic narrative language or “story words”:* first, next, then, last

   a. *Teach story grammar concepts and use story grammar terms:*

      characters/who, setting/where and when, problem/what, and conclusion/how
i. *Story grammar* has been a mainstay of narrative teaching for many years and a diversity of therapy techniques have been developed to teach concepts, including *Story Grammar Marker* (SGM ®) and other forms of *story mapping*, can be used to outline the formal structure of fictional stories and support story comprehension and retell. A search on-line provides numerous ideas for incorporating story grammar concepts into teaching sessions. *(See additional notes under visual methods.)*

ii. *Story grammar and personal narratives*: Bui (2002) found both children with and without learning disabilities benefited from weekly exercises involving sharing a personal narrative followed by identifying a new story grammar concept each week. These activities laid the groundwork for exploring the story grammar within fictional stories read to the students during the week.

4. *Focus on cause and effect relationships*: Bishop and Dolan (2005) found that children recall a story more successfully when they understand whole event sequences. Teaching cause and effect sequences within stories improves a child's ability to recall the narrative. This may also be a helpful approach to addressing social story outcomes. Have children share a personal story and then write down or draw their actions and the reactions that followed. Discuss possible alternative outcomes, if appropriate.
a. Construct a "cause and effect chart" for a personal story: Although this is a visual aid, it is best described here. One way of chunking out story sequences is by charting cause and effect relationships. Before charting out this sequence in a story, take some time to teach the concept. Start with a concrete example: fill a cup with water, spill it and observe the results with the child. Think of other examples from their life, specifically negative past events (e.g., bee sting, falling down). Once a child has mastered the idea of cause and effect, chart out story cause and effect sequences on a big piece of paper. Appendix B provides examples of this type of charting.

Visual methods

Finding or creating visuals to support a child’s personal narrative can serve to anchor the memory and sequence of real events. Visuals can extend interest in and exploration of a child’s narrative. The following are suggestions to integrate visuals into narrative intervention:

Use imagery to support learning. Visuals can be used to organize and sequences events. This is not a novel idea, but the impact is in the presentation. The following are ideas to integrate visuals into narrative teaching:

1. Pictography: An adult can quickly sketch a series of events as a child shares them as placeholders for his/her thoughts. Ukrainetz (1998) recommended the use of quick sketches, or "sketchwriting," or "stickwriting" in place of written narratives as a means of eliciting longer, more detailed stories from students. A child can sketch his/her own story after telling it, being careful to
draw only the most salient aspects of his/her narrative, or the clinician, teacher or caregiver can do so as the child is telling his/her story.

2. *Photographs*: Caregivers and professionals can create visuals by taking digital photographs of a child performing a task (e.g., making something or completing therapy tasks) and using the printed versions to help the child sequence and review the steps of the task. Use the language “first, next, then, last” to create structure, if needed. Have the child share with his/her caregiver when the activity/session is complete. This technique can be used to help a child complete a common sequence of events, such as setting up a favorite game or making a favorite recipe (e.g., peanut butter and jelly sandwich). Use photographs to encourage narrative use in familiar situations.

3. *Write down the child's words* on post-it notes and adhere them below images, whether sketches or photographs. For a child who is not writing yet, it allows him to see that his/her words can be represented in print (Goldsworthy, 2003). For those having trouble writing complete sentences, transcribing a child's thoughts anchors the ideas being discussed without taking the focus away from your oral language goal.

4. *Construction and/or deconstruction of an object* can provide opportunities ripe for adults and children to create narratives together. Support retelling later by taking notes, taking photographs or quickly sketching pictures of the steps taken to put together or take apart a toy, object or craft project. Have the child organize images and retell what he/she did.
5. **Encourage a child to take on the role of artist.** Narratives can be built upon the process of art creation. Introduce the practice of careful observation and apply it to drawing, painting or other art media. Teach children about the quality and application of different art media. Introduce critical thinking concepts related to art: form, texture, value, perspective, proportion, color relationships and others. Serious art instruction and creation have been found to encourage children to use more complex language to describe their work and the work of others (Heath & Wolf, 2005). Build narratives by reconstructing how the child created something and why she made the aesthetic or material choices she did.

   a. **Manipulative story reenactment:** Kim (1999) stated that when children use manipulatives to recreate stories it supports their narrative recall and social-cognitive development. In that vein, adults can team with a child to recreate the events of their own experiences in play dough. After stories have been documented in pictographs, play dough characters can be constructed. Adult and child can role-play events. This activity also allows a child to reflect upon his/her experiences and actions, and imagine alternative outcomes.

6. **Teach story grammar concepts using visuals.** As mentioned above, story grammar language is a common structure to teaching narrative structure, and it is a successful means of improving a child’s story comprehension and recall (Bui, 2002). Assigning a visual symbol or picture to each story grammar concept (i.e., character, setting) supports a child’s learning and is
an integral aspect of story mapping therapy techniques, such as Story Grammar Marker (SGM®). Symbols may be created to anchor narrative concepts and used when identifying the grammar within a child’s story.

7. Create books with the child: Connect oral narratives to literacy by exploring story structure, including story grammar, through book creation. Book making also encourages a child to share his/her stories with others outside of the therapy room or classroom. Make books of the child’s stories whenever possible. Document the progression of any activity—including constructing or deconstructing something, discussing a problem at school or sharing about a family vacation. Compile drawings or photos into book format, or photocopy images, sequence them and bind them into a book format. Write or type their words below corresponding images and review the child’s words with them, and invite the child to share their book with others.

   a. “ME” books: Organize photographs from the child’s life into a book about them. A photo album can be used for this purpose, or the child and adult can collaborate on constructing an informal “book” of construction paper.

   b. “My Day” books: An adult can help a child reconstruct the day or difficult events of his/her day by drawing sequences of events and talking about them. These discussions can be opportunities to introduce emotional language. A child’s memory for events is more accurate and detailed if he/she assigns emotions to experiences (Fivush, 1998).
c. **Treasure maps:** Maps are not books, but can be helpful way to sequentially organize information. Create a “treasure map” for the child and a reward hidden where “X marks the spot.” This activity may include initial discussion of the task, the repeated use of simple narrative language (e.g., “Next, look inside the dollhouse”), lots of movement in order to find clues and a visual (map) to use in retelling the story at the end. It may be best to begin with a few clues (2–3) to follow before adding greater complexity.

**Kinesthetic methods**

As discussed previously, body movement can be used to support language acquisitions and may be incorporated into oral narrative goals. The following are some ways kinesthetic movements can be incorporated into personal story development:

1. **Role-playing,** or acting out, real events can support narrative construction and retell by allowing a child to reconstruct events. This method of running through past events can be used to compliment activities involving other modalities. Role-play may be used after a story has been reconstructed through over means (e.g., pictorially, verbally). Some children may feel uncomfortable with role-playing, instead, encourage these children to use their body to dramatically gesture story events from the safety of sitting position (e.g., they can create “binoculars” with their hands).

2. **Sign language or modified sign** of narrative terms, such as *first, next, then, last,* referred to by this author as “story words,” may be used to cue basic
story structure. This can help a child determine which part of the story comes next and encourages him to have greater independence during storytelling over time.

SECTION III: A multiple modality approach to fictional narratives

Stories born of the imagination are an important aspect of the academic experience (McCabe, et al., 2008) as well as human culture. Fictional narratives include the invention of a new story or the retelling of a story read or heard. Producing a novel tale can be an arduous task for children, particularly those with language and/or learning difficulties, as fictional stories require an advanced oral language and cognitive development. Consequently, many focus on teaching this form of narrative through sharing and retelling existing stories. Children's literature provides ample material to teach about what fictional narratives are and how they are constructed. Studies show that shared book reading as a means to support overall language and literacy abilities (Trelease, 2001). As a result, many of the suggestions below focus on the use of picture books and other forms of children's literature as a means to build a child's fictional storytelling skills.

Auditory and general methods

Dramatic storytelling, presenting a story using dramatic voice and gestures, is an effective tool to enhance vocabulary, length and quality of a child's utterances (Speaker, Taylor & Kamen, 2004) as well as story recall (Isbell, et al., 2004). Shared book reading is a common and powerful tool for building critical thinking skills.
(Borgia & Owles, 2007) as well as increasing vocabulary (Reese & Cox, 1999), both necessary for creating a complete story.

Get ready to interact. Consider incorporating the following approaches outlined in the previous section, including:

1. Get on the child's eye level

2. Increase your affect during storytelling, shared book reading and imaginative story creation. Create different qualities of voice for different characters and express the emotions of characters. Encourage the child to adopt the perspective of different characters. This approach to reading inspires a child to become emotionally involved in a story and conveys the emotional content and character dynamics, scaffolding their comprehension and recall.

3. Model language

4. Don't rush the child

Expand and explore. Consider incorporating the following approaches outlined in the previous section, including:

1. Adopt a conversational/dialogic style during book reading and/or imaginative storytelling.
   
   a. Relate fictional narratives to life: When discussing events in books, attempt to relate them to a child’s real life. If a character expresses sadness, briefly discuss what makes the child sad and why. This type of interaction is at the heart of “dialogic reading” and supports a child’s participation in book reading (Doyle & Bramwell, 2006). The last portion of this chapter discusses conversation further.
2. Follow the child's lead

a. Think collaboration not domination. See the first portion of this chapter for information about incorporating conversation and collaboration into interactions, including shared book readings.

b. Consider the following suggestions during shared book reading (Justice & Kaderavek, 2002):
   
i. Pausing during reading to allow for child contributions
   
ii. Allowing the child to pick where to read (i.e., on the floor, favorite chair)
   
iii. Give the child opportunities to manipulate the book, particularly when the book has moving parts
   
iv. Match the child's interests and abilities when sharing a story; as the child matures, he/she will become more interested in the story written in a book's text
   
v. Have the child to "read" to you; encourage the child to tell the story his/her way and support his/her interpretation (p. 10).

3. Use basic narrative language or "story words"

a. Teach story grammar concepts and use story grammar terms (e.g., characters/who, setting/where and when, problem/what, conclusion/how) after a child becomes familiar with the storyline of a book.

   i. Story grammar therapy techniques, including Story Grammar Marker (SGM ®) and other forms of story mapping, can be used
to outline the formal structure of fictional stories and support story comprehension and retell.

4. *Focus on cause and effect relationships:* Bishop and Dolan (2005) found that children recall a story more successfully when they understand whole event sequences. The authors suggest that finding ways to teach cause and affect sequences within stories improves a child’s ability to recall the narrative.

   a. *Construct a "cause and effect chart" for a story:* Although this is a visual aid, it is best described here. This activity can follow shared book reading and story discussion. As shared previously, before charting out cause and effect sequences in a story, take some time to teach the concept. Start with a concrete example: fill a cup with water, spill it and observe the results with the child. Think of other examples from their life, specifically negative past events (e.g., bee sting, falling down). Once a child has mastered the idea of cause and effect, chart out story sequences on a piece of paper. Draw a line down the center of a piece of paper and label the left side “cause” and the right side “effect.” Use basic narrative language and the “cause and effect chart” to retell the story sequences. See Appendix B for examples of “cause and effect charts” for the fictional narrative format.

**Visual methods**

As previously noted, visuals support a child's understanding acquisition of narrative concepts. The following are suggestions to integrate visuals into fictional narrative intervention:
Use dramatic imagery. Imagery can be used to scaffold a child’s memory for story events. As noted in previous chapters, children’s picture books have long been helpful tools for teaching fictional narrative concepts. The following are ideas to integrate visuals into narrative teaching:

1. Illustrated books: Vivid imagery within children's picture books scaffolds a child’s comprehension and memory for story events. Illustrations are rich sources for conversation, during which events, motives, emotions and other ideas may be explored. Wordless books can be a useful format for building narrative abilities, when adults have spent adequate time “previewing” books and formulating a sense of story elements and outcomes (White & Low, 2002).

   a. Previewing wordless books: White and Low (2002) suggested that parents “preview” a wordless book by spending time familiarizing themselves with a book prior to sharing it with a child. The authors find that after previewing, parents' stories are more cohesive and children are more involved during storytelling.

   b. Write down the child’s words when he/she retells a story or creates his/her own: As suggested in the previous personal narrative section, record a child’s words on post-it notes and attach them to images, whether it be sketches or photographs or book illustrations, to formalize their storytelling. This is particularly appropriate when using wordless books, but can also be adapted to activities involving picture books with text.
i. *Photocopy book imagery: *Kerfoot (2009) photocopied illustrations and creates a book from the child's words. This gives a child the opportunity to create a story with the help of pictures.

1. After reading and/or reviewing and talking about a book's images, the adult can encourage the child tell the story in his/her own words.
2. Record the child's story and transcribe it later.
3. Photocopy book illustrations and write the child's words under the story images.
4. The new story can be bound into a simple book so the child can share his/her story with others. This activity works particularly well with wordless books, when the child is provided ample time to preview the images and formulate ideas about them.

ii. *Laminate images: *Extra copies of books can be dismantled and the pages laminated in order to encourage a child to organize events and retell the story in their own words. Likewise, color reproductions of book characters can be laminated, attached to tongue depressors and used as puppets to retell a familiar story. This activity works well with one-on-one or in small groups.
2. *Encourage a child to take on the role of artist.* When working with fictional story creation, having a child create images is a natural extension of the story-building process. A child can create his/her own interpretation of a favorite story by producing drawings, painting, collages and other handiwork. Adult and child can discuss salient aspects of the story, motives and emotion behind events, all of which support a child’s narrative development. Artwork produced can be bound into book format to be reviewed over time and shared with others.

   a. *Group/collaborative storytelling using art:* If several children are involved in the story-building process, they can each be assigned a different character to reproduce as a three-dimensional sculpture. These reproductions then can be used during storytelling to involve each child in the reenactment of story events. Children can share ideas on how to act out what happens in the story, why characters do what they do and if the children have ever experienced similar experiences.

3. *Manipulative story reenactment:* As mentioned above, Kim (1999) reported that a child’s narrative recall and social-cognitive development are supported when manipulatives (i.e., dolls) are used to recreate a familiar story from children’s literature. Dolls and other toys can be used to stand in for story characters during play. Adults can partner with children to reconstruct story events.
a. **Fabric transfers:** Book characters can scanned and printed onto fabric transfer paper, which can then be used to make three-dimensional stuffed manipulatives.

**Kinesthetic methods**

Fictional narratives can be enriched through kinesthetic movement in the form of play. Kim (1999) suggested that narrative language and perspective-taking emerge from combining play and storytelling activities. Play helps a child organize story sequences, encourages him to translate his/her experiences into words. The following are some ways kinesthetic movements can be incorporated into personal story development:

1. *Role-playing,* or acting out, story events can support fictional narrative comprehension and recall. Sequential teaching of fictional stories, may translate into repeated readings of a story followed by role-play activities.
   a. **Manipulatives and play:** The manipulatives mentioned in the "visual methods" section may be used during play, or other objects may stand in for book characters in order to encourage symbolic play, depending on the child's development and goals.

2. *Sign or modified sign language* may be used to cue basic story grammar structure/concepts (e.g., first, next, last, beginning, ending).

In this chapter, suggestions for mixing and matching auditory, visual and kinesthetic/gestural narrative activities were outlined. By using a multiple modality approach to oral narrative, clinicians, teachers and caregivers utilize a child's
strengths in order to scaffold acquisition of story concepts, structure and meaning. After all, the importance of narrative is not simply the improvement of storytelling. Rather, it reveals child's overall language development and communicative skill. The next chapter describes the application and outcome of a multimodality approach to oral narrative development with two children who have oral language deficits.
Chapter 5

METHODOLOGY

Oral narrative intervention is a long-term process. It encompasses many aspect of language discussed in Chapter 1 and develops throughout childhood into early adolescence (McCabe, et al., 2008). In order to give the reader a sense of what therapy targeting oral narrative using multiple modalities looks like, this author enrolled two students in a short series of sessions and recorded observations of interactions. The hope is that these observations may be informative to the reader. Significant gains on the students' parts are not to be expected within such a short timeframe.

As discussed in previous chapters, personal narrative develops earlier and supports the daily communication needs of the child (McCabe, et al., 2008). For these reasons, personal oral narrative development was the primary focus of this observation. Fictional narratives were incorporated into activities to generalize narrative concepts.

Procedures

Over a 4-week period, both subjects were introduced to story structure and narrative language using a multimodality approach. This was an anthropological observation of how the 2 participants responded to a short-term, multimodal approach to teaching narrative concepts. Subject 1 and 2 were explicitly and implicitly taught personal narrative structure. Fictional narratives were used and produced to extend teaching of the narrative language concepts. Each therapy session targeted all learning modalities sequentially and as appropriate for the
child's learning style, including: 1) listening/auditory, 2) visual, and
3) kinesthetic/gestural.

Pre/post sampling

Oral narrative samples were collected from each subject at the outset and throughout the project. All sessions were recorded for narrative sampling and later analysis. Participants were not exposed to any discomfort, harm or risk during project activities.

Subjects

There are two subjects included in this observation. Subject 1 is a 6-year, 9-month old girl who lives at home with her parents and younger sibling. Both she and her sister were adopted during their infancy. She has a history of delayed language development and has just begun receiving language therapy through the Sacramento Scottish Rite Childhood Language Clinic. Subject 2 is an 8-year, 7-month old boy who lives at home with his parents. He also has a history of language delay and has been receiving language intervention through the Sacramento Scottish Rite Childhood Language Clinic since 2006. Both children come from similar socioeconomic backgrounds and English is their primary and only language.

Procedures

Sessions consisted of some or all the following: 1) discussion/review of story words as appropriate for subject, 2) sharing a personal narrative or collaborating on a fictional story in addition to discussion, 3) creating simple drawings (pictographs) of story events and book construction, 4) acting out the story, and 5) retelling their story to another person using their pictograph books. Shared book reading was used
to reinforce narrative concepts, whether that be *story words* or *story grammar* concepts targeted for the session (i.e., character, setting). Depending on subject’s abilities, the child and adult explored details of a story and/or alternative outcomes to the story shared that day.

*Subject 1.* Sessions targeted primarily personal narrative development with some fictional narrative creation. All sessions followed the above sequence of activities, but all four sessions primarily focused on the use of *story words* to structure shared activities and their subsequent narratives. At the end of each session a parent was invited in so the child could retell her story using her pictographs. Visual and verbal prompting was given during all story generation and retell activities. At the end of each session a parent was invited into the therapy room to allow the child to retell his story using her pictographs. Visual and verbal prompting was given during all story generation and retell activities. Activities focusing on the use of story words included:

- *Ice cream making activity*
- *Self-portrait puppet*
- *Snow globe activity*
- *Snow globe story creation*
- *Wordless book “reading”*

Carryover of narrative concepts was achieved by sending home a “sock monkey” named Peanut and a journal. Subject 1 was encouraged to record a sequence of events using “story words” in the journal. The family also decided to add
photographs of Peanut to aid in story retell. Subject 1's mother then transcribed the sequence of story events into the journal and reviewed them with her daughter.

**Subject 2.** Sessions targeted primarily personal narrative development with some fictional narrative creation. All sessions followed the above sequence of activities. The first session primarily focused on the use of *story words* to structure a shared activity and its subsequent narrative. The second session focused on the story grammar concept *character*, the third session, *setting*, and the final session, *story problem*. Each activity provided a concrete example of the day's narrative or story grammar concept:

- **Ice cream making activity** – *story words*
- **Self-portrait puppet** – *character*
- **Snow globe activity** – *setting*
- **Snow globe story creation** – *story problem*
- **Wordless book “reading” & “picture walking” of other books** – *review*

At the end of each session a parent was invited into the therapy room to allow the child to retell his story using her pictographs. Visual and verbal prompting was given during all story generation and retell activities.

Carryover of narrative concepts was achieved by sending home a “sock monkey” named Peanut and a journal. Subject 2 was encouraged to dictate a sequence of events, use “story words,” 2 days per week. His mother then transcribed the sequences into the journal. Dictation allowed Subject 2 to focus on the oral language task of verbally telling his “Peanut story,” instead of writing and spelling.
Materials

The following materials were used during interactions with the children in this observation:

* Craft supplies (e.g., colored paper, white printer paper, colored pens and pencils, Elmer’s glue, poster board, etc.)
* Ice cream making materials: half and half, sugar, vanilla, ice, rock salt and various utensils
* Snow globe making materials: baby food jars, permanent markers, figures, distilled water, glitter, Gorilla Glue
* Sock monkeys and at-home narrative journals
* Children’s book(s):
  - Once upon a Banana, by Jennifer Armstrong
  - Frog and Toad Together by Arnold Lobel
  - Curious George Rides a Bike by H.A. Rey
* Recording device for audio recording all sessions for later review
* Laminated sheet of “story words” – first, next, then, last
* Story awards for completion of the final observation session
Chapter 6  
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

It is worth repeating that narrative intervention is a long-term endeavor. It encompasses numerous language abilities acquired throughout childhood and into adolescence (McCabe, et al., 2008). For these reasons, narrative goals should be viewed as long-term language goals and a professional's approach should evolve as the child acquires the requisite social, linguistic and cognitive skills. This does not suggest that narrative is "too big" to address; on the contrary, it is [a?] highly practical focus for intervention and its potential impact is great. Ultimately, our focus as professionals and caregivers should be on sparking a child's interest and participation in the act of storytelling, and by doing so improve oral narratives as well as academic performance and personal relationships.

The purpose of this observational exercise was to apply a multimodal approach to oral narrative development and note the subjects' short-term responses. This is not a study. Hugely significant gains were not expected due to the short timeframe of the observations. Rather, this author hoped to see the two child subjects become more comfortable applying a simple narrative structure and/or increase engagement during storytelling activities, in place of the disorganized structure and general avoidance of oral narrative sharing of both subjects prior to the interactions.

Both child subjects avoided sharing oral narratives in their daily lives per parent reports. Prior to the observation sessions, Subject 1's father was asked to describe his daughter's ability to share a story about her day's events. "She avoids it"
was his response, sharing that his daughter usually offers single words (i.e., “recess” or “lunch”) before beginning a completely different topic of discussion. The author was unable to collect a spontaneous narrative sample from Subject 1 during her first session due the subject’s unwillingness to share or expand on a topic.

Subject 2 reportedly attempts to share stories, but becomes overwhelmed by such a linguistically taxing activity as oral narrative. He also has social pragmatic issues that appear to hinder his ability to tell stories effectively. During the first session, Subject 2 asked about a band-aid on the author's finger. After sharing a simple story using narrative words first, next, then, last, the author asked if he had ever hurt his finger before. He said no and the author went on to ask if he had ever gotten any body parts hurt during soccer, a sport he currently plays. He replied that he had many body parts hurt before. The author then asked, “Can you tell be about one time you got hurt? What happened?” Subject 2 replied, “No” and changed the subject.

In spite of the short timeframe of this narrative exercise, it appeared to have a positive impact on the storytelling of both subjects. Subjects 1 and 2 benefited from multiple exposures to story concepts and the linguistic structure created by the use of “story words” first, next, last (Subject 2 was also taught then in addition to the other 3 words). Both children became increasingly interactive and engaged with the storytelling process over time. During the first session, both subjects attempted to change the topic of discuss and/or activity or made multiple statements that they lacked the skills to accomplish a task. By the end of the 4 sessions, Subject 1 made gains in her ability to focus on a series of narrative tasks and provide more complete
story ideas, and Subject 2 rarely made off-topic comments or stated that he didn't like or couldn't do something. In fact, Subject 2 appeared less anxious when asked to share a story. As both children learned the pattern of session activities and understood that the clinician was there to collaborate with them on story creation, they both appeared to be less reluctant to try new tasks and share ideas. This observed progress suggests that over time, and with continued training, both subjects would become more independent storytellers.

Narrative sampling pre and post observation

Subject 1 narratives. A narrative sample was collected for Subject 1 after the initial session's activities. This first personal narrative by Subject 1 was elicited using a “book” of the child's pictographs of story events. It consisted primarily of brief, telegraphic utterances and frequent, overt verbal and visual cueing was required to support story retell. Subject 1’s first narrative, transcribed below, is about how to make ice cream, as was done during the session. The clinician's support is shown in parentheses:

**(Visual and verbal cue)***
First, milk, then sugar, then... (vanilla) vanilla... then put it in a bag.

**(Visual and verbal cue)***
Next... cut our fingers off. (Referring mistakenly to the hand sign for last)

**(Visual cue)***
Next, ice... little, tiny sugars... salt.

**(Visual and verbal cues but instead describes picture)*** That's the little bag and that's the ice bag. The ice cream.
(Visual cue and verbal prompt)
(Next, you put the little bag...) Inside.
Shaked it. (For how long?) 5 minutes.

(Visual cue and verbal prompt)
(Last...) Put it in the freezer.

At the end of the final session a narrative was elicited using the photographs of Subject 1 and Peanut, the sock monkey, child drawings and Peanut’s journal.
Subject 1 still needed visual and verbal prompting, but provided complete ideas during story retell:

This is Peanut...and this is...

(Visual cue and verbal prompt to “Tell the story…”)
First, me and Peanut went to (the) ice skating rink.

(Visual prompt)
Me and Peet and me and Peanut went to get a new uniform – remember, Daddy?

(Visual and verbal cues)
Then Peet went to the train museum. Next...and then Peanut went on the train!

(Subject’s father and clinician provide visual cues)
And, me and Peet went to go get Daddy...and he on the suitcase! (Visual and verbal prompt by father, “Your story word is…”) Last!

Subject 2 narratives. A narrative sample was collected for Subject 2 after the first session’s activities. The first narrative created by Subject 2 was recorded on paper in drawings and text. During story retell, Subject 2 relied completely on his text to recall the story, reading it word-for-word. To elicit longer, more spontaneous language during story retell, quick sketches, or pictography, alone was used the following session as Ukrainetz (1998) suggests. The next session resulted in the
personal narrative below. For this narrative, Subject 2 created his own visual cueing system to help him remember which words he needed to use in his story – he simply wrote the appropriate “story word” below each picture:

Title: *Going to the Aquatic Center*

First, I go on the big diving board – and then I do a belly flop. “Ow, ow!”

Then, I go on the big slide.

Then, I go the little diving board and I do a belly flop. “Ow!”

Next, I go on the water-park and four buckets. *(Prompt to tell more)* It had kinda like buckets when it fall it hit you.

*(Clinician restates)*
Next, just go home for free (a rote tagline he likes to use).

*(Prompt to “Tell me more...”)* This is our car. That is – is it a second story house?

The following narrative was collected during the third session and was elicited using Subject 2’s pictographs of story events and written story words. Less visual and verbal prompting was required during retell. This day we focused on making sure his pictures had enough detail to help him retell his story. Adjustments to pictures are noted in parentheses:

Title: *How to Make a Snow Globe*

First, we picked our characters.

Next, we decorated the...the...oh, we glued the characters. *(To help child remember details, such as glue, clinician asked Subject 2 to add a picture of glue to provide him more details to comment on.)*

Then, we decorated the glass...uh...with trees?
(He was asked to change picture to add a “Sharpie” and asked him to repeat information again using his image.)

Then, we decorated our glass with pens.

(Visual cue)
We’re waiting for the guy to dry...
Next, we wait until the guys dry, until the glue dry.

Then,...we put glitter and water in the globe.

Last, we finish our globe, I mean, we shake our globe... and then we make a book.

Both children made gains in telling stories using their “books.” They related more complete ideas and remained on topic more consistently. Subjects 1 and 2 both continued to need visual and/or verbal cueing by the clinician but knew better what was expected of them and they began to meet those expectations more reliably.

The multiple modality approach to narrative. Integrating multiple modalities into activities allows the clinician and child to discuss a targeted concept multiple times. Children with language difficulties, such as those that took part in this observation, may also have problems maintaining attention. A multimodal approach can address this issue by requiring children to use their bodies and their minds during narrative activities. It incorporates physical abilities and interests into the more taxing, language learning tasks. This approach asks children to attempt a difficult assignment using different skills and by doing so make multiple “passes” by critical terms and concepts without always being explicitly taught.

Auditory modality. Auditory input was a staple of interactions. The clinician incorporated all ideas noted in Chapter 3 for auditory/general approaches when working with children. Both children responded well to the clinician sitting at eye-
level, speaking clearly, at an even, slow rate and with appropriate intonation. Repetition and restating the ideas appeared to aid both subjects' understanding of tasks and concepts.

**Visual modality.** Each child has his or her strengths and areas needing growth. It became clear by the last session that Subject 1 responded best during story retell to photographs of events. She had difficulty using her drawings to help her retell a story. This may be due to her still developing drawing and fine motor skills. Often when she felt unable to draw something specific, instead of asking for help, she appeared to impulsively draw nonrepresentational images that did not aid in later retell exercises. During drawing activities she would also draw things or people that were not in the story being created. Often, this appeared to be a way to avoid challenging, uninspiring, and/or time-consuming imagery. With this in mind, Subject 1 appears to be best served by photographs during storytelling tasks.

Another option would be for the adult to make pictographs for this child as she is retelling her story.

Subject 2 used a "short-hand," symbolic drawing style during story documentation. He verbalized difficulty drawing specific imagery although he declined help when offered. Instead, he developed a simple set of markings to represent story elements (i.e., characters, settings). Unlike Subject 1, Subject 2's drawings supported his basic memory of events, but often resulted in limited detail during retell. However, he stayed focused on the topic at hand and "read" his pictographs relatively well during story retell activities. As a result, pictography was a successful story retell tool for Subject 2.
Kinesthetic or gestural modality. The clinician consistently used hand signs for the story words, first, next, last during formal and informal storytelling. Both children responded well to this visual cueing during their own story retelling.

Imaginative play was also used during two sessions. Subject 2 appeared to easily handle the transition between activities and was easily directed from play activities back to story creation. Subject 1 had greater difficulty maintaining story focus during play sequences as well as transitioning back to story-building tasks. At this time, she may be best served by photographing play sequences followed by the sequencing and retelling using the photos.

Story words and story grammar. Subject 1 seemed to have little exposure to narrative structure and all sessions focused on learning and using the “story words” first, next, last. Her parents supported her learning by visually (i.e., hand signs) and verbally cueing her during daily event sequences. Progress for this child translated into expressing thoughts in sentences and responding to cues, not independent use of “story words.” Subject 2 had been previously exposed to “story words” and story grammar concepts prior to this observation and he drew on this knowledge during activities. He became more independent in his use of terms during the observations.

Personal narrative focus and parent/caregiver collaboration. The choice to focus primarily on personal narrative building during this series of observations based on the suggestions of McCabe and her colleagues’ (2008). They asserted that personal narrative is a more potent format for a child with language problems. It supports his or her overall language development and conversational skills with others. This observation also demonstrated that parents and caregivers can
integrate personal narratives into daily life activities. A child spends much of his or her time around family, and when family members adopt a simple narrative structure at-home it provides a vehicle for conversational interactions between parents and children and holds the possibility of making those interactions more satisfying for both child and adult.

Conclusion

Narratives envelop the human experience and bind us to one another. When we share stories, we share our thoughts and feel as though we belong in our world. From a developmental perspective, oral narrative skill is predictive of later literacy and, therefore, academic success. The purpose of this project was to encourage professionals, teachers and parents to view oral narratives through a more holistic, multimodal lens – to involve the “whole child” and spark their desire to tell stories. The literature review makes a case for such an approach. The short-term observations of 2 subjects provide a glimpse of what multimodal interactions include and their short-term outcomes.

Further development of this project could address ways for working on oral narratives using a multimodal approach in the public school setting. Future studies may include a comparison between a multimodal approach and a standard picture card approach, or whether oral narratives gains using a multimodal approach translate into overall oral language progress.
APPENDICES
APPENDIX A

Narrative, Language & Theory of Mind (ToM) Developmental Milestones

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Narrative Skills</th>
<th>Language Skills</th>
<th>ToM Skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12 mo.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>First real words; nouns, familiar people or objects</td>
<td>Communicates desire with eye contact; joint attention develops Points to object</td>
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<tr>
<td>18 mo.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Uses up to 100 words</td>
<td>Begins to use words to get needs met</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Begins to refer to past events with assistance from an adult</td>
<td>Telegraphic language Primarily CVC words, multi-syllable words begin to emerge</td>
<td>Begins to request information and answer questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 mo.</td>
<td>Personal narratives begin with a focus on negative past events Heap stories including just labels and descriptions</td>
<td>Uses 50 to 250 words Begins to combine words Starts to ask/answer questions Enjoys listening to stories</td>
<td>Talks about the absence of objects (&quot;all gone&quot;) May misrepresent reality; lie, tease</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 yrs.</td>
<td>Two events appear in narratives By 36 mo: &quot;sequences&quot; form, theme but without plan of action Between 36 to 42 mo: &quot;primitive&quot; narratives emerge—their theme and some temporal organization</td>
<td>Uses 800 words or more 2 to 4 word phrases Continues to exhibit multiple grammatical errors</td>
<td>Maintains topic for several turns</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 yrs.</td>
<td>Rapid language growth period</td>
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<td>4 yrs.</td>
<td>Begins to create “chain” stories (e.g., ...and then...and then...)</td>
<td>Uses around 1,500 words Uses conjunctions:</td>
<td>Predicts behavior or situations Express empathy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age Range (years)</td>
<td>Narrative Characteristics</td>
<td>Vocabulary</td>
<td>Verb Use</td>
</tr>
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<td>------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>5-6</td>
<td>- Narratives include: some plot and &quot;high point&quot; (conclusion) - Creates imaginary roles with use of props - Uses hints to express desires</td>
<td>- &quot;True&quot; narrative emerges, with a focus on: past personal events, multiple events, and typically ending at story's &quot;high point&quot; - Story grammar elements: &quot;most&quot; use initiating events, 50% include steps taken by characters, 20% share a story conclusion</td>
<td>- Vocabulary continues to increase - Uses 4 to 6 word sentences - Sentences contain details - Generates accurate grammar most of the time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-7</td>
<td>- Narrative structure is more complete, including central theme/focus, high point and resolution</td>
<td>- Verbal descriptions are more developed - Continues to develop conversational abilities - Constructs sentences approximately 6 words in length - Uses morphological elements accurately most of the time - Understands most concepts of time</td>
<td>- Understands &quot;nested&quot; beliefs (e.g., Mommy thinks...) - Relates experiences in which the child felt jealous, guilty, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-9</td>
<td>- Stories contain greater complexity: character motivations, reactions, and internal goals</td>
<td>- Uses around 5000 words - Pronoun agreement improves - Understanding of multiple meaning words improves</td>
<td>- Continues to develop perspective-taking in order to persuade others</td>
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<tr>
<td>9-14 yrs.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- At 9 yrs: still has difficulty formulating story conclusion</td>
<td>- Understanding of figurative language continues to improve</td>
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<tr>
<td>- 10 yrs.: Most story grammar elements are in place, but “higher level language,” including pronoun agreements, are still not completely mastered</td>
<td>- Students are expected to acquire new information through reading (including expository texts)</td>
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<tr>
<td>- By 12 yrs: stories include greater episodic complexity (e.g., interactive, embedded episodes)</td>
<td>- Vocabulary from school texts becomes more abstract</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Metacognitive skills emerge</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Understands jokes based on lexical ambiguity, then later based on deep structural ambiguity</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Narrative milestones:* McCabe & Rollins, 1992; Norbury & Bishop, 2003; Paul, 2001; Saracho & Spodek, 2006

*Language milestones:* Paul, 2001; Shipley & McAfee, 2004

*ToM milestones:* Paul, 2001; Westby & Keller, 2000, as cited by Shipley & McAfee, 2004
APPENDIX B

Cause and Effect Charting

Simple cause and effect charting for *Once Upon a Banana* by Jennifer Armstrong.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cause</th>
<th>Effect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monkey ran away from the clown.</td>
<td>Bad things started to happen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clown finally found monkey.</td>
<td>Clown accidentally saved baby.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bananas went everywhere!</td>
<td>Everybody was happy eating bananas!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Complex cause and effect charting for *Once Upon a Banana* by Jennifer Armstrong.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cause</th>
<th>Effect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monkey ran away from the clown.</td>
<td>The clown chased the monkey.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The monkey stole a banana.</td>
<td>The grocery store man got angry.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The monkey didn't throw his peel in the trashcan.</td>
<td>The motorcycle man slipped on the peel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When the motorcycle man slipped, his foot hit a ladder.</td>
<td>The painter on the ladder fell off.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The painter fell into a man's cart.</td>
<td>The cart rolled into the street and made a mess of traffic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The cart rolled away.</td>
<td>The cart crashed into a man on a bicycle.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The man flew off his bicycle.</td>
<td>A judge saw the flying bicyclist and accidentally stepped onto a skateboard.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The judge rode the skateboard down the street.</td>
<td>The judge bumped into a lady walking a baby in a carriage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The baby carriage rolled away.</td>
<td>The baby rolled through the park and hit a speed bump in the street.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The baby went flying from the carriage.</td>
<td>The garbage truck swerved to miss the flying baby.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The clown reaches up to get his monkey down from the signpost.</td>
<td>The clown accidentally catches the baby.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The dump truck driver was looking at the baby instead of the road.</td>
<td>The truck hits the banana delivery truck.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bananas are everywhere!</td>
<td>It's a banana block party!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX C

A Quick Reference Guide to a Multimodal Approach to Oral Narrative Development

### 1. GENERAL APPROACHES
- Sequential presentation
- Repeated exposure to concepts
- Conversation & collaboration
- Contextualized teaching
- Parent/caregiver involvement

### 2. GET READY TO INTERACT
- Get on the child’s level
- Increase your affect
- Model language & slow your rate of speech slightly
- Don’t rush the child

### 3. EXPAND AND EXPLORE

#### PERSONAL NARRATIVE
1. Adopt a conversational style
   - Ask open-ended questions
   - Introduce a simple narrative structure (e.g., first, next, last) to help the child organize his thoughts.
   - Add greater complexity once the child has mastered this simple structure.

2. Follow the child’s lead
   - Think collaboration
   - Pause for input
   - Watch & listen
   - Encourage contributions
   - Expand on the child’s thought

3. Model narrative language or “story words” (including the terms: first, next, then, last)

   See Multimodal Toolbox below for information about teaching story grammar.

4. Teach and chart “cause and effect” sequences in stories

#### FICTIONAL NARRATIVE
1. Adopt a conversational approach during shared book reading
   - Relate fictional stories to the child’s life through conversation.

2. Follow the child’s lead
   - Think collaboration
   - Pause for input
   - Watch & listen
   - Encourage contributions
   - Expand on the child’s thought

   - Let the child where to read
   - Give the child opportunities to hold and manipulate the book
   - Match the child’s interests and abilities—as children age, they become more interested in the story presented by the text, first, talk about pictures
   - Have the child “read” to you

3. Model narrative language or “story words” (including the terms: first, next, then, last)

   See Multimodal Toolbox below for information about teaching story grammar.

4. Teach and chart “cause and effect” sequences in stories
4. THE MULTIMODAL “TOOLBOX”
* Mix and match activities to meet the specific strengths of your child and address narrative language goals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PERSONAL NARRATIVE — Multimodal Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>AUDITORY</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dialogue about daily or past events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Ask for specific information sequences (e.g., Tell me 2 things you had for breakfast? How do you make cereal?).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Avoid broad questions that may overwhelm or confuse your child (e.g., What did you do today?).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Use the “story words” *first, next, then, last* during story creation and/or retell

With younger children, introduce just *first, next and last*, including alternative words like “then” only after the others are used consistently.

Use photographs from a child’s life (e.g., family, pets, activities) or take photos of therapy activities to aid story creation.

* Construct “books” of a child’s experiences and stories whenever possible —ME books, How-to books, social stories or of how to address a child’s fears. This scaffolds their narrative language and also supports early literacy skills.

Role play story events as well as character actions and reactions

* First, the adult can review the story pictographs and/or notes, while the child acts out events again.
* Next, the adult can act out events while the child “reads” the pictographs.

* With an older child, the adult and child can role-play verbally to explore difficult situations and alternative solutions.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teach 1 story grammar concept at a time, over time*</th>
<th>Encourage a child to take the role of Artist</th>
<th>Use sign language or modified sign to mark the “story words” first, next, then, last</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Character(s)—who</td>
<td>* Teach your child about materials and how they are used.</td>
<td>* Teach your child hand signs to represent terms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting(s)—where</td>
<td>* Encourage critical thinking by discussing composition &amp; art terminology.</td>
<td>* Model the signs and ask the child to help you remember which word to use when storytelling.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem—what (Feelings/Emotions—reactions)</td>
<td>* Use art to interpret and reflect upon personal stories.</td>
<td>* Pause—allow your child to contribute a sign when the time comes. *You and your child can practice using story words during shared book reading (e.g., child signs/says “next” for a page to be turned).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actions/Steps taken—how, why</td>
<td>* The artistic process can also be a narrative opportunity—help your child chart progress as they make something (via pictographs or drawings) and after the activity is done, sequence steps taken.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion—what (Feelings at the end—reactions)</td>
<td>* Younger kids: practice by “picture-walking”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Teach 1 concept over several sessions.</td>
<td>Transcribe and draw your child’s story</td>
<td>Encourage dramatic storytelling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Create personal stories to introduce a story grammar concept.</td>
<td>Or, have your child write a simple sentence and produce a simple drawing for each sequence of his story.</td>
<td>* Adults can help anchor ideas or events if they use dramatic body movements while telling stories. It helps your child if you are goofy—get into character!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Extend teaching by finding examples of story grammar concept within several storybooks to support learning.</td>
<td>* Remember, children may produce richer language with only pictures as stimuli (no text).</td>
<td>* Even if a child does not want to get up and role-play, they can sit and create hand or arm movements.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Use intonation to retell stories and encourage the child to do the same

This helps the child understand and/or think about a story’s content, including meaning, emotions and outcomes.

* Younger kids: practice by “picture-walking”
through book, looking at illustrations and asking, "What do you think he's saying?" Be dramatic!

* Older kids: practice intonation by reading comic strips—the adult can be one character and the child another.

* If a child uses pictographs to tell his story, the adult can add text using Post-it notes, if it is appropriate for the child's goals.

gestures or facial expressions to represent story events and actions.

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### FICTIONAL NARRATIVE — Multimodal Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AUDITORY</th>
<th>VISUAL</th>
<th>KINESTHETIC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Have conversations about the book you are reading with your child</td>
<td>Use story illustrations to improve story comprehension</td>
<td>Talk about how your body shows emotions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discuss ideas in books during shared book reading</td>
<td>* Picture walk: when introducing a new story, look through the book with your child. Talk about the illustrations. Ask your child what they think the story is about.</td>
<td>Review the facial expressions and body language of story characters.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Respond to your child's comments—what in the book is important to them?</td>
<td>* During shared book reading, talk about how pictures can help tell the story and show character qualities and emotions.</td>
<td>* Have the child pretend to be a character in a book and do what the book character does.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Attempt to tie story characters, situations and emotions to the child's life and personal experiences.</td>
<td></td>
<td>* Review the story emotions in sequence.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Book suggestions:

* Ask your therapist and/or teacher for names of good books for your child.

* Use flip books or books that a child
Use the “story words” first, next, then, and last during book reading and/or story retell

* During shared book reading: for children who are not fluent readers, use post-it notes to mark narrative language during book reading (e.g., on the first page, place a post-it with “First” on it). Simplify the story text or put the story in your own words, as appropriate for your child.

* With story retell: picture-walk through the book and have your child help you use your “story words” as you talk about each page.

Use photocopied illustrations to help story retelling

After multiple readings, your child can organize laminated copies of illustrations and retell the story.

Role play story events as well as character actions and reactions

* The adult can retell or reread the story while the child acts out events.

* Then, the adult can act out events while the child “reads” the pictures or text.

* With an older child, the adult and child can role-play together and create alternative endings, if appropriate.

Play and language:
Imaginative play supports language acquisition and narrative activities.
| Teach 1 story grammar concept at a time, over time* | Encourage a child to take the role of Artist |
| Character(s)—who | Discuss illustration composition in book read—talk about how to tell a story through pictures. |
| Setting(s)—where | * Teach your child about materials and how they are used. |
| Problem—what | * Encourage critical thinking by discussing composition and art terminology (e.g., shadow, form). |
| (Feelings/Emotions—reactions) | * Encourage your child to make a preliminary sketch, and have him make decisions about what to include and exclude in his illustrations. |
| Actions/Steps taken—how, why | * Discuss materials and mediums—what materials convey the feelings of the story? Critique the illustrations in the book you are reading together. |
| Conclusion—what | * Group work: assign each child a different story event to illustrate. |
| (Feelings at the end—reactions) | Use sign language or modified sign to mark the “story words” *first, next, then, last* |
| * Teach 1 concept over several sessions. | * Teach your child hand signs to represent terms. |
| * Create personal stories to introduce a story grammar concept. | * Model the signs and ask your child to make them along with you. |
| * Extend teaching by finding examples of story grammar concept within several story-books to support learning. | * Pause and cue to encourage your child to contribute a sign when the time comes. |
**Use intonation during the reading and retelling of stories**

This helps the child understand and/or think about a story’s content, including meaning, emotions and outcomes.

* Practice intonation by reading comic strips—the adult can be one character and your child another.

* Use books that are repetitive and/or predictable to encourage child participation during book reading.

* Children may also be more apt to copy an adult model when intonation is used (particularly when books have repeated words and phrases).

**Use wordless books to prompt fictional story creation**

Look through a wordless book before you share it with your child. This allows you to know the story’s events and outcomes.

* Have your child help you interpret the story, it’s his story, too!

* Photocopy book illustrations (reduce size, if needed) and leave room for the child to add his own words to the images.

* Or, transcribe the child’s story—handwrite or use Post-it notes to quickly add text to a page.

**Encourage dramatic storytelling**

* Adults can help anchor ideas or events when they use hand and body gestures while telling stories. (This works particularly well when stories include repeating language and/or events.)

* Search for the YouTube video of Going on a Bear Hunt performed by the author, Michael Rosen.

* Even if a child does not want to get up and role-play, they can sit and create gestures to represent story events and actions.
APPENDIX D

Tell Me a Story: A whole child approach to oral narrative development
Introduction

Each of us tells stories everyday. When we share our triumphs or worries with another person we often share *stories*. Over the phone with Aunt Cecelia or on the front porch with a neighbor...often, chit-chat = stories.

Most children learn to tell their own stories, but it takes time. Typically, children begin to tell stories around 3 years of age and are adult-like storytellers by 11 or 12 years old. The clinical word for "story" is *narrative* and it is an important representation of a child's oral language development.

In order to tell a story, a child must use his or her knowledge of vocabulary, grammar structures as well as other associated abilities, such as memory and perspective taking. It is easy to overlook how much learning and accumulated skill underlies the sharing of stories.

The most important idea to take away from this book is that narrative language is an expression of a child's overall oral language skill and as such, it is part of a continuum of language skills—beginning with a baby’s cooing and culminating in his or her ability to read and write.

The Language Continuum

*(Goldsworthy, 2008)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Baby</th>
<th>Oral Narrative</th>
<th>Reading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Babbling &amp; Listening</td>
<td>...develops over time as language &amp; other related skills are acquired.</td>
<td>&amp; Writing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Between babbling and literacy, many language skills need to be acquired in order to excel communicatively and academically. For instance, between the two ends of the continuum some of the language skills needing to be acquired are:

- recognizing that sound changes = meaning changes,
- putting words together,
- acquiring correct grammar structures,
- and thinking about language and how to use it.

This book proposes that speech-language pathologists, teachers and parents or caregivers use a multimodal approach to target narrative development and provides suggestions on how this can be done. By targeting language skills through multiple modalities, including auditory, visual and kinesthetic modes of learning, the whole child is taken into account and learning is more possible. Oral narrative goals are long-term undertakings but worth the effort. With appropriate focus, narrative goals support a child’s story construction and retell, necessary for academic achievement, and scaffold overall language learning as well as strengthen personal relationships.
How to use this book

This book offers specific approaches to use when teaching oral narrative and was written with clinicians, teachers and parents/caregivers in mind. The information gathered here should provide you with ideas for addressing oral narrative from a multiple modality perspective. For parents of children without language difficulties, this book may serve as a source of inspiration for enriching parent-child interactions. For clinicians and teachers working with children with oral language deficits, this book will support your narrative goals and aid you in your lesson or therapy planning.

This book is divided into three parts:

Section 1: Story Time

This section gives a brief introduction to oral narrative acquisition and its importance to language and academic learning. Developmental milestones for oral narrative and other related skills can be found on pages 105–107. This section also suggests general techniques for working with children who have language difficulties and the value of a multiple modality approach.

Section 2: Personal Narratives

This section discusses the developmental significance of targeting personal narrative and multimodality means of doing so. A quick reference, or Multimodal Toolbox, is
found at the end of the section to help with planning personal narrative intervention. Examples and illustrations are provided when possible.

Section 3: Fictional Narratives

This section provides information on the role fictional storytelling plays in academic environments and how to address this form of narrative using multiple modalities. As with the section on personal narrative, a quick reference, or Multimodal Toolbox, is included to help with planning fictional narrative intervention. Examples and illustrations are provided when possible.

Enjoy!
Story Time!

Stories enrich our lives and shape cultures. They are a highly sophisticated form of social communication. Narratives bind people together, giving them a common language and shared body of knowledge. A child’s earliest narratives contain a single event and without careful listening you may not recognize them. In *Language Games to Play with your Child*, McCabe (1991) used the metaphor of a French braid to describe language development. She stated that oral narrative is made up of many interwoven “strands,” including the understanding and manipulation of language sounds (phonology), word creation (morphology), vocabulary (semantics) and grammar (syntax). A child must acquire all of these facets of language at a specific time to produce age appropriate language and literacy skills. Simply, a child’s oral narrative ability gives the listener a good idea of how he or she is doing with all of these skills and, therefore, provides a picture of his overall language skills.

Finally, recent research tells us of the predictive nature of oral language development in a child’s later academic success (Bishop & Donlan, 2005; Davies, Shanks, & Davies, 2004; Silliman & Scott, 2006). Literacy skill and academic success are built upon the foundation of oral language development. Narrative development is significant in itself. Snow, Burns and Griffin (1998), reported that story recall in kindergarten students is one key indicator of a child’s future literacy abilities. Additionally, oral, and later written, narratives are familiar formats within school curriculum. Beginning in kindergarten, children are required to share narratives (California Department of Education, 2007), and high-stakes assessments...
required by No Child Left Behind ask students to produce and/or interpret narratives (McCabe, 2008).

Oral narrative development

Oral narrative abilities are acquired throughout childhood (Lysaker, 2006; McCabe & Rollins, 1992; Norbury & Bishop, 2003). Typically, the earliest narratives emerge just before a child turns two years, after he or she has acquired a small bank of words and begins to put words together (McCabe & Rollins, 1992). Even at the age of 10 years, many typically developing children continue to have difficulty constructing a story conclusion. This supports the idea that oral narrative involves a diverse set of linguistic, cognitive, and social abilities acquired throughout childhood. The matrix on page 105 charts typical oral narrative development along with other related language and cognitive development. This may help the clinician, teacher and/or caregiver assess how a child's performance compares to his or her typical peers.

Since oral language development and oral narrative skills are so intertwined, it comes as no surprise that children who have difficulty learning language also demonstrate limited narrative ability over time. “Late-talking” children with various diagnoses often have trouble constructing stories as they age. Miniscalco and colleagues (2007) reported that children with language delays at 2.5 years, due to autism, language impairment and/or attention deficits, continued to struggle with narrative tasks at 7–8 years of age. Roseberry-McKibbin (2008) reported that children may also demonstrate limited language development due to a lack of
exposure to language and/or early education opportunities owing to low socioeconomic status. Research supports narrative intervention with children who experience language delays for many different reasons (Bishop & Donlan, 2005; McCabe, et al., 2008).

In fact, Bishop and Dolan (2005) reported that language deficits appear to get in the way of a child's ability to reconstruct stories by obstructing his memory for story events. This is true of children with normal intelligence. The authors stated that a child's language difficulties may overshadow intelligence during story recall tasks, even when information is presented in a non-verbal way via pictures. For this reason, the authors suggest finding ways to teach cause and affect sequences within stories to improve recall.

**Perspective taking and narratives.** A child's ability to conceive of the emotions, motives and mental plans of others, a cognitive ability referred to broadly as *theory of mind*, contributes to his or her narrative skill. During narrative creation, particularly fictional narrative, a storyteller must include the points of view and intentions of characters within a story (Astington, 1994; Hewitt, 1994). Typically developing children learn implicitly that fictional stories are based on characters and their feelings and share information about emotions and motivations when retelling stories (Hewitt, 1996). This is not the case for children with language learning problems. Explicit teaching as to the role emotions and motives play in stories, and the need to include such information during story retell, seems necessary for those with language disorders, especially children on the autism spectrum.
Personal narratives. Where to begin? McCabe and her colleagues (2008) suggested that personal narratives are earlier developing and necessary for a child's social and academic success. She and her colleagues define *personal narrative* as "a recount of a real past experience" (p. 194). This narrative form in particular has been referred to as an important building block to teaching writing in elementary schools. The authors shared that personal storytelling supports the development of conversational and functional language. McCabe and Rollins (1992) suggested that children with language impairments create personal narratives more successfully than fictional narratives due to the frequent need to tell personal stories in daily life. As a result, the authors suggested that personal storytelling is a more advantageous place to begin narrative remediation and more likely to carryover into everyday interactions.

Gender and personal narratives. Are there differences between boys and girls when it comes to sharing personal stories? Fivush (1998) suggested there are many. The author found that girls recall more about their stories, provide more contextual information, including temporal-spatial and evaluative context, and include emotional content to a greater degree. Fivush wrote that parents explore a child's past events differently with their children; both mothers and fathers tended to elaborate, confirm and explore emotions to a greater extent with their daughters than with their sons. Fivush noted that gender differences in narrative development emerge early in the child's life.
For boys, *who* they are sharing their personal stories appears to be critical. Fivush stated that “reminiscing...resembles personal disclosure” and that boys are more apt to share personal information with people they are close to whereas girls are comfortable disclosing information in many situations with various listeners (p. 98).

**Fictional narratives.** McCabe and colleagues (2008) defined *fictional narratives* as “composition or recall of a previously heard or read story” (p.194). If personal narrative development results from the growth of conversational and functional language then fictional narratives spring from established language and cognitive skills. Simply, the ability to independently tell a fictional story emerges later than a child’s ability to converse with others. The developmental milestones matrix on page 105 outlines the emergence of personal and fictional narratives, as well as other abilities needed to be a strong storyteller.

While children with language deficits are reportedly better personal storytellers, but both narrative forms are needed for academic success and need to be taught (McCabe, et al., 2008). Bui (2002) first introduces story concepts (e.g., story grammar) within a personal story context. Once a child is familiar with the concept(s) within a personal story context, she reinforces and generalizes learning by presenting the same concept(s) in fictional stories.
The table on the following pages outlines typical development of narrative, language and associated cognitive skills, referred to as theory of mind (ToM), to give you a sense of where your child should be at any given age. If your child is not demonstrating the skills noted for his age, narrative is probably an appropriate goal for him or her. Look for where your child falls on the table, create goals that start where he or she is, regardless of age, and progress from that point. Begin on a level that is comfortable for your child.
# Narrative, Language & Theory of Mind (ToM)

*Developmental Milestones*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Narrative Skills</th>
<th>Language Skills</th>
<th>ToM Skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12 mo.</td>
<td>-First real words; nouns, familiar people or objects</td>
<td>-Communicates desire with eye contact; joint attention develops</td>
<td>-Points to object</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 mo.</td>
<td>-Uses up to 100 words</td>
<td>-Understands basic what, who, where questions</td>
<td>-Begins to use words to get needs met</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 mo.</td>
<td>-Begins to refer to past events with assistance from an adult</td>
<td>-“Telegraphic” language</td>
<td>-Begins to request information and answer questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 yrs.</td>
<td>-Personal narratives begin with a focus on negative past events</td>
<td>-Uses 50 to 250 words</td>
<td>-Talks about the absence of objects (“all gone”)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-“Heap stories” including just labels and descriptions</td>
<td>-Begins to combine words</td>
<td>-May misrepresent reality; lie, tease</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 yrs.</td>
<td>-Two events appear in narratives</td>
<td>-Starts to ask/answer questions</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-By 36 mo: “sequences” form, theme but without plan of action</td>
<td>-Enjoys listening to stories</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Between 36 to 42 mo: “primitive” narratives emerge-theme and some temporal organization</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 yrs.</td>
<td>-Begins to create “chain” stories (e.g., …and then…and then…)</td>
<td>-Uses around 1,500 words</td>
<td>-Predicts behavior or situations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Narratives include:</td>
<td>-Uses conjunctions: <em>so, when, if, because</em></td>
<td>-Expresses empathy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-Maintains interactions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Narrative Structure</td>
<td>Verbal Descriptions</td>
<td>Conceptual Understanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
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<td>-------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-6 yrs.</td>
<td>- Narrative structure is more complete, including central theme/focus, high point and resolution</td>
<td>- Verbal descriptions are more developed</td>
<td>- Understands “nested” beliefs (e.g., Mommy thinks...)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Story grammar elements: “most” use initiating events, 50% include steps taken by characters, 20% share a story conclusion</td>
<td>- Continues to develop conversational abilities</td>
<td>- Relates experiences in which the child felt jealous, guilty, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Constructs sentences approximately 6 words in length</td>
<td>- Understands most concepts of time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-7 yrs.</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Uses morphological elements accurately most of the time</td>
<td>- Understands most concepts of time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Understands most concepts of time</td>
<td>- Relates experiences in which the child felt jealous, guilty, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-9 yrs.</td>
<td>- Stories contain greater complexity: character motivations, reactions, and internal goals</td>
<td>- Uses around 5000 words</td>
<td>- Continues to develop perspective-taking in order to persuade others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Pronoun agreement improves</td>
<td>- Understands multiple meaning words improves</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
- At 9 yrs: still has difficulty formulating story conclusion
- 10 yrs.: Most story grammar elements are in place, but "higher level language," including pronoun agreements, are still not completely mastered
- By 12 yrs: stories include greater episodic complexity (e.g., interactive, embedded episodes)

- Understanding of figurative language continues to improve
- Students are expected to acquire new information through reading (including expository texts)
- Vocabulary from school texts becomes more abstract
- Metacognitive skills emerge

- Understands jokes based on lexical ambiguity, then later based on deep structural ambiguity

**Narrative milestones:** McCabe & Rollins, 1992; Norbury & Bishop, 2003; Paul, 2001; Saracho & Spodek, 2006

**Language milestones:** Paul, 2001; Shipley & McAfee, 2004

**ToM milestones:** Paul, 2001; Westby & Keller, 2000, as cited by Shipley & McAfee, 2004
Get ready to talk story...

Clinicians, educators and parents/caregivers can increase the odds of a child adopting new narrative language skills when they integrate the following five approaches into their interactions with their children:

1) repetition,
2) sequential presentation,
3) contextualized teaching,
4) conversation and collaboration,
5) and parent or caregiver involvement.

These approaches are explained below and included on a quick reference chart on pages 147 and 163 to support you in your activity planning.

Repetition

One of the advantages of using a multimodal approach to oral narrative development is that it gives a child repeated exposures to story concepts, as each modality is cycled through one at a time. Repetition, from a narrative, multiple modality perspective, translates into teaching the same story concepts from a variety of angles and modalities in order to scaffold learning. This is a dynamic process. It provides opportunities for a child and adult to collaborate and determine, together, where their interactions should lead next.
A session targeting personal narrative may consist of the following sequence of activities:

1) Informal conversation about a real sequence of events. If the focus of the session is the story grammar concept of "main character(s)" then that idea would be discussed and revisited throughout all activities. (Primarily an auditory activity)

2) Child and adult may act out the story sequence and discuss emotional aspects of the story. (Primarily a kinesthetic activity)

3) Story events can then be depicted in quick drawings, or pictographs. (Primarily a visual activity)

4) Finally, the child may share his story to the clinician using the pictographs and all can be compiled in a book to share with others. (A story retell activity)

This sequence of activities may take place during one or several sessions. Each session reviewing what has been explored previously and building from that point on. The adult scaffolds the child's narrative constructions by offering language as necessary, and discussing/exploring the ideas and concerns of the child. This approach lets the child determine the course of discussion, story-building and activity progression, while still providing needed concept repetition.

Fictional narrative activities should include repeated readings and discussions of a story. White and Low (2002) reported that the more familiar a child is with a story, the better he or she recalls and the more he or she shares ideas about it. Research also shows that repeated book readings enrich a child's vocabulary
(Justice & Kaderavek, 2002), while allowing a child to assign personal meanings to stories and nurturing his sense of self and relationship with others (Witte-Townsend, 2004). Deeply personal and emotional interpretations of stories scaffold story recall (Doyle & Bramwell, 2006). Children's book illustrations also support learning by helping a child interpret the stories read to them. Multiple exposures to the same picture book, enables a child who does not read yet, or has reading difficulties, to use imagery to tell the story in their own words.

Research suggests that play complements readings or storytelling activities by encouraging better story recall and sharing of ideas (Kim, 1999). For example, sessions focusing on fictional narrative concepts may begin with shared book reading and conversation that relates story events and emotions back to the child's own experiences. The initial reading may be followed by play reenactment of story events by the child or with manipulatives, using the story's illustrations for guidance. Another session may include rereading of the book with further discussion, followed by drawing of the main characters or important story events. Story grammar and story terms can be taught, one at a time, over time, through play and repeat readings.

A sequence of fictional narrative activities may include:

1) Shared book reading with discussion of illustrations, cause and effect sequences and other story concepts, depending on goals. Discussion should link the story to the child's life. (Primarily an auditory activity)
2) Play that centers on reenacting story cause and effect sequences. (Visual and kinesthetic activity)

3) Repeat reading of book. (Primarily an auditory activity)

4) Drawing story sequences. (Primarily a visual activity)

5) Repeat reading, have the child “read” to you. (Story retell activity)

6) Finally, the child may dictate their story to the clinician and the child’s drawings and words may be compiled in a book in order to share with others. (Story retell activity)

Focus on one concept at a time and provide several repetitions, and check for understanding throughout sessions. With each exposure to story concepts, using multiple modalities, a child better understands and creates stories, becoming an active story participant and creator, rather than a passive listener. Consult the matrix at the end of this chapter for suggestions on multiple modality activities in order to incorporate repetition into session interactions.

**Sequential presentation**

As noted, a multimodal approach to narrative development provides children with repeat exposures to story concepts. To further support learning, a *sequential presentation* of activities is advised (Moreno, 2006). People are better able to recall of information when information is delivered sequentially, *one modality at a time*. Sequencing can be incorporated into narrative building, and activities can be
ordered with an eye to which modality is being utilized allows for better learning, as well as expansion and enrichment of narrative concepts.

Recent studies serve as models for planning sessions. For example, Kim's (1999) study method included sequential modality activities. First, she had preschoolers participate in storybook reading (primarily an auditory task). Next, she had children reenact the story by playing with dolls (primarily a visual and kinesthetic task) and, lastly, she asked the children to verbally retell the story.

Bui's (2002) study of narrative skill development addressed personal narrative development with older students using sequential modality presentation. The best performing of her sample groups, the "integrated story-grammar instruction" group, used a predictable series of activities in order to anchor narrative concepts. Initially, the adult and student established what it meant to recall and reflect on personal experiences. Once those ideas were understood, each student recalled and reflected on one experience each week (primarily an auditory and discussion task). Emotions and possible solutions were explored. The student then created a picture of his experience and wrote a sentence to accompany the image (primarily a visual task). One story grammar element was introduced per week and applied to the student's story (primarily a auditory and discussion task). Story grammar concepts were anchored through identifying elements within other stories read to them (primarily auditory task). The sequence of activities concluded by having each student draw a picture for each story grammar element and write a corresponding sentence (primarily a visual and kinesthetic task). After learning all story grammar elements, the student collaborated with the clinician to map a story.
using all elements taught previously. This last step, involved all modalities, and was scaffolded by all the exercises that went before. For more examples of activities to sequence during interactions, see the matrix at the end of the personal and fictional narrative chapters.

**Conversation and collaboration**

Conversation is, by nature, an exercise in collaboration. Working together empowers the child to share new ideas, try out new words and explore emotional or experiential connections to stories read. In short, collaboration through conversation scaffolds oral language development, including narrative building. As Hewitt (1994) noted, narrative intervention offers the perfect framework for language practice, as it resembles functional, conversational skills within a structured story format. When we successfully incorporate the interests of students into narrative activities, children become energetic, enthusiastic partners in their language learning.

Justice and Kaderavek (2002) reminded us that children with language disorders may be overwhelmed by language-intensive tasks, such as constructing narratives and book reading. Adopting a collaborative atmosphere during language activities is essential for children with language deficits. In a collaborative environment, the child is apt to feel more empowered to try out new language skills. **Dialogic book reading.** Doyle and Bramwell (2006) find that incorporating discussion into book reading activities reinforces the concept that narrative language is built upon a social connection between listener and storyteller. The authors confirm that dialogic activities are best done in small groups. When small,
shared book-reading groups function as safe environments for children to develop social skills and positive relationships with books. By posing questions about characters, setting or story events throughout a reading encourages engagement and more complex and complete story retelling by children.

Some considerations when using dialogic book reading:

1. **Bring the child's experience into book reading.** Relate the feelings and experiences of the story to a child's feelings and experiences. Torr (2007) explored *intertextuality* during book reading, and finds that when a child's ideas are encouraged and incorporated into readings he or she learns that language use and knowledge building is a collaborative process. Observe the child's offerings; these tell you what is most salient to him or her. Pause during readings to see what a child may want to contribute to the reading.

   a. **Questioning:** Encourage children to connect their experiences to a reading through questioning. If story's character is *grouchy*, ask if a child has felt that way before. Consider the following prompts offered by Doyle and Bramwell (2006):

      i. "Does anyone know what it means to feel grouchy?"
      
      ii. "Have you ever felt grouchy?"
      
      iii. "How can you tell when someone is grouchy?"

   iv. Another style of questioning may include commenting on the illustration and asking for input: "They are tiny, aren't they?" or "I like those colors. Can you see the pattern on there?" (Torr, 2007, p. 83–84)
2. **Social-emotional story selection.** Doyle and Bramwell (2006) suggested adults choose stories that are pro-social in nature and engender positive group interactions. The authors offer examples of books that function in this manner, including, Robert Kraus' *Leo the Late Bloomer*, Maurice Sendak's *Where the Wild Things Are* and Janell Cannon's *Stellaluna*.

**Personal narrative discourse.** Discussion can easily be translated into personal narrative goals. McCabe and her colleagues (2008) recommended that we "foster a personal narrative discourse," or in other words, explicitly teach and incorporate narrative structure into daily discussions (p. 201). Children can make use of basic narrative structure and temporal language (e.g., first, next, last) to aid their progression through discussions with others (Kamhi, 1988 & Johnston, 2006, as cited by McCabe, et al., 2008). After a child is comfortable using basic narrative language, he or she can work on descriptions of events, cause and effect sequences as well as emotions and motives of people within the story. (See pages 131 and 156 for more on charting cause and effect sequences.)

**Gender differences in sharing personal stories.** Fivush (1998) suggested there are differences in how boys and girls share personal stories. The author found that girls recall more about their stories, provide more contextual information, including temporal-spatial and evaluative context, and include emotional content to a greater degree.

The authors also found parents explore a child's past events differently with their children. Both mothers and fathers tended to elaborate, confirm, and explore emotions to a greater extent with their daughters than with their sons. Fivush
notes that gender differences in narrative development emerge early in the child’s life.

Context appears to play a critical role for boys when sharing personal narratives. Fivush stated that “reminiscing... resembles personal disclosure” and that boys are more apt to share personal information with people they are close to whereas girls are comfortable disclosing information in many situations with various listeners. This means that as professionals, we need to create reasonable expectations for our clients.

Possible prompts during personal narrative discourse can include:

1. *Share a negative situation you have experienced* and ask if they have had the same thing happen to them. Below are possible examples of questions used to get a child to share about his experiences. As a rule, yes/no questions are not the best form of questioning to use when eliciting narratives, however, success has been found when discussion topics are powerful for the child.

   a. “Once I went to the doctor and had to get a shot. It hurt when the doctor poked me with a needle. Have you ever been poked by anything?” (McCabe, et al., 2008)

   b. Other prompts may include:

      i. Children often notice if you are wearing a bandage. If the child asks about yours, probe to see if the conversation can encourage the child to share a story of his own.
ii. "Once, I was chasing my dog. I was running really, really fast, and I didn't have shoes on. I tripped! I stubbed my toe and my toe started to bleed! Have you ever hurt yourself like that?"

iii. "When I was little, I had a favorite toy and I played with it all the time. One day, my brother sat on it and broke it. I was so mad! Have you felt mad before?

2. Share a simple, personal experience and draw 3–4 quick sketches to correspond with events. Talk about the experience using basic narrative, temporal terms (e.g., first, next, last). Ask the child to share a similar experience and have him or her draw pictures to represent salient events, or support him or her by drawing pictographs as they share.

a. Durbin and Franke (2008) shared a brief, personal story about getting an ice cream cone and then dropping it. In order to introduce personal narrative structure to children the authors draw a stick drawing (e.g., pictograph) of each event on an index card as they tell the story.

Parents or caregivers may be very helpful sources of information about the child's experiences. They may be able to explain what the child is trying to share, and can be encouraged to collaborate at home on narrative building by by talking about daily events with their child and creating pictographs of their child's experiences.
Contextualized teaching

The term context refers to a framework. When we contextualize narrative concepts, we make them more accessible to a child by building upon a framework, or foundation, of that child’s present knowledge. For example, introducing the concept of character can be done after reading a story involving discussion of who was in the story. The child is already familiar with the characters of the story and adding the label “character” is building on his current knowledge. This approach can be referred to as contextualized teaching and it buoys a child’s learning by anchoring abstract concepts with prior knowledge, making the child more successful during activities, and giving more meaning to new knowledge being acquired.

Bui (2002) provided us with an example of contextualized (and multimodal) teaching. She reports that children with and without learning disabilities learned story grammar concepts and increased story comprehension by using the context of personal narrative. The author uses context within the following teaching steps:

1. Start with informal discussion about something that happened to the child.  
   This creates a framework, or context, on which to build.
2. Have the child create an illustration to represent the story. This allows a child to successfully put their knowledge to work, continuing to develop and use the story’s context.
3. Have the child or adult construct a sentence or two to represent the story.  
   This activity continues to develop the child’s context for the narrative concepts to be taught next.
4. Build upon the child’s knowledge of his story’s structure by explicitly teaching one story grammar concept (e.g., character, event) at a time. *This step is taught within the context of the previous steps and, as a result, makes the story grammar element more accessible, less obscure, to the child.*

5. Introduce the idea that story grammar elements are universal and found in all stories. Read a story to the child and, collaboratively, determine the targeted story grammar concept within another story. *This activity allows a child to recognize a narrative concept by drawing on prior knowledge.*

*Note:* This style of teaching takes time. The sequence of events outlined above may take several sessions, and a review of the child’s knowledge of previous steps is usually required, particularly with children with language and/or learning difficulties.

Think of contextualized teaching like building a home. The skeletal frame of a house can be compared to the initial discussion of a personal story. As child and adult collaborate, developing a richer understanding of the story through multimodal activities, the house takes shape through the construction of a roof, walls, doors and windows. Our work begins with broad strokes, becoming more refined and detailed as the child’s exposure to the story increases and the his narrative competence strengthens.

**The importance of parent/caregiver involvement**

A child’s main conversation partner is his or her caregiver(s). Collaborating with parents can improve language outcomes (McCabe & Rollins, 1992). This is
particularly true for personal narrative acquisition as the ability to share stories about oneself first emerges in conversation with family. McCabe and Rollins (1992) shared that when mothers consistently expanded upon their child’s utterances and explored their child’s ideas, their child produces longer utterances.

Collaboration with parents and caregivers during daily, shared book reading may look like this:

1) For small children: letting a child “lead” by turning pages and having him or her “read” to you. After a while they will become interested in the written story.

2) Discuss story elements of interest to the child: this technique exposes the child to novel vocabulary and encourages a child to share ideas. Here are some discussion techniques to use:

* Link the story to the child’s life with questions like: Has that happened to you? Have you ever seen a ____? Have you felt ____ before?

* Explore basic concepts presented in the story. Children with language problems may not pick up on fundamental language concepts. If a story is about a bug and an elephant, talk about what it means to be as little as a bug and as big as an elephant, and what that means to the story.

For older children: Provide simple definitions for complex terms. Talk about figurative language used in a story, including figures of speech, metaphors and other non-literal language. These are often confusing for children with language deficits.
Whole Child Learning
Using a multiple modality approach to oral narrative development

What does “multiple modality” mean? The word *modality* refers to physiological senses—including hearing (auditory), sight (visual) and movement (kinesthetic/gesture), and for this book, it refers to the way we use sensory information to learn. This book suggests methods for using these modes of learning to teach narrative concepts.

How do we create a learning environment that scaffolds a child’s narrative language acquisition? Traditional teaching methods in the school setting have relied primarily on the student’s ability to listen and read to learn (Lavoie, 1989). This style of teaching produces adequate results for most typically developing individuals (Moreno, 2006), but places students with language and/or learning problems at a great disadvantage (Lavoie, 1989). Moreno (2006) suggested that new concepts are more easily acquired and retained when a multimodal approach is used (Moreno, 2006). More precisely, recall of information improves when presented through multiple modalities in a “sequential rather than simultaneous” manner (p. 150).

For example, Kim (1999) successfully used sequential presentation of different modalities when she had preschoolers in her study first participate in storybook reading (primarily a listening/auditory task), then had the children play with dolls to reenact the story read (primarily a visual and kinesthetic task) and, finally, had the children verbally retell the story.
As Kim and others demonstrated, the professional and caregiver can create a structure and progression to our teaching sessions to support positive outcomes. When we use a multiple modalities approach, we provide multiple exposures to narrative concepts and place those concepts within context, in order to scaffold the learning process of children with language and/or learning problems (Goldsworthy, 2008). Children are more likely to understand and retain information when an approach cycling through modalities is taken.

It is important to keep in mind that each child is unique; everyone has his or her own strengths. As a clinician, teacher or caregiver becomes familiar with a student’s abilities he or she will make use of the child’s strongest modalities in order to serve his specific needs. Here are three examples of activity sequencing may look like in one or a series of sessions:

**Child #1**

*Fictional story activity:*

1) Auditory/listening activity: book reading including a discussion of book and main ideas

2) Kinesthetic activity: role-play story events with dolls

3) Visual activity: create drawings of the story or quick pictographs

4) Visual and verbal review activity:
   - review child’s pictures and collaborate on retelling of story

5) Story retell: independent retell or retell using a book made from the child’s pictographs or illustrations
Child #2
Personal story activity:

1) Visual activity: child draws different experiences of that day
2) Auditory/listening and retell activity: adult helps child retell story of his day using his pictures and uses basic narrative terms—first, next, then, last—adult transcribes story on post-it notes
3) Visual activity: child sequences his pictures and creates a book, the adult matches post-it notes to images
4) Kinesthetic activity: adult and child role-play the child's story
5) Story retell: sharing the book constructed with parent

Child #3
Treasure hunt activity:

1) Auditory/listening activity: discuss a treasure hunt activity, including instructions and materials, the terms first, next, last are discussed
2) Visual activity: child and adult study treasure map and talk about what needs to be done to complete task
3) Kinesthetic and visual activity: child “reads” map, follow directions and makes plans with adult
4) Story retell: once the treasure has been found, child reviews map with parent using first, next, then and last.

Getting a story started

This book is organized with the user in mind. The first section is meant to be read, as needed, but the next two sections are meant to be a quick reference during
therapy planning. All of the activities in the following sections can be mixed and matched as appropriate for the child. Some parts of the personal narratives and fictional narratives are very similar. The two narrative forms are separated for easy access to information and general user-friendliness. If you are working on personal narratives, just flip to the personal narrative section to start planning your sessions.

Ultimately, your child will shape your sessions. He or she will bring his own strengths and abilities to the story-building process. During our discussion on conversation and collaboration, gender differences were shared and these differences should inform your expectations. Stories may initially spring from shared experiences and craft projects, and only after a child feels comfortable will his stories come from his personal life. That's okay!

This book should be used as a starting place for clinicians, teachers and parents. You alter activities to match your own working style and meet the needs of your child. For example, one child may be a kinesthetic learner and may benefit from repeated, physical role-playing activities between book readings or pictography activities, while another child may benefit from drawing all of the characters in his or her story about falling off the monkey bars at school. The Multimodal Toolbox is yours to use as needed, in fact a few boxes have been left open under each category for you to note your own activities. I would love to hear about your ideas. Please write down your thoughts and therapy or material ideas and send them to me at: talking.story@sbcglobal.com

Now, let's get to work!
A Multimodal Approach to Personal Narratives

Children tell stories, as we all do, to share with others and understand the world around them (Franke & Durbin, 2006). Working on personal narratives first makes sense as they develop earlier than fictional storytelling and scaffold overall oral language acquisition (McCabe, et al., 2008). It should be our aim as clinicians, teachers and caregivers to scaffold a child’s early attempts to talk about his or her life.

Where to begin? How can an adult inspire a child to share a story? One of the easiest ways to create a personal story is for adult and child make something together and then make a how-to story about what steps were taken to complete the project. This provides a concrete sequence of events to review and retell, and such an experience also allows for the auditory, visual and kinesthetic modalities to be used.

McCabe and Rollins (1992) suggested that many of the earliest child narratives focus on negative past events, such as injuries, or other real past experiences. The authors successfully collected narratives by asking children if they had ever gone to visit the doctor or if they had ever been “jabbed by anything” (p. 35). The researchers also share that preschool children produce stronger narratives when their parents or caregivers consistently extend conversation about past events of interest the children: Children also reveal more if the adult was not present for the event discussed. An adult’s willingness to continue talking about important events to the child can be a positive starting place for personal narrative development.
Other topics that take into account a child's egocentric viewpoint are also successful beginning places for narrative learning, including: a child's birthday, engaging tasks or favorite activities, stories about his or her family, vacations and other experiences. Any topic regarding a child's life, that holds the child's interest over time, can be used to construct personal narratives.

Negative event prompts may include:

1. "Have you ever been jabbed by anything?"

2. "Have you ever gone to the doctor?"

3. "Did anyone get hurt at school today?"

4. "How did you get that bump/scratch?"

You may precede any of these prompts with your own story about a similar experience. To keep a child sharing, you may want to follow any of the child's responses with "Tell me about it..." or another encouraging phrase.

Auditory modality and general approaches

Having a conversation about a personal experience is a good place to start when building a personal narrative as the two support each other (McCabe, et al., 2008; McCabe & Rollins, 1992). Before we begin a conversation, we need to get ourselves mentally and physically ready to interact with a child, so what we say, and how we say it, is received by the child.
Getting ready to interact

Consider using these approaches during all activities with your child to facilitate learning:

1. Get on the child’s level by sitting next to them or having a small child in your lap.
2. Increase your affect so words stand out and carry emotional meaning.
3. Model language for the child/children, and slow your speech down slightly, so each word is clear, beginning to end.
4. Don’t rush the child when he or she is telling a story. Work at his or her pace.

McCabe and Rollins (1992) suggest that a child’s story is a “meaningful expression of who the child is and what he or she has experienced” (p. 15). Giving ample time to share is especially important when working with children who have language disorders. To the extent you build rapport with a child, the more willing a child will be to share his experiences with you.

Expand and explore

Maintain topics and investigate a child’s ideas. Repeat new words again, use them alone and in full sentences. Parents or caregivers and teachers can be useful sources of information when searching for personal narrative topics.

1. Adopt a conversational/dialogic style of interaction during personal narrative building by discussing topics of interest to the child as opportunities arise, exploring events and emotions, and asking open-ended questions rather than yes/no questions (e.g., “What did you do when you bumped your knee?” vs.
"Did it hurt?" while still maintaining the progression of teaching sessions.

See section 1 for more information on conversation.

a. "Foster a personal narrative discourse" McCabe, et al. (2008) suggested that professionals can aid children who have difficulty organizing their thoughts during conversation by applying narrative structure concepts to discourse. This includes explicit teaching of the temporal, sequential terminology first, next, then, last (p. 201). Once children master the basic narrative format, the authors suggest adding greater complexity to personal narrative discourse through introducing other concepts, including: event or character descriptions, emotions, inclusion of causal factors.

2. Follow the child's lead: Talk about what interests the child. Focus less on correcting the child's perception of events and more on exploring ideas and encouraging language to express an thought.

3. Think collaboration instead of domination by looking for opportunities to allow the child to contribute and guide the direction of interactions—follow the child's interests while guiding story structure. This approach is particularly critical when working with children with language and/or learning disabilities, or children with little language (Justice & Kaderavek, 2002).

1. Pause for responses

2. Watch and listen for what holds a child's interest
3. *Encourage a child's contributions* by exploring and expanding upon the child's ideas

4. *Use basic narrative language or “story words”* (first, next, then, last) during personal narrative activities. (Also, see Kinesthetic/gesture portion of this chapter for information about complementing terms with hand signs to anchor concepts.)

5. *Teach story grammar concepts and use story grammar terms:* character/who, setting/where and when, problem/what, and conclusion/how

   a. *Story grammar* has been a mainstay of narrative teaching for many years and a diversity of therapy techniques have been developed to teach concepts, including *Story Grammar Marker* (SGM ©) and other forms of *story mapping*, can be used to outline the formal structure of fictional stories and support story comprehension and retell. A search on-line provides numerous ideas for incorporating story grammar concepts into teaching sessions. (*See additional notes under visual methods.*)

   b. *Story grammar and personal narratives:* Bui (2002) found both children with and without learning disabilities benefited from weekly exercises involving sharing a personal narrative followed by identifying a new story grammar concept each week. These activities lay the groundwork for exploring the story grammar within fictional stories read to the students during the week.
* Also, see pages 168–185 for multimodal approaches to teaching and extending story grammar concepts. Many suggestions are applicable to both personal and fictional narrative forms.

6. Focus on cause and effect relationships: Bishop and Dolan (2005) found that children recall a story more successfully when they understand whole event sequences. Teaching cause and affect sequences within stories improves a child’s ability to recall the narrative. This may also be a helpful approach to addressing social story outcomes. Have children share a personal story and then write down or draw their actions and the reactions that followed. Discuss possible alternative outcomes, if appropriate.

a. Construct a “cause and effect chart” for a personal story: Although this is a visual aid, it is best described here. One way of chunking out story sequences is by charting cause and effect relationships. Before charting out this sequence in a story, take some time to teach the concept. Start with a concrete example: fill a cup with water, spill it and observe the results with the child. Think of other examples from their life, specifically negative past events (e.g., bee sting, falling down). Once a child has mastered the idea of cause and effect, chart out story cause and effect sequences on a big piece of paper. See the following pages for examples of this type of charting.
Complex cause and effect charting*  
for personal narratives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cause</th>
<th>Effect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I didn’t do my homework last night.</td>
<td>My mom got angry and yelled.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I felt grumpy and didn’t get to sleep at the usual time.</td>
<td>I woke up late and in a bad mood.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I missed the bus.</td>
<td>I was late for school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I got to school my class was already working on new information.</td>
<td>I was confused and frustrated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I didn’t understand the work, so I started to think about my video game.</td>
<td>I didn’t hear the homework directions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I didn’t know we had homework.</td>
<td>I didn’t take my book home.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I got an incomplete on my assignment.</td>
<td>I feel depressed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Possible solutions

- Write down homework assignments.
- Ask my teacher about information I miss or don’t hear.
- Remember we all have bad days and move forward.

Possible outcomes

- I will feel less stressed because I will know what I need to do each night.
- My teacher will know I am trying my best to do my work and will know if I understand assignments.
- Remembering this will help me:
  1) let go of my anger and depression &
  2) start the next day with a better attitude.

Simple cause and effect charting* 
for personal narratives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cause</th>
<th>Effect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I did not do my homework.</td>
<td>I had a bad day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I got a bad grade.</td>
<td>I am sad.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Match your charting complexity to the child’s narrative and language level. In other words, if your child is using brief phrases to relate information in a story, make the story at that language level or a bit more complex, depending on your goals.
Visual methods

Finding or creating visuals to support a child's personal narrative construction can serve to anchor the memory and sequence of real events. Visuals can extend interest in and exploration of a child's narrative. Use imagery to scaffold a child's learning. Visuals can be used to organize information and sequences events. This is not a novel idea, but the impact is in the presentation. Here are some ways of bringing visuals into personal narrative teaching:

**Pictography** An adult can quickly sketch a series of events as a child shares them as placeholders for his thoughts. Ukrainetz (1998) recommended the use of quick sketches, or "sketchwriting," in place of written narratives as a means of eliciting longer, more detailed stories from students. A child can sketch his own story after telling it, being careful to draw only the most salient aspects of his narrative, or the clinician, teacher or parent/caregiver can do so as the child is telling his story. *See the following page for an example of pictography.*
**Pictography.** It's not Art, it's writing in pictures. Details should be kept to a minimum to keep the child focused on the story – this exercise is about getting ideas down quickly, not about drawing accuracy or skill.

Look at the example above. It outlines the main ideas of the story and serves as a reminder of the sequence of events. A drawing like this allows your child to recall primary events and, as he or she becomes a more skilled storyteller, fill-in other details as your child shares the story.

*Note:* Your child may not be able to create drawings that they can "read" later. His or her drawing and/or fine motor skills may not be developed enough to create pictographs that represent the ideas behind them. If this is true for your child consider either of the following solutions:

- draw pictographs for the child as they retell the story,
- or, photograph story sequences as the story takes place.

For example, if the story is created through a series of actions (e.g., craft activities, personal/fictional story reenactments) photograph story events.
Photographs Parents or caregivers and professionals can create visuals by taking digital photographs of a child performing a task (e.g., making something or completing therapy tasks) and using the printed versions to help the child sequence and review the steps of the task. Use the language “first, next, then, last” to create structure, if needed. Have the child share with their parent or caregiver when the activity/session is complete. This technique can be used to help a child complete a common sequence of events, such a setting up a favorite game or making a favorite recipe (e.g., peanut butter and jelly sandwich). Use photographs to encourage narrative use in familiar situations.

Write down the child’s words on post-it notes and adhere them below images, whether sketches or photographs, to formalize their storytelling. This conveys to the child who is not writing yet, or is having trouble writing complete sentences, that the words they speak can be represented in writing.

Construction and/or deconstruction of an object can provide opportunities ripe for adults and children to create narratives together. Support retelling later by taking notes, taking photographs or quickly sketching pictures of the steps taken to put together or take apart a toy, object or craft project. Have the child organize images and retell what he or she did.
Encourage a child to take on the role of artist Narratives can be built upon the process of art creation. Introduce the practice of careful observation and apply it to drawing, painting or other art mediums. Teach children about the quality and application of different art mediums. Introduce critical thinking concepts related to art: form, texture, value, perspective, proportion, color relationships and others. Serious art instruction and creation have been found to encourage children to use more complex language to describe their work and the work of others (Heath & Wolf, 2005). Build narratives by reconstructing how the child created something and why she made the aesthetic or material choices she did.

Manipulative story reenactment Kim (1999) stated that when children use manipulatives to recreate stories it supports their narrative recall and social-cognitive development. In that vein, adults can team with a child to recreate the events of their own experiences with dolls, puppets, or even in play dough or clay. This activity also allows a child to reflect upon his experiences and actions, and imagine alternative outcomes.

Teach story grammar concepts with visuals As mentioned above, story grammar language is a common structure to teaching narrative structure, and it is a successful means of improving a child’s story comprehension and recall (Bui, 2002). Assigning a visual symbol or picture to each story grammar concept (i.e., character, setting) supports a child’s learning and is an integral aspect of story mapping therapy techniques, such as Story Grammar Marker (SGM®). Symbols may be
created to anchor narrative concepts and used when identifying the grammar within a child's story.

See the following page for an example of story grammar icons.

* Also, see page 168 for multimodal approaches to teaching and extending story grammar concepts. Many suggestions are applicable to both personal and fictional narrative forms.
**Story grammar icons.** Create or find your own images to represent each story grammar concept. Here are some ideas for story grammar icons:

- **Character or Story Star(s)** (Where)
- **Setting** (Where & When)
- **Story Starter** (What happens first)
- **Character Emotions or Feelings** (What)
- **Problem & Plan of Action** (What)

- **Event or First Step** (What)
- **Event or Next Step** (What)
- **Step Did Not Work** (What did not work)
- **Conclusion** (What happened at the end)
- **Emotions at The End** (What)
Create books with your child. Connect oral narratives to literacy through book creation. Book making also encourages a child to share his stories with others outside the therapy room or classroom. Make books of the child's stories whenever possible. Document the progression of any activity—including constructing or deconstructing something, discussing a problem at school or sharing about a family vacation. Compile drawings or photos into book format, or photocopy images, sequence them and bind them into a book format. Write their words below corresponding images, review the child's words with them, and invite the child to share their book with others.

“ME” books. Organize photographs from the child's life into a book about him or her. A photo album can be used for this purpose, or the child and adult can collaborate on constructing an informal “book” of construction paper.

“My Day” books. An adult can help a child reconstruct the day or difficult events of his or her day by drawing sequences of events and talking about them. These discussions can be opportunities to introduce emotional language. A child's memory for events is more accurate and detailed if he or she assigns emotions to experiences (Fivush, 1998).
How-to books can be created after a craft or other project has been completed. Have the child draw a pictograph of each step that was taken during the activity, or take turns drawing the story. If you would like to have written text of the story, prompt the child for "a whole sentence," if appropriate, and add the child's words to each page.

Social stories Creating books involving social interactions of your students may be a good choice for school age children. Choose a topic or address a social concern the child brings to your attention. Draw a sequence of events that occurred in the classroom or on the playground. Discuss alternative outcomes and troubleshoot how to address a negative situation the next time it occurs.

Note: As previously mentioned, Ukrainetz (1998) recommended using only pictures for readers if your goal is eliciting longer, more detailed stories from students.

See the following pages for instructions on how to construct simple "books."
Simple books. There are many types of books. After you and your children make a few books, you can brainstorm new ways to make "books" once you become comfortable with the basics. Here are four ideas for constructing simple "books." Books are simply ways to format sequential information. Be creative! Have fun! Inspiration can be found on San Francisco Center for the Book website: www.sfcb.org/html/exhibitions_online.html

*Note: Narrative opportunities are everywhere! Use bookmaking as chance to use simple narrative language and hand signs for "first, next, then, last" as you move through each task.

Yarn bound book:
1) Cut blank paper to the size you would like the book to be. Create story using pictographs, words or both, depending on child's goals. Stack the book pages. Use a thicker paper, such as most colored craft papers, for the front and back covers.

2) Hole punch top or left side of the pages.

You will need:
- Blank paper
- Colored paper
- Hole punch
- Yarn
- Pencils, markers
- Paper cutter or scissors

3) Thread yarn through one hole beginning at one end, leaving a long length of yarn (4-5 inches). You will need this to knot the binding closed.

4) Have your child thread yarn through the remaining holes.

5) Thread yarn back through the holes. You may need to use a big knitting needle (plastic ones may be found at most knit shops).

6) Close the binding by creating a knot or bow, child's choice!
**Accordion book:**
1) Cut one 8.5″ x 11″ sheet of paper in half, long ways, so you end up with two 4.25″ x 11″ sheets per child.

2) Glue sheets of paper end to end, as shown above.

3) Once the glue has dried completely, fold the new long sheet of paper in half.

4) Fold it all in half again. If the story you will be creating will only have 4 parts, stop folding now.

5) If you are working on a longer story, fold in half again.

6) If your child would like to make a cover for either end of the accordion, do so with colored paper. According books may be kept closed with ribbon or string.

**You will need:**
- Blank paper
- Pencils, markers
- Glue stick
- Paper cutter or scissors
- Optional: Colored paper, ribbon, string
"Book" on a ring:
1) Create story images on 3" x 5" or larger-sized cards. If your child is pictographing, remind him or her to keep details to a minimum. Stack the index cards in order and face up.

2) Hole punch upper top left corner of cards.

3) Use a loose-leaf ring (from an office supply store) to keep all cards together and in order. This "book" allows you and your child to use the cards independently of ring during sequencing activities.

4) If your child's "book" is very special to them, the cards may be individually laminated, hole-punched and placed on the ring again as shown.

You will need:
- Blank 3" x 5" cards
- Pencils, markers
- Hole punch
- Loose-leaf rings
Simple scroll:
1) You can use the long sheet of paper created in the first step of the "accordion book" directions or you can cut a long sheet of paper from a roll of paper.

2) Cut or buy two small wooden dowels for either end of the scroll. (You can find wooden dowels at most hardware stores. Some dowels are pre-cut or you can have them cut to size.)

3) If the dowels are longer than the width of the paper, have your child decorate the ends with paint, pens, glitter, or any other materials you have available.

4) Brush glue all around the center portion of the dowel. Glue down the one end of the paper and roll paper around dowel so it is completely covered. Repeat this step on the opposite end of the paper.

5) Let the paper dry fully onto the dowels.

6) Once completely dry, have child create pictography or other illustrations on the paper, in order, top down.

7) When illustrations are completed, the child can roll the bottom dowel up, until it meets the top dowel, or you can roll both top and bottom dowels at the same time so they meet in the center.

8) Scrolls can be fastened closed with ribbon, string, yarn or other material.

* Note: Your child may never have seen a scroll. Talk about who used scrolls and share ideas about why.

You will need:
- Blank paper
- Yarn or ribbon
- Pencils, markers
- Paper cutter or scissors
- Paint, glitter or other supplies to decorate dowel ends, if needed
Kinesthetic methods

As discussed previously, body movement can be used to support language acquisitions and may be incorporated into oral narrative goals. The following are some ways kinesthetic movements can be incorporated into personal story development:

*Role-playing* or acting out real events can support narrative construction and retell by allowing a child to reconstruct events. This method of running through past events can be used to compliment activities involving other modalities. Role-play may be used after a story has been reconstructed through other means (e.g., pictorially, verbally). Some children may feel uncomfortable with role-playing, instead, encourage these children to use their body to dramatically gesture story events from the safety of sitting position. For example, if they use binoculars in their story, they can create “binoculars” with their hands.

*Sign or modified sign language* may be used to cue basic story grammar structure/concepts (e.g., first, next, last, beginning, ending). This can help a child recall which part of the story comes next and encourages greater independence during storytelling over time. The hand signs for “first,” “next,” and “last” are described on the following pages.
"First" in American Sign Language (ASL):

1) Point your pointer finger up as if you are counting “1” with your palm away from you.

2) Then, keeping your finger up, turn your palm in towards you.

"Next" in ASL:

1) Hold your left hand up so that it horizontal to you, palm towards you.

2) Place your right hand in the same position, but in front of the left hand (closest to you).

3) Move your right hand over the left hand, so it is on the opposite side of the left hand, away from you with your palm still facing you.

"Then" in ASL:

1) Make a “gun” with your left hand.

(This is not my favorite metaphor, but a good way to visualize this sign.)

2) With your right hand, make a “1” with your pointer finger.

3) Use your pointed finger to tap your left-hand thumb, moving towards you, followed by another tap to the left-hand pointer finger.

4) To extend the “gun” metaphor, one could think of the movements in this way: the first tap is like “cocking the trigger” and the second tap is like “shooting the gun.”
"Last" in ASL:

1) Your left hand will be positioned horizontally, fingers together, palm facing you.

2) With your right hand, fingers together, make a chopping motion as if cutting the tips of your fingers off. (Excuse the imagery... again!)

The remaining pages of this section are devoted to a Quick Reference Guide to the approaches just discussed as well as a Multimodal Toolbox for addressing personal narrative goals. Use this matrix to plan your interactions or just get ideas on diversifying how you think about and approach storytelling.
A Quick Reference Guide to multimodal approaches to Personal Narratives

1. GENERAL APPROACHES
   * Sequential presentation
   * Repeated exposure to concepts
   * Conversation & collaboration
   * Contextualized teaching
   * Parent/caregiver involvement

2. GET READY TO INTERACT
   * Get on the child's level
   * Increase your affect
   * Model language & slow your rate of speech slightly
   * Don't rush the child

3. EXPAND AND EXPLORE
   PERSONAL NARRATIVE
   1. Adopt a conversational style
      * Ask open-ended questions
      * Introduce a simple narrative structure (e.g., first, next, last)
        to help the child organize his thoughts.
      * Add greater complexity once the child has mastered this simple structure.

   2. Follow the child's lead
      * Think collaboration
      * Pause for input
      * Watch & listen
      * Encourage contributions
      * Expand on the child's thought
      * Allow the child to help record their story, when appropriate, through drawings, text or other means.
        —Create books of the child's stories when possible to allow the child to share with others and support emergent literacy skills.

   3. Model narrative language or "story words" (including the terms: first, next, then, last) See Multimodal Toolbox below for information about teaching story grammar.

   4. Teach and chart "cause and effect" sequences in stories
4. THE MULTIMODAL "TOOLBOX" — PERSONAL NARRATIVES

*Mix and match activities to meet the specific strengths of your child and address narrative language goals*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AUDITORY</th>
<th>VISUAL</th>
<th>KINESTHETIC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dialogue about daily or past events</td>
<td>Pictograph events of a child's story &amp;/or Use symbols to mark story grammar &amp;/or Create a “treasure map” or visual timeline to represent the sequence of events.</td>
<td>Talk about how your body shows emotions * Talk about and practice facial expressions and body postures. * Discuss and encourage the use of emotion during storytelling or book reading activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Ask for specific information sequences (e.g., Tell me 2 things you had for breakfast? How do you make cereal?). * Avoid broad questions that may overwhelm or confuse your child (e.g., What did you do today?).</td>
<td>Use photographs from a child’s life (e.g., family, pets, activities) or take photos of therapy activities to aid story creation. <strong>Construct “books” of a child’s experiences and stories whenever possible</strong> —ME books, How-to books, social stories or of how to address a child’s fears This scaffolds their narrative language and also supports early literacy skills.</td>
<td>Role play story events as well as character actions and reactions * First, the adult can review the story pictographs and/or notes, while the child acts out events again. * Next, the adult can act out events while the child “reads” the pictographs. * With an older child, the adult and child can role-play verbally to explore difficult situations and alternative solutions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Use the “story words” first, next, then, last during story creation and/or retell**

With younger children, introduce just first, next and last, including alternative words like “then” only after the others are used consistently.
Teach 1 story grammar concept at a time, over time*

Character(s)—who
Setting(s)—where
Problem—what
(Feelings/Emotions—reactions)
Actions/Steps taken—how, why
Conclusion—what
(Feelings at the end—reactions)

* Teach 1 concept over several sessions.
* Create personal stories to introduce a story grammar concept.
* Extend teaching by finding examples of story grammar concept within several storybooks to support learning.

Encourage a child to take the role of Artist

* Teach your child about materials and how they are used.
* Encourage critical thinking by discussing composition & art terminology.
* Use art to interpret and reflect upon personal stories.
* The artistic process can also be a narrative opportunity—help your child chart progress as they make something (via pictographs or drawings) and after the activity is done, sequence steps taken.

Use sign language or modified sign to mark the “story words”
first, next, then, last

* Teach your child hand signs to represent terms.
* Model the signs and ask the child to help you remember which word to use when storytelling.
* Pause—allow your child to contribute a sign when the time comes. You and your child can practice using story words during shared book reading (e.g., child signs/says “next” for a page to be turned).

Use intonation to retell stories and encourage the child to do the same

This helps the child understand and/or think about a story’s content, including meaning, emotions and outcomes.

* Younger kids: practice by “picture-walking” through book, looking at

Transcribe and draw your child’s story

Or, have your child write a simple sentence and produce a simple drawing for each sequence of his story.

* Remember, children may produce richer language with only pictures as stimuli (no text).

Encourage dramatic storytelling

* Adults can help anchor ideas or events if they use dramatic body movements while telling stories. It helps your child if you are goofy—get into character!

* Even if a child does not want to get up and role-play, they can sit and create hand or arm gestures or facial
illustrations and asking, “What do you think he's saying?” Be dramatic!

* Older kids: practice intonation by reading comic strips—the adult can be one character and the child another.

* If a child uses pictographs to tell his story, the adult can add text using Post-it notes, if it is appropriate for the child's goals.

| expressions to represent story events and actions. |
A Multimodal Approach to Fictional Narratives

Stories born of the imagination are an important aspect of the academic experience (McCabe, et al., 2008) as well as human culture. Fictional narratives include the invention of a new story or the retelling of a story read or heard. Producing a novel tale can be an arduous task for children, particularly those with language and/or learning difficulties, as fictional stories require an advanced oral language and cognitive development. Consequently, many focus on teaching this form of narrative through sharing and retelling existing stories. Children's literature provides ample material to teach about what fictional narratives are and how they are constructed. Studies show that shared book reading as a means to support overall language and literacy abilities (Trelease, 2001). As a result, many of the suggestions below focus on the use of picture books and other forms of children's literature as a means to build a child's fictional storytelling skills.

The following auditory/general methods will be familiar to you...it is very similar to those noted under personal narrative auditory/general methods portion of the last section. It is repeated here, as there are slight differences in some areas and to save you from turning back to the last section for information.
Auditory modality
and general methods

Dramatic storytelling, presenting a story using dramatic voice and gestures, is an effective tool to enhance vocabulary, length and quality of a child’s utterances (Speaker, Taylor & Kamen, 2004) as well as story recall (Isbell, et al., 2004). Shared book reading is a common and powerful tool for building critical thinking skills (Borgia & Owles, 2007) as well as increasing vocabulary (Reese & Cox, 1999), both necessary for creating a complete story.

Getting ready to interact

Before we begin any story sharing activity, we need to get ourselves physically and mentally ready to interact with a child, so what we say, and how we say it, is received by the child.

1. *Get on the child’s eye level* by sitting next to them or having a small child in your lap.

2. *Increase your affect* during storytelling, shared book reading and imaginative story creation. Create different qualities of voice for different characters and express the emotions of characters. Encourage the child to adopt the perspective of different characters. This approach to reading inspires a child to become emotionally involved in a story and conveys the emotional content and character dynamics, scaffolding their comprehension and recall.

3. *Model language* for the child/children, and slow your speech down slightly, so each word is clear, beginning to end.

4. *Don’t rush the child* when he or she is sharing a story.
Expand and explore

Comment on thoughts shared by your child during shared book reading and expand on an idea before continuing the story. Repeat new words again, use them alone and in full sentences. Consider incorporating the following approaches outlined in the previous section, including:

1. Adopt a conversational/dialogic style during book reading and/or imaginative storytelling.
   a. Relate fictional narratives to life by discussing story events with your child, and attempt to relate them to his real life. If a character expresses sadness, briefly discuss what makes the child sad. This type of interaction is at the heart of "dialogic reading" and supports a child's participation in book reading. See section 1 for more information on conversation.

2. Follow the child's lead by talking about what interests the child. Focus less on correcting the child's perception of events and more on exploring ideas and encouraging his use of language to express his thoughts.
   a. Think collaboration not domination by looking for opportunities to allow the child to contribute and guide the direction of interactions—follow the child's interests while guiding him through the story's structure. This approach is particularly critical when working with children with language and/or learning disabilities, or children with little language (Justice & Kaderavek, 2002).
b. Consider the following suggestions during shared book reading

(Justice & Kaderavek, 2002):

i. **Pausing** during reading to allow for child contributions

ii. **Allowing the child to pick where to read** (i.e., on the floor, favorite chair)

iii. **Give the child opportunities to manipulate the book,** particularly when the book has moving parts

iv. **Match the child’s interests and abilities** when sharing a story; as the child matures, he or she will become more interested in the story written in a book’s text

v. **Have the child to “read” to you;** encourage the child to tell the story his way and support his interpretation

(p. 10)

3. **Use basic narrative language or “story words”** (first, next, then, last) during story activities. (Also, see Kinesthetic/gesture portion of this chapter for information about complementing terms with hand signs to anchor concepts.)

4. **Teach story grammar concepts and use story grammar terms** (e.g., characters/who, setting/where and when, problem/what, conclusion/how) after a child becomes familiar with the storyline of a book.

   a. **Story grammar** therapy techniques, including **Story Grammar Marker** (SGM ®) and other forms of **story mapping**, can be used to outline the formal structure of fictional stories and support story comprehension and retell.
5. *Focus on cause and effect relationships:* Bishop and Dolan (2005) found that children recall a story more successfully when they understand whole event sequences. The authors suggest that finding ways to teach cause and affect sequences within stories improves a child’s ability to recall the narrative.

a. *Construct a "cause and effect chart" for a story:* One way of chunking out story sequences is by charting cause and effect relationships. Before charting out this sequence in a story, take some time to teach the concept. Start with a concrete example: fill a cup with water, spill it and observe the results with the child. Think of other examples from their life, specifically negative past events (e.g., bee sting, falling down). Once a child has mastered the idea of cause and effect, chart out story cause and effect sequences on a big piece of paper. Cause and effect charts can be text-based or image-based.

* The following pages have examples of fictional narrative charting. Both charts tell the story sequences of the same book but one contains greater detail, while the other is very simple.
Complex cause and effect charting*
for Once Upon a Banana by Jennifer Armstrong

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cause</th>
<th>Effect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monkey ran away from the clown.</td>
<td>The clown chased the monkey.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The monkey stole a banana.</td>
<td>The grocery store man got angry.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The monkey didn't throw his peel in the trashcan.</td>
<td>The motorcycle man slipped on the peel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When the motorcycle man slipped, his foot hit a ladder.</td>
<td>The painter on the ladder fell off.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The painter fell into a man's cart.</td>
<td>The cart rolled into the street and made a mess of traffic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The cart rolled away.</td>
<td>The cart crashed into a man on a bicycle.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The man flew off his bicycle.</td>
<td>A judge saw the flying bicyclist and accidentally stepped onto a skateboard.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The judge rode the skateboard down the street.</td>
<td>The judge bumped into a lady walking a baby in a carriage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The baby carriage rolled away.</td>
<td>The baby rolled through the park and hit a speed bump in the street.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The baby went flying from the carriage.</td>
<td>The garbage truck swerved to miss the flying baby.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The clown reaches up to get his monkey down from the signpost.</td>
<td>The clown accidentally catches the baby.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The dump truck driver was looking at the baby instead of the road.</td>
<td>The truck hits the banana delivery truck.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bananas are everywhere!</td>
<td>It's a banana block party!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Simple cause and effect charting*
for Once Upon a Banana by Jennifer Armstrong

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cause</th>
<th>Effect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monkey ran away from the clown.</td>
<td>Bad things started to happen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clown finally found monkey.</td>
<td>Clown accidentally saved baby.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bananas went everywhere!</td>
<td>Everybody was happy eating bananas!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* As noted previously under personal narratives, match your charting complexity to the child's narrative and language level. In other words, if your child is using brief phrases to relate information in a story, make the story at that language level or a bit more complex, depending on your goals.
Visual methods

As previously noted, visuals support a child's understanding acquisition of narrative concepts. The following are suggestions to integrate visuals into fictional narrative intervention:

_Incorporate dramatic imagery into book reading and story review._

Imagery can be used to scaffold a child's memory for story events. As noted in previous chapters, children's picture books have long been helpful tools for teaching fictional narrative concepts. The following are ideas to integrate visuals into narrative teaching:

**Illustrated books** Vivid imagery within children's picture books scaffold a child's comprehension and memory for story events. Select books with compelling imagery. Illustrations can be wonderful sources of conversation and opportunities to discuss story events, motives, emotions and other narrative concepts. Wordless books may be a useful format for building fictional narrative abilities when adults have spent adequate time “previewing” books and formulating a sense of story elements and outcomes (White & Low, 2002).

_Previewing wordless books_

The wordless book format may seem simple, but can present challenges for some parents. White and Low (2002) encouraged “previewing” wordless books by looking through the book and becoming familiar with it's story before sharing it with your child. The authors found that after previewing, a
parent's story was more cohesive and the child showed greater involvement during storytelling.

*Write down the child's words when he or she retells a story or creates his or her own* As suggested in the previous personal narrative section, record a child's words on post-it notes and adhere them below images, whether sketches or photographs, to formalize their storytelling. This is especially appropriate when using wordless books, but can also be adapted to activities involving picture books with text.

**ACTIVITY Photocopy book imagery**

Kerfoot (2009) photocopies images from children's books to give a child the opportunity to create his own story. After reading and/or reviewing and talking about a book's images, the adult can encourage the child tell the story in his own words. Record the child's story and transcribe it later. Match text with images. The images can be bound into a "book" for the child to share his story ideas with others. This activity works particularly well with wordless books, when the child is provided ample time to preview the images and formulate ideas about them.

**ACTIVITY Laminate book illustrations and/or characters** Extra copies of books can be dismantled and the pages laminated in order to encourage a child to organize events and retell the story in his or her own words. Likewise, color reproductions of book characters or child drawings of characters can be laminated, attached to tongue
depressors and used as puppets to retell a familiar story. This activity works well with one-on-one or in small groups.

_More activity ideas are found under Story Grammar Projects on page 168._

_Encourage a child to take on the role of artist_ When working with fictional story creation, having a child create images is a natural extension of the story-building process. A child can create his or her own interpretation of a favorite story by producing drawings, paintings, collages, papier mache sculptures and other handiwork. Adult and child can discuss salient aspects of the story, character motives, and the emotional outcomes of events, all of which support a child’s narrative comprehension and development. Artwork produced can be bound into book format to be reviewed over time and shared with others.

_Group/collaborative storytelling using art_ If several children are involved in the story-building process, they can each be assigned different characters to reproduce. These reproductions then can be used during storytelling to involve each child in the reenactment of story events. Children can collaborate on how to act out what happens in the story, why characters do what they do and discuss if their own similar life experiences.

_See Story Grammar Projects, page 168, for ideas on character recreation._
Kinesthetic methods

Fictional narratives can be enriched through kinesthetic movement in the form of play. Kim (1999) suggests that the combination of play and storytelling are activities from which narrative language and perspective taking emerge. Play helps a child organize story sequences, encourages him to translate his experiences into words. The following are some ways kinesthetic movements can be incorporated into personal story development:

**Role-playing** or acting out story events can support fictional narrative comprehension and recall. During the discussion of role-play when developing personal narratives, the concept of *sequential* teaching was mentioned. The first portion of this chapter discusses this further and how it relates to narrative intervention planning. *Sequential* teaching of fictional stories, may translate into repeated readings of a story followed by role-play activities.

**Story reenactment using dolls and toys**

As mentioned above, Kim (1999) reported that a child’s narrative recall and social-cognitive development are supported when manipulatives (i.e., dolls, toys) are used to recreate a familiar story from children’s literature. Dolls and other toys can be used to stand in for story characters during play. Adults can partner with children to reconstruct story events.
Fabric transfers Book characters can scanned and printed onto fabric transfer paper, which can then be used to make three-dimensional stuffed toys for story play and reenactment.

See Story Grammar Projects, page 168, for more information on making materials and narrative activities.

Sign or modified sign language Lastly, hand signs may be used to cue basic story grammar structure or concepts (e.g., first, next, last, beginning, ending). You can use formal sign language or create your own gestures. Hand signs are described below:

"First" in American Sign Language (ASL):

1) Point your pointer finger up as if you are counting “1” with your palm away from you.

2) Then, keeping your finger up, turn your palm in towards you.

"Next" in ASL:

1) Hold your left hand up so that it horizontal to you, palm towards you.

2) Place your right hand in the same position, but in front of the left hand (closest to you).

3) Move your right hand over the left hand, so it is on the opposite side of the left hand, away from you with your palm still facing you.
“Then” in ASL:

1) Make a “gun” with your left hand.  
(Not my favorite metaphor, but a good way to visualize this sign.)  
2) With your right hand, make a “1” with your pointer finger.  
3) Use your pointed finger to tap your left-hand thumb, moving towards you,  
followed by another tap to the left-hand pointer finger.  
4) To extend the “gun” metaphor, one student of mine described the  
movements in this way: the first tap “is like cocking the gun” and the second  
tap “is like shooting the gun.”

“Last” in ASL:

1) Your left hand will be positioned horizontally, fingers together, palm  
facing you.  
2) With your right hand, fingers together, make a chopping motion as if  
cutting the tips of your fingers off. (Excuse the imagery... again!)

The remaining pages of this section are devoted to a Quick Reference Guide to  
the approaches just discussed as well as a Multimodal Toolbox for addressing  
fictional narrative goals. Use this matrix to plan your interactions or just get ideas  
on diversifying how you think about and approach storytelling.
A Quick Reference Guide to multimodal approaches to Fictional Narratives

1. GENERAL APPROACHES

* Sequential presentation
* Repeated exposure to concepts
* Conversation & collaboration
* Contextualized teaching
* Parent/caregiver involvement

2. GET READY TO INTERACT

* Get on the child’s level
* Increase your affect
* Model language & slow your rate of speech slightly
* Don’t rush the child

3. EXPAND AND EXPLORE

Fictional Narrative

1. Adopt a conversational approach during shared book reading

* Relate fictional stories to the child’s life through conversation.

2. Follow the child’s lead

* Think collaboration
* Pause for input
* Watch & listen
* Encourage contributions
* Expand on the child’s thought

During shared book reading

(Justice & Kaderavek, 2002, p. 10):

* Let the child where to read
* Give the child opportunities to hold and manipulate the book
* Match the child’s interests and abilities—as children age, they become more interested in the story presented by the text, first, talk about pictures
* Have the child “read” to you

3. Model narrative language or “story words” (including the terms: first, next, then, last) See Multimodal Toolbox below for information about teaching story grammar.

4. Teach and chart “cause and effect” sequences in stories
4. THE MULTIMODAL “TOOLBOX”—FICTIONAL NARRATIVES
*Mix and match activities to meet the specific strengths of your child and address narrative language goals*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AUDITORY</th>
<th>VISUAL</th>
<th>KINESTHETIC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Have conversations about the book your are reading with your child</td>
<td>Use story illustrations to improve story comprehension</td>
<td>Talk about how your body shows emotions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discuss ideas in books during shared book reading</td>
<td>* Picture walk: when introducing a new story, look through the book with your child. Talk about the illustrations. Ask your child what they think the story is about.</td>
<td>Review the facial expressions and body language of story characters. * Have the child pretend to be a character in a book and do what the book character does.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Respond to your child’s comments—what in the book is important to them?</td>
<td>* During shared book reading, talk about how pictures can help tell the story and show character qualities and emotions.</td>
<td>* Review the story emotions in sequence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Attempt to tie story characters, situations and emotions to the child’s life and personal experiences.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Book suggestions:**

* Ask your therapist and/or teacher for names of good books for your child.

* Use flip books or books that a child manipulates during reading.

* Find books with text that repeats during the book to encourage greater child participation.
Use the “story words” *first, next, then, and last* during book reading and/or story retell

* During shared book reading: for children who are not fluent readers, use post-it notes to mark narrative language during book reading (e.g., on the first page, place a post-it with “First” on it). Simplify the story text or put the story in your own words, as appropriate for your child.

* With story retell: picture-walk through the book and have your child help you use your “story words” as you talk about each page.

Use photocopied illustrations to help story retelling

After multiple readings, your child can organize laminated copies of illustrations and retell the story.

Role play story events as well as character actions and reactions

* The adult can retell or reread the story while the child acts out events.

* Then, the adult can act out events while the child “reads” the pictures or text.

* With an older child, the adult and child can role-play together and create alternative endings, if appropriate.

**Play and language:**
Imaginative play supports language acquisition and narrative activities. Encourage children to reenact story events using dolls and other toys.
Teach 1 story grammar concept at a time, over time*

Character(s)—who
Setting(s)—where
Problem—what

(Feelings/Emotions—reactions)

Actions/Steps taken—how, why
Conclusion—what

(Feelings at the end—reactions)

* Teach 1 concept over several sessions.

* Create personal stories to introduce a story grammar concept.

* Extend teaching by finding examples of story grammar concept within several story-books to support learning.

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Encourage a child to take the role of Artist

Discuss illustration composition in book read—talk about how to tell a story through pictures.

* Teach your child about materials and how they are used.

* Encourage critical thinking by discussing composition and art terminology (e.g., shadow, form).

* Teach your child to make a preliminary sketch, and have him make decisions about what to include and exclude in his illustrations.

* Discuss materials and mediums—what materials convey the feelings of the story? Critique the illustrations in the book you are reading together.

* Group work: assign each child a different story event to illustrate.

---

Use sign language or modified sign to mark the “story words”—first, next, then, last

* Teach your child hand signs to represent terms.

* Model the signs and ask your child to make them along with you.

* Pause and cue to encourage your child to contribute a sign when the time comes.

---

* Teach your child hand signs to represent terms.

* Model the signs and ask your child to make them along with you.

* Pause and cue to encourage your child to contribute a sign when the time comes.
**Use intonation during the reading and retelling of stories**

This helps the child understand and/or think about a story's content, including meaning, emotions and outcomes.

* Practice intonation by reading comic strips—the adult can be one character and your child another.

* Use books that are repetitive and/or predictable to encourage child participation during book reading.

* Children may also be more apt to copy an adult model when intonation is used (particularly when books have repeated words and phrases).

**Use wordless books to prompt fictional story creation**

Look through a wordless book before you share it with your child. This allows you to know the story's events and outcomes.

* Have your child help you interpret the story, it's his story, too!

* Photocopy book illustrations (reduce size, if needed) and leave room for the child to add his own words to the images.

* Or, transcribe the child's story—handwrite or use Post-it notes to quickly add text to a page.

**Encourage dramatic storytelling**

* Adults can help anchor ideas or events when they use hand and body gestures while telling stories. (This works particularly well when stories include repeating language and/or events.)

* Search for the YouTube video of *Going on a Bear Hunt* performed by the author, Michael Rosen.

* Even if a child does not want to get up and role-play, they can sit and create gestures to represent story events and actions.
Story Grammar Projects
Basic story grammar craft projects and activities.

Story grammar concepts are used in the academic setting and, as such, are important for children to understand. Make story grammar concepts more concrete using the projects and activities on the following pages, or find others online that fit your needs.

Collaborate with your child. If he or she needs some help cutting, then take turns cutting. If a child’s sensory issues makes using sticky glue difficult, then find ways to scaffold the child’s participation. "Craft" projects provide ample opportunities for skill and self-esteem building. Children who have language learning problems may be reluctant to try new tasks, or may use the phrases “I can’t do that” or “I’m not good at that” during activities. Let them know you are working as a team and you will help when they need it. Let your child know that you are there to help him or her, but that people only get better by at something through practice! Everyone has strengths and challenges – point out a strength of your child and remind him or her of the time and effort he or she has put into that ability.

* Remember: Narrative opportunities are everywhere! Use the simple narrative language or “story words” – first, next, last – while working on projects. Also, you may want to create a “recipe” book of any craft project you undertake. This will allow your child to share his or her craft story with others and scaffold his or her retelling of it.
Story grammar projects and activities by category:

"Character" projects
For you and your child to make:
Puppets (see page 170)

For you to make:
Fabric transfers (see page 174)
Characters on a stick (see page 176)

"Setting" projects
For you and your child to make:
Card board stage (see page 178)
Snow globes (see page 180)

"Event" projects
Use character puppets and settings to recreate important story events. Reinacted stories can be video taped (with parent permission) and watched again with the student. Focus on cause and effect relationships.

For you and your child to make:
Story maps (see page 182)
Treasure hunt activites (see page 184)

"Problem" projects
Use character puppets and settings to reenact a book's problems. Discuss character feelings, character motives and vocal intonation during story situations. Focus on cause and effect relationships.

"Conclusion" projects
Use story maps to mark conclusions (see page 182 for more on story maps). Treasure hunts can be used to introduce the concept of "conclusion" (see page 184) and favorite books can be mapped with the same ideas in mind.
“Character” puppets

Puppets are a natural fit for teaching the concept of “character.” Here are some simple ideas on using puppets:

* Have your child make a puppet of himself to use during personal narrative activities.
* Or, have your child make a character from a story you are reading together.
* Or, have your child make up an imaginary character to integrate into imaginative play activities.

Simple puppets

Puppets can be made from socks, paper bags, papier mache and other materials. The following pages have instructions for making simple puppets.

Use story words

Turn the puppet-making process into a narrative exercise by using the simple story words “first,” “next,” “then,” and “last” throughout the activity.

Review and retell the steps taken to make your puppets and make a puppet “recipe” book for the child to refer to and share, when appropriate.
Walking fingers puppet
Use this pattern to make a puppet that "walks" when your child places his fingers through the holes. This allows the puppet to take on the actions of a story character!

1) Make a photo copy of the pattern at right and cut it out. (Size of pattern can be adjusted by shrinking or enlarging during photocopying.)

2) Trace the pattern onto posterboard. This will be what your child decorates and uses as a puppet.

3) Optional: I reinforce the posterboard with "self-lamination" plastic sheets before I cut the puppet out.

4) Decorate puppet – create a shirt with cut paper or fabric, paint or draw a face...be creative!

Note: This is a fast way for a child to make a "me" puppet for personal storytelling activities!
Jointed puppet
Have your child make a paper self portrait, alien creature, or story characters for acting out stories read.

1) Have your child draw a head and face on heavy colored paper.

2) Choose another color of paper and draw the character’s body. Choose another for the arms and legs.

3) Cut out all character parts.

4) Use a hole punch to make holes for connecting the body parts with brass brad fasteners. (These can be found at office supply stores.) OR, for a puppet that does not move its arms/legs, glue all parts together.

5) Attach a tongue depressor with glue to the bottom or top of the puppet the child has made.

Note: These puppets may be used with a puppet stage (see activities under “setting”).

You will need:
Heavy/thick colored paper
Scissors
Pens, crayons, pencils
Brass brad fasteners
Tongue depressor
Glue gun or strong glue

Tongue depressor – attach at the bottom (left) or top (right) of character
**Finger puppet**
Find knit gloves and make worm or caterpillar puppets! This project could easily be incorporated into activities using Eric Carle’s *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*. This is a project that will probably need to be constructed mostly by an adult.

1) Cut off the fingers of a knit glove.

2) Use a needle and thread to hem under each finger’s bottom edge.

3) Glue on eyes towards the top of each “worm” or “caterpillar.”

4) Make caterpillar antennae by threading a pipe cleaner through the top of the puppet.

5) Feel free to decorate your puppets using glue and glitter, embroidery or other creative means!

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**You will need:**

- Knit glove
- Scissors
- Needle and thread
- Craft “wiggle” eyes
- Pipe cleaners
- Decoration materials
- Glue gun or other strong fabric glue

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Note: Caterpillar puppets are especially affective when used during *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* by Eric Carle story retell activities!
**Fabric transfer “characters”** are soft toys made by scanning character images and printing them on fabric transfer sheets. These transfer sheets can be found at your local office supply store or online. Read on:

1) Scan book illustration or other image. (Scan at 300dpi, if possible, for a good quality image.) Crop the image on screen as close to the character(s) you want to transfer on to fabric.

2) Print out images on fabric transfer sheets – follow the directions on the transfer sheet packaging.

3) Cut all characters you scanned out of the transfer sheets. Cut as close to the edge of the characters as possible.

4) Prepare your chosen fabric. It is best to prewash fabric, dry it and iron it flat. A simple cotton material is best, such as a mid-weight muslin or broadcloth.

5) Closely follow the package directions for transferring images onto fabric. Leave plenty of space between images on the fabric you use.

6) Once you have the characters transferred on to fabric, place a second layer of fabric under each character and cut around the character image. Leave at least a 1/4 to 1/2 inch around the image edge for seam allowance.

**You will need:**
- Fabric transfer sheets
- White or colored fabric
- Scanner
- Scissors
- Iron & Sewing machine
- Tape
- Needle & thread
- Synthetic, wool, or cotton batting
7) Once you have cut out all of the characters and their second layers, bring the second layer of fabric from the back to the front. Match up layers and use tape to fix the fabric layers in place for sewing. (I like to use small pieces of Scotch tape, rather than pins, to match up fabric layers as this avoids making holes in the transferred image. Take the tape off after sewing is done.)

8) Sew around the edge of each character, but leave the last 1 1/2 to 2 inches open. You will use this hole for turning the character right-side out and inserting batting.

9) Turn the fabric inside out so the image is showing again.

10) Fill your character with cotton or synthetic batting.

11) Sew up the open hole with a needle and thread.

Your soft stuffed character is done, ready to play with and easy to hand wash!

Note: Before or after you sew your fabric layers together, consider if you would like to add any extra decoration to your characters. For instance, you may want to embellish your characters with embroidery, craft paint or other materials. A yarn tail or craft "wiggle" eyes are easy additions.
Characters on a stick. This is an easy way to get children involved in listening to a story and participating in retelling it. It is also a good introduction to the story grammar concept of "character" or the "who" of a story. Remember: characters may be people, things or places...discuss "who" is in the story when introducing images on a stick.

1) Have each child draw or paint a different character from a the book you are working on, OR simply make color copies of book characters from book illustrations. Sometimes a group of people or things will be a character (e.g., the townspeople), find an image that represents the group and place it on a stick as a "character."

(Of course, I do not think I really need to tell you this, but do not charge children money to use these images or sell these images as that would break copyright laws!)

You will need:
- Copies of illustrations
- OR child drawings
- Tongue depressors
- Stapler or glue gun
- Laminator or access to a laminator and materials

2) Cut out images carefully, so each character is isolated and will be on their own stick.
3) Laminate the character images and cut around the edges leaving a narrow laminant border to maintain the lamination seal.

4) Staple or hot glue the characters to tongue depressors or popsicle sticks.

Individual or group activities may include:

* **Listening:** Each child is assigned one character and give the character on a stick. The child is told to raise up their character when it is mentioned during reading.

* **Retelling or reenactment:** The children retell the story independently or as the adult narrates using their characters. A puppet theater or setting backdrop may also be constructed when the concept of "setting" is taught.

* Reinactments can also be done using the "Cardboard Box Stage" as described on page 184.
Cardboard Box Stages. After you have created characters and talked to your child about the story grammar concept of “character,” you may wish to create a stage for characters to perform stories. (See Characters on a Stick, page 176, and Jointed puppets, page 172, for projects that would work well with this stage design.) Once “character” is well understood, introduce the story grammar concept of “setting.” Here is one way to do that:

1) Find two cardboard boxes the same size:
   Make sure the box size is large enough to accommodate the size of your characters.
   The boxes should be at least 10 inches tall. Be sure the corners are sturdy and intact.
   Both boxes should be made of strong cardboard and be in good condition.

2) Prepare Box 1 – The Stage:
   a) Glue Box 1 flaps closed (or use clear packing tape to close it).
   b) Draw a rectangle or square on one side of the box.
   c) Use a box cutter (or retractable knife) to cut a big rectangle or square out of one side. This will be the your stage’s viewing area.
   d) Turn the box over to the adjacent smooth surface (no flaps).
   e) Decorate the front of the box, around the opening cut in step “c.” Use paint, bulletin board edges (from school supply stores) or other materials.
   f) Create scenery for the back “wall” of the “stage”:

1) One way to do this is to simply paint directly on the back wall itself.

2) Measure the back wall by cutting a piece of paper to match its dimensions. Have your child paint one or several settings for the book you are working on. The setting papers can then be inserted and taped onto the back wall as appropriate to story retell activities.
3) Prepare Box 2 – The Stand:
   a) Make sure one end of the box is closed well with either strong glue and/or clear packing tape.
   b) Cut off the remaining open flaps with the box with a box cutter (or retractable knife).
   c) Cut “legs” out of all 4 sides of the box like this:

You will need:
- 2 cardboard boxes (same size, in good condition)
- Scissors and box cutter
- Glue gun or strong glue
- Pens, crayons, pencils, glitter, colored paper, etc. for decoration

d) Glue the Box 1 on top of Box 2 with a strong glue, such as Gorilla Glue, and let dry for a few hours. Decorate the “legs” of the stage, if desired.

e) Cut an opening in the stage’s “floor.” (A good, sharp box cutter is essential.) This will be an opening for children to insert characters for reenacting stories.

f) Use your “stage” with the characters you and your child have made. Create new puppet characters and sets for different stories. Make up your own stories, act out alternative endings from favorite stories. Most importantly – have fun!
Homemade snowglobes. This project is a fun way to explore the story grammar concepts of “character” and “setting.” A child can be encouraged to create a fictional story about the character(s) and setting within the globe. The adult and child can create a story before constructing the snowglobe (using the toy to act out sequences) or once the snowglobe is complete. A tale can be prompted through questions like, “What do you think (the character) is doing in the snow?” or “Why is (the character) alone in the (setting)?” or using other prompts. The story can be drawn or painted and compiled into a book. (See pages 145–148 for simple bookmaking ideas.)

1) Find small plastic toys in toy, craft supply or drug stores. Make sure the toys you choose can stand flat on the lid of your jar and fit when the lid is screwed on. Baby food jars work well for this project as they create a good seal and tend not to leak. This means very small toys are used when working with baby food jars.

2) Have your child choose 1 or 2 toys (aka. “characters”) to include in the snowglobe and check the fit as instructed above.

* Note: If your goal is to work on fictional narrative, story creation can begin at this point:

a) Use the toys selected to act out a story through imaginative play with your child. Story play with the toys may provide a more concrete way to construct a fictional tale.

b) After you create a short story, write it down or have your child create drawings to compile into a book. Once your story is recorded in text and/or drawings, continue to make the snowglobe.

3) To continue to make your snowglobe:

Glue down your toy(s) with a strong, waterproof adhesive, such as Gorilla Glue. If you use Gorilla Glue, there is no need to “clamp” toys down to lid. Just set the toys/lid aside and let dry overnight.
4) The jar (aka. "setting") can be decorated in a few ways. The simplest, although temporary, decoration is drawing with permanent markers on the jar’s outer glass surface. You can also experiment with glass paints or other materials if you so choose.

5) Once the glass/setting is done and the toy(s)/character(s) dry, the snowglobe is ready to assemble.

a) Fill the jar with distilled water. (Distilled water keeps things from growing in the water.) Leave a room at the top, allowing for the mass of the toy attached to the lid. You can add or remove water, depending on the needs of your toy(s).

b) Add a pinch of glitter to the water. *Optional:* you can add a pinch of glycerin to thicken the water. This slows the fall of the glitter through the water.

c) Carefully insert the toy(s) into the water and gently screw on the lid. Be sure the lid is secured and will not leak.

*Have fun!* Create silly character/setting combinations to spark story creation.

How did a penguin get into outer space? Is that space dust floating in the snowglobe?
**Story maps.** One way to help children understand story structure is to create visual representations of story sequences. The following are some suggestions, but are in no means the only means to "map" narratives. Be creative, brainstorm with your child and find a method that works best for you both!

**Timelines**

Pictography can be used for mapping, too. Quick sketches can be made by you or your child during story review. Each picture can be created on one sheet of paper or on separate sheets of paper. The idea is to create a clear, visual sequence of information.

**Drawn on separate sheets of paper and taped to the chalk board or wipe board:**

![Timeline Diagram]

**Drawn on one big sheet of paper or on a chalk or large wipe board:**

![Timeline Diagram]

Timelines are helpful at any learning level. This linear information format can even be helpful for older students and with nonfictional material, such as academic texts (i.e., history, science). Timeline exercises create the perfect context in which to discuss new vocabulary.

Timelines can also provide a great cueing tool for rein-actments of stories, whether personal, fictional or, as mentioned above, from academic textbooks.
**Roundabouts**

Some stories are a circular chain of events. The story begins and ends at the same situation. Some Dr. Seuss books have this structure, as do Laura Numeroff's books. In her book, *If You Give a Moose a Muffin*, Numeroff sets her story into motion when a child offers a muffin to a moose and the moose asks for some jam to go with it. It ends with the same request by the moose.

Draw and/or write in the circles. You can create large or small scale roundabouts.

You can create a roundabout with index cards taped or tacked to a board or wall, again, with drawings and/or text.

Work with your child's strengths; if they produce more language using picture stimuli and your goal is language, work with pictures.
Treasure maps

Most children love to look for "clues" and find hidden treasure. If this is true of your child, treasure maps may be the perfect tool for building narrative skills! Treasure hunt activities can be approached as a personal or fictional narrative exercise depending on the language goal(s) you have set for your child. Maps can be simple or complex.

Personal narrative activities. If you are working on personal storytelling, you can construct a narrative based on an actual treasure hunt you and your child collaborate on. You can create clues – either picture clues using drawings, photographs or other images, or, if your child is a reader, using words – then you and your child can hunt for treasure together. When the hunting is done and the treasure has been found create a map together. You can talk about your clues and draw them together or construct a map with the picture clues you provided for the activity. This map will serve as a visual prompt as your child shares the story of his or her treasure hunt.

Fictional narrative activities. These activities are inspired by books and the "treasure map" becomes a metaphor for a story's progression. There are many great children's book about pirates and their treasure. Some "treasure" will be literal, others will be more conceptual. The idea here is to visually map a story that you and the child love. Use the stereotypical "treasure map" format; decorate it to reference the look of the story – if the story is about pirates, create a map that looks weathered, using an paper bag or other colored paper. If the story is about fairies, make a map of tracing paper with fairies flying around it and lots of glitter! Explore the "look" and "feel" of the story with your child, talk about it, make a plan, and then get to work, Matey!

The next page gives an example of a simple story "treasure map."
Here is simple example of treasure mapping the book *Where the Wild Things Are* by Maurice Sendak:

Where the Wild Things Are By Maurice Sendak

Max's room
...sent to bed with NO DINNER!

Max begins to dream.

Max meets the Wild Things.

Wild Things make Max king!

Max sails home to bed.

Make your maps as complex as you think appropriate for your child. This activity could also be used as an outline for future writing activities, if writing is a part of your narrative goals.
Creating narrative goals

Target personal narratives during sessions and in daily life. McCabe, et al. (2008) urged professionals to focus on a child’s overall communication and social functioning when creating goals for personal narrative building.

Let the authors’ three therapy goals shape your narrative goals and interactions with your child:

1. **Foster personal narrative discourse** by teaching children with language difficulties to use narrative structure to organize their thoughts during discussion.
   a. Teach a basic narrative structure using the temporal, sequential terms *first, next, then, last* and apply them to discourse.
   b. Once the above structure is mastered, teaching the following concepts can enhance a child’s narrative discourse: description, emotion, and causal factors.

2. **Increase parent elaboration of their child’s personal narratives.**
   a. Educate parents about the narrative structure being taught and the concept of elaboration to support carryover into daily parent-child exchanges.
3. Encourage generalization of narrative structure to different contexts.

   a. Once a child masters using a personal narrative structure during conversation with the clinician, a child practices his acquired skills on others.

   The preference for personal storytelling has also been emphasized for written language tasks. Calkins (1994) encouraged educators to use personal narrative, over fictional formats, in the teaching of creative writing. By writing about their experiences children learned that their lives and perceptions mattered.
Keep talking story!
Final thoughts on oral narrative intervention from a whole child perspective

It is our challenge and reward as clinicians, teachers and parents or caregivers to aid a child's early attempts to talk about his or her life. Storytelling supports a child's language development and helps him build personal relationships with adults and peers. A multi-modality approach aids us in this goal. It provides the adult with a variety of tools to engage a child, explore an idea and, when successful, coax a child to share his or her personal experiences and try out new vocabulary.

Most children can learn by simply listening and reading, but children having difficulty developing language need more support (Lavoie, 1989). Recent research tells us that clinicians, teachers and caregivers may find greater success reaching narrative goals by teaching to the whole child using multiple modality approach (Bui, 2002; Speaker, Taylor & Kamen, 2004; Ukrainetz, 1998). This teaching approach equips the professional or parent with many tools to explain oral narrative concepts and, at its best, inspires a child to share his own story with confidence.

Look for the stories all around you

...and find ways to create stories with your child every day!
REFERENCES


Kerfoot, J. (Personal communication, Summer 2007).


www.youtube.com/watch?v=ytcoU2WAZ4s.