**Language Sampling (Module Three):
Pragmatic Language Sampling and Analyses**

**A VDOE Professional
Development Series**

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**Learner Outcomes for Language Sampling Modules**

* List optimal language sampling contexts for various age groups and describe best practices for collection of conversation samples (Module One)
* Identify areas of concern in conversational language samples and select analyses for syntactic, morphological, semantic, and pragmatic behaviors (Module Two)
* Implement a protocol for eliciting samples that highlight pragmatic language behaviors and use a rating scale to document these behaviors (Module Three)

**Agenda for Module Three**

* Review pragmatic language assessment tools
* Introduce “Share and Tell” language sampling protocol
* Describe clinician behaviors for eliciting language samples that provide opportunities for student comments, questions, and repairs of communication breakdowns
* Summarize methods for analyzing and rating pragmatic language skills

**Pragmatic Language Assessment Tools**

* **Norm-referenced tests**: may not reveal weaknesses observed in “real life” social interactions
* **Parent/teacher/self-reports**: provide views of a student’s verbal and nonverbal difficulties in social interaction
* **Observations of peer interactions**: provides authentic data of social interaction abilities and peer responses
* **Language samples**: may provide documentation of parent/teacher reports and
* Inform intervention plans
* Document student progress as a result of intervention

**Pragmatic Language Assessment Tools**

* **Bottom line:**
* Limit use of norm-referenced tests and choose wisely!
* Use multiple sources of data including those that can be collected frequently for progress monitoring:
* Peer observations
* Language samples

**“Share and Tell” Language Sampling Protocol for Documenting Pragmatic Language Skills**

**Overview of “Share and Tell” Language Sampling Protocol**

* For school-age children and adolescents, ages 5 to 14
* SLP elicits **three** discourse types within one 10-to-12-minute sample. Each “mini” sample segment is 3 to 4 minutes:
* **Personal retell/recount** sample: problem with a sibling, pet, etc.
* **Expository** sample: rules for a game or sport
* **Book/movie** retell sample: beginning, middle, and end details

“**Share” Directions**

* **For each mini-sample, the SLP presents at least one “share”**
* **Guidelines for “share” development**
* Four to six past tense utterances
* Two to three complex sentences with at least one subordinating conjunction

 Example: “My brother was playing with it, **when** I wasn’t home and he broke it!

* Expository shares should provide 5-6 procedure steps
* Book/movie retell shares should include a problem, a plan, an emotional reaction, and a resolution

**Examples of “Share” Scripts for Personal Retell**

**Problem with Sibling:** One time when I was younger, I bought a Nintendo Switch with my own money. My brother was playing with it when I wasn’t home one day, and he broke it! I was so mad. I had to wait a whole year before I could get a new one. Oh, I was so mad!

**Problem with a Pet:** My dog’s name is Pepper. One day, he was playing outside, and he saw a bunny. He jumped over the fence to chase the bunny. Then, I had to jump over the fence to chase after him, but I couldn’t catch him. Finally, the bunny went into a hole so Pepper finally came back to me. I was so frustrated with him.

**“Share and Tell” Directions**

* After presenting a “share” in a conversational tone:
* **Pause for up to 30 seconds** to provide opportunity for student to comment or ask a question
* **Invite** student to “tell” something similar:
* Personal Retell/Recount: I wonder if something like that has happened to you.
* Expository: Now I’d like you to tell me about a favorite game or sport that you like.
* Story/Book Retell: I’d like to hear about your favorite book or movie.
* **Stage** a communication breakdown with each mini-sample

**Review of Communication Breakdowns**

* Natural/spontaneous breakdown: Clinician asks for clarification of something the student said
* Stage a breakdown if one doesn’t occur:
* Repeat something incorrectly the student has said
* Tell student you’re confused about something said

**Additional “Share and Tell” Directions**

* Use **authentic comments** to keep conversation going
* “I bet that was fun”
* “That’s my favorite too”
* Limit use of questions by replacing with statements:
* “I wonder why you liked that one” instead of “Did you like that one?”
* Process questions, such as “why” and “how” are appropriate because they elicit longer utterances:
* “Why did you do that?” “How do you win that game?”

**Video Example: Clinician “Share” & Communication Breakdown**

* Clinician: "You know what Kevin, I also slept on the top bunk and my um sister slept on the bottom. And one time, I let my brother sleep with me. This is a problem I had with my brother that was kind of annoying. I let my brother sleep with me. I was in kindergarten and he wasn't yet. He was littler than me. And you know he broke out in chicken pox! Like he woke up next to me and he had chicken pox all over. And then, I got the chicken pox.
* Student: I can connect to that. So last Valentine's Day this year, I got the flu two years in a row!
* Clinician: Two years in a row on Christmas?
* Student: No Valentine's Day.

**Rationale for Development of the “Share and Tell” Protocol**

Most students with pragmatic language impairments show relative strengths in:

* Responding to adult questions or elicitations
* “Why did you do that?”
* “Tell me more”
* Although response may be incorrect or off topic or not match context

**Rationale for Development of the “Share and Tell” Protocol (continued)**

But students with pragmatic language impairments often show difficulties in:

* Taking turns (too few or too many)
* Producing spontaneous comments and questions that build the conversation
* **Nonresponsive** or
* **Noncontingent turn**: fail to meet the informational expectations (Martin et al., 2018), or are off topic/unexpected
* Listen to this example
* Clinician: Is he gonna have a party?
* Student: I am.
* Clinician: Well tell me about that.
* Student: All my friends are gonna be there.
* Clinician: All your friends?
* Student: Now girls, boys, girls, boys. All sorts of stuff. Especially Andrea.
* Clinician: Andrea? She's your special friend?
* Student: Yeah.
* Clinician: I wonder why you like Andrea so much.
* Student: I brought her flowers once.

**Rationale for Development of the “Share and Tell” Protocol (continued)**

But students with pragmatic language impairments often show difficulties in:

* Providing sufficient and clear (cohesive) details in extended discourse
* Narratives and expository contexts
* Noticing that the listener is confused or responding appropriately to communication breakdowns

**Rationale for Development of the “Share and Tell” Protocol (continued)**

* Clinician “Share” part of the protocol provides opportunities for students to:
* Initiate a spontaneous comment to the “share”
* Ask questions about a “share” **if** clinician pauses after the share
* Demonstrate awareness of a communication breakdown and attempt to repair the breakdown

**Analyses of Pragmatic Language Skills**

**Pragmatic Analyses**

**Listen and look at the sample and decide to complete one or both of the following descriptive analyses:**

* **Count verbal or nonverbal behaviors** that reduce communication success
* Count **noncontingent turns** defined as turns that don’t build the conversation, fail to meet the informational expectation (Martin et al., 2018), or are off topic/unexpected
* Keep sample so that you have access to adult turns
* Count word errors
* **Complete a rating scale** of pragmatic language behaviors

**Pragmatic Analyses: Rating Scales**

**Rating scales of pragmatic language skills: some examples:**

* Pragmatic Protocol (Prutting & Kirchner, 1987)
* Targeted Observation of Pragmatics in Children’s Conversation (TOPICC; Adams, Gaile, Freed, & Lockton, 2010)
* Timler’s “Share and Tell” rating scale
* Download a copy of the “Share and Tell” Rating Scale
* **One caveat: interrater reliability can be variable**

**“Share and Tell” Rating Scale:** See module two for explanation of cover sheet

**“Share and Tell” Rating Scale, Pragmatic Language Categories that are rated:**

* Responding to questions
* Asking questions
* Balance in turn-taking
* Topic initiation
* Topic management
* Pronoun Use/referents
* Language Use (Formal/Scripted)
* Communication breakdowns
* Proximity
* Nonverbal behaviors

“**Share and Tell” Rating Scale: Scale for Ratings of Pragmatic Language Categories (To Be Completed After Listening to Entire Sample)**

**0** =Appears appropriate for age; only minimal disruptions were noted

**1** = mild concerns or concerns that would be occasionally noted by other communication partners

**2** = moderate concerns or concerns that would be frequently noted by other communication partners

**3** = significant/severe concerns or concerns that would be almost always noted by communication partners AND behaviors would significantly disrupt/distract interactions with other communication partners

**“Share and Tell” Rating Scale: Check observed behaviors within individual pragmatic language categories to inform intervention planning:**

For example, topic management behaviors include:

❏ Child provides excessive amount of detail

❏ Child stays on one topic too long

❏ Child returns to the same topic over and over

❏ Child provides too few details

❏ Child provides irrelevant or tangential details

❏ Child provides out-of-sync comment/ irrelevant /off topic comments

**Summary of Pragmatic Language Sampling & Analysis**

* **Sample Collection**
* Provide opportunities for students to ask questions and to respond to your comments
* Keep it real by sharing your opinions and stories
* **Sample Analysis**
* Listen to the sample and decide to do counts or to complete a rating scale (or do both)
* Find a rating scale that works for your caseload and use it consistently to develop your own intra-reliability

**Next Steps**

* Take the knowledge test for Module Three
* Thanks for listening to this 3-part series on language sampling!
* See VDOE professional development topics on SUGAR and Narratives for further information