

The Magic of Stories: Literature-based Language Intervention

by Carol J. Strong

Publisher: Thinking Publications, Eau Claire, Wisconsin

Cost: \$56.75

Reviewer: Bina Maser, North York Board of Education, North York, Ontario

This book is intended to help professionals meet the needs of school-aged students with language impairments, by identifying these students and integrating language instruction into their teaching plans. The authors would also like to alert and inform school professionals about students with language impairments, and to co-ordinate language intervention with the efforts of these school professionals.

This book is a resource for speech-language clinicians, special educators, elementary teachers, and ESL/bilingual specialists working with students from kindergarten to grade 7. It provides language-teaching strategies for 30 recommended storybooks. In narrative context students learn vocabulary, figurative language, world knowledge, and sentence patterns. They use language to predict, summarise, problem solve, compare and contrast, retell events, pretend, share feelings, clarify, and answer questions.

The reproducible materials can be used with diverse populations including students with disadvantaged circumstances, language disorders, learning disabilities, ESL backgrounds, severe cognitive impairments, and/or other special needs. Teaching units target small instructional groups (4 to 6 students), but can be adapted for individual use or for the classroom.

A pre- and postassessment of each student's narrative skills is outlined. Twenty-two narrative teaching strategies such as the use of semantic word maps, story retelling, flow charts, and think alouds are described in detail. This is followed by thirty detailed narrative teaching units, which correspond to thirty recommended books which are graded from kindergarten to grade seven. The twenty-two narrative strategies are integrated into the narrative teaching units.

The authors have provided an excellent resource that bridges oral language with literacy development. Clinical language intervention and educational reading strategies are connected through narrative contexts. Methods described parallel current reading guidelines in schools today.

New clinicians and teachers would benefit from the well-planned narrative units. The language-teaching strategies can be used throughout the curriculum. Higher-level thinking and expression are encouraged, and the language levels are well delineated.

The book has some weaknesses. The materials are not eye-catching initially. The information is directive and the more experienced clinician and teacher may find the extensive programming offered too detailed. The 30 books recommended to accompany the teaching units have to be ordered, which may be an additional cost. Each narrative, if taught twice a week for 30 minutes can take three to four weeks to complete. The language intervention techniques may initially appear complex but the effort and time required are well worth it.

Story Making: Using Predictable Literature to Develop Communication

by Robin E. Peura and Carolyn J. DeBoer

Publisher: Thinking Publications, Eau Claire, Wisconsin

Cost: \$53.75

Reviewers: Melissa Potashner and Lynne Morris, North York Board of Education, North York, Ontario

The objectives of *Story Making* are: (a) to introduce children to literacy experiences and develop cognitive and metalinguistic skills, (b) to provide literacy activities to link home and school as a means to improve the child's communication skills, and (c) to provide a means to target deficits in the areas of phonology, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics.

Story Making is an excellent resource for Speech and Language Pathologists to use in individual therapy or in collaboration with classroom teachers. It is appropriate to use with a variety of children including those with language disorders, learning disabilities, developmental delay, English as a Second Language, and those in general education programs. *Story Making* was intended for use with children from kindergarten to grade 3 either on an individual basis or in groups.

The book consists of a series of reproducible patterned stories that are based on well known children's literature. Accompanying each story is an introductory description outlining specific goals and a list of additional activities. The user friendly materials are familiar, clearly drawn, and well presented on the page. When using *Story Maker*, children create their own pattern books by selecting from the range of reproducible material or using other personally relevant pictures or drawings. Cross-referenced tables are provided as a useful information resource. Each story is cross-referenced by goals for phonology, syntax, semantics, thinking skills, and themes.

The appendices provide student progress tracking sheets and letters to parents. The parent letters can be used to outline specific goals to work on at home, supply the clinician with feedback about the success of the home program and provide general hints to encourage literacy skills at home. While most of the book does not use technical language, the phonology descriptions are more technical and will probably require explanation from a speech-language pathologist.

In summary, *Story Making* is a useful resource for the speech-language pathologist working with children in the primary grades. The clearly laid out, systematic, reproducible materials are user friendly and adaptable to the students' individual needs and abilities.

Scamper Strategies: Fundamental Activities for Narrative Development

by Carol A. Esterreicher

Publisher: Thinking Publications, Eau Claire, Wisconsin

Cost: \$56.00

Reviewers: Sharon McWhirter and Shelli Mandel, North York Board of Education, North York

Scamper Strategies is a structured guide for developing narrative skills. The strategies for imaginative story recreating are applied to classic literature. This material is most appropriately used with

students in grades 2-9, although the strategies may be adapted for preschoolers and secondary students.

Scamper Strategies includes a chart outlining the stages of narrative development and instructional applications within the classroom. The strategies are highlighted on coloured pages and presented in detail with many examples. A tracking log is provided for use with individuals or small groups of students. The heart of the book is comprised of discussion guides and story scaffolds for sixteen classic children's tales.

This program is very adaptable for use with individuals, small groups and classrooms. The strategies are appropriate for students in general programs, language-learning disabled programs, and gifted programs. The program can also be used with students with a hearing impairment or augmentative communication system. The Scamper principles can be used with stories from many different cultures.

A strength of *Scamper Strategies* is the specific discussion guides and lesson plans included for classic children's stories. The story scaffolds are very clearly laid out in an easy-to-follow manner. Reproducible materials supporting these lesson plans are included in the appendices. This book is also useful for speech-language pathologists when consulting with classroom teachers on narrative development. Activities and materials can be pulled from the program and left for the teacher's use.

The activities in *Scamper Strategies* are literacy-based and extend student's thinking. This program allows students the opportunity to take risks in developing their narrative skills because there are no "wrong" answers. Expressive language components are incorporated into the program. *Scamper Strategies* is very practical, well-organised, and well-defined. The layout allows for teachers with limited experience to teach narrative development.

The primary limitation to the book *Scamper Strategies* is that, at first glance, the amount of information that needs to be learned in order to apply the strategies appears overwhelming. However, it is well worth the time it takes to become familiar with the approach detailed in *Scamper Strategies*.

Vestibular Rehabilitation: Protocols and Programs (1996)

by Richard E. Gans

Publisher: Singular Publishing Group, Inc.

Resource Cost: \$150.00 (includes 1 clinician manual, 5 patient education form pads, progress forms and 10 self-directed Home Program sets)

Reviewer: Kathy Packford, Sturgeon Community Hospital and Health Centre, St. Albert, Alberta

In *Vestibular Rehabilitation: Protocols and Programs*, Richard Gans provides an excellent workbook designed for clinicians and therapists involved in the rehabilitation of patients diagnosed with vestibular disorders including motion intolerance, loss of balance and unsteadiness. The program is based on a series of graphically illustrated exercise protocols from numerous sources incorporating those which have proven to be universally standard and highly effective. The objective in compiling this resource is to facilitate a standardisation of vestibular rehabilitation with reliable outcome predictions.

Dr. Gans emphasises the importance of a thorough medical and diagnostic vestibular evaluation using a multidisciplinary approach prior to initiating any vestibular rehabilitation program. It is important to have a thorough understanding of the patient's medical condition prior to setting therapy outcome goals. Besides the primary care physician, the team may include audiologists, vestibular physiologists, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, nurses, and other allied health professionals.

Based on the diagnosis, the vestibular finding can be categorised into one of three main groups: vestibulopathy, dysequilibrium, or benign paroxysmal positioning vertigo (BPPV). These are somewhat arbitrary categories which definitely overlap but give a starting point in assigning an exercise approach. This will assist the therapist in determining the rationales for therapy: adaptation, substitution, or liberatory/repositioning/desensitisation methods or a combination of these techniques. The protocols can then be applied based on the diagnosis, symptoms and the patient's level of functioning. Those patients who are not in an acute stage or those who are unable to regularly attend therapy at a centre would be appropriate for the self-directed program. Patients whose symptoms are more intense may require a clinician directed approach with supervision during the exercises and a variety of special vestibular therapy equipment.

The educational materials and the exercise programs are well written and very easy to follow. Suggestions are given for the clinician to modify the program to meet the needs of the client and frequent monitoring of the patient's progress is recommended. The workbook is very well organised and the instructions for the patient are clear and concise. The patient is asked to use a self-rating scale to determine whether the symptoms are improving. Comparing these values to pre-treatment ratings is a valuable outcome measure which the patient can relate to and is useful in evaluating the efficacy of the program. It may also be used to help the clinician modify the program to suit the patient's needs.

Within the exercise protocols, there is some redundancy which the clinician may find tedious, but the patient may find more user friendly. The organisation of the materials is quite 'cookbook' in nature and the categorisation somewhat arbitrary. Clinicians may also find that the graphic illustrations in the self-directed home program would require more in-depth explanation by the treating therapist.

A table of outcome predictions is provided for four categories of vestibular diagnoses as well as a prediction of improvement in balance for each of the three main categories. These data are based on Gans clinical experience with over 600 patients and is reportedly consistent with studies reported in the literature. Specific information about the design of the study is not included, however the main purpose of the workbook is clinical application, not a presentation of research in the field. Case studies are included, along with the outcome measures for each individual. An extensive reference list is provided as well as suggested readings.

The workbook materials are very informative from my perspective as an audiologist assessing patients whose diagnoses fall within the categories of chronic balance disorders. I would highly recommend this workbook as an important resource for students in the fields of medicine, physiotherapy, or otolaryngology as well as audiologists.

