

1. Contextual & Student Information

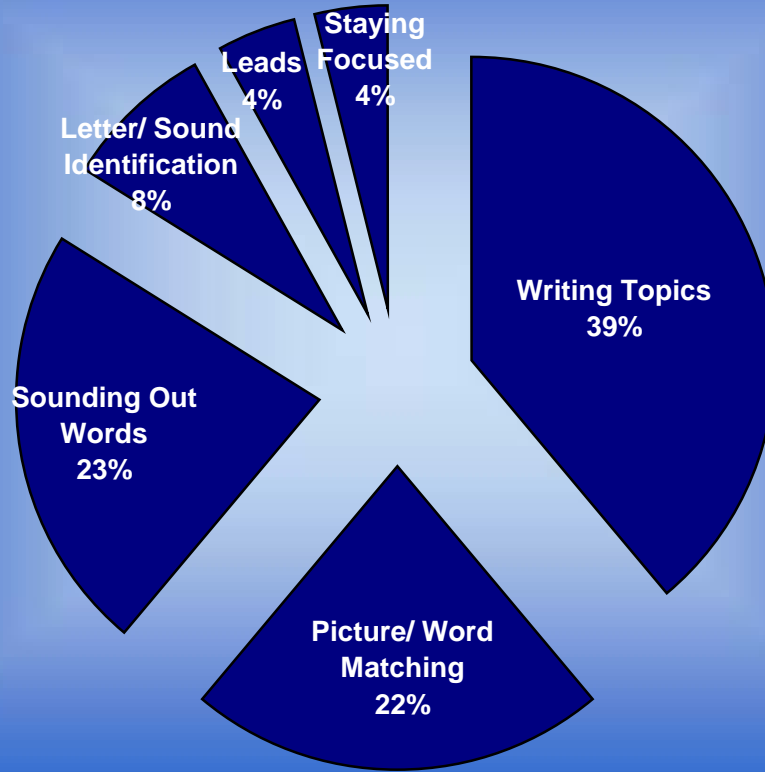
• A. Description & Rationale for Chosen Context & Student

- The student being assessed will be called Tony. Tony is a first grade general education student. He has repeated kindergarten, and remains below grade level in all academic areas. Tony struggles the most in the areas of reading and writing. Currently, Tony is working on letter/sound identification, phoneme segmentation, and stretching out his words while reading and writing.
- The context in which Tony will be assessed is during individual writing time in Writer's Workshop for ten minutes. Writer's Workshop occurs on a daily basis from 9:45 am-10:30 am. During workshop, the teacher conducts a 15-20 minute mini-lesson, and then the students are given the rest of the time to work individually on their personal stories. Tony has a very difficult time during Writer's Workshop. I have to work with him on an individual basis daily, which occurs after the mini-lesson. Tony does not seem to understand the directions given, and the expectations for his writing.
- I conducted 10 observations prior to implementing the language intervention strategy, and 4 observations following the implementation of the language intervention strategy for a total of 14 observations.

• B. Topics Discussed (most to least frequently discussed)

1. Tony's ideas for writing topics
 2. How pictures should match the words written on the page
 3. Sounding out words
 4. Identifying letters and sounds
 5. Creating a weather lead (story starts with describing the weather)
 6. Staying focused on writing
- I chose to collect data for the duration of the occurrence of topics, because I have observed that the amount of time spent on a topic is more important than the number of occurrences. Tony and I seem to spend the most time discussing ideas for his writing topic, because this is the area he struggles with the most during Writer's Workshop. The amount of time is the most significant measurement, because that time is spent repairing Tony's communication breakdowns.

Duration of Topics Discussed



Duration of Topics Discussed

Dates of Observation		Writing Topics	Picture/Word Matching	Sounding Out Words	Letter/Sound Identification	Leads	Staying Focused
	10-12-09	5	3	0	0	1	1
	10-13-09	2	2	5	1	0	0
	10-14-09	6	0	2	0	2	0
	10-15-09	3	2	3	2	0	0
	10-19-09	1	3	2	2	0	2
	10-21-09	7	3	0	0	0	0
	10-26-09	5	1	3	0	0	1
	10-28-09	4	1	1	3	1	0
	11-2-09	4	4	2	0	0	0
	11-4-09	2	3	5	0	0	0
Total Minutes	39	22	23	8	4	4	

2. Language Assessment Information

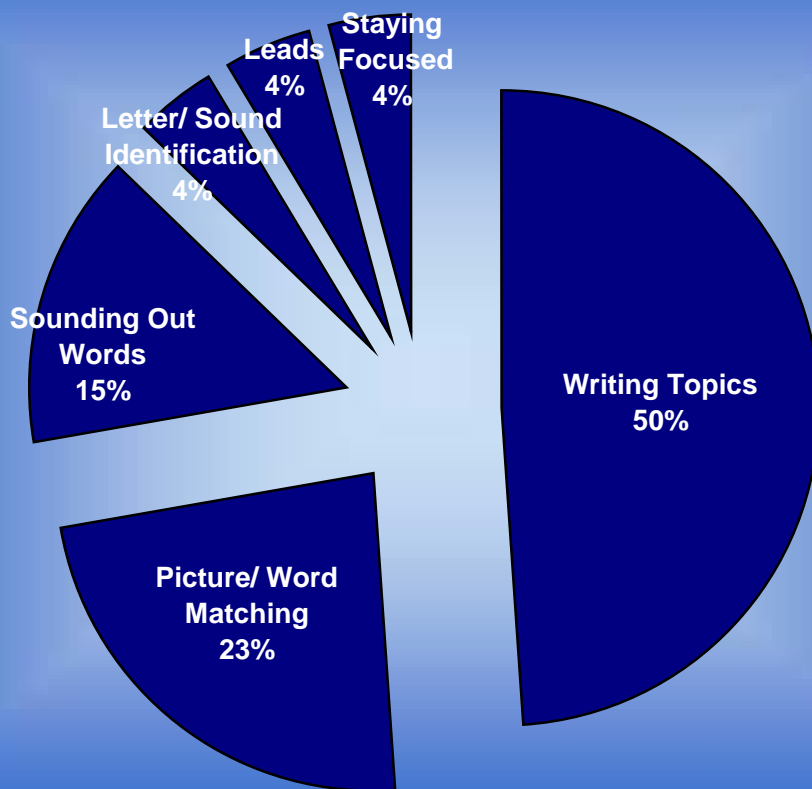
- **A. Communication Breakdown Indicators**

- Tony: Raises eyebrows, eyes widen and stares straight ahead. He either responds by saying, “I don’t know what I am supposed to do” or says, “uh huh. Uh huh” pretending to know what to do, but when prompted to explain what the instructions were, says “I don’t know” or remains silent.

- **B. Communication Breakdowns By Topics (listed from most to least severe)**

1. Writing topics
 2. picture/word matching
 3. sounding out words
 4. letter/sound identification
 - leads
 - staying focused
- I chose to collect data for the duration of the communication breakdowns due to the observation that Tony has a lot longer breakdowns in some topics more than others (i.e. he struggles at repairing communication breakdowns in specific topics). For instance, there are very long communication breakdowns during *writing topics*, while *leads* and *staying focused* have very short communication breakdowns. I believe the length of the communication breakdowns directly correlates with the severity.

Duration of Communication Breakdowns



Duration of Communication Breakdowns

Dates of Observation		Writing Topics	Picture/Word Matching	Sounding Out Words	Letter/Sound Identification	Leads	Staying Focused
	10-12-09	3	1	0	0	1	0
	10-13-09	2	1	2	1	0	0
	10-14-09	4	0	1	0	0	0
	10-15-09	1	0	0	0	0	0
	10-19-09	1	1	0	1	0	1
	10-21-09	5	2	0	0	0	0
	10-26-09	2	1	1	0	0	1
	10-28-09	1	0	0	0	1	0
	11-2-09	2	3	1	0	0	0
	11-4-09	2	2	2	0	0	0
	Total Minutes	23	11	7	2	2	2

3. Language Intervention Information

- **A. Topic Focused Upon & Rationale**

- The topic I chose to focus upon for the language intervention is *writing topics*. I chose this specific topic because this is the area in which Tony is having the most difficulty repairing communication breakdowns. According to the data above, not only is *writing topics* the longest topic discussed, but fifty percent of Tony's communication breakdowns occur during *writing topics*. Furthermore, during the time *writing topics* was discussed (39 minutes), I found that communication breakdowns accounted for an overwhelming sixty percent of that time (23 minutes of CB/39 total minutes). The goal of this language intervention is to reduce the duration of communication breakdowns during *writing topics*.

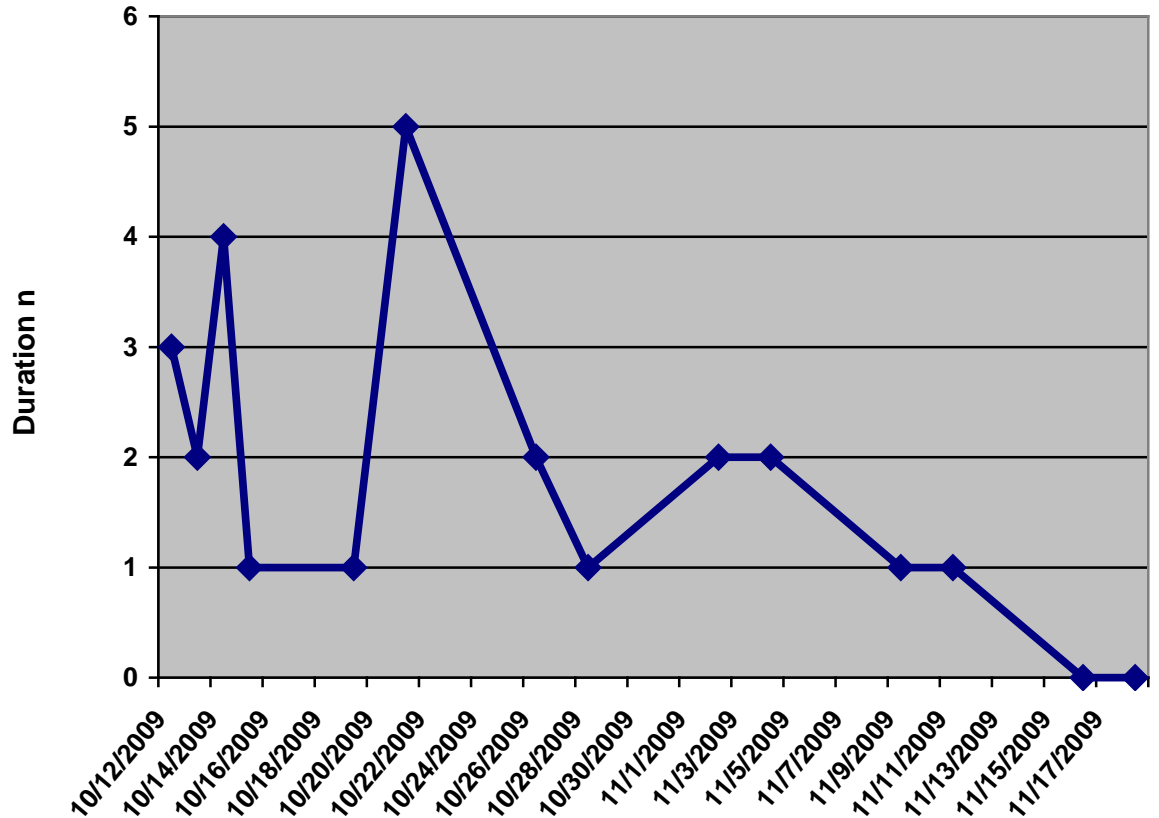
- **B. Most Likely Causes of Communication Breakdowns (listed from greatest to least):**

- inability to follow two to three-step directions-when we are developing a writing topic, I usually have the students tell me their topic, go through the pages as if they were telling me their story (note: the story is a "small moment" which means that the setting doesn't change), then go back and write and draw what they just told me. Tony has a difficult time with this because he cannot think about doing all those steps at once. Once he tells me the story, he worries about what to do next, and then after that.
- unclear directions
- lack of interest in topic discussed

- **C. Language Goal**

- With language intervention strategy A implemented, Tony will be able to independently develop and record his own writing topic with less than 3 reminders of the given directions.
 - *D. Language Intervention Strategy A*: I will make a chart with pictures and words listing the steps to thinking and writing about a topic (1. Think of a topic; 2. Talk about the topic; 3. Draw about the topic; 4. Write about the topic). Tony is a very visual learner, so I will also draw pictures on sticky notes while he is telling me the parts of his story he wants to write about. The pictures will be based off of what he tells me he wants to write on each page (ex: If he wants to write on the first page about playing basketball, I will draw a person playing basketball). I will stick the picture sticky notes on his pages in his writing booklet to remind him of the steps he needs to take to write.

Communication Breakdown Intervention



	10/1 2/20 09	13- Oct	14- Oct	15- Oct	19- Oct	21- Oct	26- Oct	28- Oct	2- Nov	4- Nov	9- Nov	11- Nov	16- Nov	18- Nov
◆ Breakdowns	3	2	4	1	1	5	2	1	2	2	1	1	0	0

Note: My version of Microsoft Word Does not allow me to make an “interruption line.” I do not have that option (it is too old). Sorry for drawing it in!

- I chose to record the duration of the communication breakdown due to the observation that Tony took a very long time repairing the breakdown under the topic *writing topics*. This directly correlated with the severity of the breakdown.

•E. Impact of Language Intervention Strategy

- The impact of my language intervention strategy was very positive. The duration of communication breakdowns drastically decreased over the four days the intervention took place. Tony really liked the chart I made for him, and the sticky picture notes seemed to help him a lot. In fact, he is starting to make the picture sticky notes on his own. He is taking responsibility for his own writing, and depending on teacher support less.

4. Reflections

• A. Causes of Language Problems

- I went back to the reflection of my previous study and found that my assumptions of language problem causes were that one person did not understand what the other person was trying to get across. While that may be true, I now believe the causes of language problems are much broader than that. A language impairment is any behavior that prevents a person from understanding or being understood. Many things can cause a language impairment. Not only can the listener be part of the language problem, but the speaker as well. If the speaker is being unclear and confusing about what they are trying to convey, then that could be a cause of a communication breakdown. Causes of language problems are endless. A lot of language problems are caused by biological factors such as a neurological disorder. Also, social-environmental factors contribute to the causes of language problems. Parents that have children with language problems often do things such as recast sentences, which is an expansion off of what the child has said. Processing factors also contribute to the causes of language problem, such as cognitive impairments.

For a d/hh child with a language impairment, factors that contribute to the language impairment include: onset of hearing loss, degree of hearing loss, early intervention, age of intervention, proper amplification, when they received hearing aids, etc.

• B. Carrying Out a Language Assessment

- Before this class, I did not have a clear idea of how to carry out an effective language assessment. Now, however, I know not only how to carry out an effective assessment, but what type of assessment is best. A functional language assessment is the most beneficial assessment method because the goal is to enhance the child's day-to-day use of language (i.e. to provide the child with tools to identify, understand and resolve their communication breakdowns). A functional approach is best because it focuses on what that child needs in order to get what they want, or communicate what they want. For example, for Tony, I knew that he needed a visual strategy in order to accomplish his writing topic task. I created a chart so that he could understand how to get what he needed. Furthermore, the context in which an assessment takes place is crucial to the success of the goals because the context influences what the child will actually learn. The closer the learning

context is to their own life, the more likely they will develop a deep understanding.

- **C. Designing and Implementing Language Intervention Efforts**

- I did not know how to even start implementing a language intervention before this project and class. Instinctively, I would have tried an approach closely related to a formalist approach—trying to “fix” what is wrong. Now, however, I understand that a functional approach is the best. To design and implement a language intervention, first you have to design a generalization plan. A generalization plan is important to be considered first because you have to create an environment in which the student can learn a language goal and easily use it in a different environment. It would make sense to use a learning environment you want the child to carry that goal over to.
- It is essential to use a functional approach that considers the child’s needs and wants in a language intervention. A child is more likely to succeed at goals if they are given tools that are USEFUL to them—tools that can allow them to communicate with others.