Overview of Narrative Assessment

- Aligns with VDOE Guidance on comprehensive assessment
- Provides systematic observation data that is considered an SLP probe in Virginia
- Examines functional skill required for school success

Benefits of Narrative Assessment

Comprehensive Assessment Areas
What Is Language?

Language involves the ability to integrate knowledge of phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics to create sentences and texts.

Bloom & Lahey Model of Language

- Content (Semantics)
- Form (Phonology, Morphology, Syntax)
- Use (Pragmatics)

What is language?

Language involves the ability to integrate knowledge of phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics to create sentences and texts.
What is Narration?

- Type of discourse involving orderly accounts of real or imagined events
- Coherent sequences of utterances with a common theme

Narratives Support Function

- Cognitive benefits
  - Mode of thought
  - Long Term Memory
- Social benefits
  - Social discourse (oral and written)
- Academic benefits
  - Classroom discourse
  - Related to reading comprehension
  - Ability to understand and learn from instruction in language arts, social studies, history, science, and mathematics

Narratives Are Important

- Thinking
- Social development
- Bridge to literacy
- Classroom
Why Assess Narration?

Narrative is a contextually relevant and pragmatically valid means of assessing a student’s ability to integrate language skills purposefully.

What Is A Narrative?

Types of Narratives and Required Components

Types of Narratives (Genre)

- Recounts
  - Elicited factual reports of past events
- Accounts (a.k.a. “personal narratives”)
  - Spontaneously produced verbalizations about past events
- Eventcasts
  - Descriptions of on-going or anticipated events
- Scripts
  - General descriptions of typical event
- Fictionalized Narratives (a.k.a. “Stories”)
The process for narrative analysis involves 3 steps:

1. Elicit
2. Transcribe
3. Analyze

Eliciting Narrative Samples

- Narratives that differentiate between children with and without language impairment:
  - Personal Narratives in Conversation – (Hadley, 1998)
  - Story Creation
    - Wordless Picture Books (Berman & Sloban, 1994)
    - Picture Sequences
    - Single Pictures
Narrative Analysis

Narratives may be analyzed by:

1. Macrostructure
   - Story Grammar
   - Episodic Complexity
2. Microstructure
   - Cohesion (lexical level)
   - Sentence Structure/Complexity (utterance level)
   - Lexical Diversity/Complexity

Macrostructure Analysis

- Setting
- Initiating Event
- Internal Response
- Plan
- Attempt
- Consequence
- Reaction
- Ending

Example of a Story

[Image of a girl picking apples among trees]
Story Structure

**Story = Setting + Episodic Structure**

*Setting*: introduces the main characters, the protagonist, and the context of time and place

“There was a little girl. Her name was Lisa.”

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**Episodic Structure:**

*Initiating Event (IE)*: The occurrence that influences the main character(s) to action. Could be an internal event such as a thought, perception or wish.

“She got lost in a forest.”

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**Parts of Story Grammar**

**Episodic Structure:**

*Action (A)*: the actions of the main character in pursuit of the goal.

“She looked and looked until she saw a bird who told her to follow it, so she did.”
Parts of Story Grammar

Episodic Structure:

**Consequence (C):** the achievement (or not) of the goal, as well as any other events or states that might result.

“She finally got home.”

Webinar #2

Macrostructure: Analyzing Episodes

Microstructure Analysis

- Grammatical Complexity
- Story Ideas (propositions)
- Complexity of Vocabulary
- Cohesion
- Dialogue
- Creativity
- Literate language
Discriminating Measures

Narratives may also be analyzed by:
- Type and Number of Story Grammar (SG) Propositions
- Total Number of Words or Utterances
- Grammatical Complexity
- Number of Different Words
- Holistic Scoring
- Grammatical Acceptability

Assessment Considerations

The Impact of Culture, Socio-Economic Status, and Language Impairment

Cultural Similarities

- Structural organization
  - Setting, goal, complications, resolution
- Referential elements
  - Characters, events, temporal & causal relationships
- Evaluative elements
  - Purpose, feelings, values, opinions
### Cultural Differences

- Narrative volume
- Contexts for social use
- Moral code
- Concern with authority
- Autonomy and self-determination
- Aggression
- Emotional expressiveness

### Factors to Consider

Narrative skills development and performance may be impacted by:

- Experience with books/stories
- Interest in topic
- Experience with topic

### Narrative Language Abilities

Children with language impairment may exhibit:

- Comprehension Issues
- Production Issues
Atypical Narrative Performance

Abilities may vary because of:

- Home cultures that may value different types of narratives than the ones used in school.
- Limited experiences listening to and telling stories or with elaborative language.
- Poor language learners

Resources

- Guide to Narrative Language: Procedures for Assessment
  - Hughes, McGillvray, & Schmidek
  - 1997

- Language Sampling with Adolescents
  - Marilyn Nipplod
  - Plural Publishing, 2010

Additional Training

- For more information on Narrative Assessment visit www.doe.virginia.gov
- Additional webinars are available on:
  1. Macrostructure: Analyzing Episodes
  2. Overview of Microstructure