

Unlocking the Power of Oral Language Assessments: Going Beyond the Score

A Webinar by The WPS Professional Learning Center (ProLearn™)

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1



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2



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Stephanie Kneedler

EdD, NCSP



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I am an assessment consultant with Western Psychological Services. I am a salaried employee and have no additional relevant financial interests or conflicts of interest related to this presentation.

4

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5

Learning Objectives

Participants will:

- Describe the key components of Integrative Language Theory (ILT) and how to complete comprehensive oral language assessment using a battery of different tests built on this theory
- Describe the function, theory, and key administration features of a variety of speech and language assessments used to evaluate oral language
- Support their teams in offering data-based, individualized recommendations and interventions



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Theoretical Foundation

“In our world, there are an infinite number ... of subjects to talk about. Humans could not communicate about the world with efficiency if we did not have a shortcut, a way of referring to the world using a **code** to represent things and ideas.”

—Dr. Elizabeth Carrow-Woolfolk

Language is this code.

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7

Oral Language Foundations

- Oral language is the system of speech and words that are used to share ideas
- It is described across three domains
 - Form: Phonology, morphology, and syntax
 - Content: Semantics
 - Use: Pragmatics
- Oral language skills are a bedrock to reading and writing

<https://www.asha.org/practice-portal/clinical-topics/spoken-language-disorders/language-in-brief/>

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8

Oral Language Development

- There generally seems to be an innate capacity for language learning in young children, with environment playing a significant role in language acquisition
- Children seem to work through learning the complexities of language as seen by applications of rules that proficient speakers do not use (which typically remediate with practice):
 - Example: “I goed there before” vs. “I went there before”
- The development of oral language can be understood as a unique interplay between innate human ability, environment, and real-life application

<https://www.readingrockets.org/topics/early-literacy-development/articles/young-childrens-oral-language-development>

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Oral Language Milestones

- Early development between birth and 3 years is the most intensive period for oral language development
- Before children have learned their native language, many display the capacity for the use and learning of spoken communication:
 - Newborns carry the capacity for effective communication and sound recognition, such as crying for basic needs or responding to the voice of their caregiver
 - By 6 months, most babies recognize the basic sounds of their native language
- With some variability, there is a typical trajectory for the mastery of oral language in early childhood:

<https://www.nidcd.nih.gov/health/speech-and-language>

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10

Oral Language Milestones (cont.)



- Birth to 3 months
 - Reacts to loud sounds
 - Smiles in reaction to a caregiver
- 4 to 6 months
 - Follows sound with their eyes
 - Babbles when excited or happy
- 7 months to 1 year
 - Listens when spoken to
 - Imitates speech sounds
 - Has one or two words by first birthday

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11

Oral Language Milestones (cont.)



- 1 to 2 years
 - Follows simple commands
 - Puts two words together
- 2 to 3 years
 - Has a word for almost everything
 - Speaks in a way that is understood by family members and friends
- 3 to 4 years
 - Hears when you call from another room
 - Speaks easily without having to repeat syllables or words

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12

Oral Language Milestones (cont.)



- 4 to 5 years
 - Pays attention to a short story and answers simple questions about it
 - Communicates easily with other children and adults
 - Uses rhyming words
 - Uses adult grammar

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13

Disorders of Oral Language

- Delays in understanding what others say and/or sharing their own thoughts may indicate a language disorder:
 - **Developmental language disorder (DLD)** delays in the mastery of language skills such that attainment of milestones may be significantly behind that of their peers
 - **Apraxia of speech** makes it difficult to order sounds and syllables correctly to form words to be understood
- Other conditions such as autism spectrum disorder or intellectual disability impact acquisition and use of oral language
- Sometimes delays in oral language acquisition are due to hearing loss instead of a language disorder

<https://www.nidcd.nih.gov/health/speech-and-language>

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14

Early Intervention Imperative

- Functions of oral language are foundational to social skills, cognitive abilities, and literacy
- Language disorders (regardless of etiology) are a high-incidence condition
 - 7.7% of parents reported that their children 3–17 years old had demonstrated language problems in the past year (Black et al., 2015)
- Language disorders can impact quality of life across the lifespan in areas such as social connectedness, school achievement, employment, and mental health
- A review of language interventions revealed that early intervention yielded the most fruitful outcomes, though later intervention was also beneficial
- Importantly, children who underwent comprehensive language assessment (beyond screening) reported higher effects of intervention, perhaps due to the individualization of intervention

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC10680434/>

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15



Integrative Language Theory (ILT)

16

Theoretical Foundation

- Developed by Elizabeth Carrow-Woolfolk, PhD
- Integrative Language Theory (ILT):
 - Language reflects two dimensions
 - Language knowledge (structures)
 - Language performance (processing)
- CASL®-2, OWLS™-II, and OPUS™ assessments are based on ILT
- These provide a framework for describing and assessing the elements of language

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17

Integrative Language Theory (ILT)

- Language knowledge represents the form and content of language, known as the structures of language, and is defined by four categories:
 - Lexical/Semantic
 - Syntactic
 - Supralinguistic
 - Pragmatic

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18

Integrative Language Theory (ILT) (cont.)



- Lexical/Semantic represents the words and word combinations that make up vocabulary
- Syntactic encompasses the grammatical rules of language
- Supralinguistic reflects the ability to analyze language beyond the literal meaning given by grammar and vocabulary
- Pragmatic represents the contextual aspects that influence how a message is expressed and interpreted

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19

Integrative Language Theory (ILT) (cont.)



- Language performance refers to the systems used to process language
 - Oral language
 - Auditory comprehension
 - Oral expression
 - Written language
 - Reading comprehension
 - Written expression



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20

Integrative Language Theory (ILT) (cont.)



- Auditory comprehension
 - Internal factors
 - Sensation, perception, and memory
 - External factors
 - World knowledge and experience; complexity of the spoken message
- Oral expression
 - Selection and expression of appropriate words given the context and syntactic rules

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21

Linguistic Structures Assessed by WPS Products

Lexical/Semantic	Syntactic	Supralinguistic	Pragmatic	Articulation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ OWLS-II ▪ CASL-2 ▪ OPUS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ OWLS-II ▪ CASL-2 ▪ OPUS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ OWLS-II ▪ CASL-2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ OWLS-II ▪ CASL-2 ▪ CAPs™ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Arizona™-4

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22

OWLS™ -II, CASL® -2, and OPUS™

The Work of Elizabeth Carrow-Woolfolk, PhD



Interconnected Assessments

- This family of assessments are all based on ILT and are used together for comprehensive oral language assessment
- Use of all three tests allows for analysis of the specific strengths and needs in a person's use and understanding of oral language to best plan individualized interventions



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23

24

Interconnected Assessments (cont.)



- Results from the OWLS-II informs which areas to assess using the CASL-2
 - The OWLS-II measures language processing in the context of language knowledge
 - Using item analysis, examiners can use results from the OWLS-II to determine which language knowledge areas they wish to focus on using the CASL-2

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25

Interconnected Assessments (cont.)



- The OPUS is a test of *integrated* listening comprehension
 - Can be used as a companion to the CASL-2 to compare a person's performance on the multiple specific tasks of the CASL-2 with performance on the single integrated task of the OPUS
 - The CASL-2 is useful to identify differential skill levels of specific Lexical/Semantic, Syntactic, and Supralinguistic tasks, but does not measure the ability to integrate them
 - Use of the OPUS in addition to CASL-2 provides a more complete picture of listening comprehension ability

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26

Case Example— David: 7 Years, 11 Months

- Referral concern:
 - Reported to use minimal language
 - Often described as playing alone on the playground
 - Struggles with following multistep directions
 - Has difficulty expressing himself orally and in writing

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27

Case Example—David: 7 Years, 11 Months (cont.)



- Teacher concerns:
 - Overall language functioning
 - “Lost” during group instruction/discussion
 - Often makes errors when completing assignments
 - Difficulty following oral directions
 - Does not ask for repetition or clarification of directions
 - Decodes at grade level but difficulty when writing
 - Has difficulty selecting a topic/beginning, organizing his thoughts, and revising his work
 - Overly simplistic sentence structure
 - Average speller; uses capitalization and punctuation correctly

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28

Case Example—David: 7 Years, 11 Months (cont.)



- Parent concerns:
 - Uses minimal expressive language at home
 - Has difficulty maintaining the pace and understanding some basic conversations (e.g., conversations with parents and siblings at dinner)
 - It is difficult for David to follow along with age-appropriate conversation
 - Shy—he appears to avoid communicating with peers and family

29

Case Example— David: 7 Years, 11 Months Developmental History

- **Infancy:**
 - Could verbally imitate
 - Socially interactive
 - Minimally babbled
 - Slow to progress with vocabulary development
 - Other developmental milestones such as walking, sleeping, eating, etc., achieved at typical rate
 - Audiological testing revealed hearing was within normal limits

30

Case Example— David: 7 Years, 11 Months Academic History

- **Preschool:**
 - Noted to be “shy” but no major concerns; played typically with peers
- **Kindergarten:**
 - Making sufficient progress in the curriculum
 - Quiet and did not eagerly participate in class discussions
 - Responded in one-word responses when called upon
 - Mastered letters and most letter sounds
- **First grade:**
 - Is decoding well but teacher is beginning to become concerned about comprehension
 - Placed in an intervention group for comprehension and reteaching

31

Case Example—David: 7 Years, 11 Months Academic History (cont.)



TEST RESULTS

WJ-IV	WISC-V	????
Broad Reading = 101	Full Scale IQ = 91	
Broad Math = 107	Verbal Comprehension = 81	
Broad Written Language = 79	Visual Spatial = 110	
	Fluid Reasoning = 104	
	Working Memory = 90	
	Processing Speed = 108	

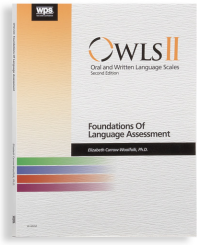
32



33

OWLS-II Overview

- A research-based, standardized measure of language performance measuring oral expression, listening comprehension, written expression, and reading comprehension
- Ages:
 - Oral Language: 3–21 years
 - Written Language: 5–21 years
- Each of the four scales is individually administered in 10 to 30 minutes
- Publication: 2011



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34

OWLS-II Overview

The four scales can be used separately, but together they provide a complete score profile that identifies strengths and weaknesses within four linguistic structures.

Oral Language Scales	Written Language Scales
Listening Comprehension (LC) <i>Listening</i>	Reading Comprehension (RC) <i>Reading*</i>
Oral Expression (OE) <i>Speaking</i>	Written Expression (WE) <i>Writing</i>
LC/OE Kit – Measuring receptive and expressive oral language in ages 3–21 years	RC/WE Kit – Measuring receptive and expressive written language in ages 5–21 years
COMPREHENSIVE KIT (LC/OE & RC/WE) Measuring both oral and written language	

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35

OWLS-II ILT Foundations

- The OWLS-II measures underlying language processes:
 - Comprehending spoken language (Listening Comprehension)
 - Expressing language orally (Oral Expression)
 - Comprehending written language (Reading Comprehension)
 - Expressing language in a written form (Written Expression)

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36

Administration, Scoring, and Interpretation

37

OWLS-II Components

- Print and digital materials on the WPS Online Evaluation System™ (OES)
- Three Manuals
- Record Forms and Response Booklets
 - Includes parallel Form B
- Test Easels
- Comprehensive Profile Form

38

OWLS-II Administration

- The OWLS-II is individually administered
- Form A is used for initial administrations
- Form B is used for repeat administrations
- Form A and Form B do not require separate manuals
- One, two, three, or all scales can be administered
- No set order of administration for each scale
- Listening Comprehension is least intimidating as it requires no verbal responses, so may be best to start with this

39

Administration Procedures

Scale	Process	Item Format
Listening Comprehension (LC)	Oral language reception: Listening to and comprehending spoken language	Items are presented verbally and pictorially; responses are given primarily by pointing on multiple-choice items
Oral Expression (OE)	Oral language expression: Speaking	Items are presented verbally and pictorially; responses are given verbally
Reading Comprehension (RC)	Written language reception: Reading and comprehending language	Items and responses are presented in text; responses are given by pointing or saying the number of the response on multiple-choice items
Written Expression (WE)	Written language expression: Writing	Items are presented verbally and visually (some in text, some pictorially); responses are written

40

OWLS-II: Linguistic Categories

Linguistic Category	Description
Lexical/Semantic	Vocabulary: nouns, verbs, modifiers, idioms, prefixes, suffixes
Syntactic	Grammatical morphemes: function words and inflections, sentence structure, word order, sentence complexity, accuracy, and type
Supralinguistic	Nonliteral language: double meaning, inference, verbal reasoning, figurative language, indirect requests, humor
Pragmatic	Functional and social characteristics of language
Text Structure (RC and WE only)	Knowledge and performance of the combination of all other categories to create lengthy text passages to be read or written
Conventions (WE only)	Letter formation, spelling, punctuation, capitalization

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41

OWLS-II Interpretation

- Overall Language Score
- Oral Language Skills (OE and LC)
- Written Language Skills (RC and WE)
- Expressive Language Skills (OE and WE)
- Receptive Language Skills (RC and LC)
- Oral Expression
- Listening Comprehension
- Reading Comprehension
- Written Expression



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42

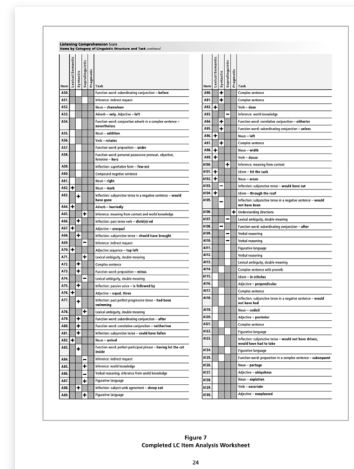
OWLS-II: Link to Intervention

- Part 1: Complete Item Analysis Worksheets**
 - After calculating standard scores, analyze specific item responses to identify strengths and needs in skill areas.
 - The record form provides an Item Analysis Worksheet:
 - Both the LC and OE Item Analysis Worksheets have four columns for each of the scales: Lexical/Semantic, Syntactic, Supralinguistic, and Pragmatic and the specific skill tested.
 - By indicating (+) for correct answers, (-) for incorrect answers, or (NR) for questions where there was no response, you can generate a visual representation of strengths and needs by category.

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43

OWLS-II: Link to Intervention (cont.)



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44

OWLS-II: Link to Intervention (cont.)



Table 3
Guidelines for Interpreting the OWLS-II

A comprehensive discussion of interpretation is provided in chapter 7 of the *Foundations of Language Assessment: An outline of the chapter is provided here for reference.*

Goals of Interpretation

- Identify the individual's strengths and weaknesses by comparing scales
- Identify specific problem areas that require attention
- Help to develop a comprehensive and useful intervention plan

Warning Signs to Consider When Interpreting OWLS-II Scores

There are many factors to consider that cannot easily be summarized. The following signs are discussed in detail in chapter 7 of the *Foundations of Language Assessment*:

Assessing lack of fluency	Page 43	Assessments of pragmatic competence are	Page 43
Rate of growth/level of severity	Page 44	Language and memory	Page 44
Cross-test response of acquisition	Page 45	Mutual influence of processes during development	Page 47

Phases of Data Interpretation

Start at the most general level of analysis and move to the specific.

Compare scores to normative data. Look at each of the four OWLS-II scale scores and compare them to the normative data. Do the scores perform in the average range, on the low or the high side of the average range on one or more scales?

Compare scale scores to one another. Do the individual's scores on different tests make sense in the context of the interpretive assessment of the differences are due to normal variation or if they are statistically significant and clinically meaningful. Comparing scale scores can help to one of the following four patterns:

Identify Error Patterns Within Categories of Linguistic Structures

The OWLS-II contains numerous linguistic categories and there is a pattern of study (lexical, syntactic, semantic, pragmatic) or pragmatic errors. Such a pattern does not have a ready-made interpretive comparison, but would have implications for targeted interventions. Errors and patterns should be interpreted in the context of other information about the examinee. Examples of error types in each category of linguistic structures are as follows:

Errors of Lexical Structure

- Phonological errors - substituting one sound for another (e.g., "purple" and "apple")
- Phonological errors - substituting one sound for another in a word that is not because of an articulatory problem
- Conceptual errors - drawing a link of understanding of the form being used (e.g., "purple" and "apple")

Errors of Syntactic Structure

- Errors of sentence construction - putting in or taking out an important function word or inflection (e.g., saying "I'm sitting" instead of "he is sitting")
- Errors of morphology - using the wrong function word or inflection (e.g., substituting "the" for "her")
- Errors of sentence structure - may be due to problems in many different aspects of the sentence and it is necessary to investigate the data for specific information

Errors of Pragmatic Structure

- The error involves a pragmatic error in the selection of a phrase or term representing the desired meaning instead of the intended one
- Errors for pragmatics may reflect a lack of language mastery

Errors of Pragmatic Structure

- Pragmatic skills assessed on the OWLS-II include requesting information, responding to requests, presenting a picture, giving reasons, representing appropriate feelings, relating an event, and finding a solution to a problem
- When assessing pragmatic errors, it is important to consider the specific system that the examinee used and determine if it is a problem

Errors of Test Structure

- The error occurs when the examinee has difficulty in other categories as well
- It is assessed to find test structure errors at the absence of other error types

Errors of Construction

- Errors in spelling, punctuation, and/or capitalization can be noted and included in an intervention plan.

continued on next page...

OWLS-II: Link to Intervention (cont.)



Part 2: Complete OWLS-II Comprehensive Profile Form

- Download the free PDF form at wpspublish.com/owls-ii-oral-and-written-language-scales-second-edition.html
- Indicate whether the examinee was given Form A or Form B.
- Transfer the standard score for each scale to its corresponding line.
- Plot the scores to compare the scales with one another and to the average of 100.
- The next section of the form allows for comparisons among all the scales.
- The Comprehensive Profile Form has a place to transfer Oral Language and Written Language Composites from the record forms, and allows for calculating three additional composites: Receptive Language, Expressive Language, and Overall Language.

OWLS-II Standardization

- Age-stratified standardization sample included 2,123 participants
- Represented U.S. census in gender, ethnicity, geographic region, and parents' educational level
- Validation samples of 241 students with various speech and language disorders and 114 students receiving intervention for various psychological or behavioral needs



OWLS-II Resources

- Log into wpspublish.com to access:
 - Quick Reference Guide
 - Sample Test Report
 - Case Example
 - Comprehensive Profile Form
 - FAQs
- Available through WPS Online Evaluation System ([OES](#))
 - Digital Easels
 - Online Manuals

Case Example–David:
7 Years, 11 Months
Academic History (cont.)



TEST RESULTS

WJ-IV	WISC-V	OWLS-II
Broad Reading = 101	Full Scale IQ = 91	Listening Comprehension = 85
Broad Math = 107	Verbal Comprehension = 81	Oral Expression = 73
Broad Written Language = 79	Visual Spatial = 110	Reading Comprehension = 95
	Fluid Reasoning = 104	Written Expression = 72
	Working Memory = 90	
	Processing Speed = 108	

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49

Case Example–David:
7 Years, 11 Months
Academic History (cont.)



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	Working Memory = 90		
	Processing Speed = 108		

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50

Comprehensive Assessment of
Spoken Language–Second Edition
(CASL-2)



Overview

- **Benefit:** measures the oral language processing skills of comprehension and expression across four categories
- **Format:** 14 stand-alone, individually administered performance tests
- **Administration Time:** 5 to 10 minutes per test; 45 to 60 minutes to obtain the General Language Ability Index (GLAI)
- **Scores:** standard scores, confidence intervals, percentile ranks, and descriptive ranges
- **Ages:** 3 to 21 years
- **Published:** 2017 by WPS

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51

52

CASL-2 Scale Key Areas

- The design of the CASL-2 allows for examining specific elements of language, individually, to identify areas of strength and need.
 - Lexical/Semantic
 - Receptive Vocabulary, Antonyms, Synonyms, Expressive Vocabulary, Idiomatic Language
 - Syntactic
 - Sentence Expression, Grammatical Morphemes, Sentence Comprehension, Grammaticality Judgment
 - Supralinguistic
 - Nonliteral Language, Meaning from Context, Inference, Double Meaning
 - Pragmatic
 - Knowledge of language that is appropriate in different situational contexts

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53

CASL-2 Scale Key Areas (cont.)



- Addresses referral questions like determining language delays or oral language disorders
- Evaluates English language competence
- Identifies specific aspects of oral language that are impacting classroom learning or interpersonal communication

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54

ILT Foundations

Language Knowledge

- Structure, form, and content:
 - Lexical/Semantic Index (LSI)
 - Syntactic Index (SI)
 - Supralinguistic Index (SPI)

Language Performance

- Systems used to process oral language:
 - Receptive Language Index (RLI)
 - Expressive Language Index (ELI)

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55

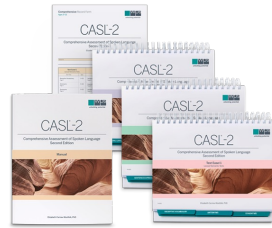
Administration, Scoring, and Interpretation



56

CASL-2 Components

- Print and digital materials on the WPS Online Evaluation System (OES)
- Manual
- Three test Easels
- Two Record Forms
 - Comprehensive Form: ages 3–21
 - Preschool Form: ages 3–6



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57

Test Administration

- 0 points: The examinee does not identify that a sentence is grammatically correct or incorrect.
- 1 point: The examinee identifies that a sentence is grammatically correct or incorrect, but does not successfully correct the sentence if it is incorrect.
- 2 points: The examinee identifies that a sentence is grammatically incorrect, then successfully corrects the sentence by adding, changing, or deleting one word.

Receptive Vocabulary
 Antonyms
 Synonyms
 Grammaticality Judgment
 Sentence Comprehension
 Idiomatic Language
 Double Meaning

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58

CASL-2 Interpretation

- 14 test standard scores and up to six summary index scores
 - Each test measures a specific oral language skill and can be interpreted separately
 - Receptive Language and Expressive Language Index
 - Lexical/Semantic, Syntactic and Supralinguistic Indexes
 - General Language Ability Index
- Provides a profile of individual strengths and needs in oral language skills
- Analysis of indexes and each score allows the clinician to develop a specific plan for intervention

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59

CASL-2 Tests: Interpretive Information

Test	Category	Process	Item number and format	Skill measured	Poor performance likely indicates
Receptive Vocabulary	Lexical/Semantic	Receptive	71 items are presented verbally with pictures (for all items), responses are given verbally or nonverbally to indicate the multiple-choice option	Auditory comprehension of spoken words that refer to basic perceptual and conceptual relations	Lack of specific word knowledge; has not mastered the underlying concept or perceptual relationship of the word
Antonyms	Lexical/Semantic	Expressive memory retrieval (without cues)	62 items are presented verbally without pictures; responses are given verbally (one word)	Word knowledge, retrieval, and oral expression of words with opposite meanings	Lack of specific word knowledge for opposite meanings; may be related to difficulty in retrieval with no contextual information
Synonyms	Lexical/Semantic	Receptive	69 items are presented verbally without pictures; responses are given verbally or nonverbally to indicate the multiple-choice option	Recognition of words that have similar meanings	Lack of specific word knowledge for similar meanings; has not mastered understanding of all features of a word
Expressive Vocabulary	Lexical/Semantic	Expressive memory retrieval (with cues)	20 items are presented verbally with pictures, followed by 52 items without pictures; responses are given verbally (one word)	Word knowledge, retrieval, and oral expression of a word that best completes a sentence	Lack of specific word knowledge, or knowledge is incomplete; may be related to difficulty in retrieval even when given contextual information
Idiomatic Language	Lexical/Semantic	Expressive memory retrieval (without cues)	54 items are presented verbally without pictures; responses are given verbally as a word or combination of words	Knowledge, retrieval, and oral expression of idioms	Lack of idiomatic knowledge likely due to a lack of exposure to idioms through experience (e.g., books, TV, regional use)
Sentence Expression	Syntactic	Expressive memory retrieval (with cues)	50 items are presented verbally with pictures, followed by 32 items without pictures; responses are given verbally as a word, phrase, or sentence(s)	Oral expression of accurate syntactic, grammatical morphemes, sentence structure, word order	Lack of specific syntactic knowledge; hasn't acquired specific syntactic structures yet
Grammatical Morphemes	Syntactic	Expressive memory retrieval (with cues)	34 items are presented verbally with pictures, followed by 32 items without pictures; responses are given verbally as a word or phrase	Knowledge, retrieval, and oral expression of inflections and function words	Lack of morphological knowledge and rules governing their expressions; may be related to poor reasoning skills
Sentence Comprehension	Syntactic	Receptive	42 items are presented verbally with pictures, followed by 14 items without pictures; responses are given verbally or nonverbally to indicate the multiple-choice option	Recognition of the meaning of sentences that have similar structures and words	Lack of syntactic knowledge for word order; sentence topic may not grasp the relation of sentence meaning to when unfamiliar word combinations are used
Grammaticality Judgment	Syntactic	Expressive memory retrieval (with cues)	57 items are presented verbally without pictures; responses are given verbally by adding, deleting, or changing one word in a sentence	Ability to judge the accuracy of syntactic and grammatical correctness of sentences	Lack of ability to identify syntax errors; lack of experience with basic sentence patterns; difficulty with retrieval, even with cues

Table 3.2 continued on next page

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60

CASL-2 Tests: Interpretive Information (cont.)



Table 3.2. CASL-2 Tests: Interpretive Information (continued)

Test	Category	Process	Item number and format	Skill measured	Poor performance likely indicates
Nonliteral Language	Supralinguistic	Expressive; memory retrieval (with cues)	51 items are presented verbally without pictures; responses are given verbally as a word, phrase, or sentence	Understanding of the meaning of spoken sentences, independent of the literal interpretation of the surface structure	Lack of understanding of indirect requests, figurative language, and sarcasm; lack of experience needed to suspend the literal meaning
Meaning from Context	Supralinguistic	Receptive/ Expressive; memory retrieval (with cues)	62 items are presented verbally without pictures; responses are given verbally as a word, phrase, or sentence	Recognition of the meaning of an unknown word by using the linguistic context in which the word is presented	Lack of lexical/semantic and/or syntactic knowledge of the context sentence; lack of generalization skills needed to make inferences
Inference	Supralinguistic	Expressive; memory retrieval (with cues)	18 items are presented verbally with pictures, followed by 47 items without pictures; responses are given verbally as a word, phrase, or sentence	Expression of past experience or prior knowledge used to draw conclusions that are not explicitly provided in the given context	Lack of knowledge from past experience; difficulties in applying background knowledge to infer meaning
Double Meaning	Supralinguistic	Expressive; memory retrieval (without cues)	50 items are presented verbally without pictures; responses are given verbally as words, phrases, or sentences	The ability to identify and express two possible meanings for a single word or sentence that has multiple interpretations	Failure to recognize that words can have more than one meaning; lack of knowledge necessary to construct two word meanings
Pragmatic Language	Pragmatic	Expressive; memory retrieval (with cues)	11 items are presented verbally with pictures, followed by 45 items without pictures; responses are given verbally as a word, phrase, or sentence	Ability to understand and apply pragmatic language rules that are recognized by society to be appropriate for a given context	Lack of understanding of societal norms/expected responses in given social situations; may be related to lack of experience in these situations

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61

CASL-2: Link to Intervention

- Each test provides precise information about a single language structure and processing skill.
- The manual provides test descriptions, including skills being measured and what is likely indicated by poor performance to aid in intervention planning.
- Use the Item Analysis Worksheet to evaluate performance and identify patterns at a finely grained level to support intervention.
 - Example: An examinee may obtain standard scores in the Average range but may have a pattern of poor performance on items measuring verbs and prepositions despite success on nouns and adjectives.
 - Example: An examinee may give responses that are deemed Acceptable but provide very few Preferred responses. This reveals the presence of imprecise word choice as compared to their peer group.

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62

CASL-2: Link to Intervention (cont.)



- In addition to Item Analysis Worksheets, age ranges at which 90% of individuals in the standardization sample correctly answered each item across all CASL-2 tests are included in the Manual.
 - This can be used to determine whether an item failure is likely or unlikely given the person's age.
 - If the examinee fails many items that they are expected to pass based on age, the item may reveal an area of needed intervention.
- The CASL-2 can be used track improvement and response to interventions.

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63

AGE (YEARS)		TESTS REQUIRED FOR THE CASL-2 INDEX SCORES BY AGE AND GRADE												
		CASL-2 INDEX SCORES												
		Receptive Language	Expressive Language	Meaning from Context	Inference	Double Meaning	Pragmatic Language	Supralinguistic	Nonliteral Language	Systemic Index (SI)	Supralinguistic	Nonliteral Language	Systemic Index (SI)	
3-4 Pre-K K-1	General Language Ability Index (GLAI)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Receptive Language Index (RLI)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Expressive Language Index (ELI)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Language/Semantic Index (LSI)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Systemic Index (SI)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
5-6 K-1 Grade 1	General Language Ability Index (GLAI)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Receptive Language Index (RLI)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Expressive Language Index (ELI)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Language/Semantic Index (LSI)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Systemic Index (SI)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
7-9 Grade 1 2	General Language Ability Index (GLAI)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Receptive Language Index (RLI)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Expressive Language Index (ELI)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Language/Semantic Index (LSI)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Systemic Index (SI)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
10-12 Grade 2 3	General Language Ability Index (GLAI)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Receptive Language Index (RLI)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Expressive Language Index (ELI)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Language/Semantic Index (LSI)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Systemic Index (SI)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
13-21 Grade 3 4-12	General Language Ability Index (GLAI)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Receptive Language Index (RLI)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Expressive Language Index (ELI)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Language/Semantic Index (LSI)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Systemic Index (SI)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	

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64

CASL-2 Standardization

- Standardization sample included 2,394 typically developing participants
- Represented U.S. census in gender, ethnicity, geographic region, and parents' educational level
- Clinical validation sample of children with various speech and language disorders, hearing loss, ASD, ID, SLD and DD



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65

Final Thoughts

- **Language differences versus language delays**
 - Provides alternate scoring for dialectical differences so that those with language differences are not penalized
 - Allows for multiple correct item responses to account for the different but acceptable ways that individuals might use language
 - Focuses on one skill at a time (when possible) to eliminate other language difference factors and to isolate any possible language delay

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66

Final Thoughts (cont.)



▪ English Learner (EL) considerations

- CASL-2 was standardized with individuals who demonstrated proficiency in English
- ELs, bilingual, and multilingual individuals were included, so long as they were judged by the examiner to be proficient in English
- If an examinee does not exhibit sufficient English proficiency to learn and communicate in English, then it is not appropriate to base interpretation of his or her scores on the CASL-2 norms, although the item responses can provide qualitative clinical information

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67

Final Thoughts (cont.)



▪ Dialectical considerations

- The CASL-2 expressive tests include alternative correct responses in the test easel for speakers of African American English or a similar dialect (e.g., Southern English)
- Thus, the clinician can be confident as to whether the examinee shows signs of delayed or disordered speech without the interference of dialectical differences, which may otherwise distort language assessment results

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68

Case Example—David: 7 Years, 11 Months Academic History (cont.)



TEST RESULTS

WJ-IV	WISC-V	OWLS-II	CASL-2
Broad Reading = 101	Full Scale IQ = 91	Listening Comprehension = 85	General Language Ability = 77
Broad Math = 107	Verbal Comprehension = 81	Oral Expression = 73	Lexical/Semantic = 73
Broad Written Language = 79	Visual Spatial = 110	Reading Comprehension = 95	Receptive Vocabulary = 94
	Fluid Reasoning = 104	Written Expression = 72	Antonyms = 69
	Working Memory = 90		Expressive Vocabulary = 66
	Processing Speed = 108		Idiomatic Language = 100
			Syntactic = 82
			Sentence Expression = 81
			Grammatical Morphemes = 72
			Sentence Comprehension = 101
			Grammaticality Judgement = 83
			Supralinguistic = 83
			Nonliteral Language = 79
			Meaning from Context = 92
			Inference = 82
			Double Meaning = 83
			Pragmatic Language = 81

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69

CASL-2 and OPUS Tests

The OPUS may be used on its own or as a companion to the CASL-2.

Test	Structural Category	Age Range	What Is Measured	Processing Skills	Item Example
CASL-2					
Receptive Vocabulary	Lexical/Semantic	3 to 21	Auditory comprehension of words that refer to basic perceptual and conceptual relations.	Receptive	Here are some pictures. Point to the little dog.
Antonyms		5 to 21	Word knowledge, retrieval, and oral expression in a linguistically decontextualized environment.	Expressive	Tell me the opposite of yes. If it's not yes, it's _____.
Synonyms		5 to 21	Knowledge of the meaning of spoken words in a linguistically decontextualized environment.	Receptive	The first word is glad. The four words to choose from are hurt, hungry, sleepy, angry. Which word means the same as glad?
Expressive Vocabulary		3 to 21	Word knowledge, retrieval, and oral expression in a linguistic context.	Expressive	Jane wanted to know the time, so she looked at the _____.
Idiomatic Language		9 to 21	Knowledge, retrieval, and oral expression of idioms.	Expressive	He looked at the price tag and said, "It costs an arm and a _____."
Sentence Expression	Syntactic	3 to 21	Oral expression of words, phrases, and sentences using a variety of morphosyntactic rules.	Expressive	This boy is standing. (Examiner points to the picture of a standing boy.) This boy (examiner points to the picture of a sitting boy) _____.
Grammatical Morphemes		3 to 21	Metalinguistic knowledge and use of the form and meaning of grammatical morphemes.	Expressive	Here (examiner points to the picture of one frog) you see one frog. But here (examiner points to the picture of three frogs) you see many _____.
Sentence Comprehension		3 to 21	Auditory comprehension of syntax in spoken sentences that have similar structures and words.	Receptive	Point to the one picture that goes best with the sentence I say. The boy is playing. (wait for response.) The boy is playing. (wait for response.) The boy is not playing.
Grammaticality Judgment		5 to 21	Ability to judge the accuracy of syntax and construct grammatically correct sentences.	Expressive	The boy are happy. Does that sound right? If the examinee responds correctly with "no," the examiner says: Now make it sound right. Change, add, or take out only one word.
Nonliteral Language	Supralinguistic	7 to 21	Understanding of the meaning of spoken messages independent of the literal interpretation of the surface structure.	Expressive	The sky began to cry. Large tears began to drop down. What was happening?
Meaning from Context		7 to 21	Ability to deduce the meaning of words from their oral linguistic context.	Primarily comprehension with expression	He wanted to see the club's secret hideout, so he decided to peek through the tiny hole in the wall of the hideout. Explain what peek means.

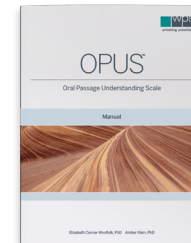
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70



Oral Passage Understanding Scale (OPUS)

- Standardized assessment of listening comprehension
- Ages: 5–21 years
- Individually administered in 10–20 minutes per item set
- Scores: Age- and grade-based standard scores, confidence intervals, percentiles, test-age and grade equivalents, descriptive ranges



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71

72

OPUS Key Areas

- The OPUS provides a thorough assessment of the comprehension of spoken language in a natural context including:
 - Comprehension of substantive word meanings: nouns, verbs, and modifiers
 - Comprehension of grammatical morphemes and inflections
 - Inference for background knowledge, context, figurative language, and prediction
 - Memory for nonmeaningful information and text details
 - The ability to understand the passage's overall meaning by integrating language and memory

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Administration, Scoring, and Interpretation

73

74

OPUS Components

- Manual
- Test Easel
- Record Form
- Digital Audio Training Files



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OPUS Administration and Scoring

Individually administered based on age

Digital audio files help you prepare to deliver the correct pacing and tone

Item Set	Ages	Passages	Record Form Start Page
A	5-6	1-5	3
B	7-8	4-8	4
C	9-10	7-11	6
D	11-13	9-13	8
E	14-16	11-15	9
F	17-21	13-17	10

Free scoring is available on the WPS Online Evaluation System.

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75

76

OPUS Interpretation

- Standard score and confidence Interval with descriptive range
- Passage analysis
 - Passage type
 - Word count
 - Sentence count
 - Mean words per sentence
 - Complexity index
- Item analysis
 - Lexical/Semantic
 - Syntax
 - Inference (supralinguistic)
 - Memory
 - Passage synthesis

77

OPUS Link to Intervention

- Passage and item analysis are key components in identifying areas of intervention.
- The OPUS Manual displays characteristics that contribute to difficulty in each passage to support intervention planning.
 - Passages can be examined by type, word count, sentence count, mean words per sentence, and complexity.



78

OPUS Link to Intervention (cont.)



- Item Analysis Worksheet will be completed for you when using the WPS OES
- Item analysis
 - Lexical/Semantic
 - Syntax
 - Inference (Supralinguistic)
 - Memory
 - Passage Synthesis
- Scores for Total Inference and Total Memory can be tallied and compared against the standardization sample

79

Table 3.2. Characteristics Contributing to OPUS Passage Difficulty

Passage number	Passage name	Passage type	Word count	Sentence count	Mean words per sentence	Complexity Index
1	The Yellow Flower	Fictional narrative (simple)	25	4	6.2	1.00
2	Allison and Jennifer	Fictional narrative (simple)	49	5	9.8	1.80
3	Eily the Elephant	Fictional narrative (simple)	74	5	14.8	1.43
4	Mitchell and His Crayons	Fictional narrative (simple)	87	8	10.8	2.29
5	Big Leafy Leaf	Fictional narrative (fable)	62	4	15.5	2.00
6	Metamorphosis	Nonfiction	84	6	14.0	2.00
7	The Wind and the Sun	Fictional narrative (fable)	168	8	21.0	2.09
8	The Snowflake and the Leaf	Fictional narrative (personification)	140	9	15.5	1.80
9	John Smith	Nonfiction	167	7	23.8	2.18
10	A Little Princess	Fictional narrative (simple)	142	5	28.4	2.67
11	Technology	Persuasive essay	147	8	18.3	2.20
12	The Watch	Fictional narrative (personification)	117	5	23.4	3.00
13	Deserts and People	Persuasive essay	121	5	24.2	2.00
14	The Wind in the Willows	Fictional narrative (personification)	99	3	33.0	3.25
15	South Africa	Nonfiction	74	3	24.6	1.67
16	The Call of the Wild	Fictional narrative (personification)	104	3	34.6	2.57
17	Vonnegut	Nonfiction	125	5	25.0	1.50

Note. The Complexity Index formula is given as [(number of independent clauses + number of dependent clauses)/number of independent clauses], where dependent clauses include subordinate and nonfinite clauses. Formula taken from the Edmonton Narrative Norms Instrument: <https://www.uAlberta.ca/rehabilitation/departments/communication-sciences-and-disorders/resources/resources-for-clinicians-and-researchers/edmonton-narrative-norms-instrument/pictures-analyses-and-comprehension/syntactic-complexity>

Reprinted from Carrow-Woolfolk, E., & Klein, A. (2017). *Oral Passage Understanding Scale (OPUS) [Manual]* (p. 20). Torrance, CA: Western Psychological Services.

80

OPUS Standardization

- Standardization sample of 1,517 individuals ages 5–21 years
- All demographic categories closely match the proportions of the U.S. Census figures
- Clinical validation sample of children with various speech and language disorders, ASD, ID, SLD and DD



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81

Case Example–David: 7 Years, 11 Months Academic History (cont.)



TEST RESULTS

WJ-IV	WISC-V	OWLS-II	CASL-2	OPUS
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Broad Math = 107	Verbal Comprehension = 81	Oral Expression = 73	Lexical/Semantic = 73	
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	Fluid Reasoning = 104	Written Expression = 72	Antonyms = 69	
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			Nonliteral Language = 79	
			Meaning from Context = 92	
			Inference = 82	
			Double Meaning = 83	
			Pragmatic Language = 81	

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82

Case Example Summary

David's assessment results suggest that he has difficulties in several areas of language:

- Listening Comprehension—while he can understand basic spoken language, he struggles with complex and abstract information
- Oral Expression—David has difficulty organizing his thoughts and using appropriate grammar and vocabulary when speaking
- CASL-2 scores indicated challenges with vocabulary, sentence structure, making inferences, understanding figurative language, and pragmatics
- OPUS results show significant difficulties in understanding and processing spoken information, especially in making inferences and understanding detailed content

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83

Case Example Recommendations

- Therapy services should focus on improving David's expressive language skills—vocabulary development, sentence structure, narrative skills
- Classroom accommodations
 - Written instructions to accompany verbal directions
 - Visual aids to support comprehension
 - Allow for some extra time for David to respond
- Social skills training—participating in social skills groups to improve David's pragmatic language abilities, helping him to use his language more effectively in social interactions

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84

Key Takeaways

Integrative language theory is the basis for OWLS-II, CASL-2, and OPUS

All tests can be used separately or in combination, as they each serve a different purpose

Wide age range covers preschool through high school/early college

Item analysis on all tests provides details for intervention planning (based on ILT)

CASL-2 and OPUS can be scored for free online: platform.wpspublish.com

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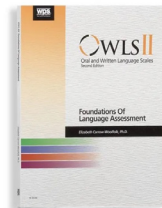
Intervention

85

86

Designing a Successful Intervention Plan

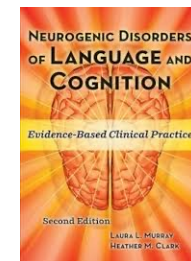
- The Vertical Model
 - Learning via hierarchy
- The Horizontal Model
 - Repeatedly layering the information to be learned
 - “The Layering Method”
 - Learning Activities
 - Processes



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Designing a Successful Intervention Plan

Activity	Examples
Pointing Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Point to the picture or object that represents the spoken, written, and/or gestured word stimulus. • Point to the written word that represents the spoken, written, and/or gestured word stimulus. • Point to the picture, object, or written word that represents the spoken and/or written definition (e.g., “Point to the color of bananas”). • Point to the picture, object, or written word that completes a spoken and/or written phrase or sentence (e.g., “The housekeeper _____ the floor”). • Point to the pictured scene that represents the spoken and/or written description.
Following Directions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Point to the pictures or objects in the sequence specified by a spoken and/or written command (e.g., “Point to the girl in the pants and then the boy in the hat”). • Manipulate an object or set of objects in the manner and sequence specified by spoken and/or written command (e.g., “Sign your name and then fold the paper in half”).
Answering Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Answer spoken and/or written yes/no questions about general information (e.g., “Is Canada south of the United States?”). • Answer spoken and/or written yes/no questions about pictured scenes or spoken and/or written stories or scenarios. • Answer spoken and/or written multiple-choice questions about pictured scenes or spoken and/or written stories or scenarios.
Sentence Verification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine if a spoken and/or written sentence makes sense (e.g., “The dairy farmer kept his cows in the garage”).



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87

88

Interventions for Oral Language Delays

- A research review from Kauschke et al. (2024) found that pairing direct interventions with parent training improved the efficacy of intervention. Treatment recommendations varied based on features of language delay:
 - Expressive delay: Structured parental training
 - Receptive delay: Language therapy
 - Phonetic delays: Traditional motor approach
 - Lexical/Semantic and Morphologic/Syntactic delays: input enrichment, modeling, elicitation, production opportunities, metalanguage, and visualizations

<https://europepmc.org/article/med/38377329>

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89

Interventions for Oral Language Delays (cont.)



- In a preliminary review of the research, Frizelle et al. (2020) found that frequent, short intervention sessions (two to three times per week, approximately 2 minutes) and less frequent, long sessions (one time per week, approximately 20 minutes) have yielded the best outcomes on vocabulary and morphosyntax
- General oral language interventions and specific vocabulary acquisition interventions have been found to be highly effective in improving receptive and expressive language
- Explicit and structured instruction has proven beneficial: reading aloud with discussion, structured questioning, purposeful dialogue, and interaction

https://pubs.asha.org/doi/abs/10.1044/2020_LSHSS-20-00058

<https://apps.asha.org/EvidenceMaps/Articles/ArticleSummary/d132a9e3-b026-46ae-9cda-c906ba5bb5e9>

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90

Interventions for Oral Language Delays (cont.)



- A review of research from Tarvainen et al. (2020) support the notion that parent–child interactions have a strong influence on oral language development and that targeting parent communication strategies is an effective intervention
- Their review further found that typically, younger children responded to interventions faster than older children, stressing the importance of early identification and intervention

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9620463/>

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91

Did You Know?



92

Digital Easels Available



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93

FREE Scoring Available



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94

FREE Resources

- OWLS-II
 - Sample Report
 - Quick Reference Guide
- CASL-2
 - Sample Report
 - Report Writing Guide
 - Understanding Sensitivity and Specificity with the CASL-2
- Arizona-4
 - Report Writing Guide
- OPUS
 - Report Writing Guide

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95

Questions?




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96

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RCMAS™-3 | Revised Children's Manifest Anxiety Scale, Third Edition 

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97

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98

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99