

Reconsidering Level 2 Interventions for Low Language Children in Head Start

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Teacher Enhanced Language and Literacy (Project TELL)

- Design
 - Randomized Control Trial (Goal 3, IES)
 - Randomization at center level, classrooms nested, children nested
 - 3 groups
- Population
 - 444 4 year old children enrolled in Head Start
 - 223 identified low language (PLS-3 total less than 75 at enrollment)
 - 221 identified typical language (PLS-3 total greater than 75)
 - 4 low kids/classroom; 4 typical/ classroom - matched for age, gender,
- Intervention
 - Level 1 Opening the World of Learning/ Creative Curriculum
 - Level 2/3 Enhanced Milieu Teaching + OWL (low language children only)

Research Question

- Is OWL + EMT relatively more effective than OWL alone or the control (Creative Curriculum) for children who enter Head Start with low language scores?

- Creative Curriculum
- Creative Curriculum + OWL
- Creative Curriculum + OWL + EMT (low language)

Enhanced Milieu Teaching

- Environmental Arrangement
 - Increase opportunities to communicate
 - Responsive Interaction*
 - Positive, meaningful contingent verbal responses by adult
 - Language Modeling* and Expansions of Child Utterances*
 - Milieu Teaching Procedures*
 - Least to most supportive prompts
 - Functional production with feedback and natural consequences
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- *Specified at child's target level based on MLU, vocabulary
 - EMT episodes targeted use of vocabulary in sentences of specified length

Child language level in EMT based on PLS-3, teacher and coach observations

- Level 1 – basic vocabulary, 3-4 word sentences
- Level 2 - entry level vocabulary, 4-5 word sentences

- 72 children received EMT
- 75% were Level 2

EMT Teacher Training

- Year 1
 - 2 days workshop training (large, small group)
 - Weekly feedback from HS Education Specialists (3 months)
- Year 2
 - 4 days workshop training (large, small group)
 - Weekly coaching and feedback by research staff (6 months)
 - Approx 70% of teachers participated in both Yr 1 and Yr 2
- OWL training in addition

Level 2 EMT as Planned

ACTIVITY	TEACHER PRIMARY SKILL	TEACHER EMT SKILLS
Small groups	Implement OWL lessons: Small group, Sounds Words and Letters (SWPL), Let's Find Out About It (LFOAI)	Provide child turns Prompt at child's level (least to most) Model language at child's level Respond and Expand child language
Centers	Conversational interactions Model rich language and vocabulary	Same as above Follow child's lead
Meals	Conversational interactions Model rich language and vocabulary	Same as above Follow child's lead

Challenges in Level 2 EMT

- Teachers not yet fluent in new curriculum
- Teachers not skilled at adapting to individual children within group lessons
- Teachers not skilled at EMT

Adaptations to support teacher use of EMT

- Play materials provided for teachers
- Play kits were 6 theme bags with short book showing play themes and add ins to specify vocabulary.
 - Two levels of vocabulary for each week's play kit
 - Each kit used 3-4 times across 24 weeks, with added vocabulary for each new use
- Child vocabulary probed in first and last session of each week
- Vocabulary related to curriculum, but did not match weekly units

Level 3 as Implemented

ACTIVITY	TEACHER PRIMARY SKILL	TEACHER EMT SKILLS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Individual teacher-child sessions •10-minutes, 3 x/week •During centers, nap or end day •Play kits provided 	<p>Play Conversational Interaction</p>	<p>Follow child lead Balance turns Respond to child Prompt at child's level (least to most) Model language at child's target level Expand child language ----- Administer vocabulary probe Read/share brief story about thematic play</p>

Challenges in Level 3 As Implemented

- Teachers not prepared to work with individual children
 - Time in schedule
 - Classroom supervision
- Teachers not confident about play interactions
- Teacher linguistic skills in conversations varied
 - Number of different words, specific vocabulary modeling varied
- Teacher fidelity of implementation for EMT varied
 - Good responsiveness
 - Good to fair language modeling, expansions at target level
 - Fair use of EMT prompt procedures (number, correctness)

Outcomes

- No differences between 3 groups of low language children on standardized language and literacy assessments
- On average, children with low language gained between .4 and 1.0 SD on all standardized measures
- EMT +OWL group of low language children showed better gains in NDW language sample measures
- Gains for low language children were similar to typical language children
- Variability in EMT child outcomes associated with teacher language (TNDW) and implementation of EMT (expansions MT episodes)
 - Within sessions
 - On PPVT

Right logic? Right Intervention?

- Prevention vs Response to Intervention
 - This was a prevention approach
- General language vs. curriculum specific vocabulary, concepts
 - This was a general language skill approach
 - Vocabulary, oral language
- Teacher skill affected implementation of intervention level
 - Knowledge of the curriculum
 - Fluency in implementing the curriculum (adaptation)
 - Instructional strategy skills (adaptation)
 - General language skills
 - Play skills

RTI vs prevention

	Child not responding to Level 1	Prevention based on language skills at entry
Level 2	<p>Specific content from curriculum</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">•More practice in regular classroom activities (more response opportunities, adapted teaching, pre-teaching, feedback)•Small group	Language focused: vocabulary, MLU
Level 3	<p>Individualized instruction linked to the specific content of the curriculum</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">•Small group•Individual instruction	Language focused: vocabulary, MLU

A better approach to Level 2/3 in preschool language and literacy

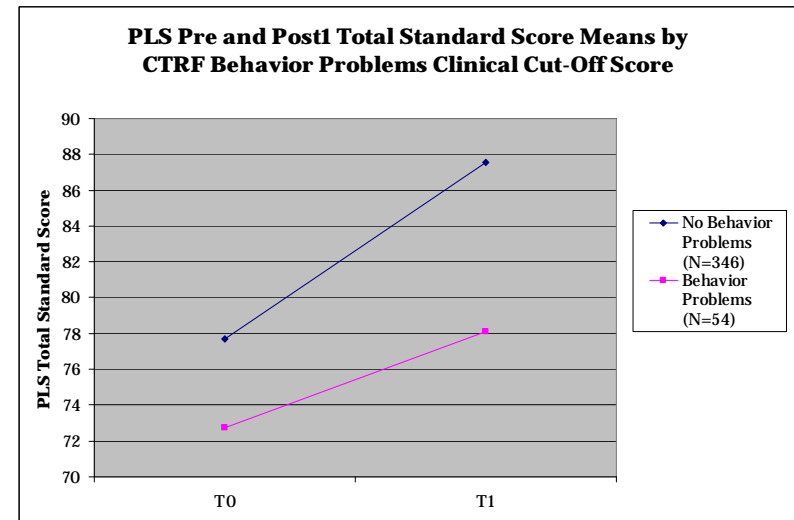
- Determine the specific skills taught in the curriculum
 - Curriculum Based Measures
 - Teach Multiple skills
 - Vocabulary
 - Concepts
 - Phonological Awareness
 - Literacy (pre literacy, narrative, comprehension, reasoning)

Level 2 goal: adaptations of the curriculum, specific teaching in targeted areas

Level 3 goals: instruction in basic skills, entry into the curriculum

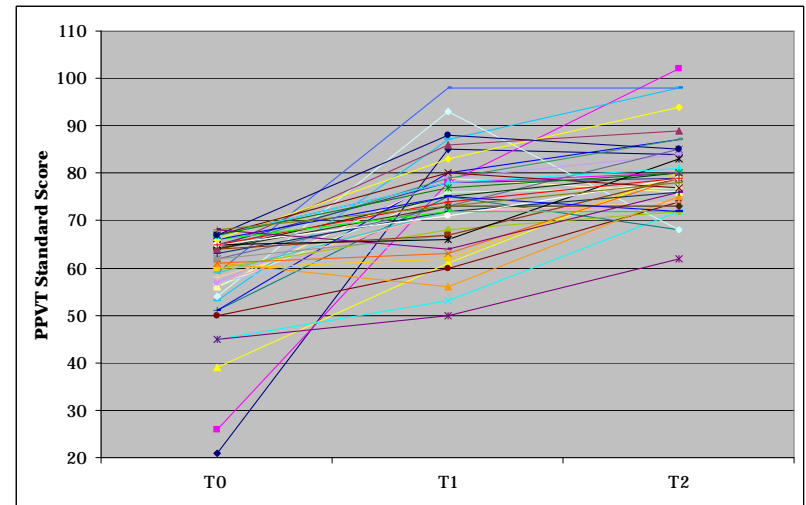
Some preschool specific issues

- The preschool curriculum is more than language and literacy
- Children with low language may have challenges in other areas
 - Behavior and social skills
 - Other curriculum areas (e.g., math concepts)
 - Other domains of development
 - Classroom participation



Child response to intervention

- Early identification resulted in false positives (?)
- Children with low language varied widely in their response to the curriculum regardless of experimental condition
- Some child characteristics were associated with relatively poorer response : behavior, NV IQ



Teacher Fidelity is Associated with Child Outcomes

- In all three conditions, teacher language skill (e.g., defining vocabulary in context) was associated with child outcomes
- In EMT, teacher vocabulary use and teacher EMT specific skills were associated with child outcomes
- Teacher implementation of primary and secondary intervention requires specific skills
 - Can teachers adequately teach primary curriculum?
 - Do teachers have skills for Level 2 or Level 3 intervention?
 - In addition to CBM Level 2/3 progress monitoring in place to provide teachers with feedback, fidelity feedback to teachers may be necessary