

Tactics for Apraxia, Scripting, Articulation and Reading

Apraxia

People who have very low vocal verbal skills or apraxia may need many more repetitions to produce expressive language. As we saw from Dr. Gilmour, one of her patients (a 14 year old boy who is non-verbal with ASD), viewed a custom-made session with just 3 words in it, over and over again for 6 weeks until he said his first word.

Research shows us that a neuro-typical person needs 70 to 100 exposures to a word for it to be permanently integrated into the repertoire of language. We find that with Gemini, repetitions can be as few as 40 times, but in the cases of apraxia, it can take up to 200 repetitions.

I suggest, in the cases of apraxia, that the first session be continued with at least 1 viewing session per day (2 times as each session), while a different session rotated in each week for the other 2 daily viewing sessions (For Quick Start, this would be session 2.0). This is also the recommended protocol for classrooms where there is a mixed ability of students. The instructor presents the new weekly videos for receptive skills and greater engagement, and repeats the first session to overcome oral motor apraxia.

This should be continued for at least 6 months before re-evaluating the course of action. 98% of people who stick with this protocol for 6 months see substantial improvement in communication skills.

Here is a comment from one of the parents who used this protocol:

Nicole S. (Parent):

My son is 3 years old with ASD and severe apraxia. We are only 1 month into using [Gemini](#) and we can see improvements each day with him. He clearly said Daddy for the first time last week....it made me cry! Although he has not said it again I can see there is hope He is making new sounds each day and is more engaged when we talk to him now. You can actually see him watching our mouths when we talk to him! My son has been in speech therapy since he was 18 months old with no real success. He really enjoys watching the Gemini videos and is now making the hand gestures for the different animals when the person asks "what sound does a animal make." It is only small steps but it is only early days for us.

Scripting

A lot of parents take comfort in the fact that their child is at least saying something and are worried about discouraging any vocal verbal behavior. I just wanted to say the scripting and echoing are GREAT skills that can be molded into conversation and it is a lot easier to work with someone who scripts than a non-verbal person, but it isn't real communication, not yet anyway. Most scripters are not aware or confused about the difference between functional communication and scripted speech. They are also compulsive about repeating things.

First, we need to get on top of the echoing. Have the student watch the Echolalia Buster video in Quick Start Language for 1 day. Every time the student echoes back a question instead of answering it, use the prompt, "No Repeating Answer Correctly." Have everyone in the student's life do this. We have seen the echoing stop very quickly within a few days or a week.

Next, we need to make sure that the student has enough receptive language so, they should be watching any of the Quick Start Language sessions that they doesn't yet know receptively. They also need to understand the difference between "scripting" and "functional language." For this we use the "No Funny Talk" videos in the category "Stimming". This video will demonstrate to the viewer the difference between verbal stimming and true conversation. Everyone in the student's life should then use the prompt "No Funny Talk" whenever they start to script. This constant commenting will allow the student to understand the difference between scripting and functional language and also understand that scripting is the same as "nonsense" talk.

Once the student has enough receptive language from Quick Start, we will move on to the "Tell Me Three Things" sessions to stop the scripting and shape it into conversation.

Whenever the student is scripting, prompt him, "No Funny Talk" and then immediately follow it up with "Tell Me Three Things about x, y, z (whatever he was just scripting). The student will stop scripting long enough to relate the "Three Things" and will usually lose his train of thought and forget about the scripting. This does 3 things:

1. It gives the student constant practice in creating his own self-generated speech.
2. It teaches the student the difference between stimming and conversation.
3. The constant self-generated commentary becomes rather tiring, and the scripser would rather be silent than continue the compulsive scripting.

As soon as the student begins to script off of a Gemiini session, a new session should replace it. This is the key to success. For some students, that means creating a new session 5 times a day. This takes about 2 minutes to do, so it is not a significant time investment. Gemiini has so much content that it is the only program that can keep up with the rapid recall of some students. Typically we find that the students will take what they have last scripted and make it functional as the newly viewed session becomes the "script of the minute." Then that one is also converted to functional language as the next session takes its place as the "scripted" video.

Here is a comment from one of the parents who used this protocol:

Natalia Gardella

I can just say that my scripser is not scripting as much at home as he did two weeks ago. Sunday he was scripting quite a bit but as soon as I put the video on for him he stopped. It completely redirected his attention to something productive. Tell me 3 things videos are great. We use this all the time and I can literally see the wheels spinning in my sons head. Today he actually told me that he doesn't want to tell me three things about anything. I can keep going on and on. It's only been two weeks since we started.

We are working hard here. My MIL is now living with is for a few months. Which is great. Having dinner with another person around the table is nice

and we include her in all our talks. Daniel is much warmer towards her since she arrived in Monday. She was also here last month and she says : "he is talking so much more since I left a month ago!" And he is . When we talked at dinner we took turns with "tell me 3things" and Daniel told me that he doesn't want to tell me 3 things about any object that I picked out. Instead he said "mom can u tell me three things about this?" And then he asked his dad and grandma. He was never this talkative around dinner table. It's awesome.

Articulation and Reading Combination

The Gemiiini Quick Start Books are a great time saver because they teach phonics, sight words and articulation all at the same time. The work amazingly well, but they have one drawback: they are really boring.

To counteract the boredom, have your students watch during meals or car rides and also edit them to add in higher interest videos (Humor, Transportation, Toys and Animals are favorites).

Here is a comment from one of the parents who used this protocol:

Ingrid T.
7/18/2014

I am a mother of three kids and have a son who is 6 years old that has Downs Syndrome. We were so lucky to have met Laura and have been using Gemiiini for approx. 2 months with our son. His reading and articulation have improved drastically in that short amount of time and we can't wait to see where he goes with this! I homeschool him and had been teaching him to read all year, but since using Gemiiini his reading level has probably tripled. He was struggling to read two-vowel words at the end of the school year and now after these 2 months he is probably reading at a 1st grade level. What's so amazing is that we can understand what he's saying!! He was very hard to understand but with the articulation tools on Gemiiini we are amazed with the results. The program is easy to use and it is very effective for kids with Downs Syndrome who are visual learners like our son. We couldn't be more pleased!

Articulation Only

The category Articulation and Reading is the place to find all of the sounds and words. Some of the sounds are held quite long as in the direct instruction reading method. The shorter staccato sound (as "D" vs "Duuuhhh") will be labeled "final sound." You may also find the phonemic alphabet modeled by professional SLPs in the sub-category "Phonemic Alphabet."

Search the subcategories in this section for different ideas on articulation sessions. It can be helpful to include the individual sounds along with word samples in an artic-centered session.

Here is a comment from one of the parents who used this protocol:

Nicola Porter -Parent

"Hi, we have been using the program and have found a remarkable improvement....he clearly said lizard within minutes of watching the program and yet could not do so after 4 years of speech therapy."