Pearson

CELF®-5 Case Study

- Receptive Language Disorder
- Critical thinking skill difficulties

Gracie, age 13:3

CELF 5
Clinical Evaluation of Language Fundamentals

History and Referral

Gracie was age 13:3 and attending a private school where she was enrolled in the seventh grade. Her parents reported that Gracie had struggled academically since the first grade. Her classroom teacher reported that Gracie was well-behaved, with excellent social language skills. She had many friends and was able to engage in reciprocal language exchanges, typical to her peers. The teacher noted deficits in the student's ability to engage in active listening tasks during whole-group instruction.

Gracie rarely participated in class discussions and often appeared to be off track. Her teacher also indicated that Gracie had difficulty engaging in seatwork. She did not appear to know how to initiate tasks or how to complete assignments without additional assistance and direction from the teacher. These difficulties in the classroom impacted her across the curriculum. The teacher indicated that Gracie was more successful when written instructions were presented and when key terms and concepts could be taught individually, a second time, following whole-group instruction.

Referral Questions

The student was referred for a full speech and language evaluation to determine the following:

1. Did the student manifest a language impairment?
2. If a language impairment is present, what are the patterns of strengths and weaknesses?
3. What implications does the profile of strengths and weaknesses have on the student's ability to access her education?
4. What intervention recommendations can be derived from the student's profile?

Test Results

The following scores were obtained from administration of CELF-5.

Core Language and Index Score	Standard Score	Confidence Interval	Percentile Rank	Confidence Interval
Core Language Score	83	77–89	13	6–23
Receptive Language Index	79	72–86	8	3–18
Expressive Language Index	100	93–107	50	32–68
Language Content Index	86	79–93	18	8–32
Language Memory Index	85	78–92	16	7–30

Test Scores	Scaled Score	Confidence Interval	Percentile Rank	Confidence Interval
Word Classes	8	6–10	25	9–50
Following Directions	4	2–6	2	0.4–9
Formulated Sentences	8	6–10	25	9–50
Recalling Sentences	11	10–12	63	50–75
Understanding Spoken Paragraphs	4	2–6	2	0.4–9
Word Definitions	7	5–9	16	5–37
Sentence Assembly	11	9–13	63	37–84
Semantic Relationships	7	5–9	16	5–37
Pragmatics Profile	13	12–14	84	75–91
Reading Comprehen-sion	5	3–7	5	1–16
Structured Writing	9	6–12	37	9–75

The Core Language Score of 83 (confidence interval of 77–89) places Gracie's overall performance in the below average range. The Receptive Language Index of 79 (confidence interval of 72–86) places her performance on tests measuring listening and auditory comprehension in the below average range as well. The Expressive Language Index of 100 (confidence interval of 93–107) places her performance on tests measuring overall oral language expression in the average range. The difference between the Receptive Language Index and the Expressive Language Index of 21 standard score points is rare and clinically significant ($p < 0.05$). The Language Content Index score of 86 (confidence interval of 79- 93) is within the average performance range. The Language Memory Index score of 85 (confidence interval of 78–92) is in the below average range. The profile of scores indicates a mild language disorder with deficits in listening and auditory comprehension and relative strengths in expressive language skills.

Gracie's performance on the Following Directions test (scaled score of 4) indicates an area of weakness in her ability to comprehend and recall auditory information. These skills are necessary for following classroom instructions in order to successfully complete assignments and to follow teachers' instructions. This information correlates with the teacher's observation that Gracie had difficulty initiating and finishing assignments independently. Gracie's response pattern in the Following Directions test indicated weaknesses in her ability to comprehend directions containing two and three-level commands with multiple modifiers, vocabulary related to sequential order, and vocabulary related to spatial order.

Gracie's performance on the Understanding Spoken Paragraphs test (scaled score of 4) also indicated an additional area of weakness in her ability to listen and comprehend auditory information and to utilize critical thinking skills to make inferences and predictions. Gracie's observed off-task behavior and difficulty with auditory comprehension may be directly attributable to deficits addressed in this test. Analysis of Gracie's responses indicated weakness in answering questions that required prediction and implied meaning. Word Definitions (scaled score of 7) and Semantic Relationships (scaled score of 7) are in the below average range. Scores on all other tests are within the average range.

The Pragmatics Profile was also completed for Gracie. Responses to all questions were rated as occurring Always or Almost Always. The student received a scaled score of 13, indicating performance in the above average range. This outcome indicates that the student's language difficulties occurred in the presence of strong pragmatics abilities.

The CELF–5 written language tests were also administered. On the Reading Comprehension test, the student earned a scaled score of 5 (confidence interval 3–7). Analysis of response patterns indicated that questions for factual information generally posed no difficulties for Gracie. In contrast, implicit questions, questions that required the student make inferences and predictions and interpretation of metaphors, resulted in incorrect responses. This response pattern is similar to the one observed in Understanding Spoken Paragraphs. In combination, the patterns indicated a need for developing metalinguistic awareness and knowledge. Assessing metalinguistic abilities with CELF–5 Metalinguistics may identify additional strengths or weaknesses (Wiig & Secord, 2014). On the Structured Writing task, the student obtained a scaled score of 9 (confidence interval 6–12). Analysis of the response pattern indicated that sentences were complete and that simple and complex sentence structures were included.

Recommendations and Follow-up

Based on the results, Gracie would benefit from structured language tasks that specifically address her weakness in receptive language. Goals and objectives should be developed to specifically target Gracie's ability to answer higher level predictive and inference questions relating to information she is exposed to auditorily. In addition, she would benefit from structured language tasks that address vocabulary relating to ordinal, spatial, and relational directions and modifiers. Assessment in the area of metalinguistic skills using CELF–5 Metalinguistics may also be warranted. Further testing may yield additional information to help in educational planning for Gracie.

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