The Implementation of SIWI in Therapy: A Case Study

Kristen Secora1, Kimberly Wolbers1, Kelli Williams, Hannah Dostal2
1University of Tennessee, Knoxville, 2University of Connecticut

Introduction

Writing is a complex linguistic activity that relies on skills across a variety of language domains including syntax, vocabulary and other areas of semantics, and metalinguistic knowledge. Although it clearly falls within the scope of practice for SLPs, many SLPs report inadequate training in graduate school for addressing writing (Blood et al., 2010) or other barriers to implementing written language assessment or intervention (Ehren & Ehren, 2001).

The Strategic and Interactive Writing Instruction (SIWI) approach has been widely studied with students who are deaf and hard of hearing (DHH) who use a variety of communication approaches (e.g., Wolbers, 2008; Wolbers et al., 2022). Although it has been primarily used by teachers of DHH students during classroom writing instruction, we present here a case study describing how SIWI has been integrated into treatment sessions by a speech-language pathologist.

The three overarching principles of SIWI emphasize: 1) Strategic, 2) Interactive, and 3) Linguistic/Metalinguistic approach to writing within an authentic and balanced framework. These principles guide instructors as they engage in co-creating texts with students, and through discussions within the language zone (a space devoted to using, sharing, persuasive, etc.).

SIWI Implementation

- Structure instruction including visual aids (e.g., popsicles for structuring information report writing)
- Balanced approach to writing instruction: equal time is devoted to the writing process and to building language skills
- Writing for authentic audience: writing activities designed for specific purpose and audience
- Allows for targeting various goal areas:
  - Reread text aloud to target any speech sound
  - Select topics that will contain target sounds
  - Encourage students to take their own data on sound production
  - Discuss verb tenses that naturally arise in the writing process
  - Include direct instruction of derivational morphemes
  - Target regular and irregular plurals in context
  - Discuss function words and how they alter the meaning of the sentence (e.g., the, the’s, in/on)
  - Integrate sensory details and other descriptive language
  - Expose to new linguistic and metalinguistic vocabulary and knowledge
  - Explore contextually-dependent meanings of multiple meaning words
  - Discuss correct prepositions given the target context
  - Expand vocabulary knowledge in depth and breadth
  - Transition words for building discourse cohesion

Limitations and Future Directions

- Previous SIWI research has been focused on students who are DHH. Additional research is needed to understand how SIWI can be implemented with students who have other communication needs
- Collect outcome measures to quantify the effects of SLP-implemented SIWI

Contact Information

Kristen Secora, PhD, CCC-SLP: ksecora@utk.edu
Kimberly Wolbers, PhD: kwolbers@utk.edu
Kelli Williams, MA, CCC-SLP: kelliwilliams@yahoo.com
Hannah Dostal, PhD: hannah.dostal@uconn.edu

Financial: Kristen Secora and Kimberly Wolbers are salaried full time employees at the University of Tennessee Knoxville. Nonfinancial: none to report
Financial and nonfinancial: Kelli Williams none to report
Financial: Hannah Dostal is a salaried full time employee at the University of Connecticut. Nonfinancial: none to report

References