

SPEECH-LANGUAGE LINKS

ISSUE 2

NOVEMBER 2009

*A Newsletter for Resource Teachers of the Deaf in the
Central and Southern Regions of New Zealand*

Hi everyone!

I hope all is going well with your students, and with your Action Research Projects!

In this issue:

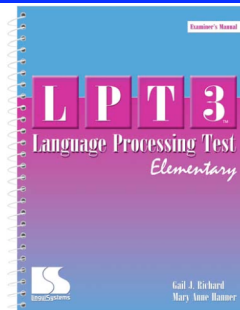
- **The Language Processing Test-3 is on the way!**
- Notes from two seminars that Brenda recently attended: one on Auditory Neuropathy and the other on a new language analysis system
- **More ideas for including semantic skills into your teaching from RTDs around our region**
- Some joke websites to use with your students



The Language Processing Test-3:

I know I have mentioned this assessment to most of you, and we are starting to get some copies now. I have so far been able to take these copies around a few areas to teach some of you, and this will continue throughout next year. We are hoping to complete workshops in all areas by the end of Term 2, 2010.

One of the great things about the assessment, as some of you have discovered, is that you can see the areas of relative difficulty for the student as you are administering the test. This is great because it means there is not a lengthy analysis process to complete after the test administration! Most of you are already incorporating work on many of the semantic skills involved, so it is useful to determine which of these skills should be the main focus for each student aged between 5.0 and 11.11 years.



If you want to have a sneak preview, go to: www.linguisticsystems.com/itemdetail.php?id=741
Click on the 'Information' tab, and also click on the 'Sample Pages' tab.

Seminar Feedback:

Brenda recently attended a one-day presentation at the University of Auckland entitled 'Optimising speech and language outcomes for children with hearing loss'. Professor Christine Yoshinaga-Itano from Colorado was the main presenter. She spoke about a new language sample analysis software package called LENA (Language ENvironment Analysis). The child wears a digital language processor in a pocket of custom-made clothing. It has the digital memory capacity to record a child's language environment continuously for 16 hours. The audio file is transferred to a computer where the LENA System automatically analyses it for: child vocalisations, mean length of utterance, adult word count, conversational turns, percent time in silence, and the decibel levels of each utterance. LENA was designed to:

- provide a measurement tool to help researchers gain insight into the natural language environment of children
- aid professionals in the early detection of language delay
- educate and provide feedback to parents and staff regarding how much they talk and interact with the child.

(Unfortunately the software cannot transcribe the sample, but it can be imported into a couple of other programs. I will endeavour to investigate these further next year!) Vickie Rydz from the National Screening Unit also gave an update on the Newborn Hearing Screening Programme.

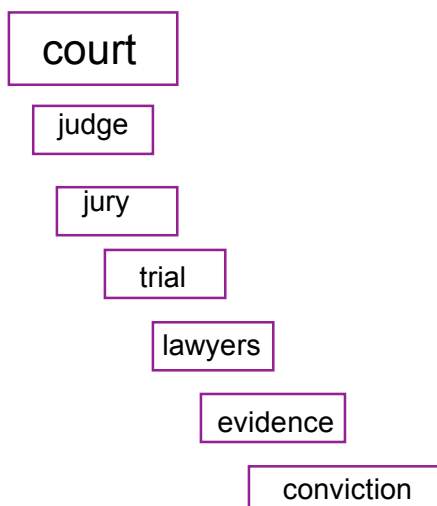
During the school holidays Brenda also attended a Phonak seminar called 'Guidelines for the diagnosis & management of Auditory Neuropathy' at Canterbury University. Some interesting points from this seminar that Brenda learned were:

- Auditory Neuropathy Spectrum Disorder (ANSD) accounts for approximately 5-10% of all permanent hearing loss in children
- ANSD can result from an auditory nerve abnormality or damage to the inner hair cells in the cochlea (not the outer hair cells as is the case in sensorineural hearing loss)
- cochlear implantation is now typically recommended, but does not always prove useful
- visual strategies alongside auditory input are recommended for the majority of children.

If you would like a copy of Brenda's notes from either of these seminars, please email her:
bsargent@vanasch.school.nz

Activity ideas:

John-Paul Oliver in Wellington has been working with one of his high school students focusing on the most **salient** (most common / prominent) **associations** with objects. For example, for the word 'court' they make a list of all the things they can think of that are associated with that item (such as: judge, lawyer, gavel, legal dispute, jury, reporters, trial, conviction, sentence, bible, evidence, police). Each idea is then written on a separate card. The student, with discussion from John-Paul, then places each card either close to or far from the word on the desk, depending on the strength of the association. Once this is done, they then discuss whether some of the further away cards should be included as an association or actually discarded (e.g. bible & gavel). This is a great way of helping the student to organise his language more efficiently. Well done JP!



Fun 'jokes' websites for kids:

I was recently asked if we have developed a resource containing jokes for kids. We had tossed around the idea previously, because they often contain words with multiple meanings (which ties in well to semantics work). They are also good for getting the child to give an explanation of why they are funny. However, we decided there were so many websites dedicated to this that it wasn't worth the time. Here are a few good ones we've found:

www.kidsjokes.co.uk

www.ducksters.com/jokesforkids

<http://kids.yahoo.com/jokes>

And, of course, we couldn't finish without putting a few in that your students might enjoy!

Why do gorillas have big nostrils?
Because they have big fingers!!

What is a cat's favourite colour?
Purr-ple.

Why is the man standing in the sink?
He's a tap dancer.

What do monkeys sing at Christmas?
Jungle bells, jungle bells...

This one was told to me by Winnie Solomon (8 years old) in Wellington:

Q: What's your name?

A: Evette

Q: What colour is the sky?

A: blue

Q: What's the opposite of on?

A: off

You just said "Evette blew off!"

Lovely way to end the newsletter, I know, but there you go! Thanks Winnie! Enjoy the rest of your final term everyone, and if any of your students have any jokes they'd love to share, please get them to email us!

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