

Treatment of Lexical Deficits in Children with Specific Language Impairment

Children with specific language impairment (SLI) often have difficulty learning new words. As a result their vocabularies may be smaller than other children their age, and this can negatively impact their oral language development as well as reading and writing. The primary goals of this research are to develop methods for identifying the individual word-learning deficits of young children with SLI and to evaluate prescriptive treatments targeting those deficits. The research plan is based on the premise that word learning may be compromised by processing deficits in one or more lexical levels including the conceptual, lexical-semantic, or phonological. We are conducting a series of four cross-sectional studies testing the hypothesis that phonological and/or semantic encoding or retrieval cues designed to improve the storage or retrieval of lexical-semantic or phonological level representations of words improves word learning in preschoolers with SLI.

ASU students may be involved in this series of studies or others that are in progress in our lab. They may learn how to administer assessments to children and to administer the research tasks. They will interact with our research project managers, doctoral students, masters' students, and Dr. Gray. We encourage students to develop their own related line of research and to present and publish their work. Students are invited to attend our lab meetings.

Qualifications: Students should be in good academic standing and have an interest in conducting research with preschool or school-age children. Experience working with children is helpful. Most of our research is conducted in schools; therefore, students must obtain a fingerprint clearance card and provide proof of a negative TB skin test. We can explain how to obtain these. Students should also be available to work approximately 10 hours per week with most of those hours available during weekdays when children are in school.