You Are Going to Be an Author:

Adolescent Narratives as Intervention

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Student-composed narratives represent a new adolescent literacy approach in general education and an academic standard in secondary schools. Provided with an intervention of scaffolded story writing, adolescents with significant communication disabilities can write narratives also. A detailed description of the scaffolded story writing process is provided, and four case examples of the written narratives of students with communication disabilities are presented. Implications for speech and language intervention include successfully connecting the IEP goals of students with the core curriculum, engaging students in mixed-ability groups, exposing students to the elements of critical literacy, developing writing skills, and building capacity for other communication behaviors.

"*It was a dark and stormy night. . . .*" Narratives, or stories, are the most compelling forms of written language (Combs & Beach, 1994). A good story can be read over and over. Each time we read a story, we identify to some extent with the characters, care about their predicaments, hope they will find a satisfactory conclusion, and compare their plights to similar experiences that we have had or know about. Stories grab our interest and engage us cognitively. They link us together and make us reflect. They produce a social context for us and extend our logical thinking and problem solving. Stories entice us to use the tools of our language—our words—carefully and thoughtfully, behaviors that are highly conducive to therapeutic interventions.

Student stories, especially stories written by individuals at the secondary level who experience significant language disabilities, may be one of the best ways for the speech–language pathologist (SLP) to structure an intervention program (Goodin & Meholin, 1990; Graham, Harris, & Troia, 2000). As Kane (1998) noted, "Discourse knowledge can be taught and nurtured from the earliest grades using authentic contexts and quality children's literature as well as the children's own writing" (p. 118). Students in Grades 6 through 12 can be very self-absorbed, and stories about their own lives or stories they create can serve as a context for learning (Gruwell, 1999; McGreagor, 2000). The narratives that students write often reflect the stories of their lives or the stories they tell themselves (Combs & Beach, 1994). Furthermore, SLPs working at the secondary level are now required by the 1997 Amendments to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act to link their therapeutic interventions to the general education curriculum (Brannen et al., 2000; Ehren, 2002; Moore-Brown & Montgomery, 2001).

General educators have also called attention to the challenges inherent in literacy instruction for adolescents (Gee, 2000). Luke and Elkins (2000) suggested that the term *adolescent literacies* "addresses complex issues around adolescents' access to and alienation from social institutions, their position and identities within cultural fields of community life and work, education and consumption, and their engagement with texts and discourse of power" (p. 397). This is no less true for adolescents with communication disabilities. Adolescent literacy incorporates new types of teaching, especially for students who are at risk for failure to develop literacy or are already identified as having special needs (Bender, 1985; Luke & Elkins, 2000; Moje, Young, Readance, & Moore, 2000;

Westby, 1984). Luke and Elkins stressed the need for "sensitive, contextual, and flexible blends" of instruction (p. 396). *Critical literacy instruction,* as it has come to be called in general education, enables readers to "examine how the language in spoken and written texts produces and reproduces race, ethnicity, social class, and gender positions" (Moje et al., 2000, p. 407). These are important issues for students with language disabilities, who often are not exposed to these discussions and readings unless the SLP can make them accessible.

Gee (2000) and others (Apel & Masterson, 1998; Kane, 1998) believe that a collection of student narratives is indeed authentic, sensitive, and contextual for the learner. In fact, although it is difficult to measure the writing proficiency of adolescents, research has supported the analysis of correct word order in short narratives by students as one effective method (Espin et al., 2000). Both general and special educators have reported frustration in trying to teach and assess adolescent literacies because after students had finally acquired sufficient decoding (word attack) and recoding (spelling) skills, they continued to exhibit serious comprehension problems in both reading and writing (Apel & Masterson, 1998; Gee, 2000). Adolescents with language disabilities have difficulty with metalinguistic tasks, abstract language, higher order thinking, self-regulation, and literacy categories needed for proficient writing (American Speech-Language-Hearing Association [ASHA], 2002). Demands placed on adolescents with disabilities as they learn to write include external challenges of the curriculum and personal challenges of their own social/physical development (Sturm & Koppenhaver, 1999).

Narrative writing is a complex process based on oral language skills (Roth, 2000). Narratives can be defined as real or imaginary time-ordered sequences of events that are interrelated in some way (Lahey, 1988; Westby, 1984). Menyuk (1969) stated that typically developing children could produce simple narratives by the age of 6 years. Students with significant language disorders often cannot do so even at ages 14 or 15. Westby (1991) noted that narratives serve as a transition between oral and literate language forms. To succeed in an academic setting, students must develop oral and then written language skills (Coleman, 1997).

Westby (1991) noted, "We dream, remember, anticipate, hope, despair, love, hate, believe, doubt, plan, construct, gossip, and learn in narrative" (p. 352). Students with learning disabilities or communication disorders need to express those feelings in oral and written forms but frequently lack the language and organizational skills to do so. Fictional stories, personal narratives, biographies, plays, and poetry are an integral part of educational curricula from the early primary grades throughout high school (Gruwell, 1999; Manning, Manning, & Long, 1990; McGreagor, 2000), and the expectations for both text structure and content in narratives become increasingly more demanding as students get older (Roth, 2000). Students require knowledge of discourse patterns to be successful, and many students, particularly youth with communication disabilities, are less inclined to pick it up incidentally (Kane, 1998; Roth, 2000). Students with severe disabilities may need very specific instruction to successfully recognize and later reproduce or imitate a story grammar (Sturm & Koppenhaver, 2000). Nonetheless, as Storm and Koppenhaver noted, story writing may serve an even more important purpose for these students. "Written texts are more lasting than oral language and are able to be reshaped in content, form, or uses by a dizzying array of technologies and techniques" (p. 118). Students with severe disabilities who cannot rely on speech have an even greater need to tell their stories in a written form because it is their primary form of contact with peers and teachers (Musselwhite, 2000).

Once students reach the middle and secondary levels, storytelling or story writing is no longer a part of class instruction. The essays, reports, and other expository text that replace it are written forms that evolve from narratives. The dreaming, remembering, hoping, and gossiping that Westby (1991) described must be expressed first to allow the written form to mature. Storytelling is an early step toward the traditional academic paper or study list. Narratives contain the elements—such as compare and contrast, solving problems, listing items, and persuading others—used later in expository text. Speech–language pathologists and other special educators with expertise in linguistic development need to provide the necessary structure for students to benefit from the lessons of the narrative stage. Students with communication disabilities need explicit, systematic instruction to learn to write narratives (Graham et al., 2000).

Students who are still enrolled in a speech and language program when they enter middle school or high school have a variety of persistent language problems. They may not process information well, may have severely reduced vocabulary, and may not understand semantic relationships (Lahey, 1988). They often have poor short-term auditory memory skills. They usually hate to read, cannot spell, and avoid writing of any kind. They have difficulty expressing their ideas and are poor problem solvers (Lord-Larson & McKinley, 1995; Luke & Elkins, 2000). Overall, these students usually are not doing well in school. In secondary schools, they are frequently enrolled in a class for students with specific learning disabilities or a support program for students with mild-to-moderate disabilities (Moore-Brown & Montgomery, 2001). Ehren (2002) noted that this problem is not limited to students with identified special needs, citing the 1998 *Writing Report Card* report that 73% of 8th graders and 78% of 12th graders were below proficiency in writing.

Students who are eligible for services may have a variety of speech and language instructional objectives on their Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). Common objectives written by SLPs for these students include the following:

- sequence ideas correctly when reporting information;
- ask and answer questions about information they hear or read;

- increase vocabulary;
- use grammatically correct sentences;
- demonstrate understanding of semantic relationships and word associations;
- define words;
- follow directions;
- use synonyms, antonyms, and multiple-meaning words correctly;
- furnish items for categories;
- demonstrate ability to solve problems; and
- identify the main idea and supporting details in a paragraph.

An additional obstacle in both middle school and high school is scheduling students for intervention services. Providing speech and language services in secondary schools is formidable. Barriers at the administrative and classroom levels can be daunting (Ehren & Ehren, 2001). Students cannot miss core classes and do not want to miss their favorite elective classes. Some teachers will not release these students from certain classes. As a result, students must be scheduled when they are available, not when they could be placed in supportive groups with similar objectives. Scaffolded story writing is an effective method to use in these mixed-ability groups. Seeking the best ways to work with fellow professionals in these environments requires the SLP to be responsive to the school's needs and to negotiate what is best for students, based on educators' expectations (Ehren & Ehren, 2001). We advocate an approach that combines individual student goals with school-wide standards.

The SLP has a primary role in developing written language skills for students with language disabilities (ASHA, 2001; Moore-Brown & Montgomery, 2001). Knowledge of the life-span expectations of persons with language impairments, including adolescent written language, is a responsibility of the school-based SLP (ASHA, 2002). The speech and language environment, either the classroom or a separate therapy room, can be the ideal setting for supporting the development of written narratives. The SLP can create a meaningful approach to intervention for a large number of students with diverse IEP goals who have limitations on their time for related services. Scaffolded story writing can be easily replicated in middle schools and high schools because collaborative and curriculum-based intervention strategies have no predetermined set of procedural rules and have been implemented differently in a variety of settings with notable success (Goodin & Meholin, 1990).

SCAFFOLDED WRITING PROCESS

Teaching students with language and learning disabilities to write narratives is a cohesive, efficient, and productive way to target as many different objectives as possible using the same basic activity. In this interactive teaching strategy, each student can receive the level of support he or she needs while working as independently as possible. A student who is an independent writer can be in the same group with a student who requires help getting his or her ideas recorded. An SLP in a very large high school program can be responsive to multiple objectives on student IEPs. The IEP team's objectives can be addressed within the speech and language program. When several professionals collaborate on, scaffolded narratives, it becomes an approach for meeting various communication needs of students (Goodwin & Meholin, 1990), including students who are culturally and linguistically diverse.

Script of the Scaffolded Narrative Method

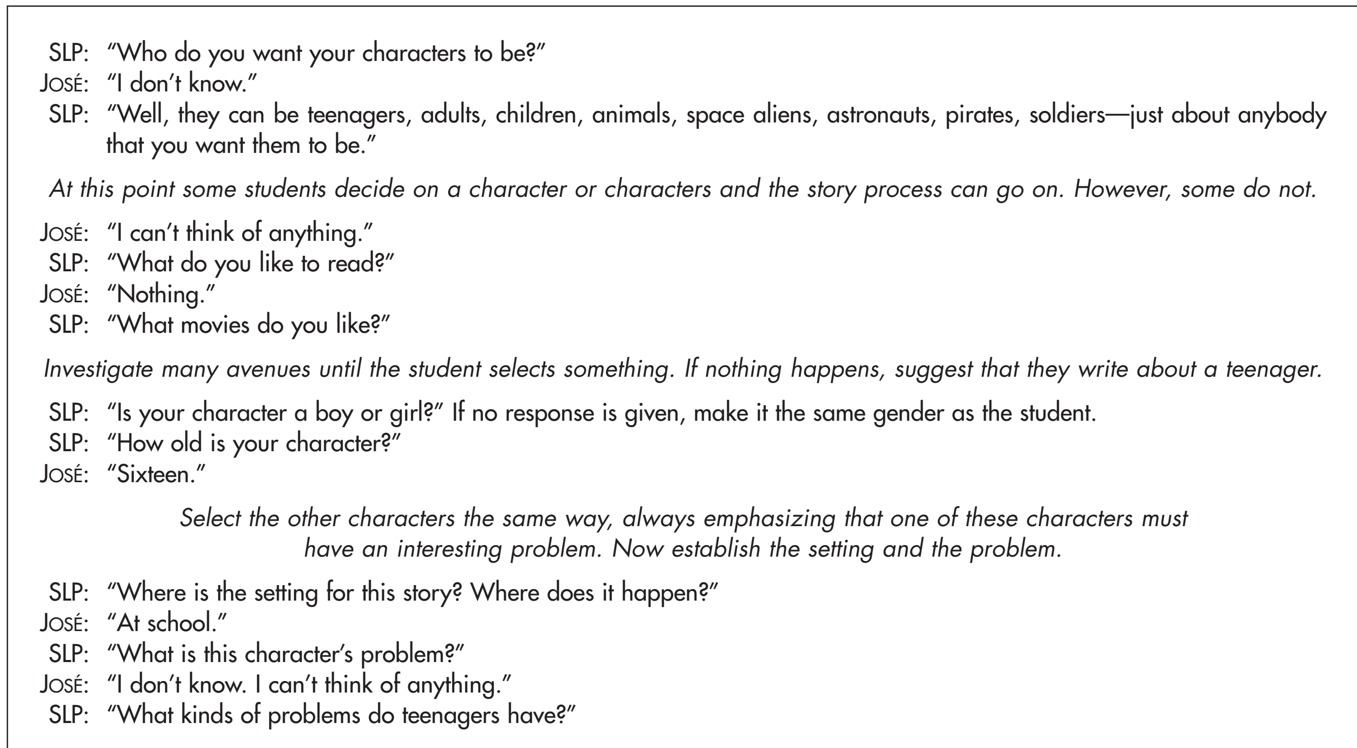
Scaffolded narratives are an adaptation of the self-regulatory strategy development (Graham et al., 2000) used with struggling writers. In the scaffolded narrative method, questioning is used to help students build their comprehension, organization, sequence of ideas, and metacognition. This questioning encourages students to become "meaning makers."

The following method is suggested for teaching narrative writing to four students with language or learning disabilities. The SLP introduces the concept of the author, what an author does, and why the student would want to be one. She or he explains that authors have control of an entire fictional world. They have power and complete authority, making all the decisions. The SLP concludes this session by clearly stating, "You are going to be an author."

The students then are taught a narrative outline. Applebee (1978) and Apel and Masterson (1998) defined the five elements of a narrative as interesting characters, setting, a believable problem, several solutions to the problem, and a good ending. The SLP may first need to read some short stories to the students and practice with the students in analyzing these stories for the five elements. The SLP next sets up a series of questions to scaffold the students' thinking process about the stories they want to write. The students make the decisions, guided by the SLP to whatever degree is necessary for building their stories. Figure 1 contains a step-by-step script of the SLP and student interaction at this stage. Notice the manner in which the SLP scaffolds the inquiry process so that the students make the decisions.

The SLP discusses the kinds of problems that teenagers might have until each student decides on a problem. This may take a while because identifying problems and solving them is often a part of a student's disability. The SLPs should suggest many problems that might be appropriate for the character. Other students in the group may suggest ideas also, making it a good point for a group discussion. The SLP might say, "How is your character going to solve this problem? Let's try to think of a couple of ideas that do not work and then one that does work."

Some students may have to think of the final solution first and then work their way back to a couple of ideas that did not work, which is how to get a good story line going. The time invested at the beginning of the process is well worth



SLP: "Who do you want your characters to be?"
JOSÉ: "I don't know."
SLP: "Well, they can be teenagers, adults, children, animals, space aliens, astronauts, pirates, soldiers—just about anybody that you want them to be."

At this point some students decide on a character or characters and the story process can go on. However, some do not.

JOSÉ: "I can't think of anything."
SLP: "What do you like to read?"
JOSÉ: "Nothing."
SLP: "What movies do you like?"

Investigate many avenues until the student selects something. If nothing happens, suggest that they write about a teenager.

SLP: "Is your character a boy or girl?" If no response is given, make it the same gender as the student.
SLP: "How old is your character?"
JOSÉ: "Sixteen."

Select the other characters the same way, always emphasizing that one of these characters must have an interesting problem. Now establish the setting and the problem.

SLP: "Where is the setting for this story? Where does it happen?"
JOSÉ: "At school."
SLP: "What is this character's problem?"
JOSÉ: "I don't know. I can't think of anything."
SLP: "What kinds of problems do teenagers have?"

FIGURE 1. Following a student through the scaffolding process.

the effort. This oral storytelling and organizing is the early stage before actual writing that Westby (1991) described. Because students with communication disabilities frequently have marginal communication skills, they do not engage in this type of activity very often. A discussion of social alternatives, termed *critical literacy* (Gee, 2000; Moje et al., 2000), is a highlight of the scaffolded narrative approach and a way to address several oral communication goals on a student's IEP.

The Five-Step Approach

The scaffolded narrative approach consists of five main steps. The SLP directs the student through each of these steps, which are designed to support (scaffold) the student as she or he creates the narrative.

Step 1: Draw a Sequence Story. The SLP divides an 8" × 11" blank sheet of paper into six sections and tells the students to draw their stories on the paper in correct sequence, using as many sheets as are necessary to complete the story. Most students will need only one sheet. The students may use stick figures and simple drawings, which is a form of stick writing (Ukrainetz, 1998). Some students need help in sequencing their stories properly. Although many students enjoy this activity, a few may not. If a student feels unable to draw anything, the SLP should not insist, instead moving on to the next step.

Step 2: Describe the Main Characters. Students should list descriptive details for the main characters, including age, height, weight, body build, hair color and style, eye color, clothes, family, favorite foods, things they like to do, and anything else that would help define the characters.

Step 3: Begin Writing the Narrative. The students begin their narratives with an interesting opening sentence or two to catch the reader's interest. The SLP might read opening paragraphs from stories he or she has enjoyed to the students. Students should follow their picture sequence when writing their narratives. They should also incorporate the information they compiled before they started writing the story, including the character descriptions.

The SLP uses a questioning technique throughout this intervention. She or he must facilitate the student's ability to come up with creative, independent ideas rather than reflecting the SLP's ideas. Figure 2 is an actual exchange between an SLP and a 14-year-old boy that exemplifies the beginning stages of narrative writing.

The dialogue between the SLP and the student continues until the student is certain about what he or she wants to write. It is obvious when the student reaches that point. The SLP needs to ask questions until a coherent story emerges, which sometimes occurs in stages. The SLP may get the first part down and then move on to the next part. Some stories change in the process as better ideas occur and the student re-

vises his or her initial thoughts. It is best to get a first draft completed and then rewrite.

Step 4: Write the Story. From the beginning, the SLP reinforces the idea that the story belongs to the student, and changes are never made without consulting the student. A lot of reassurance is necessary: Students must believe they *can write* a story. The SLP places the responsibility for the story directly with the student as the author. Students will often learn new and wonderful words as they write. Figure 3 provides an example of a dialogue between an SLP and a 15-year-old girl as she searches for the right word to use in her story.

Step 5: Rewrite and Correct. Some students require corrections and help throughout the writing process. They need words to be spelled for them, or they want to try out a sentence or two orally before they write. The SLP should give them the help they need. Some students can write fairly independently through the first draft. Students often omit periods, do not use paragraphs, and misspell words. Grammar is often incorrect, and syntax is sometimes awkward. Editing the first draft is the point at which these areas must be addressed.

Many students approach the editing process with trepidation. They have struggled over the story and like what they have done. It means something to them (Kane, 1998). They are fearful of being criticized, so suggestions for change must be given diplomatically. The SLP should suggest changes in grammar and syntax only if they are necessary to the flow of the story. When the SLP suggests a possible change and the student does not like it, the change should not be made. Some students will be unable to read their own stories if they are changed too much.

Students should learn to use a thesaurus or dictionary to find more interesting words for their stories. The SLP may read selections to the students, discussing the nuances of different words and letting them choose. If a student likes his or her original word best, that is what should be used. The mechanics of writing can be taught at the same time. These conventions will be easier for students to learn when they discover that using these rules makes their stories more readable and accessible to others. Pride of authorship has emerged at this point in the intervention process.

When the SLP presents information on punctuation, he or she should talk about complete thoughts, letting the students know that a period comes after a complete thought. Students can often find a place for a period by looking for words such as *then, so,* or *and,* which they learn are how they join their ideas together. The SLP should discuss where peri-

SLP: "What is the problem?"
JOHN: "A race and jealousy."
SLP: "Good. What race?"
JOHN: "Fast cars in a race."
SLP: "What's the problem?"
JOHN: "Two friends both want to win the race."
SLP: "Great! Who wins?"
JOHN: "Adam wins at the end."
SLP: "Okay, now what is the jealousy about?"
JOHN: "Two guys like the same girl."
SLP: "What guys?"
JOHN: "The ones who are racing."
SLP: "You've got some great ideas for your story. Can you draw pictures to show the story?"

FIGURE 2. Defining the story.

CATHERINE: "I mean they both are saying it."
SLP: "You mean they are talking at the same time?"
CATHERINE: "Yes, they are saying the same thing at the same time. How do I write that?"
SLP: "There is a good word for that. Do you want to use it?"
CATHERINE: "What is it?"
SLP: "They are talking in unison. *Unison* means they are saying the same words at the same time. Do you want to use *unison*?"
CATHERINE: "How do I do that?"
SLP: "You could say, 'They spoke in unison.' How does that sound to you?"
CATHERINE: "Good. I'll write that."

FIGURE 3. Searching for the right word.

ods belong and then let the students try making corrections independently. The SLP can then check again and see what the students have accomplished. Instruction should be repeated until the periods are where they belong.

Determining where to place a new paragraph is also challenging. Because new paragraphs are needed when ideas change the location, the characters, and the event, the SLP can help students look for such breaking points in their stories. Students should work as independently as possible to find paragraph breaks, with the SLP providing assistance only as necessary.

Spelling is an almost universal problem for these writers. The SLP should correct spelling with the students, pointing out the kind of mistake that was made and how they can learn to avoid the same mistake in the future. The SLP should encourage students to sound out the words on their own and try to put the written sounds together to make the words. At this level, students still struggle with these decoding and recoding skills (Lord-Larson & McKinley, 1995). Phonemic awareness can be taught at the same time. Teaching phonemic awareness skills is often more successful at this point because students want their personal interests to be the center of their learning time. They are now invested in their own stories to a great degree.

The editing process is an ideal point at which to teach language structure to students who want to learn, because it pertains to their stories. They want to make their stories the best that they can be. It is nice to have a final product of which they can be proud. For the SLP, however, the process is equally important. Within this five-step process, students learn a multiplicity of useful skills in a supportive environment.

CASE EXAMPLES

The appendix contains the stories from four students that are the products of a structured, scaffolded storywriting approach. Each student completed the writing process over a 5-month period during weekly 30-minute sessions held with the SLP. The approach adhered closely to the state's reading and language arts standards ("California Reading Language Arts K-12 Standards," 1999) and each student's IEP. Some students were working to meet written language standards that were three to six grade levels below their chronological age. As Gruwell (1999) observed, most of these stories were autobiographical or thinly veiled tales about the writer's hopes or dreams.

In some cases, students wrote on their own time and brought portions of their stories to the SLP. One student came early in the morning before class to discuss and review his written work. The SLP encouraged thinking and writing outside the intervention sessions. The scripting method allowed the SLP to address the specific goals for each student by using the questioning technique to incorporate the students' individual strengths and address each one's needs. These four examples were created by secondary school students in an urban school district. Table 1 provides an overview of the demographic characteristics of the four students.

The process and product criteria suggested by Ehren (2002) were effectively addressed through the students' narrative writing experiences. The story-writing process was as important as the products of the story writing. Some students took a long time, while others wrote more quickly. The SLP easily identified the areas of need as the students began this structured writing process, which was based on oral language linked to print production. The instruction was tailored to the individual needs of each student, although they received the intervention as a group or a class. Students learned to ask for help when they needed it and to accept help without feeling demeaned. They learned to evaluate their own ability as writers, and they came to recognize how much they accomplished when a story was completed or a second story was begun.

TABLE 1. Student Characteristics

Student	Gender	Age	Grade	Special education verification	Services
Johnny	M	17	11th	Severe language disabilities	Speech/language; Resource room support
Liz	F	14	9th	Traumatic brain injury; speech/language impairment	Speech/language; self-contained special education class
Kyle	M	14	9th	Severe emotional disturbance	Speech/language; self-contained special education class
Megan	F	17	12th	Cognitive impairment	Speech/language; self-contained special education class

The next school year, these four students were enthusiastic about writing. They were organized, applied the five story-writing elements, and did not need help in getting started. The students immediately discussed their ideas to clarify their thoughts, wrote a plan, and linked their oral language to their written language. Furthermore, they taught the process to new students in the speech and language group.

As Ehren (2002) suggested, both process and product must be emphasized:

> It is crucial that SLPs focus on final outcomes when working with adolescent language. The emphasis has to be on whether or not adolescents are becoming more literate in their academic classes and other settings, not whether they are getting better in treatment. (p. 5)

The end product targeted by the SLP for these four students was to produce an anthology of their stories. Each student succeeded in writing a narrative that was included in the collection. Students who were highly resistant to writing or reading began to read not only their own stories but also the stories of others.

IMPLICATIONS FOR INTERVENTION

Adolescents with communication disabilities often demonstrate only rudimentary written language skills, appear to have insurmountable daily scheduling problems, have with a wide range of IEP objectives, need to meet the expectations of the general education curriculum, and are often preoccupied with their social lives. In short, they are a uniquely challenging population. As shown in the appendix, the SLP addressed four such students' wide-ranging goals with a minimum of effort and a maximum of student engagement by guiding these young people in writing narratives. Writing narratives led to writing essays. Writing a scaffolded story was the beginning of a process for these four students that culminated in acquisition of the logical thinking and organization skills necessary to complete their senior research papers. After reading these stories, other secondary-level educators increased their academic expectations for these students, who have met those goals, which included writing senior essays, passing the high school exit exam, and graduating.

Recent changes in IDEA and in ASHA policies have highlighted the importance of linking speech and language services to the curriculum (ASHA, 2001; Brannen et al., 2000; Ehren, 2002). Using the explicit, systematic methods of the scaffolded writing process, an SLP can support students in meeting their IEP goals in literacy, demonstrate functional outcomes, and link speech and language intervention to state academic standards. In this way, the SLP can parallel general education adolescent literacies. In addition, students will have a written, tangible product of their accomplishments in speech and language services and a life skill. They will be more capable of working out the social complexities of their lives, including their contacts with peers and authority figures. SLPs may wish to consider scaffolded narratives as a major component of their collaborative intervention programs for secondary students.

LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE STUDENTS

The intervention exceeded our expectations for reaching literacy goals, increasing language skills, and motivating secondary students. Figure 4 contains a list of what we learned by observing and working with students using scaffolded story writing.

At an IEP meeting, the second author asked a student if she could share his story with the team. He agreed. His teachers were amazed at the quality of his story—its length, word use, punctuation, and spelling. They revised their academic goals upward immediately.

Students benefit from the structure provided by this method and the time allowed to complete a task they find

- No matter how many times you tell students to make up any story they want, about any place they want, they will still write a story about themselves, their friends, their life, their problems, their dreams, and their own town or street.
- Students often struggle to resolve the problem they "created." It is a big dilemma in their own lives, and their responses are complex. They also get better at solving these social problems.
- If you start with a storyboard, students will all eventually begin to write (or dictate) a story. It takes some students much longer to get started.
- Students grow eager to come to language sessions and work on their stories. They arrive on time. They tell you they think about their stories between the sessions. They make changes as they go along.
- The stories are usually 1 to 2 pages long.
- When students finish, they ask to write another story.
- The SLP can help the students address almost all of their language and communication objectives within scaffolded story writing.

FIGURE 4. What we learned teaching secondary students to write narratives.

both important and satisfying. Given these components, they can accomplish great things. They know they can write. They become authors.

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APPENDIX: FOUR STUDENT STORIES

Reggie's Basketball Story, by Johnny

Here's a story about a little boy who likes sports. His name is Reggie. He liked to play lots of sports. Reggie's favorite spot [*sic*] is basketball. Reggie's good in basketball. Reggie is a freshman at Santa Fe High School.

In a couple of weeks basketball season starts at Santa Fe High School. Reggie wants to play for the school. There might be a problem because he's a new student in high school. There's other students that were on the team last year and the year before that are twice as good as Reggie. Tryouts were today at the school. A boy named Danny was trying out for basketball too. Danny saw Reggie trying out. Danny told one of the coaches that Reggie is a good shooter. Danny is a senior at Santa Fe High School. He's played basketball for the school for three years.

The next day there was list of names of who made the team. Reggie went to go check on the list. He made it for the team but he wasn't going to be a starter for the team. Reggie didn't like that.

One day Danny and a couple of his friends went to the basketball courts. They say [*sic*] Reggie shooting baskets. Danny and his friends said that Reggie is a good shooter. Danny said that Reggie is on the team. Reggie saw them and said, "Hey guys." Danny and his friends went to shoot some hoops with Reggie. Later Reggie, Danny and his friends were just talking about basketball. Danny said that we should all play a game and they did.

The next day was the first basketball game of the season. It was Santa Fe vs. Pioneer. During the game Pioneer was winning 36 to 20. One of the players for Santa Fe got hurt really bad. It was one of their good shooters. Reggie was thinking that what are they going to do now? The coach looked at Reggie. The coach told Reggie to sub in. Reggie got up and went to his teammates and said, "Let's try to win this game." Danny had the ball. He passed it to Reggie. Reggie shoots his first shot in the game and makes a basket. Reggie was proud. That night Reggie was really doing good in the game. The game was over. Santa Fe High won.

Alice's Problem, by Liz

Valerie said, "Alice, want a cigarette?" Before Alice could answer her dad passed by to pick her up. When Alice got home she told her dad what had happened to her and Valerie. Then Alice asked what to do. Her father told her to say no to drugs because a cigarette might kill her and her life.

Note. Student stories reprinted with permission.

Alice is 13 years old. She has long brown hair to her waist. Her eyes are baby blue. She's 5' 5" tall, and her favorite food is hamburgers.

Valerie is 14 years old. She should be in high school but she failed all her classes and she has to improve her classes to go to high school. She has black eyes and short black hair. She's 5' 5" tall and her favorite food is pizza.

Alice thought about what her father told her but she didn't know what to do so she decided to go visit her grandma, Mary. Mary is 82 years old. She has long blond hair and baby blue eyes. She's 6' 1" tall and her favorite food is any kind of soup.

When she got there she told her grandma exactly what she told her father and she asked her grandma for some advice. Then her grandma gave her some good ideas to say to Valerie but Alice told her grandma that she doesn't want to lose her best friend. Mary told her granddaughter that Valerie is not the only friend she had. There are a lot of people who are looking for a best friend.

Alice knew that her grandma is right but she wasn't sure to follow her grandma's advice. She thought about what her grandma told her for two whole days. On Monday she went to school. When she was outside of the school campus she saw her friend Valerie come toward her, "Do want a cigarette? Yes or no?" Alice said, "No, because it's bad for me but if you don't want to be my friend that's okay with me." But Valerie said, "I still want to be your friend but if you decide to not smoke, that's okay with me."

Alice was surprised when she heard that Valerie still wanted to be her friend. When Alice got home after school she told her father, Bruce, what had happened. When Alice was done telling her father what Valerie had said, Bruce had a strange feeling in his stomach: "Alice, your friend needs some help."

But Alice replied, "Why, is there something wrong with her?"

"No, but I have a strange feeling that something is going to affect Valerie. We have to take her to a hospital."

"How are we going to do that? I know Valerie. She is not going to let us, but I will try."

When Alice got to school the next day she saw Valerie going to the soda machine. "Valerie," Alice yelled. "Does your grandpa know you are smoking?" Valerie's parents died in a car accident. When her parents died, everything changed her life and her grandpa is tired of training Valerie to be a nice child. "No, he doesn't know. Why, are you going to tell him?" "No, but you are going to be affected by smoking so I decided to take you to a hospital."

"But . . . what?" Valerie interrupted angrily. "You what?" But Alice went on calmly, "But if you don't want to go to the

hospital that is okay but I am going to tell you one thing. You will be affected with drugs so what do you want? Live or die." Then Alice turned her back and walked away.

The next day Valerie was waiting for Alice when Alice's dad took her to school. Alice saw Valerie coming toward her.

"Hi," said Valerie. "I thought about what you said yesterday and I decided I will go with you to the hospital."

Alice was silent for a moment, then said, "Oh, that's great. . . . I will tell my dad to wait for you, but we have to go to the hospital right away. Do you want me to tell your grandfather?"

"No," Valerie interrupted, "I mean I don't want my grandfather to get worried."

"Oh, see you then," Alice said and walked away.

When school was over Alice waited for Valerie.

When four minutes passed Valerie appeared. "I'm sorry I had forgotten all about it," Valerie said breathlessly. Then Alice's dad blew the horn. When Alice and Valerie went inside the car, Alice's dad said, "Where to go young ladies?"

"To the hospital please and step on it," Valerie said. "Yes, mam [*sic*]," said the dad of Alice and drove away.

When they were in the hospital Alice said, "I know a doctor who will help you to get it started."

"Can I help you?" said a young, beautiful woman.

"Yes, can I see Dr. Soup? I have an appointment with her," said Alice.

Valerie said, "A doctor is a she? Why did I come here?"

"Follow me please," said the secretary. The secretary opened the door to Dr. Soup's office. "Dr. Soup will come in a few minutes." Then she closed the door.

When five minutes passed Dr. Soup opened the door and walked in.

"Are you Valerie? I was expecting you. Let's see, you smoke wheat."

"I used to but now I want to get rid of smoking. I want to be a normal girl," said Valerie.

"OK, let's do some X-rays. I need the rest of you to go out." They left.

When a half an hour passed, Valerie came out. Bruce said, "What happened?"

"Nothing. They only did some X-rays and told me to be more careful. We have another appointment on Friday."

"Are you okay, Valerie?" Alice worried.

"I'm wonderful. I didn't know that smoking is illegal and it's not good for you."

The Pig Who Thought He Was an Alarm Clock, by Kyle

There once was a pig named Kyle. He was a pink pig who weighed 600 lbs. Kyle was getting into trouble all the time. Kyle always was laying around, and woke up the farmer and his wife before the alarm could go off.

Jim was the farmer. He was always grumpy. He is 5' 10" tall, strong, a little on the chubby side. Jim has blackish-brown hair, brown or light brown eyes. Jim was always trying to slaughter Kyle the pig.

Bobbie is the farmer's wife. She is 5' 5", a little on the chubby side too. Bobbie has goldish-orange hair and blue eyes.

Bobbie tries to save the pig from being slaughtered by saying, "Breakfast is ready," "Lunch is ready," or "Dinner is ready," so the farmer wouldn't have time to slaughter the pig.

The farmer's wife distracted the farmer so the pig doesn't get slaughtered.

Las Vegas, by Megan

Mary lives in Las Vegas. She went to the Casino. They didn't hire her because she was 15. Mary has long, red hair and green eyes. She is slim. She wears pants and a tee shirt. She lives with her mom. She likes pepperoni pizza. She doesn't have any pets. She enjoys watching TV.

She went to school to get her work permit. She got a job cleaning rooms in a hotel. She is delighted.

One day Mary got in a fight with another girl at school. Mary got in trouble. Her teacher said, "OK, no more fighting."

Mary said, "OK, I am sorry. I won't fight any more." The other girl got in trouble too. The teacher said, "No more fighting." Mary and the other girl were friends again.

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