Summary: Step 4

Single Sentence Imaging

**Goal:** The goal is to develop the student's ability to visualize and verbalize a single sentence.

1. **Single Sentence Imaging (Optional)**
   - Teacher creates a simple sentence using the known noun just visualized and verbalized in the Word Imaging step.
   - Teacher questions with choice and contrast to help the student develop detailed, vivid imagery and verbalization—looking for signs the student is imaging.
   - Student checks through the structure words for detailed imagery and reverbalizes.
   - Teacher summarizes, "Your words made me picture..."
   - Teacher notes signs of imagery.

2. **Phrase Imaging (Optional)**
   - Teacher says a phrase using basic concepts such as up the chair, on the table, down your leg, etc.
   - Student pictures the phrase, gestures any action (such as running her hand up the chair), and verbalizes it.
Our imagery tour has arrived at the heart of *Visualizing and Verbalizing*—Sentence by Sentence Imaging from oral and written language. All previous stimulation is preparation for this step, as here imagery and verbal processing are integrated to form a whole, the "imaged gestalt" needed for higher order thinking.

In the Single Sentence step, the student imaged the parts—the words—to create the whole of the sentence. She can now visualize and verbalize a sentence from parts to a whole, the word-parts creating a sentence-whole. In this Sentence by Sentence step, she again creates mental representations for parts, but now the parts are sentences. Parts to whole again, the sentence-parts create a paragraph-whole. The gestalt of the paragraph is created by connecting sequential imagery for sentences—a whole that is more than the sum of the parts. It isn’t an array of the parts that are imaged and verbalized, it is the parts imaged *together* to create the imaged whole. Why is the whole so important? We discussed this earlier, but let’s revisit it again. It is the whole from which we can reason, think critically, problem solve, and comprehend—we cannot do this from parts.

I wasn’t always aware of the importance of instruction to directly and explicitly teach students to create an imaged gestalt. I assumed, erroneously, that once I taught students to create images for words and images for a sentence, they would automatically create a whole. But they didn’t. Instead, they returned to their pattern of processing parts. As I look back now, I wonder why this didn’t seem apparent
to me in the early days of developing the steps of *Visualizing and Verbalizing*. After all, I knew students came to me because they primarily got *parts* of what they read or heard, details and facts, but not whole concepts. Their propensity to process parts had to be changed with the specific instructional procedures that we now call Sentence by Sentence. The following anecdote from my early days of creating *Visualizing and Verbalizing* will help you see why you must never omit this step.

I was doing V/V with a young girl named Claudia. She had severe difficulty with reading comprehension though she could decode anything and her oral vocabulary was very good. I assume this type of profile is familiar to you now. In a parent update it became clear that her father, a physician, had difficulty with imagery and also had difficulty comprehending and expressing language. About ten minutes into the consultation, he asked what I meant when I said imagery. His wife stared at him and said “You know, picturing something, imagining.” He looked at her and very pleasantly replied, “I don’t know what you mean by that.”

Trying to help him visualize, his wife presented him with numerous things familiar to him and their family. He finally said, somewhat embarrassed, “I don’t think I really see anything, but I understand what you mean now.”

Laughing but understanding, his wife said, “That’s why when I tell you how I want to decorate a room, you don’t seem to get it. That’s also why you are sometimes confused with flashbacks in movies and I have to explain them to you.”

Smiling, he said, “I guess so.” And then turning to me, he confessed, “I have always had difficulty comprehending what I read and I had to reread chapters numerous times in medical school. Can you teach me to visualize like you are teaching Claudia? I think I need to learn to do this.”

Given that he was only visiting, I had only a few hours to try some V/V with him. There we sat in the middle of an instruction area, children and some college students all around us, and he visualized and verbalized with me. Initially he had difficulty creating vivid images for known nouns, but with structure words and my questioning, he began to experience imagery. He was thrilled. I proceeded to Sentence by Sentence, choosing a book with short, self-contained, high-imagery paragraphs at a third-grade level. Without having tested him, I assumed he, as a physician, had a fairly good oral vocabulary. I knew we would have to begin Sentence by Sentence in very easy material so I could be sure he could visualize.
I read him the first sentence. After a short time with questioning, he imaged the sentence. We placed a colored square on the table in front of us as a representation of his sentence imagery. I read him the next sentence from the same paragraph. To my surprise, he did visualize the sentence but his second visualization was unrelated to his first. He was able to create mental representations now, but he had visualized two separate parts. No whole. Experimenting, I placed the second colored square to represent the second sentence, and then read him the third sentence. Again, he was able to visualize, but again he visualized a separate part, something completely different than the first two sentences. Although I had read him only three sentences from a third-grade paragraph, he could not easily summarize the content. He told me isolated parts but no gestalt. He could not tell me the main idea nor give me a cohesive summary of the material. He did not connect the language and imagery to create an imaged gestalt. He did integrate nonverbal information to verbal. He did dual code, but he did not dual code toward a whole; instead his nonverbal and verbal processing were still in parts.

I continued to experiment by reading him an entire third-grade paragraph without interruptions. Again, he gave me bits and pieces of information, but he was unable to accurately summarize the content and derive a main idea. I then had him read a paragraph to himself just to be sure that the listening aspect of the task wasn’t an interference. He responded the same as before—parts and no gestalt.

His difficulty imaging a gestalt was not an isolated incident—the same pattern emerged with individuals of all ages and from all different backgrounds. I watched, listened, and learned from my clinical experience with many different students of varying degrees of strength and weakness processing language. The primary trait they shared, despite a range of oral vocabulary skills and background experiences, was a propensity to process parts but not gestalts. It became clear that Sentence by Sentence Imaging was the most critical step in V/V instruction, as it taught that imaged sentences must explicitly build on one another to form a gestalt.

Sentence by Sentence Imaging

As noted earlier, the goal of this Sentence by Sentence Imaging step is to develop the student’s ability to create an imaged gestalt from oral and written language. The lessons begin receptively to remove decoding as a possible interference and also to stimulate oral language comprehension—listening comprehension.
Using low-level material, the teacher reads the first sentence aloud and the student visualizes and verbalizes it, placing a colored square to represent her imagery. The student checks through the structure words for details on the first sentence, which may be a main idea sentence that summarizes the whole. She does not check through the structure words for each sentence, as this would make the lessons too long and interfere with the lesson energy and her attention.

Reading the next sentences, the teacher questions for imagery as in previous lessons, giving choices, and helping the student connect and sequence her imagery. The student visualizes and verbalizes, continuing to place a colored square to represent each of her imaged sentences.

With the sentences in the paragraph completed, the student gives two verbal summaries of the paragraph: a picture summary and a word summary. In a picture summary, the student touches each colored square and reverbalizes her imagery for that sentence by saying, “Here I saw...”. In a word summary, the colored squares are collected, and the student verbally summarizes the whole paragraph in her own words, using her images as a reference for sequencing her summary.

The teacher's questions are critical in Sentence by Sentence lessons. You must ask questions that not only develop imagery but also direct imagery to appropriate details, leading to the gestalt of the paragraph. Therefore it is important that you, as the teacher, have preread the paragraph and know the gestalt so you can question to it. As your student begins to visualize and verbalize with fewer prompts from you, the lessons will become shorter.

It is important to note that the act of checking through the structure words develops expressive language as the student has to reverbalize her imagery. Reverbalizing through the structure words not only gives her additional practice in expressive language, it also assists her in establishing more fluent verbalization since she is reverbalizing concepts she has previously imaged and verbalized.

Here are the steps of Sentence by Sentence summarized for you to visualize before observing a lesson with Sofie:
1. The teacher reads a sentence to the student, and then asks, "What did those words make you picture?"

2. The student places a colored square on the table as an anchor for her sentence-imagery, and then visualizes and verbalizes the sentence.

3. The teacher questions the student's imagery with choice and contrast, keeping in mind the importance of questioning to the gestalt.

4. The student checks through the structure words on only the first sentence.
5. The teacher reads the next sentences one by one, placing a colored square and discussing imagery for each one. She directs the student to form a gestalt from her imagery, not just separate, unrelated parts.

6. The student gives a picture summary, touching each colored square and saying, "Here I saw..."

7. The teacher collects the colored squares, and the student gives a word summary by verbally summarizing the paragraph in her own words.
A Look at Sofie Now

Before we look in on a Sentence by Sentence lesson with Sofie, note that she is beginning to interact a bit more during the lessons. This is a good sign, since we are still only in the first week of four hours a day, intensive instruction.

Today Sofie arrived in a pretty blue dress, dark hair glistening, and made eye contact with me as she said, “Hi.” It isn’t that Sofie can’t talk, it is that she appears to choose to be quiet, rarely initiating communication. Observing her lack of spontaneous language, it is sometimes difficult to remember that she met all her developmental milestones for language acquisition. She was never referred for speech therapy, never had difficulty with specific phonemes in her speech, nor difficulty with stuttering or swallowing.

Looking at her now, I sigh that she went so long without attention to her basic comprehension problem for oral and written language. She was in the top reading group in first and second grade because she was an excellent reader, and decoding is the primary concern in the early grades. With very little, if any, focus on oral language comprehension in the language arts curriculum, her weakness went unnoticed. As her grade level increased, she had more and more difficulty with comprehension and expression, slipping to the background like pretty wallpaper.

When she arrived today with a little smile, I greeted her with enthusiasm and confidence. In these next few hours, she will be my responsibility. I value her and passionately want to help her reach her potential.

Join us now as we begin our first lesson in the heart of V/V, Sentence by Sentence Imaging. I will help her create sequential, connected mental representations from language, one sentence at a time, toward the imaged gestalt, the imaged whole.

SAMPLE LESSON

Sentence by Sentence Imaging

For this lesson, I paraphrased the “Little Archer” story from Imagine That! Stories, Grade 3:

The little black and white striped archerfish lives in a stream where twigs and leaves hang down near the water. When the
archerfish spots a fly on a low leaf, he swims close. He gulps a mouthful of water and then he pokes his face out and spits at the fly. The wet fly falls into the stream, and the hungry archerfish eats his lunch.

Setting the Lesson

Nanci: “You’re doing so great. We’re going to picture more sentences. I’m going to read you some sentences that are like a little story and you’re going to visualize each sentence in the story.”

Sofie: “Okay.”

Beginning the Lesson

Nanci: “Here is the first sentence in our little story: The little black and white striped archerfish lives in a stream where twigs and leaves hang down near the water. What do those words make you picture?”

Sofie: “I picture a black and white striped fish.”

Note: This is a common type of response where your student may just be paraphrasing rather than imaging. She probably doesn’t have a vivid image and is just saying back the words she remembers. Your role is to stimulate the imagery with your questions and interaction.

Nanci: “Good. What does that fish look like? When you say he is black and white striped, tell me what you are picturing for that.”
for that.” Gesturing, “What are you picturing for his size, little like this or little like this?”

Sofie: Gesturing about five inches, “I see a fish and he is little like this.”

Nanci: “Great. What are you picturing for his color?”

Sofie: “He is black and white.”

Nanci: “Right. The sentence said he was black and white striped. What…”

Sofie: “Oh right. I can picture him with black and white stripes.”

Nanci: “Great. What does that look like?” Gesturing, “Are the stripes little or big and do they go this way or that on the fish?”

Sofie: Shy, “They are the kind of stripes like a zebra has, kind of small...and they go around like this,” gesturing.

Nanci: “Great. Let’s keep going. The sentence said he was an archerfish. What do you picture for an archerfish?”

Sofie: “I don’t know.”

Note: I take a moment to teach vocabulary, but I don’t have her create an image of the archerfish shooting a bow and arrow as I don’t want to convolute her imagery, since the name of the fish isn’t about how he looks but what he does.

Nanci: “An archer is someone who shoots a bow and arrow. We’ll wait until the end of the story to find out why he is called an archerfish. Where did you picture the archerfish living?”

Sofie: “I don’t know. The ocean?”

Nanci: “Let’s see. Let me read the sentence again and see if there is more for you to picture, like where he lives. The little black
and white striped archerfish lives in a stream where twigs and leaves hang down near the water. What do those words make you picture for where he lives?”

Sofie: “Oh. I picture him living in a stream.”

Nanci: “Right. What are you picturing for that stream...is it like a river or a pool or...?”

Note: Again, I don’t accept just words but make sure the words turn into images for her.

Sofie: “I picture a little stream, like a little river.”

Nanci: “Great. Tell me more about what you picture for the stream. Is the water bluish or brownish and is it moving really fast or really slow? Tell me everything you can.”

Sofie: “I see the water sort of a green color and it is not moving too fast. I also see some leaves and grass.”

Nanci: “Great job with the stream. What do you picture the archerfish doing in the stream? Is he swimming or jumping in and out of the water or...?”

Sofie: “I just see him swimming along in the stream. Kind of slow. He just lives there in the water.”

Nanci: “Great. The sentence said the archerfish lives in a stream where twigs and leaves hang down near the water. What do you picture for the twigs and leaves?”

Note: My question focuses her imagery. Rather than reading her the whole sentence over, I read her only the part I want her to visualize.

Sofie: Looking at me directly, “I picture a little branch, a twig hanging over the water and it has some leaves on it. The branch is kind of brown and the leaves are green. I see trees near the stream and some green grass.”

Note: I don’t focus her more on the bank and the trees as it may take a lot of interaction, a lot of time that will lead us off the gestalt of the sentence. She
Sentence by Sentence Imaging

has enough imagery for the bank, the grass, the trees, the twigs, and the leaves. If I asked more questions to elicit more details on those elements of the sentence, we would be doing known nouns for the parts rather than bringing the parts together to the whole.

Nanci: “Wow. Good picturing. Let’s add some more things in our picture. Like when are you picturing this fish in the stream? Is it daytime or nighttime?”

Sofie: “I picture daytime.”

Nanci: “What does your daytime look like? Is it sunny or cloudy or rainy?”

Sofie: “It is sunny. It is really bright and sunny outside.”

Nanci: “Great. What about sound in your picture, can you hear anything?”

Sofie: “It is quiet. Well, I can hear the water in the stream. Just a little.”

Note: I keep the structure words in mind when I question for details. I know we don’t have all the details yet, but in order to move the lesson along, I choose to let them come in when she checks through the structure words.

Nanci: “Good picturing. Let me read the sentence again and let’s see if we have it all pictured. The little black and white striped archerfish lives in a stream where twigs and leaves hang down near the water. Did we get it all?”

Sofie: Thoughtful and hesitant, “I think so.”

Checking Through the Structure Words

Nanci: “I think we got most of it, too.” Putting the structure words on the table, “Check through our structure words and see if you can add anything more.”

Note: Sofie has been successful with the activity of checking through the structure words. I anticipate she will be comfortable with this and she will be easily able to add detailed imagery to this first sentence.
Check through our structure words and see if you can add anything more.

I pictured some branches of a tree hanging over the water and there are green leaves on the branches, too.

**Sofie:** Touching the *what* structure word, "Yes. I told you this is about a fish, an archerfish."

**Nanci:** "Right! Keep going through them all."

**Sofie:** Turning over the *what* card, she touches the *size*, *color*, and *number* cards, quickly reverbalizing the detail. Then she comes to the *shape* card. "I didn’t picture anything for shape."

**Nanci:** "Let’s picture the shape of the fish. Show me with your hands the shape of the fish. Was it round like this or...?"

**Sofie:** Tracing the outline of a fish with her finger, "No. It is a fish shape. Like this."

**Nanci:** "Right! Keep going."

**Sofie:** She touches the *where* and *movement* cards, successfully reverbalizing the details. Then she comes to the *mood* card. "Hmmm. I didn’t picture a mood, but I see the fish as sort of happy... just swimming along in the stream."

**Nanci:** "Yes. Me too."

**Sofie:** She comes to *background*. "I pictured the grass near the stream and some trees."

**Nanci:** Afraid she may not have strong imagery for the twigs and leaves, important elements in the gestalt of the paragraph, I say, "Right. What about the twigs and leaves? What did you picture for those?"

**Sofie:** "I pictured some branches of a tree hanging over the water and there are green leaves on the branches, too."

**Nanci:** "Good. I just wanted to make sure you had those pictured. Keep going."
Sofie: Smiling, she touches the *when*, *perspective*, and *sound* cards, successfully reverbalizing the detail. “I pictured a lot.”

**Reading the Second Sentence to the Student**

Nanci: “You sure did! I’ll read you the next sentence.” I place the next colored square vertically on the table. “We want to make sure we connect our images like this.” I overlap the squares. “Not like this.” I scatter the colored squares on the table, “We don’t want our pictures to be separated.” Connecting the colored squares vertically, “We want them to connect to each other, like a movie.”

Sofie: “Okay.”

Nanci: “Here is the second sentence: *When the archerfish spots a fly on a low leaf, he swims close.* What do those words make you picture? Keep your same fish and your same stream. But the words are making you add some things to your picture. *When the archerfish spots a fly on a low leaf, he swims close.*”

Sofie: “I picture a fly on a leaf. A green leaf. And the fish sees it and he is swimming closer to the leaf and the fly.”

Nanci: “Great imaging. What does the fly look like? A little red bug like a ladybug or a little black...?”

Sofie: “I just picture a fly. He is little and black and he has little wings.”

Nanci: “Great. What do you picture him doing on the leaf?”

Sofie: “He is just sitting there.”
Nanci: “Okay. What do you picture for the leaf? Let me read the sentence again. *When the archerfish spots a fly on a low leaf, he swims close.* What do you picture for the part where it says he spots a fly on a low leaf? What do you picture for a low leaf?”

Sofie: “I picture a green leaf, with a fly on it, and the leaf is sort of over the water. Kind of close to the water.”

Nanci: “Show me with your hands how close you see the leaf to the water.”

Sofie: Showing about eight inches between her hands for the water and the leaf, “I picture it sort of like this. The leaf is right here.”

Nanci: “Great. Now where do you picture the fish?”

Sofie: “I picture him swimming near the leaf. Kind of right over here.”

Reading the Third Sentence to the Student

Nanci: “Great. Let’s keep going and see what happens next. Get a colored square and put it down so you’re ready to visualize. *He gulps a mouthful of water and then he pokes his face out and spits at the fly.* What do those words make you picture?!”

Sofie: Laughing shyly and gesturing, “I see him getting a big drink of water and then sticking his head out and spitting at the fly!”

Nanci: “Me too! What are you picturing for him sticking his face out of the water?”

Sofie: Sort of excited, “I see his head coming out, just a little, and he spits!”

Nanci: “What does that spit part look like?”
Sofie: “He has all this water and he spits it out real fast, like it's coming out of a hose.”

Note: Once Sofie's imagery engages, I don't need to question to elicit as much detail. She is picturing the essence of the sentence and I move along more quickly, saving time and lesson energy.

Reading the Fourth/Last Sentence to the Student

Nanci: “Great job. Let me read the last sentence to you. *The wet fly falls into the stream, and the hungry archerfish eats his lunch.* What do those words make you picture?”

Sofie: Smiling and placing a new colored square, “Now I can picture the fly falling into the water. He is all wet because he was spit on. And I see the fish, the archerfish...the black and white archerfish swimming really fast to where the fly hits the water. And eating him.”

Nanci: “I just want to be sure you really pictured the part of the archerfish eating the fly. What did that look like?”

Sofie: Scrunching up her face a little, “The fish has his mouth open and grabs the fly right in his mouth. I can picture his mood now. He is happy. Sort of smiling!”

Student Giving a Picture Summary

Nanci: “Great job. We have all these colored squares out here. Touch each square and give me a picture summary. Just quickly tell me what you pictured for each sentence. Not all the details but some of them.”

Sofie: Tentatively, “Okay.”
Nanci: “Here is what you do. Touch each square and say, ‘Here I saw...’ Like this.” Touching the first square, “Here I saw a fish and...”

Sofie: “Here I saw a fish. He had black and white stripes and he is sort of little. I saw him swimming in some water. A stream.”

Nanci: “Right. Tell me a little more about what you pictured for the stream and what was next to it.”

Sofie: “I pictured water moving in the stream and...” Eyes up, “And there were some trees and green grass...oh, and some branches with leaves. Green leaves.”

Nanci: “Perfect. That’s enough. Touch the next square and tell me what you pictured. Remember to say, ‘Here I saw...’”

Sofie: Touching the second square, “Here I saw...here I saw...”

Note: Sofie appears to have forgotten her imagery for the square, so I give her a verbal cue to spark her imagery—an imagery cue.

Nanci: “This is the one where you saw something new in your picture. This is where you pictured something on the leaf.”

Sofie: “Oh! This...here I saw a fly on a leaf, and the leaf was really close to the water. Like this. And the fish saw it and was swimming over to it.”

Nanci: “Great! Next one.” Touching the third colored square, “What did you picture for this one?”

Sofie: Touching the colored square, “Here I pictured the fish getting a whole bunch of water in his mouth and then putting his head up and spitting at the fly.”

Nanci: “Right. Perfect.” Touching the last square, “Last one.”
Sofie: Touching the last square, “Here I saw the fly falling into the water, into the stream, and the fish swims over really, really fast and eats the fly!”

Student Giving a Word Summary

Nanci: “Great job, Sofie. You have a whole movie in your head from those sentences. A whole movie from that little story. This time, give me a word summary.”

Collecting all the colored squares, “Just tell me what this was about, in your own words. Pretend I just walked in the room and said, ‘Tell me the story you heard today.’ This was about...”

Sofie: “This was about...” Eyes going up, “This was about a fish, a black and white striped fish that was called an archerfish. His stripes went...”

Nanci: “Sofie, when you give me a word summary you don’t have to tell me all the details, all our images.”

Sofie: “Okay. This was about a black and white striped fish. He swims in a stream and spits water on a fly then eats the fly.”

Nanci: “Great. Tell me just a little more, like where is the fly and how does he get in the water?”

Sofie: “The fly sits on a leaf...the leaf is over the stream, and the fish swims up to it. Then the fish gets a lot of water in his mouth and spits it at the fly. The water knocks the fly off the leaf...and...and the fish eats him.”

Nanci: “Perfect. Now I have all of it. The fish is called the archerfish because when he spits the water, it comes out fast, just like an arrow comes from an archer.”

Note: With only one Sentence by Sentence completed, and hence her gestalt imagery not yet developed, the reason for the name of the archerfish may be too difficult for Sofie to understand. A longer explanation might finally produce her
understanding but developing higher order thinking isn’t my goal yet. My goal is to develop gestalt imaging, therefore I will save lesson time and her energy for that focus.

**Lesson Summary:**

*Sentence by Sentence Imaging*

- Teacher reads the first sentence to the student.
- Student places a colored square for her sentence-imagery, and then visualizes and verbalizes the sentence.
- Teacher questions with choice and contrast, keeping in mind the importance of questioning to the gestalt.
- Student checks through the structure words to develop detailed imagery for the first sentence only.
- Teacher reads each of the following sentences and helps the student form a gestalt with her imagery.
- Student gives a picture summary by saying, “Here I saw...” and quickly describing the images created for each sentence.
- Student gives a word summary by verbally summarizing the whole paragraph in her own words.

**Important Elements of Sentence by Sentence Imaging**

The heart of V/V has many facets that are important to successful implementation. Here they are, in one place, for you to visualize the whole of Sentence by Sentence and use as a reference during your instructional moments. Turn to this section of the manual to answer a question or reassure yourself that you are doing V/V just right.

1. **Begin with oral language comprehension**

   The language in the Sentence by Sentence lessons may be presented
in oral or written form. However, begin with receptive stimulation to develop oral language comprehension prior to developing written language comprehension. You read to the student not only to develop oral language comprehension as a prerequisite to written language comprehension, but also to remove decoding as a possible interference with your goal of developing an imaged gestalt.

2. Placing the colored squares

The student places the colored square to anchor her imagery before she starts to verbalize. The squares are placed top to bottom rather than right to left.

3. Drive the sensory bus for imagery

Follow each sentence with the question, “What do those words make you picture?” Don’t assume imagery. Question to be sure your student is imaging, not just saying words back. For example, if you give two choices and the student chooses one of the choices, question to be sure she is visualizing.

“What did you picture, a little dog or a big dog?”

“*A big dog.*”

“What do you picture for a big dog? Show me with your hands. Are you picturing the dog big like this [gesturing] or big like this [gesturing again]?”

4. Check through the structure words for only the first sentence

After you have helped the student develop sufficient imagery for the first sentence, have her check through the structure words to develop detailed imagery and language for that sentence. Do this only for the first sentence as it is usually the topic sentence, including the main activity or the main character, from which the rest of the paragraph builds.

Do not have the student check through the structure words for the other sentences, the benefits are little compared to the additional time added to the lesson.
5. Picture summary

The first paragraph summary begins from a cued imagery recall, a picture summary. The student touches a colored square and recalls her sentence-imagery, saying, “Here I saw...” The picture summary enables you to be certain your student is visualizing and not paraphrasing. If you developed her sentence imagery and didn’t assume imagery, the Picture Summary will be easy for her. However, if you assumed imagery for a part of a sentence, that will be the part she forgets! Remember, imagery and memory are linked.

If the student touches a colored square and seems blank, give her an image clue, “This is the one where you saw...”

6. Word summary

A word summary requires the student to summarize the paragraph in her own words, using images to support her sequential verbalization. It is often significantly more difficult for your student to give a word summary than a picture summary. Picture summaries let her simply describe her imagery, and since describing images was developed prior to the Sentence by Sentence step, the process is fairly easy for her. Word summaries, however, require a verbal generalization, a distilling of the images into a succinct verbalization—and that takes practice. Often the student will tell you too little or she will tell you all her specific images back again.

Here are some suggestions to help your student with a word summary:

- It is helpful to initiate a word summary with action and fun. Sometimes I get up, walk away a little, and then pretend to be just arriving on the scene, having not heard the story yet. This may effectively stimulate a word summary because it places the student in a real situation. Pretending not to have already heard the story means the student must tell you everything important; she cannot assume you know the story. The play aspect of this technique helps reduce the student’s stress regarding verbalizing and just generally lightens the learning atmosphere.
At first it is helpful to initiate the word summary for the student, "This story was about an archerfish that lives in a stream and..." or begin with a partial statement, "The archerfish lives..."

Sometimes it is necessary to redirect the student from a picture summary to a word summary. Initially her word summaries might be a complete retelling of each sentence-image, which would include images that she created but that weren't in the story. She will need help modifying her verbalization from describing her specific images to telling a general verbalization for which she might access some of her images as support. Discuss and compare the difference between a picture summary, in which her specific images are recalled and verbalized, and a word summary, in which some of her specific images are used to recall concepts but are not stated verbally.

The student may struggle through a word summary so much that her thoughts become disassembled and lack cohesiveness and fluency. It is then helpful to have the student retell the summary, which will improve fluency, or to model the retelling.

A picture summary describes images and a word summary paraphrases the entirety of the sentences. Don’t mix up the two.

7. Begin with low-level material and then increase levels

Always begin with low-level material. The goal is to develop gestalt imagery and verbalization, not to teach content appropriate for your student's grade level. You want to initiate the development of detailed imagery and verbalization, sentence by sentence, toward a whole and dense or high-level material is not helpful for that. Instead, begin with low-level paragraphs to be certain imagery and verbal processing are developing and then extend inch-by-inch into more complex, grade-appropriate material.

For all students beyond third grade, including those in high school and college, I usually begin with third-grade paragraphs that are high in
imagery and also short, which reduces the amount of content necessary to create the gestalt. Obviously, if your student is younger than third grade, use low-level material appropriate for her.

As proficiency develops in Sentence by Sentence processing, increase the difficulty of the paragraphs. For example, as Sofie becomes more apt at visualizing and verbalizing, I will move her from third to fourth grade, and so on, until I have her processing automatically at-or-above her grade level.

8. Written language comprehension

As the student becomes somewhat proficient with receptive Sentence by Sentence, extend to expressive stimulation by having her read each sentence aloud to develop written language comprehension. Reading aloud is important in Sentence by Sentence V/V as you and your student can share the imagery and, more importantly, you are certain she is decoding accurately. As the lessons progress, work on all comprehension processes simultaneously: receptive and expressive (expressive instruction should be done both aloud and silently).

9. Question the sentence sequentially from subject to verb to object

Questioning to develop imagery from a sentence is nearly effortless once you have experience with the technique, but in the beginning it may be difficult to know what to question to first, how much detail to get, etc. Learning the simple and direct steps of V/V is easy, but learning to question appropriately is not.

Unlike questioning in decoding and encoding, where the critical elements stay largely the same (for example, there are a finite amount of phonemes/graphemes and orthographic rules), questioning in V/V is complicated by the fact that the imagery and language changes from sentence to sentence and paragraph to paragraph. This presents the teacher with the challenge of discerning the gestalt as well as the critical details for which to question. Every sentence has new elements and every paragraph has a new gestalt. Please see chapter 19 for specific guidance and practice with questioning to directly and
explicitly develop the nonverbal code of imagery.

For now, as you are learning the steps of V/V, here is a simple guide to start you in questioning sentence-imagery: develop imagery sequentially from subject to verb to object (often from the first of the sentence to the last of the sentence).

- First, question for detailed imagery for the subject of the sentence (the primary noun).
- Second, question for imagery of the verb (what action the subject does).
- Third, question for imagery of the object where the subject acts and where imagery may be combined with the verb.

Let's apply this to the questioning for the sentence, *The little black and white striped archerfish lives in a stream where twigs and leaves hang down near the water.* Moving sequentially through the sentence, first begin imagery stimulation with the subject, the archerfish. Second, stimulate imagery for the fish living in a stream. Since it is more difficult to picture a verb such as living than a verb like swimming, which has more action to picture, don't try to develop extensive imagery for living by comparing what living is to something else. Instead, have the student image the fish living in the stream by swimming in it or floating in it. Third, stimulate imagery for the twigs and leaves hanging down near the water.

10. Question toward the gestalt

You need to not only question appropriately within the sentence, but also direct your questions to develop imagery for the main idea of the sentences rather than the parts. Read the whole paragraph to yourself prior to beginning the Sentence by Sentence stimulation so you know the point of the paragraph—the whole—then question toward that whole. Don't get too much imaged detail for an insignificant part as it will get you and the student lost—seeing the trees rather than the forest.
11. Connect images from sentence to sentence

In order to help your student connect her imagery from one sentence to the next, assist her in picturing the same central character or activity.

Occasionally a paragraph will have a second sentence that deviates from the first sentence. However, there is usually a way to connect the first image with the second image. For example, one paragraph in Richard Boning's *Specific Skills: Drawing Conclusions*, Level E, begins with the sentence, “Enemies may pass the snowshoe rabbit without even seeing it.” This usually creates an image of a white rabbit in a snowy area and an enemy such as a fox or wolf walking by without noticing the rabbit. The next sentence has a moderate deviation, “Although brown in summer, it puts on a coat of white in winter and becomes almost impossible to see.” If we image the rabbit as brown in the summer, we do not need to have a completely different image. Instead, we can keep the same rabbit and the same background but just change the color of our original rabbit and change the season.

*Remember, scan the paragraphs prior to a Sentence by Sentence lesson.*

12. Choose high-imagery self-contained paragraphs

Choose paragraphs that are self-contained and high in imagery. The choice of material is just as important in Sentence by Sentence as it was in the Picture to Picture and Word Imaging steps. Self-contained paragraphs have a beginning and an end within a short paragraph, a closure, which is a critical element for developing a gestalt. Content material such as history or science is not as appropriate for Sentence by Sentence because a paragraph may not have as distinct a completion, a whole thought.

The *Visualizing and Verbalizing* Kit contains two Sentence by Sentence Easel Books with three-sentence and four-sentence stories. These stories are great for Sentence by Sentence lessons, especially since they come with prompts that will help guide you through a complete Sentence by Sentence lesson. *V/V Workbooks* also have high-imagery stand-alone stories, and include suggested imagery and higher order thinking questions.
13. Stop the structure words

The student need not check through the structure words when she is consistently including detailed imagery in the first sentence after only a few questions from you. This may happen relatively soon or take quite some time. However, your student has been using the structure words in both the Picture to Picture and the Word Imaging steps and she has become familiar with them, which will help her begin to keep the structure words in mind as an aid for adding imaged details. When her imagery for the first sentence is detailed and vivid, stop using the structure words. The lessons will be significantly faster, enabling your student to visualize and verbalize more paragraphs, which will lead to more imagery-language stimulation and a potential increase in the grade levels of paragraphs.

14. Use paragraphs with two to six sentences

There are many support materials designed for V/V, including those in the Visualizing and Verbalizing Kit. If you are using other paragraphs for the Sentence by Sentence step, you must be careful to choose paragraphs with no more than six sentences. Five is best. Too many sentences may be too many parts for you and the student to hold in the imagery process. Imagine giving a picture summary for eight or ten sentences—that’s too many, and it would miss the goal of the lesson.

15. Don’t over-question

Do not over-question for so much imaged detail in each sentence that the student, and you, are drained of energy and attention. While it is important to develop imagery for each sentence, there is a fine line between asking too few questions and too many questions. Discerning the difference lies in your ability to monitor your student’s dual coding ability and her energy level. I have observed teachers who asked good imagery questions but they asked so many that they derailed the student. In discussing this with teachers, they indicated that they thought they needed to ask a lot of questions to develop imagery. Yet, as they questioned, they forgot to notice the poor student, who may have had her head on the table or who may have been slipping into poor behavior due to fatigue and anger. Don’t do that! The lesson energy
is more important than tangential imagery detail.

Remember also that changing the learning environment, even just a little, may be enough to help sustain the student's attention. For example, have your student stand up when she is verbalizing an image and then sit down when you give her thumbs-up. Have her get extra Magic Stones for a specific part of the lesson such as a word summary. Have her sit on the floor with you for a new paragraph, putting the colored squares on the rug rather than the table. Have her stand up and take a step for each colored square of her picture summary. Be creative without interrupting the goal of your lesson.

16. The conceptual pegs of color and movement

While children often can't or don't describe their learning process, adults do. Instruction with adults has provided insight due to their ability to report on what their brain is doing. Self-reporting gives us a window into the activity of the brain. The commonality in their descriptions of their neurological processing has led to some understanding of what is and isn't happening for imagery in the mind, especially for those individuals with difficulty creating mental representations. Two common themes have arisen: lack of color and lack of movement.

In the initial stages of imagery development, adults, including professionals, have repeatedly characterized their imagery as (1) dark, opaque, colorless, or in sepia tones, and (2) lacking in movement, often appearing as a bunch of still pictures rather than a connected movie.

With this in mind, consciously develop color and movement in your student's imagery. Do not assume those two elements. When checking through the structure words, encourage vivid detail in your student's imagery. With Michelle, when I asked her to describe her imagery, she initially told me things were brown.

"What color do you picture for the boy's hair, Michelle?"

"Brown."

"What color are you picturing for his pants?"
"Brown."

"What color are you picturing for his shirt?"

"Brown."

"What color are you picturing for the grass?"

"Brownish."

Then I wondered if Michelle just wasn't trying or attending, but now I am certain that her responses were a symptom of, or a characteristic of, her severe weakness in mental imagery for concepts. I instinctively had her include color in her imagery by giving her color to add. "Change the color of the boy's pants to blue. Tell me what color blue you are picturing." She did it when requested and as she progressed through V/V, she began to automatically visualize in color.

17. Observe the student for signs of imagery

As a parent, teacher, or therapist, you are a diagnostician in many aspects of a student’s life. In the Visualizing and Verbalizing program, you are a diagnostician who is looking for signs of imagery as well as the vividness and the speed of that imagery. Notice when and if your student moves her eyes up or defocuses to access her imagery, especially during your questioning. Notice the speed with which she responds to your questions about imagery, as well as the richness of her imagery; is she adding color and movement? Recall the adults discussed earlier who initially described their imagery as dark and colorless, without movement. If that can be happening for them, imagine what might be happening or not happening for your student.

18. Give immediate feedback and rewards

While not shown in all the lessons with Sofie, I continue to give her immediate rewards of Magic Stones, or punches on a card, throughout most of our lessons. She chooses prizes on a regular basis.

19. Monitor for too much verbalizing from the teacher

Often students with weakness in imagery are also not efficiently verbal. They may not express themselves easily and therefore may not be talkative.
This presents you with a situation to monitor closely. Are you doing all the talking and assuming your student is processing and imaging? Your goal is for you to talk less and your student to talk more.

20. How to correct an erroneous image

If the student creates an erroneous image or leaves something out, reread the sentence and ask if she wants to add or change anything.

“Let me reread this to you and see if you want to add or change anything.”

You may want to call attention to a specific image, a part, in the sentence. For example, if your student visualized a horse in a field but the language was “a horse in a barn,” give positive feedback and then help her compare her response to the stimulus.

“Good, you visualized a horse. Let’s see if the words said to picture the horse in a field.”

Reread the sentence, or the specific part of the sentence, to help her compare her imagery to the language in the sentence.

21. How to correct a picture summary

If your student loses her imagery for a specific colored square, simply cue part of the image back for her.

“This square is where you saw the big…”

Usually your student will immediately retrieve her imagery and respond with, “Oh, that’s right. Here I saw…” If she doesn’t retrieve her imagery, then she must not have visualized as vividly and with as much detail as you thought. You may have assumed imagery for the whole image or the specific part she can’t recall. Remember, imagery and memory are connected.

22. How to correct a word summary

If the student begins a word summary without enough detail, use your images to help her monitor her verbalization. For example, if she says only, “This was about how tigers get destroyed,” you can reply,
“Your words make me picture tigers being destroyed by an elephant, poison, space ships, or...” The purpose is to illustrate again that her words create images and she didn’t have enough detail to support her main idea. Encourage her to be specific in both her oral and written expression.

23. Have the student read aloud and silently

As discussed earlier, initially the V/V stimulation is from receptive language during which you read each sentence to the student. As V/V progresses, have your student read each sentence aloud and eventually silently. It is important to have the student apply the integration of imagery and language to written language comprehension. She not only learns to visualize but she learns to read for meaning rather than reading to decode isolated words (as often happens when a reading program is narrowly focused on word calling).

Sequentially proceed in this imagery-language instruction from oral language to oral reading and then to silent reading, to be certain that both oral and written language comprehension are established.

24. Content of written material

The content of the language to be visualized and verbalized is not relevant. You are not teaching content, you are teaching process.

Visualizing and verbalizing low-level, self-contained, nonspecific, random topics can be a source of frustration for older students who may primarily want to improve in a specific content area in school. One college graduate, attempting to pass a medical school entrance exam that he had failed three times, came to me for Visualizing and Verbalizing instruction. Anxious to quickly get his reading comprehension fixed and to launch his career in medicine, he was bothered by the Sentence by Sentence paragraph imagery he was being asked to create for things unrelated to medicine. Elephants, flying squirrels, divers, penguins, avalanches, and the archerfish, while interesting, had no relevance for him and his goals! Though I had done an initial climate explaining the what and why of V/V, he really didn’t understand the issue of developing process before content. I explained it again and he trusted
me enough to continue intensive instruction, four hours a day. By the third week of instruction, he began to visualize automatically, we had jumped from low-level to high-level material, and his comprehension and problem solving improved, enabling him to see the logic in this approach. Soon he was taking an anatomy class at a local community college, passing the tests, and getting perfect scores on pop quizzes. He returned to his hometown, took the entrance exam, and passed easily.

25. Oral vocabulary weakness

The grade level of paragraphs for Sentence by Sentence should be appropriate for the student’s oral vocabulary level, but there may still be words within the sentence that are not in your student’s oral vocabulary, or words you want to be certain she is visualizing. In either case, simply help your student create mental representations for a word. Tell her what to visualize for a word and then be sure she is picturing the images you gave her.

“If you’re not sure about a word, I’ll help you visualize it. For example, let’s picture that word carriage you weren’t sure about. Picture this for the carriage—a big fancy wagon, with a top, that people ride in. It has big wheels and it is pulled by horses.”

Look for signs of imagery as you wait a bit for her to visualize, then ask a few questions to be sure she was imaging and not falling into her habit of letting words go in one ear and out the other.

“What did you picture for the top of the carriage...the wheels...the...?”

Put vocabulary words on 3” x 5” cards to be practiced daily until they are automatically imaged. These are words specific to your student’s oral vocabulary needs, providing your student with differentiated oral vocabulary practice.

26. Automatic imagery is the goal

Automaticity in imagery indicates the student is quickly creating and accessing her imagery. Your goal is for her nonverbal code to process rapidly so as to easily interact with verbal information that is often
coming at her very quickly, especially in oral language. A college student told me, with his eyes glistening, that he had begun to image after a few weeks, but that the “big difference came when I could see a movie...when it all came together automatically. Before that I had to read each sentence, try to create an image, then go the next sentence and try to create an image, and it made no sense when I tried to put it together.” Another adult told me that during the instruction, week after week he was unable to visualize and “then in one moment it was as if a light bulb went on in my mind and I could just see everything. I thought it would never happen. And now I can’t stop it.”

**Oral Vocabulary Is Necessary for Sentence by Sentence Processing**

Oral vocabulary is important for receptive and expressive language processing, becoming especially critical when you reach this step in *Visualizing and Verbalizing*. We cannot visualize sentences without imagery for the parts within the sentences—the words. Your student needs rapid, accurate imagery for the words within the sentences in order to create a comprehensive mental representation of the whole. Chapter 5, “Sofie and a Guide,” discussed the importance of oral vocabulary to comprehension.

*Visualizing and Verbalizing* develops oral vocabulary by directly asking the student to attend to imagery for a word. The goal is to help your student develop the ability to image the meaning of a word, to store that imaged meaning, and to access and retrieve the meaning more rapidly. Remember, V/V students’ oral vocabularies will range from weak to strong, but if your student needs vocabulary development, you should track and extend her individual oral vocabulary in each lesson. Continuing to increase the speed and vividness of her mental representations and continuing to expose her to new vocabulary will result in a significant increase in her knowledge of word meaning.

**Error Handling**

Our sensory system has to process words very quickly, rapidly creating mental representations for each word and the whole as the language tumbles at us. If the student is imaging but her imagery is slow, she may miss a part that was to be
Sofie is beginning to visualize language, but the speed with which she converts language to imagery is still quite slow and within the lessons she misses specific descriptive elements or parts. Don't overcompensate by saying the sentences too slowly as that would then stimulate word imagery, not sentence imagery. Say sentences in a relatively normal speed, not too slow and not too fast.

Listen and watch me help Sofie compare her response to the stimulus in a Sentence by Sentence lesson.

**SAMPLE LESSON**

**Sentence by Sentence**

**STIMULUS:** The campers take pictures of the parrots hopping on the ground.

**ERROR:** Sofie didn’t visualize the action correctly in the sentence.

Nanci: “What do those words make you picture?”

After accurately picturing most of the sentence, Sofie visualized the parrots walking on the ground.

Nanci: “Good job, you have the parrots on the ground. Let’s see if the words say to picture them walking. *The campers take pictures of the parrots hopping on the ground.* Do the words tell us to picture them walking or...?”

Sofie: “Hopping. I picture them hopping along the ground near the campers.”

Nanci: Just to be sure, “Show me what hopping on the ground would look like!”

**Practice and Pacing**

Sentence by Sentence Imaging is the heart of V/V, and the majority of instruction will be at this step and the next step, Sentence by Sentence Imaging with Higher Order Thinking, as you move your student from simple to more complex language concepts, one sentence at a time. Each sentence is visualized, and the sentences are
connected, sequenced, and verbalized toward the paragraph concept, the whole.

This step must never be omitted since the parts of language are being brought together to form the elusive whole, the imaged gestalt. However, as the lessons progress, you not only increase grade levels but you begin to assume some imagery, making your lessons shorter and your questioning less detailed. The student is likely able to express herself better and you are becoming more comfortable with the language necessary to bring the imagery-language connection to consciousness for your student.

Practice this step vigorously with a goal of automaticity in visualizing and verbalizing. Note the student’s ability to create images from language, retrieve those images for the picture summary, and succinctly verbalize a word summary. To decrease the length of the lesson, allowing you to increase the amount of paragraphs included in a given time frame, stop the use of structure words when you note the student is including nearly all the structure word elements in her description of the first sentence.

Given that your student will practice Sentence by Sentence for quite some time, change the lessons just a little by sometimes having her read orally, sometimes having her listen, or sometimes having her read silently. Encourage her not only with your positive interaction and feedback, but also by letting her know when you are increasing grade levels. She will need to see that she is progressing. You can display her progress on the V/V Program Checklist.

Overlap to the next step of Sentence by Sentence Imaging with Higher Order Thinking when you note your student outwardly imaging and giving you good picture summaries and word summaries. Sentence by Sentence Imaging with Higher Order Thinking is an essential step in V/V, easily overlapped to and easily implemented instructionally.

You can do this.
"The little black and white striped archerfish lives in a stream..." What do those words make you picture?

I picture a black and white striped fish.

1. Teacher reads a sentence. Student places a colored square.

What does your daytime look like? Is it sunny or cloudy or rainy?

It is sunny. It is really bright and sunny outside.

2. Teacher questions with choice and contrast.
3. Student checks through structure words on the first sentence only:

"I told you this is about a fish, an archerfish."

4. Teacher directs student to form a gestalt from imagery.

"Here is the second sentence, "When the archerfish spots a fly... he swims close." What do those words make you picture? Keep your same fish... add some things..."

"I picture..."
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5. Student gives a picture summary.

Touch each square and give me a picture summary. Like this, "Here I saw a fish and..."

Here I saw a fish. He had black and white stripes...

6. Teacher collects the squares and student gives a word summary.

This time, give me a word summary. Just tell me what this was about. "This was about..."

This was about a fish, a black and white striped fish.

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