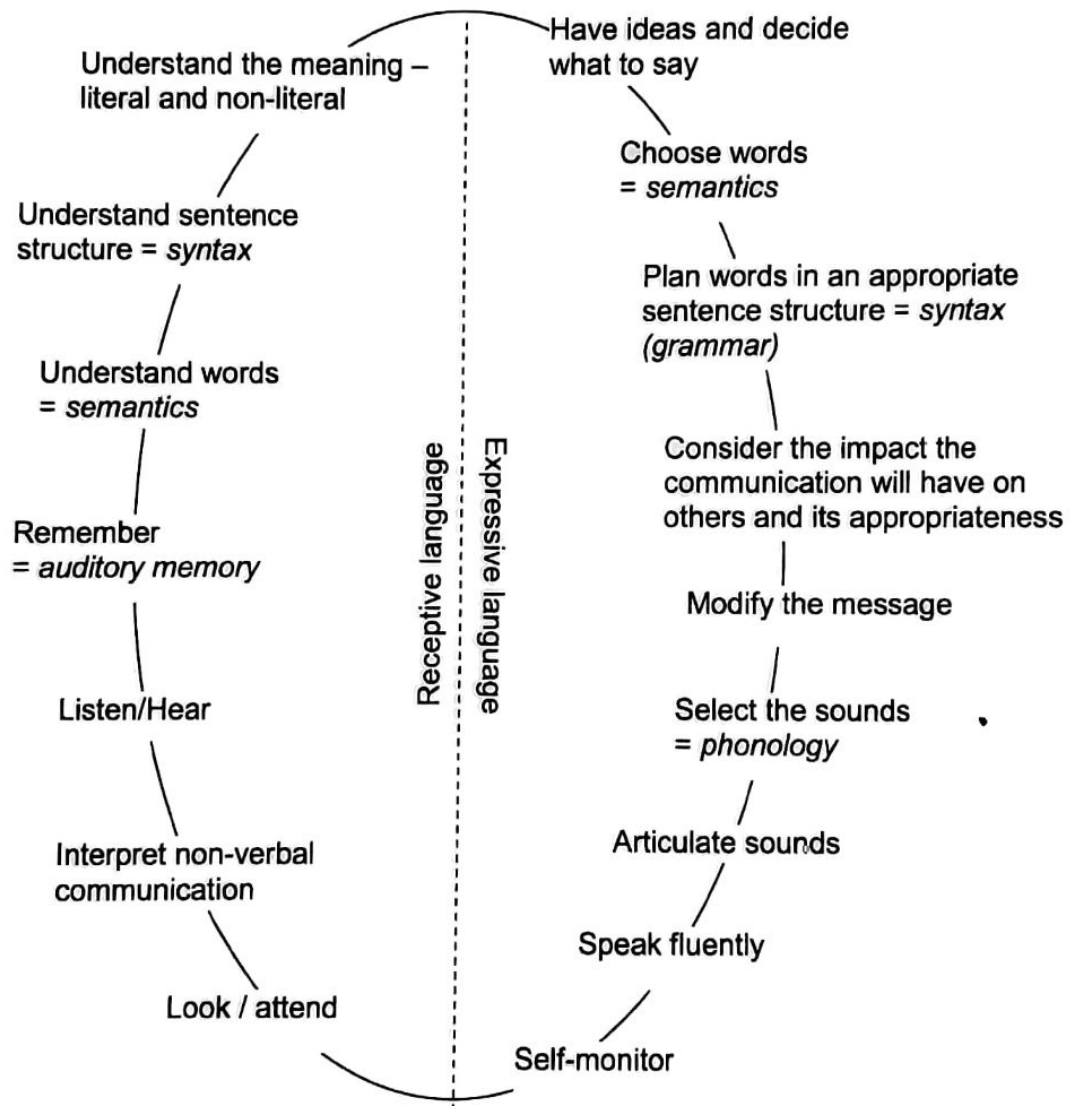


1.0 WHAT IS INVOLVED IN COMMUNICATION?

THE COMMUNICATION CHAIN



The processes involved in communication are very complex and interlinked. This diagram is an over-simplification but it helps to highlight the skills required to communicate. It also demonstrates how the processes are dependent on each other so that a problem in one area is likely to have an impact on other aspects of the communication chain.

NB: although the above relates to a verbal pupil, most of the process apply for children using augmentative systems of communication such as signing or communication books.

1.1 PROCESSES INVOLVED IN COMMUNICATION

Normal communication involves two people, a listener and a speaker and a chain of interlinked processes that enables us to understand and convey messages. This process is called the **communication chain**. The chain involves processes needed to understand language, often referred to as receptive language or verbal comprehension (V.C.) and processes needed to talk, often referred to as spoken language or expressive language (E.L.).

Processes involved in understanding spoken language (Receptive Language)	Implications for learning
<p>Look</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Looking helps to focus our attention on the speaker. • Looking is important because it provides information about non-verbal communication (NVC). (NVC is similar to 'body language'. It includes all the body movements, expressions, gestures, positions but also ways of using the voice; pitch, volume, intonation and clues from the situation.) • Over 50% of messages are conveyed through NVC, so it is important for the listener to look, attend and use the extra information conveyed through NVC. 	<p>Look A pupil may.....</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Miss important non-verbal information which could help him to understand spoken language. • Not interpret NVC accurately; he may not gauge the listener's mood or understand sarcasm. • Have difficulties interpreting and understanding NVC, so he may not use it when he talks. This may mean that his speech sounds monotonous, he avoids eye contact or he may use minimal or inappropriate facial expressions and body movements. He may appear rude or strange. This can affect relationships with others.
<p>Listen and concentrate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The listener needs to be able to concentrate on the speaker. • He needs to be able to focus on the right information and filter out all other sounds and stimuli entering his senses that may otherwise distract him. • Listening is a skill we have to learn. 	<p>Listen and concentrate A pupil may.....</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find listening in a busy environment genuinely difficult. • Tune in and out of the information so he only hears bits and pieces. • Not be able to filter out irrelevant information and this can interfere with his listening and learning. • Find concentrating hard and will just switch off. • Have learnt not to listen.
<p>Hear</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hearing is the ability to perceive and analyse acoustic information, i.e. to make sense of information that enters the ear. 	<p>Hear A pupil may.....</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have had hearing difficulties when younger and may not have learnt to listen, so although his current hearing may be within normal limits he is not listening properly. This is a genuine difficulty and should not be regarded as bad behaviour. • Have hearing problems. This should be investigated.

<p>Remember Short Term memory (STM)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • STM helps to store the information heard for a brief period of time (20 seconds) while it is processed and analysed by the brain. • Information may be lost if a sentence or instruction is so long that it exceeds the individual's STM capacity. 	<p>Remember Short Term Memory (STM) A pupil may.....</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not complete instructions. • Remember the gist of the information but not the detail.
<p>Long Term Memory (LTM)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LTM is the store or bank of all the knowledge an individual has. • The LTM stores all the words. These have to be accessed when a person tries to understand or say a word, so an efficiently organised LTM is crucial. <p>STM and LTM are both essential. Incoming information is stored briefly in the STM while it is analysed and understood by linking the message with existing knowledge within the LTM.</p>	<p>Long Term Memory (LTM) A pupil may.....</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have difficulties making connections with information learnt previously, especially information across different curriculum areas or topics. • Have difficulties remembering how to do things, especially less practical tasks. • Have a limited vocabulary because he cannot learn new words or find a word when needed. This might mean that his speech is hesitant.
<p>Understand To understand what someone is saying the listener needs to know:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The vocabulary. • The concepts used, whether they be abstract, e.g. yesterday, or concrete, e.g. blue. • The sentence structure (i.e. grammar or syntax). For example, did the speaker say '<u>I</u>ll phone Dave' or 'I phoned Dave'? • The intent of the speaker – what is meant rather than what is said. • Associated clues from non-verbal communication. <p>Verbal comprehension is a complex area that needs the integration of many different stimuli for effective understanding to occur.</p>	<p>Understand A pupil may.....</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be able to understand language used in everyday social situations, but not the abstract and academic language required for learning. Although a pupil may appear to socialise successfully with his peers, difficulties with academic language can have a significant impact on his progress. This is particularly true of pupils learning an additional language. • Not be able to assimilate the information, make inferences or use the information to solve problems. • Not learn through reading because, although he might be able to decode the words, he may not understand what he reads. • Try to disguise his difficulties by watching and/or copying others. • Try to avoid tasks by opting out, being disruptive or using delaying tactics. This can be interpreted as a behaviour issue when there may be an underlying language problem.

Processes involved in using spoken language (Expressive Language)	Implications for learning
<p>Ideas and decide</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many thinking, problem solving and deciding tasks require competent language skills. • A speaker has to have ideas, decide what is relevant and appropriate, know what his listener needs to know and organise how to communicate his message effectively. 	<p>Ideas and decide</p> <p>The pupil may.....</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have difficulties generating ideas. This may mean that he copies the ideas of others. • Have knowledge about a topic, but not be able to understand/decide/organise how to use it as required by the task. • Not be able to organise a beginning, middle and draw things to a satisfactory end. This makes his speech (and writing) difficult to follow because it lacks structure.
<p>Choose words</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This means being able to think of and find the correct words from the bank of words in the memory. • A pupil needs to learn and remember new vocabulary all the time. • A pupil needs varied life opportunities or the imagination and ability to think of situations outside his experience in order for words to have meaning and to be able to learn and use them appropriately. 	<p>Choose words</p> <p>The pupil may.....</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have difficulties understanding or storing information, so he is likely to have a limited vocabulary. It is important to link this with difficulties understanding language. • If the words are not stored correctly, it may be difficult to find necessary vocabulary. This means that a pupil may have an idea, but not be able to express it, or by the time he has thought of the word the conversation has moved on. • Use non-specific words, such as 'He was <u>doing things</u>'.
<p>Putting words in a sentence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is referred to as syntax. • It involves an ability to form grammatically correct sentences. • To do this, a complex knowledge of the rules of grammar is required. 	<p>Putting words in a sentence</p> <p>The pupil may.....</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Struggle to form grammatically correct sentences. • Write as he speaks. • Avoid the frustration of talking or writing by saying 'don't know', giving up or storming off.
<p>Consider the impact the communication will have on others and its appropriateness</p> <p>A speaker needs to....</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speak at the right time, in the right way with the right content. • Manage a conversation appropriately. That is, knowing how to start, maintain and finish a conversation. • Use appropriate volume, speed and pitch. Understanding how to speak appropriately is known as pragmatics. It is another highly complex set of skills. 	<p>Consider the impact the communication will have on others and its appropriateness</p> <p>The pupil may.....</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not understand the impact that something he says has on his listener. • May not be able to gauge his listener's mood. • This means a pupil may say inappropriate things without realising. This might be because he has misunderstood the information, has leapt to the wrong conclusion or has heard and acted on only part of it. Poor self monitoring may mean that he is unaware of doing this.

<p>Modify the message A speaker needs to....</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Know how to adapt their message and conversational style to match the situation. • Know how to repair a conversation if it breaks down, be able to seek clarification and ask appropriate questions. • These are complex skills which usually develop after the age of 5 years. 	<p>Modify the message A pupil may.....</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have difficulties using the subtle aspects of communication and managing conversations. Others may perceive this as being 'odd' and will contribute to problems integrating with social and work based groups. • Be unable to change the way he communicates to suit the situation, e.g. talking with peers and then the head teacher.
<p>Select sounds, plan how to say the word or sentence and coordinate articulators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alongside the meaning of each word is stored information about how to articulate or say the word. • It is important to select the right sounds that make up the word and sequence them in the correct order. • The muscles and organs of the mouth have to move with amazing accuracy and speed to achieve clear speech. 	<p>Select sounds, plan how to say the word or sentence and coordinate articulators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are several reasons why a pupil may have unclear speech. • Current problems or past difficulties can affect spelling, either because he may spell words as pronounced or, more importantly, he may have complex underlying speech processing difficulties which can affect his ability to learn new words, read and spell. This might be a significant issue and should be explored with the help of a Speech and Language Therapist.
<p>Speak fluently A speaker needs to....</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speak without stammering or stuttering. • Speak without stops in the middle of sentences, breaking up the flow of words. 	<p>Speak fluently</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hesitancy may occur because of a stammer, expressive language or word finding difficulties. • A speaker who stammers may successfully hide his difficulties by avoiding certain sounds/ words. However, he may have significant fears about certain situations and talking may be tiring and stressful.
<p>Self monitoring</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self monitoring is essential for communication. • Self-monitoring is a subconscious checking mechanism that continuously assesses the appropriateness of the structure, content, form (articulation) and use of the language, and should prompt the speaker to correct himself as and when necessary. 	<p>Self monitoring A pupil may.....</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have problems monitoring his speech and or expressive language and not realise that he has not explained things clearly or has not been understood. • Not realise that he has not understood something you have said or something he has read, so he may not ask for help. • Be perceived as being impulsive and/or disorganised.

Pupils learning an additional language (AL)

Pupils will use more or less the same processes of communication whatever language they are learning. If a pupil appears to be struggling to acquire an additional language, it is important to find out whether he experienced difficulties learning his home language. If he did, he may have an underlying problem with aspects of the communication chain which will affect his ability to learn any language. A Speech and Language Therapist can help with this assessment.

2.0 ADULT-PUPIL INTERACTION AND NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION

2.1 ENCOURAGING APPROPRIATE ADULT-PUPIL INTERACTION

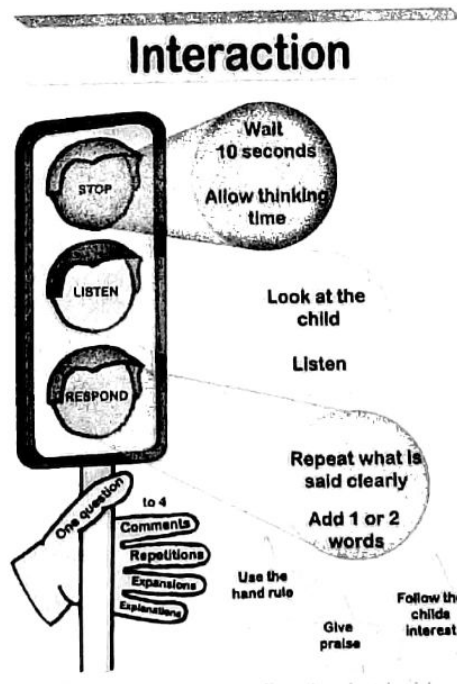
The quality of the adult-pupil interaction can influence a pupil's opportunities to communicate and can facilitate language development (Allen, J, 2011).

Follow the pupil's lead

Following the pupil's lead gives a strong signal that you are interested in what the pupil is doing. It increases the likelihood of your language being focused on the pupil's point of interest and it helps the pupil to sustain his concentration.

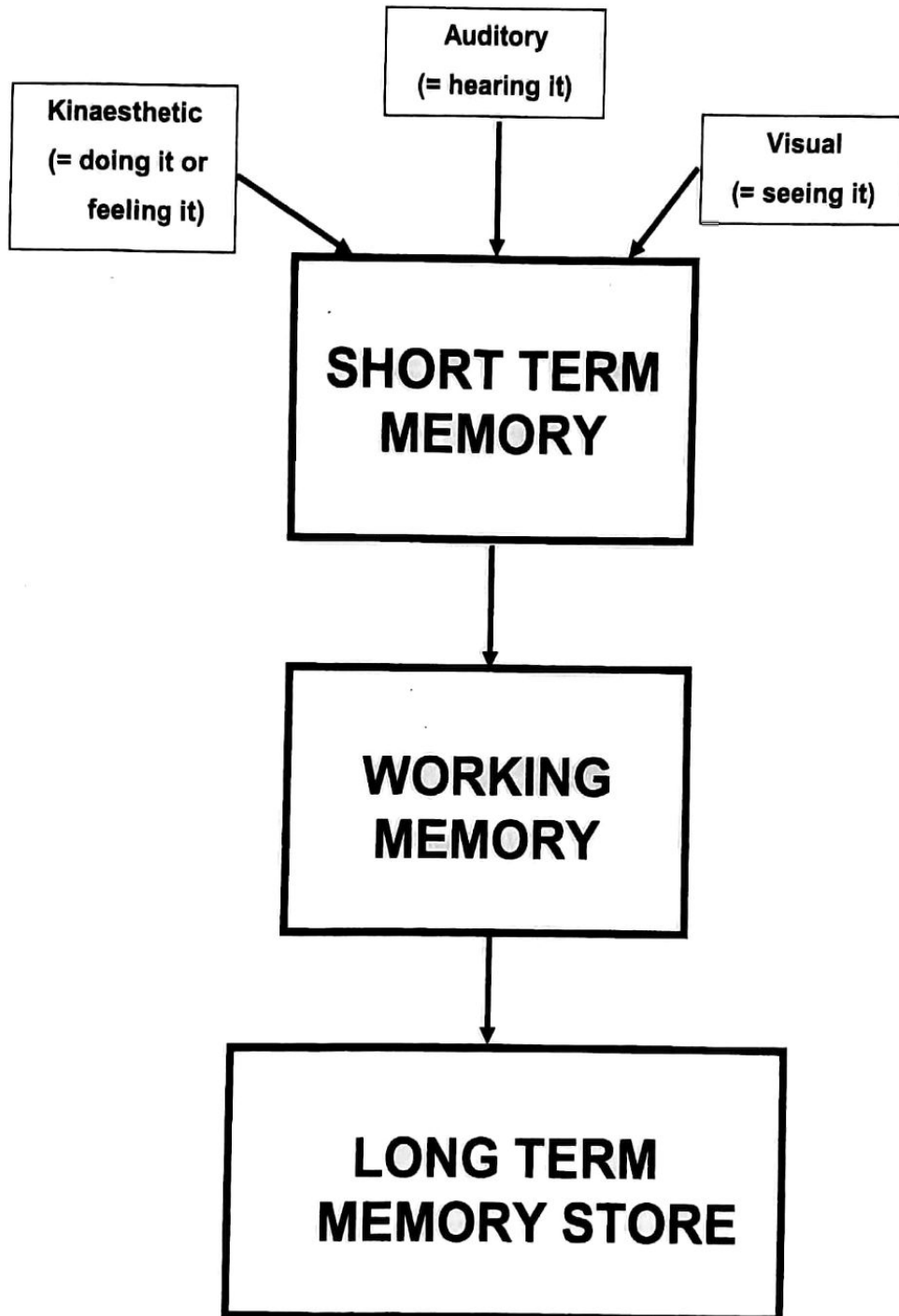
- Observe the pupil within his environment when there is access to a range of activities. Watch what he does and note his preferences.
- On another occasion, provide a choice of suitable activities using your observation of his preferences.
- Wait for the pupil to engage in his choice. Let the pupil lead the activity. You join in by copying the pupil or becoming involved as he indicates.
- If the activity becomes very repetitive, initially let him lead then model slightly different ways engaging in the activity by working alongside the pupil.

While following a pupil's lead, Stop, Listen and Respond



3.0 MEMORY AND INDEPENDENT LEARNING

3.1 A SIMPLE MODEL OF MEMORY BY BADDELEY



Reference: Gross, R and McIlveen, R, 2002, Psychology.

4.1 AUDITORY SEQUENTIAL MEMORY ACTIVITIES

Information Carrying Words (ICWs) provide a valuable framework to improve children's memory and understanding of language. However, once a child can understand at the level of four information carrying words, it is important to give practice in understanding more general instructions and information. The activities below give some ideas. Please note that auditory sequential memory tasks are more difficult than ICW tasks so that a child who is able to understand a 4 ICW sentence or direction may only be able to remember a list of three items. It is also important to promote the development of verbal reasoning and understanding abstract language. See the Blank Language Scheme page 39.

4.2 AUDITORY MEMORY ACTIVITIES FOR 4 – 7 YEARS

N.B. Remember to check that the child understands the concepts and vocabulary

1. I went shopping

Start the game by saying, 'I went shopping and I bought a football.' The next player must repeat this sentence and add a new item e.g. 'I went shopping and I bought a football and some crisps.'

If this is too hard, use pictures. Cut roughly around the shape. Each player chooses and names a picture before putting it face down. The shapes should help but if a child still can't remember he can turn the picture over and see the answer for himself. This ensures success. As soon as possible remove this prompt. You may need an in-between stage. To provide this, cover the pictures with a large sheet of card after each player has added his picture, only remove the cover if the next player gets stuck.

This game can be varied to suit any class topic. It helps to reinforce vocabulary as well as memory. For example:

'I went into space and I took.....'

'I went into the garden and I took

'I went to a hospital and I saw.....'

2. Simon Says

One child is selected to follow the teacher's instructions.

These can be simple e.g. 'Simon says touch your nose, toes and hair' or difficult e.g. 'Simon says before you turn around twice, clap your hands.' The level needs to suit individual or group needs.

If the child follows the direction correctly he can choose a classmate and give the next instruction. If incorrect, the child can choose a classmate but the teacher gives the instruction.

3. Shopping

Put packages and food items on a table. Each child has a turn to go to the shop and buy items requested by an adult or another child.

This activity can be incorporated into role play and can become quite elaborate, but remember that if the play becomes too involved the children will become distracted and the aim of the task will be lost.

Consider using shopping lists. Make strips of card with pictures or words (the number and level depending on the group). One player chooses a list and 'reads' it to the buyer. The buyer can then check his shopping so receiving easy visual feedback for himself.

This game can also be varied as in activity 1. For example:

'The doctor asks the nurse to fetch.....'

'The zoo keeper is going to feed.....'

4. Dressing up

Have a pile of dressing up clothes. Each player is asked to find articles of clothing.

Encourage the child to find all the clothes first before putting them on, otherwise he will forget half of them! Lists of clothes could be made so the children can judge their own success. Again this could tie in with topic work.

5. Telephone messages

Use toy telephones. One player chooses someone to telephone and asks him or her to give a message to another person. For example, 'George, tell Sam to touch the window'. George then has to give the message to Sam and Sam follows the direction.

6. Stepping stones

Use large pictures. Explain that there is a river and that the children need to step on stepping stones to get across. Put the pictures, 3 or 4 deep, along the river. The children can take turns to tell each other which stones to step on. If they get it wrong a crocodile eats them up and they are out! The named pictures should not be in a straight line because this is too predictable. The child needs to go forwards, backwards and from side to side in an unpredictable pattern.

7. Drawing pictures

Give a series of simple instructions for children to draw.

For example, 'Draw a big square in the middle of your paper.'

'Add three windows.'

'Add a blue door.'

'Draw two trees in the garden.'

'Draw four tall flowers.'

This can be used to work on a variety of concepts e.g. colour, number, position, size. Remember to check first that the child understands the concepts.

8. Opposites

Ask children to recall the opposites of words. For example, 'hard – soft' 'boy – girl'. Make it harder by increasing the number of opposites they have to give e.g. 'What is the opposite of long and spiky?'

Make it harder still by giving them a sentence and asking them to recall and or do the opposite. For example, 'make yourself tall' and the child has to make himself short. The following instruction shows how to make this harder, 'hold the long pencil in your right hand' becomes 'hold the short pencil in your left hand.'

AL: These quick activities are ideal for children learning additional languages. The repetition and modelling can support learning at both vocabulary and sentence levels. Many of the suggestions can be adapted to reinforce class topics. They can be played with individual children or in groups for just a couple of minutes and they do not require special resources.

Using Questions and Modelling to Develop Language Skills

The Blank Language Scheme

For Students with Language and Learning Difficulties

The ability to understand, use, create, and know the purpose of different questions is essential for children. This allows them to participate in home and school based activities, as questioning is used to guide children in their learning every day.



Marion Blank studied the language used by teachers in the classroom. She found that different types of questions and directions can be classified into four levels of increasing complexity. Basic questions ask for simple concrete information whereas more complex questions ask for abstract information. The first level begins with questions about the "here and now" (ie. what is in the child's immediate environment) and moves through to more abstract "then and there" questions (ie. what has previously happened to the child or what could possibly happen in the future).

These are the four levels, and examples at each level are given in this handout:

- 1. Matching perception - 'look at it'** - talking about objects that are present. Understanding of these questions develops at approximately 3 years of age.
- 2. Selective analysis of perception - 'talk about it'** - talking about less obvious features of stimuli (objects, pictures etc.). Understanding of these questions develops at approximately 4 years of age.
- 3. Reordering perception - 'think about it'** - talking about looking at objects in a variety of ways. Understanding of these questions develops at approximately 4.5 years of age.
- 4. Reasoning about perception - 'reasoning'** - talking about what causes things to happen and make predictions about future events based upon past experiences. Understanding of these questions begins to emerge at around 5 years of age and is continuing to develop at 6 years of age



We can extend children's thinking and language skills by asking some slightly more abstract questions, and we can simplify tasks by prompting children who are struggling in the classroom, e.g. to respond to questions asked or to tell their news, with simpler questions and modelling the answers for them when necessary. The level of complexity needs to be tailored to the individual child's needs. The development of these skills in children with language and learning difficulties will generally be slower and therefore this model will apply to them beyond age six.

Structured use of questions or directions during daily activities e.g. classroom lessons, when looking at books or other activities, can help to develop language skills by providing exposure to and repetition of the different question types and how these can be answered. This allows you to provide a clear language model and support the development of both receptive and expressive language skills.

As you will see, this goes beyond categorising questions in terms of the first word alone (e.g. who, what, when, where, why, how) since questions beginning with the same word can involve different levels of abstraction. For example, "What is this?" is much easier than "What would happen if I closed the umbrella while it's raining?". As such, questions develop along a continuum of difficulty in tandem with the development of children's story or news telling skills, and more literate language. **Make sure the questions you use are at the level a child can understand.** More difficult questions can be simplified, or you can use the cueing techniques described overleaf to help the child respond.



The levels of questioning and examples of these are outlined below:

Level 1: Matching Perception

At this level, there is a direct match between the 'perception', the information the student can see, hear, feel, or do, and the 'language', the teacher's question, comment, or direction. The focus is on the **whole object**.

Finding matching objects	"Find one like this"
Finding source of noise	"What can you hear?"
Imitating simple sentences	"Say what I say"
Finding named objects	"Show me the ____"
Naming objects	"What is this?"
Naming people	"Who is that?"
Identifying objects	"Show me the ____" e.g. computer
Identifying actions	"Show me the ____" e.g. girl skipping
Naming actions	"What is ____ doing?" "What are you doing?"
Identifying objects previously seen	"Point to the one you saw" e.g. on previous page
Naming objects previously seen	"Which one did I point to?" "What did you see?"
Naming what was seen/done	"What did you see?" "What did you do?"
Identifying an object touched	"Show me what you touched"
Naming an object touched	"What did you touch?"
Identifying an object heard	"Show me the one you heard"
Naming an object heard	"Which one did you hear?"

Level 2: Selective Analysis of Perception

Level two questions require children to focus more selectively on what is seen, heard or felt, and to respond to or identify attributes/qualities/functions etc. The focus is on **part of the object/information**.

Finding an object described by its function	"Find the one that ____" e.g. is used to cut "Show me the one we use for ____"
Naming functions and characteristics of objects	"What is this for?"
Identify and describe characteristics of objects	What size/shape/colour is it? How many? How does it taste/smell/feel? Where is it?
Identifying what is happening in a picture	"Show me ____" e.g. a man crossing the road
Describing a scene	"What is happening?" "What's happened?"
Retaining 2 characteristics of an object	"Find something that is ____ and ____" e.g. fluffy and barks
Describing the function of parts of objects	"What is this part for?" e.g. headlights on a car
Completing a sentence	"Point to a picture that goes with this..." "Finish this sentence ..."
Following directions	"Do ____ and then ____" e.g. "point to the dog, then point to the man", or "jump, then touch your head"
Remembering items named in a sentence	"Who? What? Where?"
Identifying differences between objects	"Point to a part of this and a part of this that are different"
Describing differences between objects	"How are these different?" or "What is different?" (between two pictures/objects)
Naming object from category	"Tell me something that's a type of ____"

Level 3: Reordering Perception

At this level a student can use language to restructure and reorder perceptions and experiences, can make deductions/generalisations about a situation, and is able to make a common link in order to group information together.

The focus is on the whole context, the narrative and retelling an event.

Finding an object using logical thinking	"Find something to use with this" e.g. fork, to use with a knife
Identify alternative	"Tell me something else we could use"
Retaining 3 characteristics of an object	"Find the one that ____, ____ and ____"
Selecting objects by exclusion	"Find the things that are not ____" e.g. red
Naming objects by excluding a category	"Name something that is not ____" e.g. furniture
Naming objects by excluding a specific object	Name something that is ____ but is not ____" e.g. is clothes but not shoes
Defining/describing objects	"What is a ____?"
Following a set of directions	"Do ____ then ____ and then ____" e.g. Put the bulb in, add soil with the trowel, and tap it down.
Giving directions	"Tell me what to do"
Identifying similarities between objects	"How are ____ and ____ the same?"
Sequence pictures	"Make these into a story" "Show me the first/middle/last"
Describing a sequence of pictures	"Tell the story"
Recalling actions in a story in correct order	"What did ____ do first/last?"
Identifying a person when given clues	"Show me the one who said ____?"
Generalise about a set of events	"What happened to all of these"
Assuming the role of another person	"What could ____ say?"
Identifying events after a scene	"Show me what could happen next"
Describing events after a scene	"What will happen next?"

Level 4: Reasoning About Perception

This level requires the student to solve and justify complex and abstract verbal problems. The student has to think about the relationships between objects, people and events, and give reasons as to why things happen. Questions at this level require a student to justify, reason and problem-solve, and involve the ability to predict outcomes, identify causes, explain reasoning based on hints/clues, and formulate solutions.

Selecting the consequence of an action	"Show me what will happen if ____"
Predicting changes in position	"Where would ____ be if ____"
Predicting changes in events	"What will happen if ____"
Justifying a prediction	"Why will ____?"
Identifying causes of an event	"Why did it happen?"
Solve a problem	"What could you do?"
Solve a problem from another person's point of view	"What could ____ do if ____?"
Selecting and explaining the means to a goal	"What should ____ use?" "Why did you choose that one?" "What do we need to ____" e.g. plant a bulb
Selecting and explaining inappropriate means to a goal	"Which thing wouldn't ____ use?" "Why did you choose that one?"
Explaining the structure of objects	"Why is ____ made of ____?" "Why does ____ have a ____?"
Explaining observation or reasoning	"How can we tell ____?" "How do you know ____?"
Explaining the obstacles to an action	"Why can't/shouldn't you ____?"
Explain why something cannot be done	"Why can't we ____ without ____?" e.g. Why can't we grow a plant without soil?

Cueing Techniques

If a child does not understand you, there are different ways you can help. These techniques help to scaffold a child's understanding and should be gradually dropped as the child's understanding improves. Try the following suggestions:

- **Give time** - make sure you have given the child enough time to respond.
- **Delay** - make sure the child has waited until you have finished your request.
- **Focus attention** – make sure the child is looking at you and listening to your request.
- **Repeat/Simplify** – repeat the request again, break it down into parts, or make it simpler.
- **Use questions to clarify** – check that the child understands by asking him questions.
- **Focus on the feature** – help the child focus on the feature he needs to look at to understand your question (e.g. If you're asking how two items are alike, you can draw his attention to the relevant similarity like colour or size etc.).
- **Forced alternatives** – give two alternatives (e.g. "What is he doing? Is he running or jumping?").
- **Sound/syllable cues** – give the first sound or syllable of the answer.
- **Gesture** – use gesture to help a child understand or to cue him/her in to the correct answer.
- **Rephrase** – repeat the request in a different way.
- **Sentence completion** – give the answer sentence for the child to complete (e.g. What colour is it? It's ...").
- **Demonstration** – show the answer without talking and then ask again (e.g. what would happen if we put water in this broken cup?" Demonstrate).
- **Experience the concept** - help a child to experience the answer ("How does it feel? Touch it").
- **Relate known to unknown** – help a child to relate the request to previous experiences (e.g. "The spaghetti is hard. How will it feel after it is cooked? Remember when we cooked the potatoes? How did they feel?").

These different strategies can also be used in everyday situations where you are giving information/instructions to a child, or asking them questions, e.g. about school, home etc. If you feel that the child is not understanding something you have said, try out the strategies above and see what works best with a particular child.



Modelling Language

Sometimes, although the child knows the answer to a question you ask, they might not be able to express that answer using the correct grammar, vocabulary etc. It can help to expose them to a variety of correct language forms in order for them to learn these from you. There are a number of ways you can model language for a child:

1. Listen to the sentence they produce. If it is incorrect in terms of grammar/vocabulary, repeat the sentence back to them, modifying the areas where the child made a mistake, e.g. if the child says "He eated the lemon", you can say "yes, he ate an orange". Make sure to place emphasis on the words that were produced incorrectly.
2. If the sentence was structured poorly or hard to follow, you can repeat it back with a correct structure, e.g. if a child says "he did his homework later he came home", you can say "yes, he came home, and then he did his homework".
3. If the sentence is correct and you would like the child to give more information, you can repeat the sentence back and expand on it, placing emphasis on the information you have added, e.g. if the child says "He had a cake for his dessert", you can expand on this by saying "Yes, he had a big chocolate cake with cream for dessert".
4. If you feel the child is comfortable with the level of grammar and vocabulary you are using and would like to challenge them to develop their language skills further, you can model more difficult sentence structures e.g. if the child says "he didn't eat because he had his breakfast" you can say, "yes, he would have eaten, but he had already had his breakfast".
5. To develop their reasoning skills, you can listen to the answers the child gives you to questions and try to provide alternatives, e.g. "yes, that could be why he ran away, but maybe it was because _____".
6. Remember to be positive about a child's attempts to convey information, when reading books, looking at pictures, answering questions, and chatting with you in everyday contexts, as this will motivate them to communicate with you more and more.



If you require further information on supporting a child with language difficulties in the classroom, please contact your local Speech & Language Therapist.

Functional Emotional Developmental Levels, Ref: Dr. Greenspan.

Adapted by Mari Caulfield SLP in colour & pyramid form



The Action Is In The Interaction