

For PGCE trainees

Communication and interaction

Speech, language and communication needs

Self-study task 10

Introduction to the self-study tasks

These self-study tasks are designed to help trainee teachers on PGCE courses learn more about teaching pupils with special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. They can be used as stand-alone activities or to supplement and extend taught sessions on SEN and disability provided by the school or local authority.

There are 17 self-study tasks in all. Each task will take about two hours to complete, excluding practical activities.

Every Child Matters	
SST1	Inclusion and Every Child Matters
SST2	SEN and disability legislation
SST3	English as an additional language and SEN
SST4	Children's needs and development
SST5	ICT and SEN
Cognition and learning	
SST6	Moderate learning difficulties
SST7	Dyslexia and specific learning difficulties
SST8	Working memory
Behavioural, emotional and social needs	
SST9	Behavioural, emotional and social difficulties
Communication and interaction	
SST10	Speech, language and communication needs
SST11	Autistic spectrum disorders
Physical and sensory impairment	
SST12	Visual impairment
SST13	Hearing impairment
SST14	Handwriting
SST15	Developmental coordination disorder/dyspraxia
Working in partnership	
SST16	Working with colleagues in school
SST17	Working with parents/carers and other professionals

How to use the materials

This is an online resource. Some of the tasks are for you to do on your own; others are particularly suitable to do working with a partner.

Where some of the tasks ask you to record information you need to print out the relevant material first. Other tasks may involve using the internet, which gives you access to rich sources of information about SEN and disability and online forums for additional advice.

Each task includes the following elements:

- the professional standards addressed
- learning outcomes
- an opportunity to explore the concepts, definitions and research findings most relevant to the topic
- ideas for implementing the national curriculum inclusion statement in relation to the topic, including target setting, practical strategies, the role of additional adults and pupil grouping
- practical activities – including action research, child study and class observation
- resources – including books and websites
- an opportunity to evaluate your progress against the outcomes and plan your next steps.

A useful resource to support your studies is **Implementing the Disability Discrimination Act in Schools and Early Years Settings (DfES, 2006)**. It is available free to all schools and there should be a copy in your training institution or school. (If you haven't got a copy, you can order one using the link.)

It should be read in conjunction with **Promoting Disability Equality in Schools (DfES, 2006)** – which you can view, download or order by following the link.

Evidence and sources of information

As you work through these self-study tasks, try to keep a critical and evaluative attitude. Much of the understanding we have of what works, or doesn't work, in relation to meeting the needs of pupils with SEN and/or disabilities has not been fully researched.

Remember:

- many interventions suggested for one group of pupils with SEN and/or disabilities will often benefit other groups of pupils, including those without SEN and/or disabilities
- the quickest way to find out what to do is often to ask the pupil or their parent/carer what they think works.

Literature reviews of 'what works' in relation to literacy and mathematics for pupils with SEN and/or disabilities, which has been investigated in some depth, are available at: www.dcsf.gov.uk/research/data/uploadfiles/RR554.pdf

There are also materials from the National Strategies Inclusion Development Programme, which can help teachers meet the needs of pupils with speech, language and communication needs (SCLN): www.nationalstrategies.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/node/165381

Other sources of information are listed at the end, under 'References'. You can use these to follow up and learn in greater depth about the material covered in this self-study task.

Self-study task 10

Speech, language and communication needs

Professional standards addressed

- Q1** Have high expectations of children and young people including a commitment to ensuring that they can achieve their full educational potential and to establishing fair, respectful, trusting, supportive and constructive relationships with them.
- Q10** Have a knowledge and understanding of a range of teaching, learning and behaviour management strategies and know how to use and adapt them, including how to personalise learning and provide opportunities for all learners to achieve their potential.
- Q20** Know and understand the roles of colleagues with specific responsibilities, including those with responsibility for learners with special educational needs and disabilities and other individual learning needs.
- Q25** Teach lessons and sequences of lessons across the age and ability range for which they are trained in which they:
- use a range of teaching strategies and resources, including e-learning, taking practical account of diversity and promoting equality and inclusion
 - build on prior knowledge, develop concepts and processes, enable learners to apply new knowledge, understanding and skills and meet learning objectives
 - adapt their language to suit the learners they teach, introducing new ideas and concepts clearly, and using explanations, questions, discussions and plenaries effectively
 - demonstrate the ability to manage the learning of individuals, groups and whole classes, modifying their teaching to suit the stage of the lesson.

Learning outcomes

You will understand:

- the range of approaches you can use to remove barriers to participation and learning in the classroom for pupils with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN), and
- communication approaches that will be effective with pupils with SLCN.



Activities

Activity 1 Introducing speech, language and communication needs (SLCN)

Activity 2 Successful learning environments

Activity 3 Planning for pupils with SLCN

Activity 4 Points for action

References

Appendix Suggested answers and solutions

Timings

30 minutes

40 minutes

35 minutes

15 minutes

Activity 1

Introducing speech, language and communication needs (SLCN)



Approximate timing: 30 minutes

30 mins

"Reading and writing float on a sea of talk..."
Britton, 1970

Speaking and listening is one strand of the National Curriculum – it has often received less attention than the reading and writing strands.

Research tells us that:

- pupils' ability to discriminate different sounds is fundamental to phonological awareness – which, in turn, is critical to learning to read and write (Sir Jim Rose's review on the teaching of early reading called for speaking and listening to be given priority, both because they are important in their own right and because they are essential for acquiring literacy.)
- language development is fundamental to social, emotional and behavioural development – around 50–70 per cent of pupils identified as having behavioural, emotional and social difficulties (BESD) have speech, language or communication impairments, and
- there is a substantial group of pupils with SLCN.

The 2009 school census gave the following figures:

The 2009 school census		
Type of need	Number of pupils at School Action Plus or with statements of SEN	Percentage of all pupils identified with SEN at School Action Plus or with statements of SEN
SLCN	104,350	15.4%
Autistic spectrum disorder (ASD)	51,160	7.5%

DCSF, 2009, Statistical First Release: Special educational needs in England, January 2009, SFR 14/2009.

Self-study task 11: Autistic spectrum disorders (ASD) looks in detail at autistic spectrum disorders.

Communicating effectively

This brief activity allows you to develop your grasp of the three elements of language:

- form
- content/vocabulary, and
- use/pragmatics.

All three are involved whenever we communicate effectively with someone else.

Form

'Form' includes all those rules that we follow when we use language – usually without realising what we are doing. The rules, including what we call 'grammar', are remarkably flexible. As David Crystal says, "There is no limit to what we can say, yet all of this potential is controlled by a finite number of rules." We notice immediately when the rules are not followed. For instance, if someone says "I gave book" we are alerted to hear who they gave that book to.

Content/vocabulary

'Content/vocabulary' covers the words or word combinations we use when communicating with each other. 'Semantics' is the study of the rules that govern how we use them. For example, we know that we can meaningfully say, "Felix is a cat", but not, without some further explanation, say "Felix is a cat and a dog."

Use of language

'Use of language', or 'pragmatics' as specialists often call it, has been increasingly studied over the last 20 years. Two examples may clarify what it covers:

- We make 'ritualised' use of language when we casually greet someone with a phrase such as "How are you?", often returned with an equally ritualised "Fine, thank you. And how are you?" without any great attempt to delve into situations deeply.
- We use different approaches when talking to people in different contexts. For example, we are likely to explain difficulties with a class very differently when we are describing them to a headteacher, to a group of close friends or to a partner.

Many studies reflect an interest in the choices people make in different situations. We have so many ways to exploit the language available to us: the search is for the reasons we pick particular forms or vocabulary in a given context.

The P scales

On school placements, you may have observed or worked with a pupil or pupils on the P scales. These performance descriptions allow targets to be set for pupils working below the national curriculum levels. You can find out more about them at www.qcda.gov.uk/8541.aspx

Because many pupils use alternative forms of communication such as sign, rather than oral language, it is often more appropriate to see 'speaking and listening' as 'expressive and receptive communication'. So, in the P scales, 'speaking' appears as 'expressive communication' and 'listening' as 'receptive communication'.

The elements of language



The following paragraph is the performance description for P7. Identify an example of each of the three elements of language as they appear in the P7 description, and write them in table 1.

P7 listening/receptive communication

Pupils listen and attend to and follow stories for short stretches of time. They follow requests and instructions with four key words, for example, 'Get the big book from the library.' They attend to and respond to questions from adults and their peers about experiences, events and stories, for example 'Where has the boy gone?'¹

Give yourself five minutes to complete the activity, then check what you have put against the possible answers in **the appendix**.

Table 1: Elements of language

Form/grammar	
Content/vocabulary	
Use/pragmatics	

It is important to think about each of the three elements when considering speaking and listening in general, and SLCN in particular, for several reasons:

- Form or grammar is important for clarity both of expression and comprehension. We immediately notice grammatical differences if, for example, a person is unused to speaking our language.
- Effective use of content/vocabulary is essential for comprehension and expression. We are accustomed to thinking about the nouns (fraction, peninsula, etc) required in lessons. But when working with pupils with SLCN it is likely to be as valuable, if not more valuable, to focus on the verbs, as they are multi-purpose and support learning across the curriculum.
- Success in the social use of language (use/pragmatics) is vital in school and everyday life. A wide range of conditions in the category of SLCN can affect social development. They include ASD and the equally significant but less well-publicised condition, receptive language impairment. Receptive language impairments are often not spotted at school. These pupils are not deaf, so their hearing will test as normal, but their problems in processing oral language mean that talk can be a barrier. They will find it hard, or impossible, to take part in lessons fully if their special needs are not understood and addressed.

1 A key word is any word in a sentence that must be understood to get the meaning: they are sometimes called information-carrying words. So the pupil must understand 'get', 'big', 'book' and 'library' to understand and carry out the request in the second sentence.

The importance of comprehension

Teachers do a good deal of talking in classrooms. Research suggests that teachers talk for 60–75 per cent of the time in lessons.

The comprehension of all this teacher talk is clearly of great importance. But, as we have seen, talk can be a barrier for pupils who have difficulties processing oral language.

Some useful strategies to support these pupils are explored in the next activity. But the following key principles underpin many of these strategies:

- Teachers must take the greatest care with their own use of language
- Teachers must support oral communication with other modes of communication – visual support, in particular, can help to remove barriers to participation and learning
- Planning, and in particular the planning of questioning, must take account of pupils' needs and levels of understanding

There is a substantial pay-off from following these principles, as the steps teachers and additional adults take to improve their lessons in these ways help all pupils, not just those with SLCN.

Levels of understanding

The stage of pupils' development in understanding and using language can have a profound effect on many areas of their learning.

For example, causal reasoning appears in many different forms throughout the National Curriculum. This is not surprising. Even very young children will have experienced many different events and their effects. The developing understanding of causation (why did that happen?... because...) is important for many aspects of learning.

"Causal analyses of the everyday world of objects and events appear to be able to supply information about the physical world of inanimate objects and also about the mental world of animate agents."

Goswami, 1998

The national curriculum programmes of study contain many references to "problem solving", "understanding the causes of..." and so on. 'Because', or 'cos', is the vital conjunction that links cause and effect. Therefore, teachers need to be sure their pupils are confident in how to use 'because', and have strategies to develop that confidence if they find they are not. One approach to this can be through the P scales, and in particular the P scales for speaking and listening. The development of understanding of cause and effect is well documented and follows a clear sequence. The P scales are set out in a developmental sequence – they follow the typical progress of development in a particular area.

'Because' and 'cos' first appear at P8 of the speaking (expressive communication) P scales.

Understanding cause and effect

This activity shows how an understanding of children's development towards using 'because' appropriately can help you to plan for pupils working towards P8 and the confident use of causal reasoning.



Identify three capacities from the list below that are essential for a pupil to be able to answer the question 'why?' appropriately with a sentence starting 'because' or 'cos'.

- Understanding 'over' and 'under'
- Ability to sequence events
- Understanding how to take turns in a group
- Understanding the use of 'before' and 'after'
- Ability to differentiate between activities, for example in playing with toys
- Ability to answer appropriately questions like 'where is the ball?'
- Understanding that cause comes before effect
- Ability to express the sounds 'r' and 'j'

Put them in table 2 in what you think is the order a child typically acquires them. When you have finished, **click here** to compare with the answers given in the appendix.

Table 2: Development towards understanding how to use 'because'

1	
2	
3	

Knowing this sequence or hierarchy does not tell you:

- what to teach or what changes in the classroom environment will be appropriate for a pupil who cannot yet use 'because' appropriately
- what route a pupil will take towards making any developmental step
- what will be appropriately challenging for a pupil at any point.

However, knowing the sequence can suggest approaches that help you target objectives and pitch your teaching effectively at the right level.

If pupils are just coming up to the stage of using 'because' confidently in a range of applications, you might include plenty of practice in talking and thinking about sequencing in your lesson plans. For younger pupils, this could include domestic activities, such as getting a toy dressed. For others, it might be learning about sequencing through playing games with other pupils or an adult, or by working with an information and communication technology (ICT) resource. And for others, it might mean opportunities to think about the sequence of a story.

Child development is discussed further in self-study task 4: Children's needs and development.

Activity 2

Successful learning environments



Approximate timing: 40 minutes

40 mins

Look carefully at diagrams 1 and 2. They set out the elements of environments needed for successful communication. It will help to refer to these diagrams when working on the activities in the rest of this self-study task.

Diagram 1: Successful communication environments – good communication in lessons

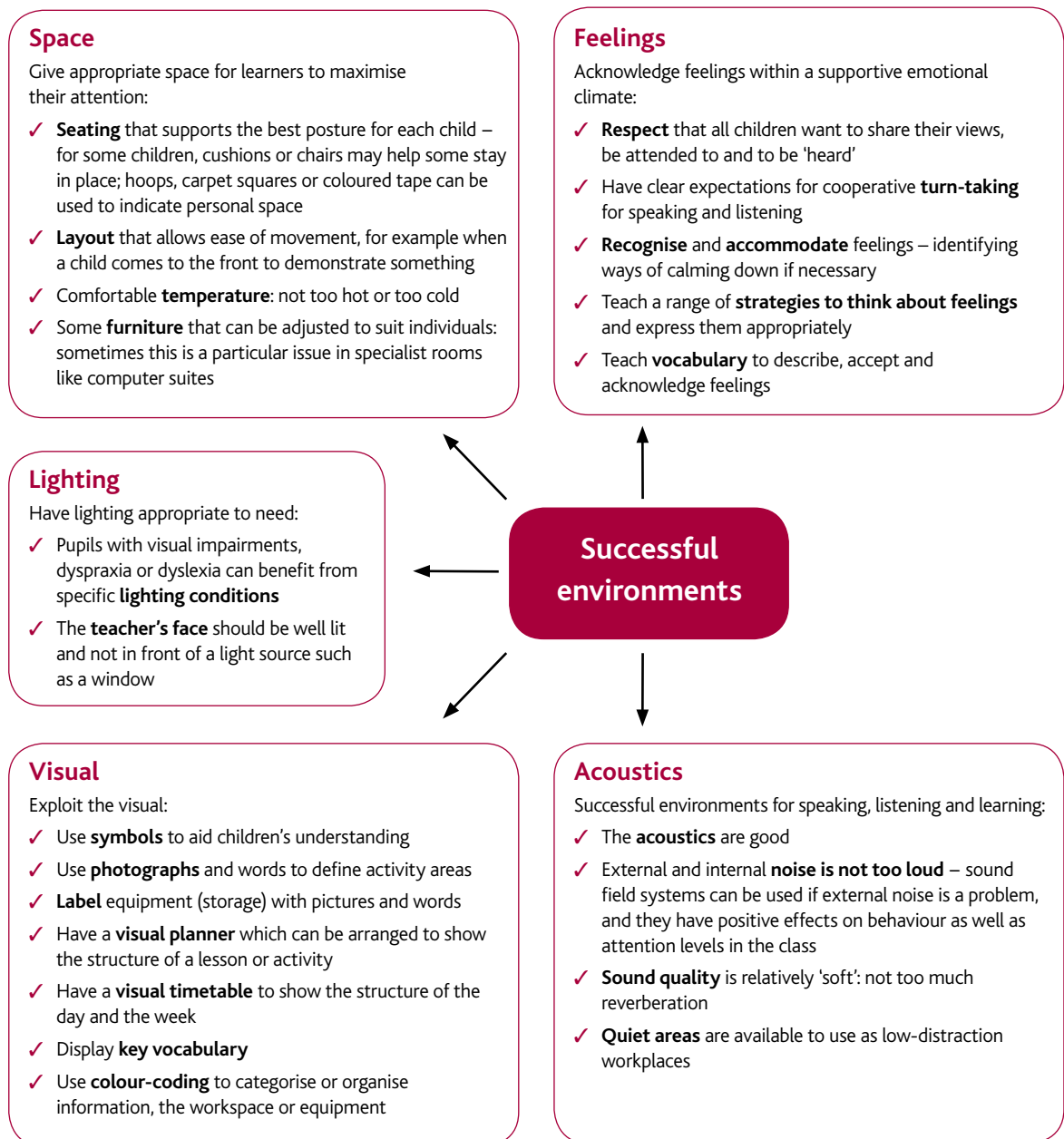
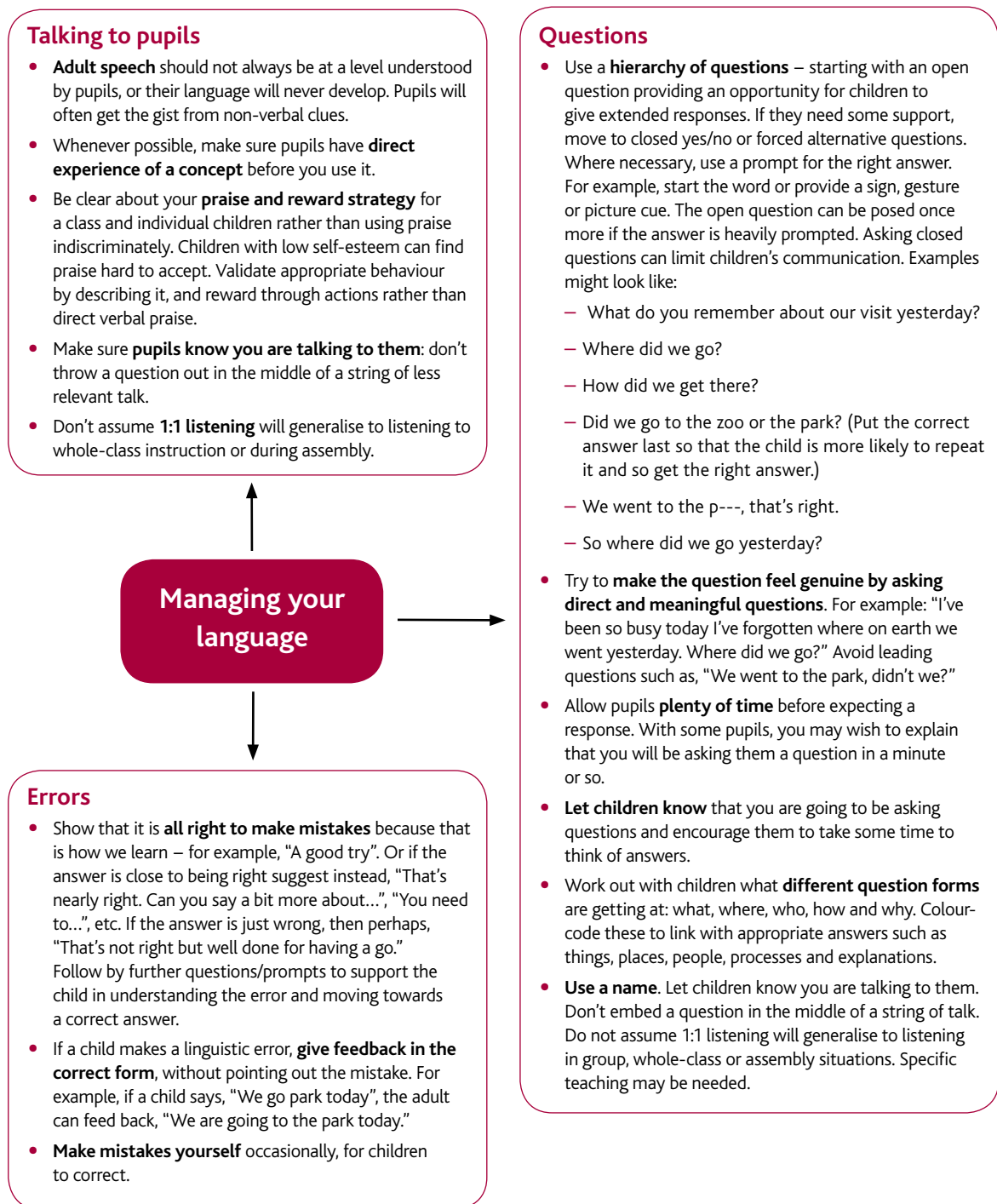
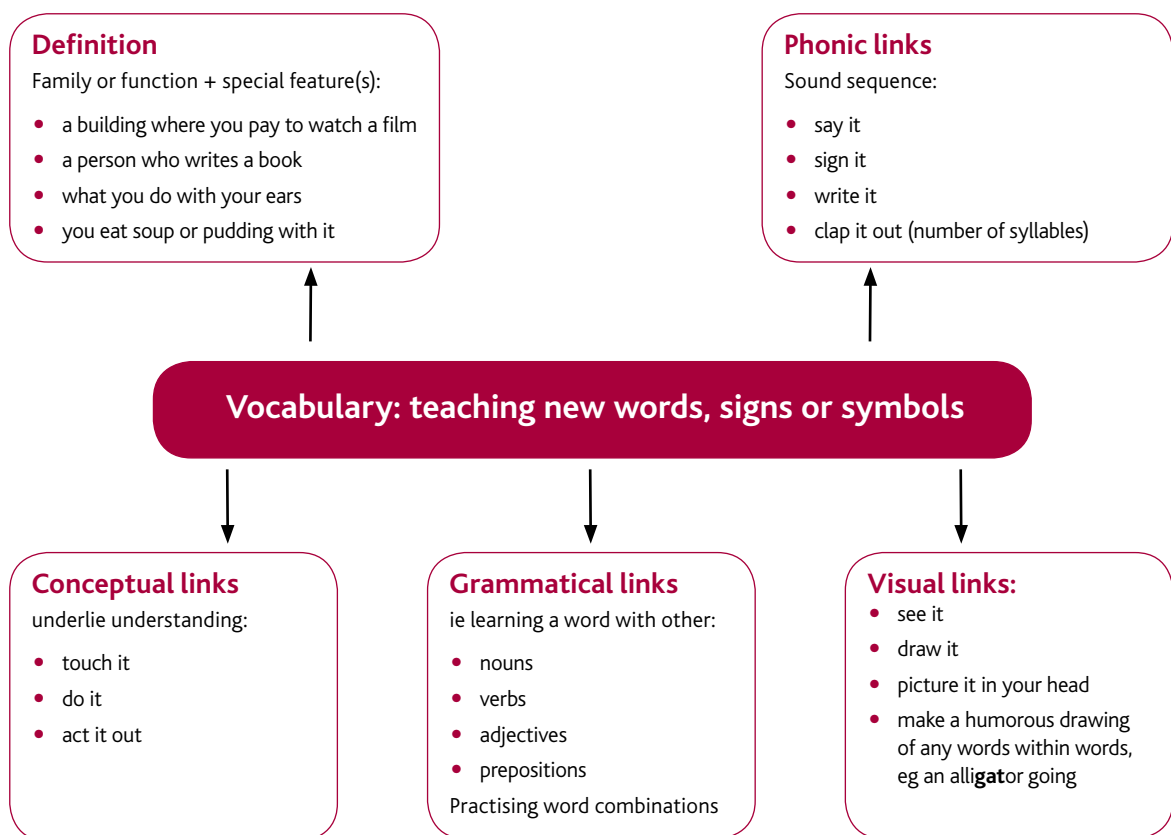
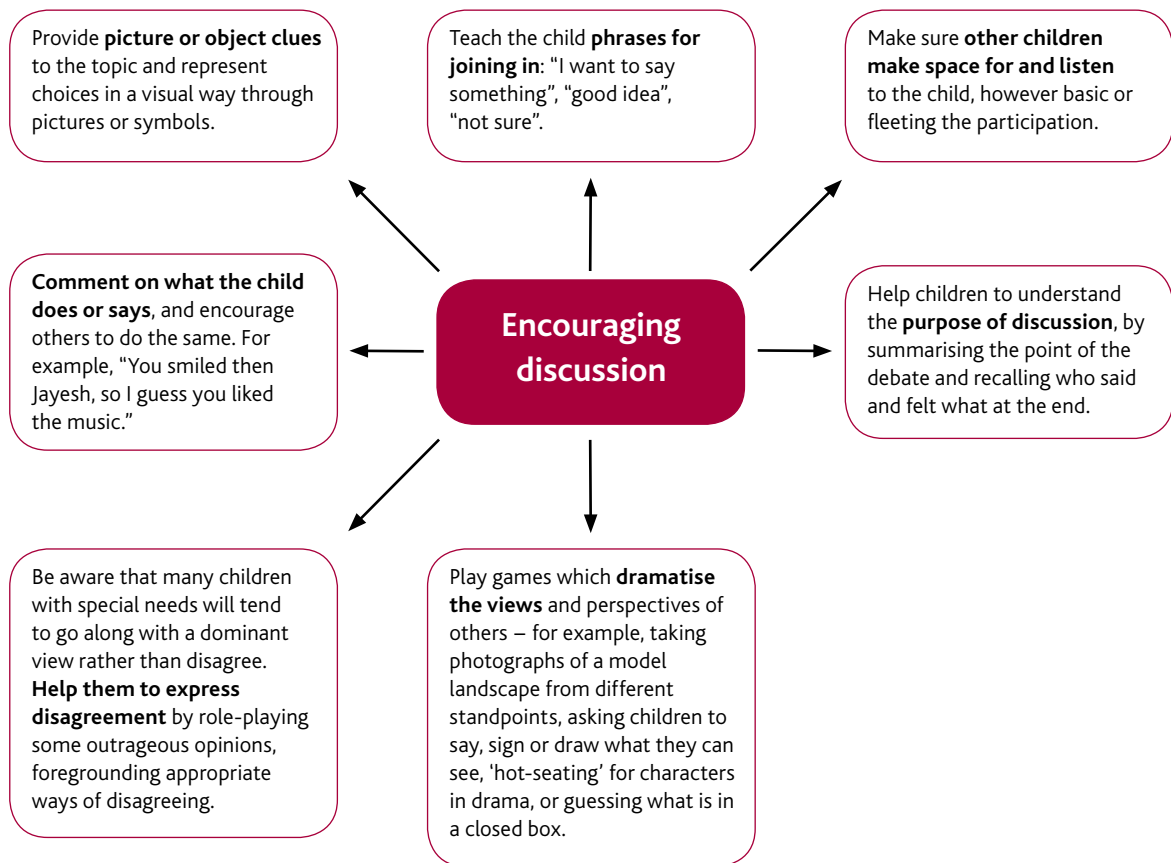


Diagram 2: Successful communication environments – managing your language





These diagrams are adapted from: DfES/National Strategies, 2003, Speaking, Listening, Learning: Working with children in key stages 1 and 2. Crown copyright – reproduced under the terms of the Click-Use Licence.



Now, working on your own or with a partner or group, use the following prompts to complete table 3.

Identify:

- the strategies, including specific elements of the learning environment (see diagram 1), that you have used or observed on school visits or placements
- the context in which you have seen or used them
- why you or others used those approaches, and
- the effect of using these approaches on pupils with SLCN.

Table 3: Communication strategies

Communication strategy from diagrams 1 and 2 you have observed or used	In what context?	For what purpose?	Effect for pupils with SLCN
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			

Next, identify strategies you have not used or seen, but that you might want to try. Remember to record these in activity 4: 'Points for action'.

Activity 3

Planning for pupils with SLCN



Approximate timing: 35 minutes

In this activity, you will look at the plan of a teaching sequence and adapt it for a pupil with SLCN. Read table 4 – it offers a straightforward approach to modifying any plan for pupils with SLCN in primary or secondary schools.

Table 4: Modifying plans for pupils with SLCN

Learning objectives and relevance	<p>Government guidance (DfES/QCA, 2001) encourages you to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• give pupils with SEN fewer objectives to work towards than the rest of the group, and/or• track back to objectives that are appropriate to the pupil's level of understanding.² <p>Think broadly about the underlying meaning and purpose of the activity and reframe or choose limited objectives.</p>
Language features	
Vocabulary	Choose familiar, useful vocabulary as well as vocabulary specific to the topic. Include verbs and adjectives as well as nouns.
Language use	Include language activities that pupils with SLCN can practise in the lesson – eg greeting others, expressing feelings, etc. Choose activities to develop skills that the pupils can use to influence people around them and to understand and express themselves in relation to a range of social tasks.
Breaking down and explaining tasks	<p>Include in your planning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• how you will introduce the important ideas, characters and locations in the lesson to all pupils, including those with SLCN, and• any specific support for pupils with SLCN, including rehearsing key concepts.
Teaching approaches and modifications	<p>Include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the way you or other adults will teach or give support, in whole-class or group work, to include pupils with SLCN, and• the strategies you will use to remove barriers for the pupil(s) with SLCN.

2 The objectives should be challenging – but you need a clear idea of the pupil's level of understanding to get the level of challenge right.

The next two activities are for either primary or secondary teaching – you only need to do the one for the phase you are training to teach.

Work through the activity by yourself or with a colleague. Allow at least 30 minutes for this task. Remember to draw on the approaches for creating a successful communication environment that you explored in activity 2.

Planning to support Norad's learning: primary

Task



Working on your own or with colleagues, choose approaches from within the teaching sequence that will support Norad's learning. You should allow at least 30 minutes for this task.

This is the plan of a primary (year 2) teaching sequence: 'The Gingerbread Man'. The sequence uses a well-known children's story to explore thoughts, feelings and deciding what to do.

Objective

To describe characters from a familiar story.

Overview

Pupils:

- tell the story of The Gingerbread Man together
- use pair and group role-play to retell the story and explore alternative ways it might continue
- reflect on the role-play activities and the actions of the characters.

Language features

Pupils learn the vocabulary for describing the characters in the story. They use retelling and role-play to articulate and comment on the choices the characters make.

Previous experience: the work builds on year 1 work on exploring themes and characters through improvisation and role-play.

Resources

Props and/or costumes appropriate for the characters in the story: the old woman, the gingerbread man, the cunning fox.

The pupil: Norad

Norad is in year 2. His comprehension (listening/receptive communication) is assessed at P8. He has been at this school since he was four. Because his understanding of language is limited and he can be reticent in a group, it can create barriers for him if teachers set tasks that are too demanding or question him in complex ways.

A plan for Norad in The Gingerbread Man teaching sequence

- Decide what learning objectives will be appropriate for Norad if the class is following the sequence on The Gingerbread Man. It may help to look at the vocabulary and language use for social behaviour (pragmatics) that would benefit Norad.
- Decide on some vocabulary and language activities to concentrate on.
- Consider how you will make sure the whole group and Norad understand their objectives, and how you will introduce the ideas, characters and locations in the story.
- Think of four teaching approaches or access strategies that will be particularly helpful to Norad.

Write down your plans in this table:

Table 5: A plan for Norad	
Learning objectives and relevance	
Language features	
Vocabulary	
Language use	
Breaking down and explaining tasks	
Teaching approaches and strategies	

Once you have completed your plan for Norad, [click here](#) to check your ideas against the suggested ideas in the appendix.

Planning to support Darren's learning: secondary



Working on your own or with colleagues, choose approaches from within the teaching sequence that will support Darren's learning. You should allow at least 30 minutes for this task.

Read the following lesson plan and notes.

Year 9 – media and messages

Objective

To understand how different media give messages – verbal and non-verbal

Overview

- As a whole group, students analyse a web page advertising a theme park
- They work in small mixed groups to analyse the messages on posters about road safety, sexual health, etc
- Then, in pairs, students share ideas and discuss their conclusions
- They record their conclusions
- The teacher leads a plenary which pulls the messages of the lesson together and checks that the objective has been met

Resources

- An interactive whiteboard for whole-group work
- Full-sized copies of posters for the groups to work on
- Record sheets for small and larger group conclusions

Student profile: Darren

Darren is in year 8. His speaking and listening is assessed at national curriculum level 3. He has been at this school since he was 11. Because his understanding of language is limited and he can be reticent in a group, it can create barriers for him if teachers set tasks that are too demanding or question him in complex ways. A teaching assistant supports Darren in this class.

- Decide what learning objectives will be appropriate for Darren if the class is following the sequence on media and messages. It may help to look at the vocabulary and language use for social behaviour (pragmatics) that would benefit Darren.
- Decide on some vocabulary and language activities to concentrate on.
- Consider how you will make sure the whole group and Darren understand the lesson objectives.
- Think of four teaching approaches or modifications that will be particularly helpful to Darren.

Write your plans in this table:

Table 6: A plan for Darren	
Learning objectives and relevance	
Language features	
Vocabulary	
Language use	
Breaking down and explaining tasks	
Teaching approaches and modifications	

Once you have completed your plan for Darren, **click here** to check your ideas against the suggested ideas in the appendix.

Activity 4

Points for action



Approximate timing: 15 minutes

Spend a few minutes reflecting on this self-study task and record key points for action below.

What do I want to do next to develop my practice?

How will I do this?

What is my timescale for this to happen?

How will I know if I have been successful?

Do I need to involve anyone else in enabling this to happen?

References

Britton, J N, 1970, Language and Learning, Allen Lane

Crystal, D, 1995, The Cambridge Encyclopedia of the English Language, BCA/Cambridge University Press

QCA, 2009, Planning, Teaching and Assessing the Curriculum for Pupils with Learning Difficulties: General guidance – available online at www.qcda.gov.uk/libraryAssets/media/P_scales_Guidelines.pdf

Rose, J, 2006, Independent Review of the Teaching of Early Reading: Final report, DfES – available online at: www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/phonics/report.pdf

Appendix

Suggested answers and solutions

Table 1: Elements of language – possible answers

Form/grammar	They follow requests and instructions with four key words.
Content/vocabulary	Use of the word 'where?'
Use/pragmatics	They attend to and respond to questions from adults and their peers about experiences.

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Table 2: Development towards understanding how to use 'because' – possible answers

The order that children typically acquire these capacities is:	
1	Ability to differentiate between activities, for example in playing with toys.
2	Understanding the use of 'before' and 'after'.
3	Understanding that cause comes before effect.

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Table 5: A plan for Norad – a possible plan

<p>Learning objectives and relevance</p>	<p>For pupils with SLCN, the lesson can provide opportunities to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • learn about describing characters through practising dialogue – question and answer • engage imaginatively with a story and the characters involved • act out roles in small or large groups and consider alternative courses of action
<p>Language features</p>	
<p>Vocabulary</p>	<p>Leap, toss Cunning, proud, astonished</p>
<p>Language use</p>	<p>Show and name; make choices Describe; ask questions; work with partner</p>
<p>Breaking down and explaining tasks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highlight and discuss key words relating to characters • Retell the story, working with whole class on aspects of character • Retell the story, acting in character with small group • Read the story in a circle, with rhythm (clapping, tambourine, etc) and pictures/symbols to support the reading
<p>Teaching approaches and strategies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use symbols and kinaesthetic approaches to support learning key words – eg acting 'proud', demonstrating 'toss' • Prompt cards with symbols to help with group work – eg to support Norad in asking for help • A chance to retell the story in character, using props • Carefully prepared questions for Norad in whole-class dialogue – be ready to 'scaffold' him towards a response

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Table 6: A plan for Darren – a possible plan

<p>Learning objectives and relevance</p>	<p>For students with SLCN, the lesson can provide opportunities to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • explore feelings related to powerful imagery, such as that on road safety posters • express those feelings to a wider group with growing independence • practise dialogue – question and answer
<p>Overview of activities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To name feelings • To make choices • Understand (at an appropriate level) the aims of advertisers and poster designers
<p>Language features</p>	
<p>Vocabulary</p>	<p>Poster, design, bright/dull, safe/unsafe Fear/attract</p>
<p>Language use</p>	<p>Describe; ask questions; negotiate</p>
<p>Breaking down and explaining tasks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support Darren in finding the elements of the posters that seek an emotional response, such as large letters, bright colours
<p>Teaching approaches and modifications</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching assistant goes through useful vocabulary with Darren before the lesson using relevant visual prompt cards • Prepare 'scaffolded' questions for less confident class members, including Darren, in whole-class activities and give plenty of time for him to prepare his answers to questions • Sign and/or symbol cards are provided for the key words

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