



STRATEGIES FOR MANAGING LANGUAGE CHALLENGES

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There are many strategies that will help a student with language problems. A few are listed below.

1. Take the Mystery Away

Teach the student about language and language strategies. Help the student understand his/her own language strengths and challenges. This process is sometimes called demystification – taking the mystery away.

2. Additional Time

Students with receptive and expressive language problems are likely to have a slower processing speed and should be allowed additional time for completion of work and tests.

3. Sit Close

A student may want to sit close to the teacher so he can listen better. This arrangement may also permit him to watch the facial expression of the teacher when s/he is talking. This may help with comprehension of verbal instructions.

4. Written Copies & Examples

Students with receptive language difficulties may need directions given to them at a relatively slow pace. They may need directions repeated to them. They may benefit from having a written copy of directions that are given orally. Examples of what needs to be done will also be useful.

5. Simplify Directions

Students with language problems may need directions broken down into their simplest form. They may benefit from a comic book or cookbook-type of illustration of steps necessary for completion of a task.

6. Voluntary Participation

Students with language processing problems should not be put on the spot by being required to answer questions during class discussions, especially without being forewarned. Rather, their participation should be on a voluntary basis.

7. Frequent Breaks

Students who have receptive language challenges may use up a lot of energy listening, and, therefore, tire easily. Consequently, short, highly structured work times with frequent breaks or quiet periods may be helpful. Oral instructions may also need to be repeated.

8. Foreign Language Waivers

Students who have experienced problems with their primary language are more likely to have difficulty with a foreign language. Foreign language requirements may need to be waived for these students.

9. Summarizing and Outlining

Reading comprehension is often helped by summarizing and paraphrasing. Learning to outline and to emphasize the main idea and supporting details also helps. It may be helpful to provide key words to orient attention to the appropriate details (e.g., who, what, when, where, why).

10. Staging Procedure

For students with weaknesses in written language, using a staging procedure may be helpful. First they should generate ideas, and then they should organize them. Next, they should attend to spelling and grammatical rules. They may also list their most frequently occurring errors in a notebook and refer to this list when self correcting.

11. Echo Reading

It is helpful to have a student in the lower grades echo read and also read simultaneously with an adult. The adult and the student may also take turns reading every other sentence or paragraph. Additionally, the adult may model a sentence and then have the student read that same sentence.

12. Multisensory Spelling

For students who have trouble with spelling, multisensory approaches should be helpful. These consist of a series of steps that stress the simultaneous use of visual, auditory, kinesthetic and tactile modalities. For example, students could write the words on a dry erase board using colored markers as they are saying them out loud letter by letter.

13. Seeing, Saying, Hearing, Touching

Multisensory strategies are also helpful for learning letter names. Examples include: 1) spreading shaving cream on a table top and having the child write letters in the shaving cream while saying the letter name out loud; and 2) cutting out letters from sandpaper and having the child “trace” the sandpaper letter with his or her finger while saying the name of the letter.

14. Rhyming for Reading

Books by Dr. Seuss, such as *Green Eggs and Ham*, *The Cat in the Hat* and *One Fish, Two Fish, Red Fish, Blue Fish* are helpful for enhancing early phonological processing (e.g., rhyming) in young children.

15. Amplify Auditory Input

Multisensory techniques can be used to increase phonetic skills and to memorize sight words. For example, a student may sound out a word or write sight words on a dry erase board using different colored markers, all while using a *Hearphones*, a *Phonics Phone* or a *Toobaloo* to enhance auditory input. These devices amplify and direct the student’s own voice straight back to his own ears, causing increased auditory stimulation to the brain. These devices can be purchased from CDL. Email CDL at learn@cdl.org for purchasing information.

16. Dolch Words

The *Dolch Word List* is a list of 220 most frequently found words in books that children read. The lists are presented in order of frequency. Mastering of the Dolch words provides children with a good base for beginning reading. Many of the words cannot be sounded out because they do not follow regular decoding rules. The words must be learned as sight words. A list of Dolch words can be found in CDL’s library at www.cdl.org.

17. Read Between the Lines

When first teaching students to infer while reading, the teacher should guide their thinking by using a whole class activity. After the class as a whole has identified a logical inference the teacher should facilitate the examination of the process by which they arrived at their inference. Leading questions may be, “What is the author saying to us? How do we know the author meant this?” Remind students that authors provide clues (imply) so readers can infer.

18. K-W-L for Comprehension

K-W-L stands for the following: K – What do I already know (about a topic)?; W –What do I want to know?; and L – What did I learn? Teachers may have students complete the first two parts of a K-W-L prior to reading. Then, after the reading, students may complete the third part of a K-W-L.

19. Strengthen Phonological Skills

According to Louisa Moats, an expert in the field of reading, older students who are very poor readers must have their phonological skills strengthened because the inability to identify speech sounds erodes spelling, word recognition and vocabulary development. For less severely impaired readers, educators must often target reading fluency.

20. Explicit, Direct, Sequential, Cumulative Instruction

Students who have difficulty with the phonological component of language need individual or small group instruction using methods embedded in programs such as *Project Read* and *Alphabetic Phonics* for elementary school students and *Wilson Language Training* and *LANGUAGE!* for middle school students. The *Lindamood Phoneme Sequencing Program (LiPS)* teaches auditory conceptualization and may be used with elementary, middle and high school students.

21. Individual Evaluation and Remediation

Many students with language challenges benefit from an individual evaluation by a highly qualified professional.

