

Identifying Students Who Have Speech and Language Impairments in the Secondary Classroom

- Lots of students will maybe have difficulty in one or two of these areas.
- Students with significant difficulties with speech and language skills will show difficulties in many of the areas and to a greater degree.
- This is not a diagnostic checklist – it aims merely to draw attention to those students who may be experiencing difficulties with language.

LISTENING AND ATTENTION			
Does the student ...	Look surprised when you ask him/her a question?		
	Need breaks or distractions from the task in hand?		
	Fiddle and fidget when listening?		
	Rush to do an activity before you have finished the first part of the instruction?		
UNDERSTANDING			
Does the student ...	Ask questions all the time?		
	Take things very literally?		
	Ask lots of questions about what you have just explained		
Do you ...	Find yourself automatically simplifying what you want to say to the student?		
EXPRESSIVE LANGUAGE			
Does the student ...	Sound like a much younger child?		
	Seldom use the correct, subject specific word, choosing a more general or easier one instead?		
Do you ...	Find yourself having to concentrate much harder when listening to the student?		
	Always seem to be talking about the same topic, whatever the context?		
Does the student ...	Seem reluctant to answer questions in class?		



	Put his/her hand up to answer a question, then seem to have forgotten or need lots of time?		
Do you ...	Come away from a conversation with the student not really knowing what it was all about?		
Does the student ...	Use a lot of hand gestures when explaining?		
	Use lots of words like 'thing', 'whatsit' instead of accurate vocabulary?		
	Suddenly use a word that doesn't fit at all with what he/she is talking about, or call things by the wrong name?		
	Start explaining something then give up?		
	Start talking about a different subject?		
NON-VERBAL SKILLS			
Does the student ...	Have a quite bland facial expression?		
	Talk too loudly or too quietly?		
	Frequently avoid contact or stare too much?		
	Stand too close or too far away from people when talking to them?		
SOCIAL SKILLS			
Does the student ...	Seem very passive?		
	Become very anxious about changes in routine?		
	'Hover' nearby, seemingly about to say something but not?		
	Make inappropriately rude/risque comments?		
	Always want to be first?		
	Have difficulty in finding a group to work with?		
	Frequently change friends/spend a lot of time alone?		
	Have difficulties sharing?		
	Shout out?		



	Interrupt frequently?		
	Seem on the periphery of the class?		
	Have an over familiar approach when talking to staff?		
	Sound overly formal or pedantic when talking?		
	Always seem to talk about the same topic?		
LITERACY SKILLS			
Does the student ...	Miss out words like <i>the, a, is</i> , in written work?		
	Miss off the endings of words like plurals?		
	Seem to use the same kinds of simple sentences all the time?		
	Make lots of spelling mistakes?		
	Get anxious about reading aloud?		
	Find reading comprehension tasks very difficult?		
	Take a long time to copy from the board?		
	Seem to muddle up the sequence of a piece of writing?		
	Have classwork notes which are frequently incomplete?		
PLANNING AND ORGANISATION			
Does the student ...	Forget equipment, homework, where he or she is going?		
	Have difficulties planning coursework?		
	Not know where to start in problem solving tasks?		
OTHER			
Does the student ...	Find it difficult to apply what he/she has learnt to a slightly different activity?		
PARTICULAR TALENTS/STRENGTHS			
What are ...	The positive things you notice about this student?		



Speech and Language Checklist

Version for Teachers/Support Assistants

Suggested measure:

No problem = always OK

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Inconsistent

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Rarely

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Never

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1. Auditory memory

Recall of information given verbally

a. Follows instructions involving the recall of 4 items (e.g. pen, pencil, piece of paper, ruler)	<table style="border: none;"> <tr> <td style="border: 1px solid black; width: 30px; height: 20px;"></td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; width: 30px; height: 20px;"></td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; width: 30px; height: 20px;"></td> </tr> </table>			
b. Follows instructions that are more complicated (e.g. before you start filtering liquid, check you have collected all the correct equipment and the forms to record your results)	<table style="border: none;"> <tr> <td style="border: 1px solid black; width: 30px; height: 20px;"></td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; width: 30px; height: 20px;"></td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; width: 30px; height: 20px;"></td> </tr> </table>			

2. Verbal reasoning

Using language to mediate in reasoning tasks and problem solving

<p>a. Similarities/differences:</p> <p>Understands and unable to explain relationships between and amongst words (e.g. In what ways are these alike? – book, newspaper, teacher)</p> <p>Can also explain 'odd one out' (e.g. aeroplane, car, lorry)</p>	<table style="border: none;"> <tr> <td style="border: 1px solid black; width: 30px; height: 20px;"></td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; width: 30px; height: 20px;"></td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; width: 30px; height: 20px;"></td> </tr> </table>			
<p>b. Deduction</p> <p>Can manipulate information in order to find out the answer. (e.g. If M went out in the morning and D went out from 3pm to 6pm, when was the house empty?)</p>	<table style="border: none;"> <tr> <td style="border: 1px solid black; width: 30px; height: 20px;"></td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; width: 30px; height: 20px;"></td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; width: 30px; height: 20px;"></td> </tr> </table>			
<p>c. Implied measures</p> <p>a) Understands and can extract hidden meaning in spoken and written language – both short and long texts.</p> <p>(e.g. He said to her 'we're nearly there, look out for the cats eyes on the left, that's where we turn')</p>	<table style="border: none;"> <tr> <td style="border: 1px solid black; width: 30px; height: 20px;"></td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; width: 30px; height: 20px;"></td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; width: 30px; height: 20px;"></td> </tr> </table>			



Can answer:	How many people? What are they doing? Is it day or night? Was the journey long or short?			
b) Humour – understands jokes		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Idioms – understands everyday idioms 'You're in hot water'		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Sarcasm – understands that how you say something can totally change the meaning (e.g. 'What lovely weather we're having!')		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3. Cause and effect

a) Prediction – can given an outcome to a series of events (e.g. 'If x, y and z happen, what might happen next?')	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Uses imagination – what would you do if? 'Tell me what you think about x, y or z'	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. Taking part in a conversation/discussion

a) Sticks to one topic in a conversation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Salience: gives relevant information when relating an event	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Understands non-verbal communication (e.g. eye contact, facial expression, body language)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Understands features of a good conversation (e.g. turn taking, knowing when to start and when to stop)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



Structured Observation

Student:

Teacher:

Subject:

Date:

Teacher focus:	
How did the teacher alert the student to focused listening?	
Were vocabulary and grammar of instructions matched to student needs? Did order of mention = order of action? Were key words and new vocabulary clearly identified and explained?	
How were verbal explanations supported visually?	
How were the tasks differentiated for the student?	
Student focus:	
Did the student follow the instructions and know what to do?	
Did the student start the activity after watching other students?	
Did the student ask for assistance from adults or peers?	
Did the student complete the task independently or with support (specify)?	
Comment on the organisation of equipment:	
Tasks	
Interactions:	
Did the student make spontaneous comments to peers: Task related Not task related	
In conversation with peers does the student: Listen Take turns in conversation Keep to the topic	
In groups does the student: Share equipment Collaborate to achieve the task Negotiate to resolve disagreements Participate verbally/nonverbally	



<p>In class discussion does the student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">ParticipateOffer relevant contributionsUse appropriate forms of language (grammar, address appropriate to the 'audience')Need extra time to respond to questionsExpress his/her ideas clearlySequence the ideas logically	
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Observation checklist

Child's Name	Teacher/TA	Lesson	Date
Child observation			Additional comments
Participation/attention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eye contact with teacher • Fidgety/distracted • Interrupting • Volunteer answers 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of LSA • Successful strategies • Successful resources • Strategies/resources needed
Understanding teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Answer appropriately • Non-verbal understanding • Whole class responses/routines 		
Following instructions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct instructions • Implied instructions • Length and complexity of instructions 		
Access to curriculum	Expressive language	Receptive language	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respond to task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand task 	
Social/interaction with peers			
Observer:			

