Teaching Conversation Skills from Single Words: a Hierarchy of Twelve Objectives

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Suggested Prerequisite Skills

Using any mode of communication, the student:
-- Sorts objects pictures into 10 categories
-- Selects objects by category (e.g. Give me the vehicle)
-- Labels at least 5 objects within 10 categories, including colors, shapes, numbers and letters
Objective #1: The student will make single-word parallel statements about paired objects with 80% accuracy during 15-minute individual sessions with the SLP [e.g. SLP (holding car): *Car*. Student (holding train): *Train*. SLP: *Vroom-vroom*. Student: *Choo-choo*. SLP: *Road*. Student: *Tracks*].

**SUGGESTIONS:**

--Use objects within the same category with multiple contrasting features.
--Use “preemptive prompting” to prevent echoing with gradual release.
--Intelligibility can be addressed simultaneously.
--Reward completion of each pair of items, or
--Each correct response (or even correct prompted response) for learners with very low frustration tolerance.
Objective #2: **The student will respond to two-word, single-feature questions about objects with 80% accuracy during 15-minute individual sessions with the SLP** (e.g. *What color* vs. *What shape* vs. *What sound*).

**SUGGESTIONS:**
--Continue to use preemptive prompting as needed.
--Use materials with many contrasting features.
--Expand variety of features as the student becomes more capable (e.g. *What place, What taste, What feeling*).
--Ideas for questions will come to you over time as you work with the students.
Two Word Parallel Statements

Objective #3: The student will make two-word parallel statements about paired objects with 80% accuracy during 15-minute individual sessions with the SLP [e.g. SLP: My Car. Student: My Train. SLP: Car, Vroom-vroom. Student: Train, Choo-choo. SLP: It’s orange. Student: It’s red.]
Two Word Respond-Repeat


COMMENTS & SUGGESTIONS:
--Typically most challenging skill to teach and learn--be persistent and creative.
--You may want to increase reinforcement again for correct (or prompted correct) responses.
--Preemptive prompting is always necessary initially, at least in my experience.
--You can also use written stimuli (e.g. Core Vocabulary) as visual supports.
--Begin modeling more appropriate syntax in your responses at this level, but keep the questions at 2 words.
Two Word Mixed Practice

Objective #5: The student will demonstrate all skills during mixed practice with 80% accuracy during 15-minute individual sessions with the SLP (e.g. SLP: My car. Student: My train. SLP: What sound? Student: Choo-choo. What sound? SLP: Vroom-vroom.).

COMMENT: I’ve just begun working on this skill with a small group. It’s going well so far!
Objective #6: **The student will make three word parallel statements about paired objects with 80% accuracy during 15-minute individual sessions with the SLP** (e.g. SLP: *This my car.* Student: *This my train.* SLP: *Car go vroom-vroom.* Student: *Train go choo-choo.*)

**SUGGESTION:** Core Vocabulary can be especially helpful to support developing syntax at this stage.
Objective #7 The student will repeat a three word question after responding to it with 80% accuracy during 15-minute individual sessions with the SLP (e.g. SLP: What you have? Student: Train. What you have? SLP: I have car. SLP: What sound train? Student: Choo-choo. What sound car? SLP: Car go Vroom-vroom.).
Three Word Mixed Practice (Small Group)

Objective #8: The student will respond to and repeat who, what, and where questions about objects with 80% accuracy during 20-minute small group activities led by the SLP (e.g. SLP: What you have? Student #1: I have train. What you have? Student #2: I have airplane. What you have? SLP: I have a car. Who flies an airplane? Student #2: Pilot fly airplane. Who drive train? Student #3: Engineer drive train. Who drive car? SLP: A driver drives a car.)

SUGGESTIONS:
--Expand question forms to include “who” and “where” questions about the objects.
--Begin to expand your own utterances to approach conventional English.
--Expand the number of objects used as stimuli.
--Rotate students’ position in the group.
--I have begun using pennies as reinforcers that the students can use to “purchase” sound effects on my device. They love it!
Small Group Conversation Skills

Goal: During a 25-30 minute Speech session, the student will:

Objective #9: respond to and repeat 6/6 SLP- or peer-generated who, what, where, when, why, and how questions related to a given topic.

Objective #10: repeat each question to a different peer.

Objective #11: recall peer-generated details following the activity.

Objective #12: generate 6 different wh-questions related to a given topic.

COMMENTS:

--I begin teaching this skill by generating the questions myself.
--As the students become able, I rotate them through this position.
--I generally choose the topics, but sometimes they’re suggested by the students.
--Student reference Core Vocabulary to prompt question types and sentence structure
--We work on non-verbal communication skills at the same time, but I typically don’t write them as objectives.