# 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

# Single Word Parallel Statements

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.

# Two Word, Single Feature Questions

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

Objective #4: **The student will repeat a two-word question after responding to it with 80%accuracy during 15-minute individual sessions with the SLP** (e.g. SLP: *What vehicle?* Student: *Train. What vehicle*? SLP*: I have a car. What sound?* Student: *Choo-choo. What sound?* SLP*: Vroom-Vroom. What place?* Student*: Tracks. What place.* SLP*: My car goes on the road*).

**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!

# Three Word Parallel Statements

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.

# Three Word Respond-Repeat

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.