101 WAYS TO HELP CHILDREN COMMUNICATE AND LEARN
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LISTENING COMPREHENSION

Classroom Problem	Teacher Analysis Questions	Additional Ideas - Strategies
1. Attention	Volume? Do I get attention? Do I reinforce good attending? Do I speak too quickly? Do I read with enthusiasm? Do I stay on topic? Do I control the noise level? Do I check for attention?	• Hearing? • Reinforce attending behavior • Provide units on listening, listening ears and activities • Modify intonational patterns, rate • Emphasize key ideas and concepts • Be aware of abrupt changes in topic and meandering lectures.
2. Following Directions	Do I use familiar vocabulary? Are my directions clear and simple? Is he/she physically able to do task? Do I probe for trouble spots? Do I check for comprehension? Do I repeat-rephrase directions? Do I Check for processing order? Do I Limit # of ideas in a sentence? Do I write on the board what I've said?	• Make commands relevant to the environment • Practice appropriate routines (sharpening pencils, stacking books, Papers in folders, etc.) • Use manipulatives, and practice in small increments • Make children say instruction in their own words. • Use multiple colors, underline, folded papers, circling, big print • Teach recognition of directional cues. • Teach concepts of time and order • Model sequence in routines often
3. Remembering things	Do I restate the question? Are questions short and simple? Do I allow for processing time? Do I establish a frame of reference? Do I elicit background knowledge?	• Establish links between old and new information • Introduce choices with visual cues • Teach "I don't know" is acceptable sometimes • Provide listening guides during lectures, listening questions • Provide keyword reminders • Use student conferences • Scaffold ideas, relate personal experience
4. Understanding things	Do I restate the question? Are questions short and simple? Do I allow for processing time? Do I establish a frame of reference? Do I elicit background knowledge? Do I preview the topic in advance? Do I explain purpose, expectations?	• Establish links between old and new information • Introduce choices by framing answers • Break down lessons to make them more manageable • Provide processing time • Ask questions in a different way • Use student conferences • Review key vocabulary

	Do I assume children understand me?	•	Use parallel questions to frame participation
5. Asks for repetitions	Do I speak loudly enough?	•	Hearing?
	Do I get attention?	•	Mark important concepts appropriately
	Do I speak too fast?	•	Watch your rate... Robin Williams or Mr. Rogers?
	Do I switch topics without signaling?	•	Propositional content and sentence length
	Do I control the noise level?	•	Don't make bridging assumptions
	Do I cue important concepts?	•	Be pragmatic.. say you are changing topics
	Do I vary my vocal presentation?	•	Be aware of abrupt changes in content
	Do I watch the # of ideas presented?	•	Clarify who, what, where, when, why, how
6. Word Meanings	Do I use familiar vocabulary?	•	Define key vocabulary in advance
	Are my directions clear?	•	Use word maps, webs and semantic organizers
	Do I establish a frame of reference?	•	Brainstorm meanings in advance
	Do I preteach key vocabulary?	•	Talk about common experiences
	Do I elicit stored knowledge & Schema?	•	Relate new vocabulary to previous lessons and experiences
	Do I give examples of subtleties?	•	Old forms-new functions- New functions-old forms
	Do I teach a hierarchy of meanings?	•	One meaning for each word vs. multiple meanings
		•	Play with words, play words games often
		•	Reinforce creative ways of saying words- word mindedness
		•	Use manipulative to demonstrate key concepts
		•	Practice concepts in activities (lining up. delivering materials)
7. New/Main Ideas	Do I use familiar vocabulary?	•	Use visual clues whenever possible
	Do I ask key concepts to be repeated?	•	Use a process approach to discerning main ideas
	Do I establish a frame of reference?	•	"What is important?" - "Why are we doing this?"
	Do I teach the concept of "Main Idea?"	•	"What are the supporting details?" (Chart them).
	Do I provide multiple examples?	•	Distinguish fact from opinion
		•	Use manipulatives to demonstrate key concepts
		•	Use brainstorming groups to discuss new and main ideas
8. Looking/Communicating	Do I provide opportunities to talk	•	Provide units on listening, listening ears and activities
	Do I encourage social communication?	•	Videotape communication exercises
	Do I model appropriate communication?	•	Provide modeling for effective communication
	Do I teach good communication?	•	Discuss parameters of attention, listening, perspective taking
9. Body language	Do I talk about communication?	•	Teach units on body language
	Is communication important?	•	Take pictures and discuss various expressions, moods, etc.
	Do I monitor my nonverbals?	•	Talk about communicating in various ways.
	Do I give feedback on nonverbals?	•	Talk, discuss, model, demonstrate, play communication games

SPEAKING

1. Answering questions

Do I restate the question?
Is the question short and clear?
What are my expectations?
Do I allow sufficient time?
What kinds of questions do I ask?
Do I establish a frame of reference?
Do I introduce choices?
Do I restrict questions in any way?
How do I respond to questions?

- Practice simple (noncomplex) responses)
- Use visuals so students can point to answers
- Teach "I don't know" for some answers
- Provide listening guides, organizers, key questions
- Provide study guides
- Repeat, rephrase, simplify
- Prompt for prior knowledge
- Present choices - concentrate on participation not correctness
- Review types and purposes for questions
- Model - demonstrate proper responding

2. Responding in time

Do I provide enough time?
What are my expectations?
Type of questions posed?
Do I provide adaptations?
Do I introduce choices?
Do I facilitate, prompt, cue?

- Ground responding in well-practiced routines
- Use parallel questioning to facilitate prompt responding
- Allow students to respond in teams.. help each other.
- Rephrase, restructure (participation is key)
- Any fast response is better than no response
- Use a hierarchy of questioning strategies.
- Script responses that can be made

3. Asking for help

What are my expectations?
Do I model questions to ask?
Do I show how to get help?
Do I allow sufficient time?
Do I provide practice?

- Practice simple (noncomplex) responses)
- Providing what I need to know charts
- Teach "I don't know" for some answers
- Provide listening guides, organizers
- Provide a Problem - Question Checklist
- Assign a peer helper
- Review types and purposes for questions
- Model - demonstrate proper responding

4. Asking questions

Do I encourage questions?
Have I modeled questions to ask?
Do I respond positively to questions?
Is my classroom a safe place?
Do I build on students' questions?

- Play practical question games, Clue, 20 questions?
- Teach specific lessons on "how to find out!"
- Use student groups to improvise discussion questions
- Provide what I need to know charts with questions shown
- Teach the meaning of "being wrong" and importance of errors
- Teach *requests,* e.g., clarification, help, action, information

5. Using a variety of words

Do I introduce new vocabulary?
Do I use background knowledge?
Opportunities to expand vocabulary?
Do I teach basic concepts?
Do I facilitate vocabulary growth?
Do I make words interesting?

- Provide common objects for manipulation.
- Do word webbing - networking activities.
- Use word categories and categorization tasks
- Use manipulatives to teach basic concepts
- Write story impressions with key words
- Use sorting and matching vocabulary games

	Do I provide "what-if" situations?	• Use flowcharting, theme-building
	Are vocabulary needs known?	• Teach alternative vocabulary through brainstorming activities
6. Finding the right word	Do I use facilitating prompts?	• Teach retrieval skills, association, visualization, rehearsal
	Do I provide retrieval strategies?	• Word webbing, semantic organizers, network builders
	What are my expectations?	• Talk about words and provide choices
	Do I teach the concept of restating?	• Use visuals and other objects, etc.
		• Identify key concepts in stories
		• Use flowcharting to organize concepts and ideas
7. Saying thoughts	What are my expectations?	• Participation is key
	Do I encourage clarification?	• Model and prompt for even partial participation
	Am I appropriately responsive?	• Use story starters, plays, and conversations
	Are we focused on the here and now?	• Use process questioning to chain responses
	Do I teach the concept of restating?	• Foster participation in familiar routines
	Do I provide sufficient time?	• Language experiences on high interest topics - dinosaurs
8. Describing things	What are my expectations?	• Remember: Participation is key
	Do I encourage elaboration?	• Verbal charades, object description
	Am I appropriately responsive?	• Use story starters, plays, and conversations
	Are we focused on the here and now?	• Use process questioning to chain responses - 20 questions
	Do I teach the concept of restating?	• Foster participation in familiar routines
	Do I provide sufficient time?	• High interest vs. low interest topics - dinosaurs vs. new content
	Do I teaching organizing and clarifying?	• Verbal games, video taping, modeling, working in teams
	Do I use routines to foster description?	• Read - Say - Write
9. Staying on topic	Do I encourage communication?	• Provide planned time for discussion and conversation
	What are my expectations for topics?	• Establish working discussion groups
	Who establishes the topics?	• Provide topics that are familiar and within vocabulary abilities
	Are topics teacher or child centered?	• Provide adequate response time
	Do students work together or alone?	• Allow students work in pairs and explain topics together
	How do I facilitate topic maintenance?	• Use turnabouts, attention focusing
	Aware of pragmatics?	• Use description, problem solving, enacting scenarios, or routines
10. Getting to the point	What are my expectations?	• Set boundaries for discussion
	Do I provide sufficient time?	• Provide cues to limit content
	Do I facilitate correct responding?	• Use guided questioning to focus attention
		• Use frequent reminders of topic
11. Putting events in order	Do I encourage conversation?	• Model and demonstrate proper sequencing
	What are the communication rules?	• Allow students to work in pairs
	Do I model proper order?	• Use a variety of curriculum-base sequencing activities
	Do I teach order-based concepts?	• Segment stories and reconstruct or retell

	Are my expectations reasonable?	• Use guided questioning, story flowcharting
		• Graphically illustrate order in communication
12. * Poor grammar	Do I model appropriate grammar?	• During instruction, model correct utterances
13. * Complete sentences	Do I redirect incorrect responses?	• New forms - old functions
14. * Short sentences	Do I focus on structure in old meaning?	• Use high interest familiar content to model grammar
15. * Expanding answers	Do I encourage full communication?	• Various grammatical programs available
	Teacher or child centered?	• Focus on meaning making first
		• Use of strength areas
		• Communication activities requiring elaboration
		• Barrier activities requiring greater specificity
		• Verbal matching exercises
		• Use cooperative groups to encourage greater elaboration
		• Use description, problem solving, enacting scenarios, or routines
16. * Having a conversation	Do I encourage communication?	• Use discussion groups for all purposes
17. * Talking in a group	Do I facilitate interaction?	• Set high communicative expectations
	How do use communication?	• Language is synergistic meaning making in communication
	What kind of classroom do I have?	• Design activities to create interaction, physical first
	Do I use communication to teach?	• Teach meaning, problem solving, analysis and synthesis in groups
	Physical Arrangements of my class?	• Organize the physical space to facilitate interaction
		• Provide planned sharing and discussion times
		• Cooperative learning, dialogue groups, editing, formulating
18. * Saying differently	Do I encourage alterative answers?	• Model a variety of responses to a questions
19. * Getting upset	How to I handle student responses?	• Ask for different answers
	Do I reward innovation and difference?	• Encourage group support and different vocabulary choices.
	Do I foster a sense of competence?	• Provide support for any level of participation

50 Classroom Pointers Teachers & Clinicians Should Follow

1. Make language more visible... act it out.
2. Encourage participation, e.g., yes/no, repetitions, choosing an answer, short phrases, etc.
3. Rephrase directions... make students say things different ways, "Put your finger on," becomes "Touch the."
4. Provide frequent feedback for verbalizations.
5. Accept different levels of verbal responses ... remember, participation is key.
6. Change your voice while talking.
7. Review vocabulary before a lesson.... engage often in preteaching. Recognize the difference between proactive and reactive instruction.
8. Repeat instructions and check with students often. Keep directions simple and short, use a slower rate of presentation.
10. Use frequent cuing techniques including, modeling the response first, providing a key word, carrier phrase, first sound, etc.
11. Ground language in a routine and act it out, practice the routines, use them as scaffolds.
12. Make frequent checks for comprehension. Don't assume anything with regard to understanding.

13. Use word webs, story organizers, vocabulary classification to build word knowledge.
14. Always elicit stored knowledge and schema... remember the story about dinosaurs.
15. Always state when the topic is changing. Children are entrenched in routines and avoid interruptions to their habits and thoughts.
16. Use explicit transition comments when discussing multiple ideas.
17. Teach students to listen for specific bits of information to signal changes in rules, procedures, routines. Agree on these ahead of time.
18. Post and review class rules, schedules, assignments, procedures, routines, etc. Use picture symbols as well as written language.
19. Make children say the instructions in their own words.
20. Follow Ellen's teachable moment theory. Don't pass up an opportunity.
21. Remember the itsy-bitsy principle. Keep things small. You can do it. It comes naturally after a while.
22. Teach time management and organization. Use calendars, written time schedules, and other reminders.
23. Preview the topic of discussion or reading with focal questions that will be discussed later. Prime the pump.
24. Teach students to wait when there are multiple questions, wait, present choices, use scaffolding.
25. Take your time. All students have some special needs and require individualized instruction.
26. Examine your realistic expectations. Stop teaching to the mean.
27. Foster a sense of competence... children need to know that mistakes are learning tools. That's why we have scrapbooks.
28. Limit the number of ideas in a sentence.
29. Review daily routines often and make the implicit ... explicit
30. Use small groups for all types of activities, problem solving, discussion, brainstorming, etc.
31. Have one child provide choices for another.
32. Give adequate time for responding.
33. Use as many visuals as possible.... all amplification devices you can, oversize print and multiple colors.
34. Encourage children to establish their own expectations for behavior, learning, etc. with your guidance.
35. Encourage verbal interaction between students. Language is meaning making for communication.
36. Minimize visual and auditory distractions.
37. Create a physical environment that facilitates classroom communication.
38. Provide ongoing and consistent feedback... yesterday, today and tomorrow.
39. Breakdown lessons to make them seem more manageable.
40. Allow students to wrestle with complex concepts out loud. They become more manageable then.
41. Expand on sentences using correct structure.
42. Provide bridges to past and present experience.
43. Frame responses so everyone participates
44. Brainstorm ideas before giving assignments.
45. Praise students for small accomplishments.
46. Encourage self-evaluation, self-monitoring, and review often.
47. Tell students the what and why of assignments in advance.
48. Let children do most of the talking. Use routines to help with this.
49. Teach children how to make requests especially for requests for help.
50. Use guided and parallel questioning strategies.