EQUALS Semi-Formal (SLD)
Curriculum Scheme of Work

My Communication

Equals SLD (Semi-Formal) Curriculum Schemes of Work

My Communication

Basic Principles

The Equals Communication SoW centres around the basic premise that communication is, at its core, a fairly simple business, but that 'education' has made it unnecessarily complicated for those with severe learning difficulties. We have perhaps, been far too concerned with the notion of being literate rather than the notion of being a communicator. We contend that communication is at the heart of being a social human being, and being a social human being that is at the heart of this document.

Equals Communication SoW argues that we only need three essentials in order to communicate:

1. A motivation (a reason) for communicating
2. A means (a method) of communicating
3. Someone (a partner or partners) to communicate to.

Because these three are **SO** fundamental, we have set them out as the 3Ms - motivation, means and mate. And if you want a little rhyme it becomes

Motivation, means and mate:
It's all you need to communicate

If we can provide all three (and it is assumed that the communicative partner(s) have time to communicate otherwise they are not effective partners!) we can at least provide the basis for teaching communication effectively to all learners. All are equally important, but it may be that schools have in the past, concentrated too much on means without giving sufficient thought to motivation and communicative partners.

Communication is a holistic process; if we can constantly tap into motivation and consistently provide someone to communicate to, all learners will have many more opportunities to practice and perfect the means that are best suited to them.

This SoW is divided into ten basic sections within the overarching title of Communication. In all of these areas, staff must be mindful of the three communicative essentials (the 3 Ms) and we have tried to marry them together as far as we can. The ten areas of learning are not developmental or linear either in nature or the way they might be worked on. Imperative communications will generally come (developmentally) before declarative communications, but they will continue for all of our lives. We all seek to express our wants and needs to others in ways that will get them met no matter how old and sophisticated we are. This is not therefore a SoW which starts at the beginning, though there is an element of greater complexity as we go through the areas of learning.

The ten areas of communicative learning

1. **Imperative communications** are primarily based on meeting specific or general needs and wants. They are not likely to be pre-intentional when used by learners with SLD, though they may be when used by learners with PMLD. Imperative communications are centred around motivation and it is therefore absolutely key that we establish a bank of personalised and effective motivations for each individual learner.
2. **Following instructions** falls into the realm of receptive rather than expressive communications and is the exception to the rule that applies in every other area of learning about communication in this SoW. That is **ALL** other sections are about the learners' direct involvement in taking some control of the communication experience. Following instructions are however, a necessary part of communicative learning since it has conforming to normative expectations at its base. Since Theory of Mind (ToM) - the recognition that other people have different thoughts, feelings and understandings to ourselves, and a significant factor in the development of empathy - doesn't emerge until around four years old with neuro-typical learners, it seems reasonable to assume that many of those on the SLD spectrum may not naturally develop ToM. We might therefore need to consciously teach it, and recognising that following instructions is an essential part of learning may be one lead in.
3. **Declarative communications** are communications for the sake of themselves, as in for example *'Isn't it a lovely day'*. They are not meant to gain anything from the recipient other than joint attention and acting as a point of contact, but are essentially social communications, expressed for the sake of communicating. The ability to *instigate* communicatively through declarative communications is a key part of working at P4 and above and is one of the markers (along with for example, the ability to follow simple instructions) which indicate severe rather than profound learning difficulties.

Declarative communications indicate that the act of social communication is sufficient motivation for the learner and is an essential part of social communication for the vast majority of all human beings, including those with SLD. The exception to this rule often arises when working with learners who have an additional autistic spectrum disorder; not all learners with SLD/ASD dislike social interactions, but a significant number might. This does not mean that we shouldn't teach social communication or social interaction or declarative communications, just that we will have to differentiate the teaching.

4. **Dynamic communications** are declaratives that are specific to a person, or group of persons, and work like a catchphrase or an 'in joke'. They are generally funny or dramatic and are a short hand 'bonding' reference point, as for example, nicknames. Dynamic communications are particularly open to being non-verbal, such as a special handshake or a thumbs up.

5. **Narratives** are the telling by learners of both factual or fictional stories. These are not scripted (as in a book) but are derived from memory and repetitive practice. They are usually quite short – a minute or two in the telling - and describe events or relate interests, biographical information, jokes, stories etc. Narratives are the way we all communicate about our lives – good, bad, funny, sad – to those who matter to us. They are the essential glue of social humanity.

6. **Formal social interactions with familiar and unfamiliar people** require a particular way of behaving that take in a society's understandings of what constitutes appropriate language, familiarity, attention, time, proximity and touch. They are generally rule bound and will be societal bound.

7. **Personalised reading and writing** for those with SLD is usually confined to single familiar and often used words. These are usually learned through whole word recognition and it is not necessary to explore the mysteries of phonics. There will probably be a number of words that apply to all learners, especially social sight words such as Toilet, TOILET, Gents, GENTS, Gentlemen, Ladies, LADIES, Lavatory, plus the innumerable symbols which indicate Gents and Ladies. There will be a number of other, less complicated, social sight words such as 'exit' and 'pull' etc. In addition to these, there will also be a bank of very personalised motivating words that will very much depend on the individual learners' interests.

8. **Non-verbal, behavioural communications** can form a considerable part of a learner's communicative repertoire, especially if that learner has what are considered severe challenging behaviours. If it is a cliché that all behaviours are communications, it is a cliché that is true, and we ignore them at our peril. There is however, sometimes a tendency to stop these communications because they are associated with challenging behaviour, rather than turning them into contextualised and appropriate communications.

9. **Peer to peer communications** have been deliberately left until the end, precisely because they are so fraught with challenges for all with SLD, including the most able learners. If communicating with and to someone without learning difficulties is hugely problematic for all those with SLD, communicating with and to someone with learning difficulties is bound to be exponentially more challenging.
10. **Augmentative and alternative communications (AAC)** are a series of access methodologies that may be used in any of the above areas of communication. Some learners will use them as a necessity, some may use them for a period of time and some may use them as part of a wider range of communication experiences in an inclusive setting. They run through all of the above and will be used by some within all of the above.

Other key issues.

Intensive Interaction is without a doubt one of the most significant (and quite possibly the most significant) breakthroughs in early communicative development to have emerged in SLD and PMLD education since education for these groups of learners first started to be taken seriously in the early 1970's. If readers of this document are new to Intensive Interaction they **MUST** get familiar with it as soon as possible. Essentially derived from the works of Melanie Nind and Dave Hewett (though there are other notable exponents such as Phoebe Caldwell) any of their writings is essential reading. The most accessible is probably still Nind M and Hewett D. (2001) **A Practical Guide to Intensive Interaction**. Kidderminster. British Institute of Learning Disabilities, but even better might be to visit Dave Hewett's website at www.intensiveinteraction.co.uk and purchase one of his dvds

Since Dave explains it all so much more eloquently and simply than we ever can, there seems no point in repeating it here, but suffice to say that you cannot be the best you can be at communicating with learners with SLD (and PMLD) unless you have first immersed yourself in Intensive Interaction and this document makes no apologies for assuming that you have already done so.

Process based learning. Communication is by its very nature predominantly process based rather than skill based; that is, learners will learn the process of communication by communicating, and the more opportunities they have of communicating, the more secure their learning will be.

Signing. Equals holds no favour for any particular version of signing for those with learning difficulties. Having said that, Makaton is very much established as the UK's leading signing system, but Signalong fills in a number of gaps in Makaton's vocabulary and is favoured by some schools. Additional words without a sign in either version can usually be translated through BSL (British Sign Language).

What is absolutely imperative, is that schools are serious about using sign with all those with SLD, whether they need to sign or not. If we're only teaching sign to those who can't talk, who are those who can't talk going to sign to? What signing system they use very much depends on the school's preference, but thought will need to be given about consistency of approach throughout the learners' lifetimes. Justin Fletcher (aka Mr Tumble, the UK's best known signing expert for children with learning difficulties) uses Makaton, and it is strongly recommended that all schools watch Mr Tumble throughout the whole of the primary phase at least.

His signing is extraordinarily good, he is always interesting and fun, and he is therefore the perfect model. He does put single signs together if it is appropriate for the communication, but he worries about meaning, not sentences.

Some **MUSTS** for signing.

- All signs **MUST** be accurately signed by all staff. We can expect learners to be approximate, but staff **MUST** be accurate.
- Staff **MUST NEVER** make up a sign if they can't remember it accurately. You wouldn't do this for a spoken word – don't do it for a signed word!
- All SLD schools (and any school which teaches children with SLD) **MUST** have **at least** the basic Makaton or Signalong books in every classroom, and **all** Makaton or Signalong books and at least one BSL dictionary in the school. Staff **MUST** get into the practice of looking up words they're not sure of and acting as 'critical friends' to those who get signs wrong. If we're not corrected, how will we ever learn?
- All parents/carers **MUST** have the opportunity to learn signing and receive regular training and re-training. This should be the responsibility of the school and resources should be found for it. There are **SO** many opportunities to progress learning at home, especially within communication, that it seems essential to convince all parents of the merits of sign.
- All staff **MUST** have regular training and re-training, even if this is only in a weekly assembly. Signs of the week and signing songs of the term or half term are great ways of learning signs. It is strongly recommended that school signing be a position of responsibility in the school. This post doesn't have to be a teacher, but the person(s) appointed must want to do it and must take it very seriously.
- All staff **MUST** sign and speak. This includes, meal times supervisors, lunch time staff, taxi drivers and escorts, bus drivers, office staff, premises managers etc. A school with excellence in communication must insist upon at least basic training to all.
- All staff **MUST** only sign key words. This takes practice and thought and has the added benefit of slowing us down in our speech. It is probably true to say that most people working with those with SLD (and PMLD) talk too much and say it too quickly.

The great strength of signing for those with SLD lies in (i) its single word effectiveness and (ii) its portability – that is, it is always there when you need it! Sentences are not necessary in order to communicate basic meaning and the insistence on sentence structure can often, and will often, only serve to confuse those who struggle with both receptive and expressive language.

If signing has a weakness, it is that not everyone understands signing, potentially resulting in learners' communications being limited to those in the know. However, if all staff at school, all staff in respite centres and out of school clubs, and all members of the family use sign as a regular course, the learner still has a considerable number of people to communicate with. Other, less flexible but more openly understandable methods, such as symbols, can be taught later or alongside. Signing **MUST** come first.

A final word on signing relates to the British desire for politeness and ensuring that learners say *'please'* and *'thank you'* when requesting. There is no problem with this and we understand the social conventions, but staff **MUST** be careful that learners don't learn to use the sign for please to mean *'I want …….(whatever it is I'm looking/pointing at)'* or even worse, respond *'please'* to the question *"Would you like ……..?'*

Symbols. Again, Equals holds no favour with any particular symbol system, as long as the consistency rule is applied. It must be pointed out however, that PECS (Picture Exchange Communication System) was **NOT** designed for those with SLD and should be used with a great deal of caution. There are two major problems with PECS for those with SLD. Firstly, it was originally designed to help quite high functioning (P7 and above) learners on the autistic spectrum communicate without having to use social contact – one can hand a symbol or a symbol strip to another person using the transactional interaction equivalent to that used with a vending machine. Secondly, it moves too quickly onto sentence structure. Whilst the opening phases (1, 2 and 3) are about the physical exchange, lengthening the proximity to both the symbol and the exchange partner and visual discrimination of individual symbols, stage 4 moves on to sentence structure with the introduction of the *'I want'* symbol and the sentence strip. This is however, often far too fast for those with SLD who don't have a difficulty with social interaction, but need **LOTS** of opportunities to communicate socially with **LOTS** of different people in **LOTS** of different situations using a limited range of single word symbols. A key element of this SoW is that effective communication is about making one's meaning understood, and one doesn't necessarily need to speak in sentences to do this.

Learners who are unable to communicate verbally, but are able to comprehend and work on sentence structure (that is, those operating at P7 and above) may be well advised to look at electronic VOCAs (Voice Output Communication Aids) on an i-pad or tablet, such as *Grid 3, Clicker Communicator, Proloquo2go.*

Symbols do nonetheless have two major advantages in that (i) iconic symbols (such as bread, toilet, burger, swimming etc) are immediately understandable by most and (ii) using a small number (maximum 20 or so) of symbols renders them portable for both learner and staff.

Some **MUSTS** and **MUST NOTS** for symbols
- Symbols **MUST NOT** make communicating more difficult. There is a tendency in teaching symbol use to consider it as a higher and more worthwhile form of communication than such elementary things as gesture, pointing or actually independently getting the desired object themselves. This is classically exhibited at snack time when the snack is in front of the child, both visible and reachable, but not obtainable without the handing over of a symbol. Here, the target becomes using the symbol rather than communicating. It won't help the communicative process if the extra communication we're asking for doesn't make sense to the learner. The instruction, *'now say it again using your symbols'* does little for pragmatics. This may seem to conflict with the concept of using real situations to teach meaning and use of symbols, but there is a salutary lesson here. We need to select our 'real' situation very carefully and thoughtfully.
- To be effective, symbols **MUST** be within easy reach at all times, since communicative opportunities **MUST NOT** be limited to times when symbols are easily available.
- With this in mind, there is a strong case for using **symbols key rings**. These can hold a maximum of 20 or so central symbols and can be (i) clipped on to the clothes of the learner and/or (ii) clipped on to the clothes of staff members (SM). It should be remembered that these will serve separate purposes, but in either event **they should be symbols which give the learner control and NOT used as a means of ensuring staff control.** Symbols key rings held by learners will be personalised and motivational to the learner. Symbols key rings held by members of staff might be generic to a class group and hold various group symbols such as drink or toilet, with learners encouraged to touch the appropriate symbols from the SMs belt. Learners will not be encouraged to independently use symbols key rings if they are constantly used as a means of re-enforcing staff instructions such as sit, look, listen etc.

Object Cues and Objects of Reference (OoR) may well be very useful as an early years lead into symbolic communication and are essential for a PMLD communication scheme of work, but they are likely to present problems for those with SLD because they are are not easily portable; and the more the you're using, the less portable they'll be. This doesn't mean that you shouldn't be using OoR, especially with learners working at P4 ish or those with a severe visual impairment, but that you will need to think about portability.

For non-ambulant learners using wheelchairs, a personalised bag of OoR can be hung on the wheelchair. For ambulant users, SM's will have to take responsibility for ensuring the OoR's are always to hand.

Abstract Signs and Symbols. Equals strongly advises against teaching abstract signs and symbols to all but the most very able learners. If your learners are able to understand, memorise and effectively use abstract signs and symbols they ought to be learning BSL and/or conventional words in reading and writing. Abstract signs and symbols will add nothing to a learner's understanding apart from greater complexity.

ISE (Bunning, 1996,1998). Individualised Sensory Environment (ISE) was essentially designed for those with PMLD but it still offers very sound principles and a good basic method of discovering motivators for all learners. It operates on the principle that if the learner wants (an object) enough s/he will be very motivated to indicate 'more' in some way when the object is removed. The object (a tray of lego bricks for example) is presented to the learner, who is then encouraged to interact with it. She may touch or connect the bricks (perhaps with initial support) for a period of time – say 30 seconds or so. When the tray is withdrawn, the presenter will observe the learner's reaction, assuming that interest will be supported by a look or a reach or a vocalisation to indicate that the learner wants more. The tray is re-presented to the learner and this may be repeated two or three times more. If initial interest is discovered, the lego tray will be presented to the learner at other times of the day and week by other presenters to ensure that the motivation to engage with the object has some consistency of intent. Even if the tray is rejected or the learner shows disinterest, the presenter should try again at other times in case the rejection or disinterest was affected by some other external factor such as too much noise in the classroom or general sleepiness on the learner's part.

ISE is immensely useful as a means of

1. discovering likes and dislikes
2. discovering communications which indicate *'I like'* and *'I dislike'*.
3. structuring the environment to provide meaningful forms of stimulation to foster purposeful responses
4. decreasing stereotypical self-stimulations
5. using sensory stimuli to encourage the learner to engage in purposeful behaviours rather than non-purposeful.

The list of objects you can use in the ISE programme is really only limited by your imagination. Here are some examples:

Any and all toys of any description; uncooked pasta; uncooked rice; uncooked beans; water (in all its forms) – warm, cold, bubbled, iced etc.; dough; various balls of all descriptions and sizes; sea shells; jelly (again in all its forms of various solidity and consistency including raw); bubble wrap; non-mix paint in a sandwich of cling film sealed with gaffa tape; feathers; hand–cream; cornflour paste; jack-in-the-boxes; scouring pads; stickle bricks; mashed potato (again, in various levels of consistency and warmth); dry cereal; peek-a-boo with a blanket; spinning secretary's chair; rocking chair; swings; hoists; water filled balloons; round and round the garden; fine water spray; bells; various mobiles; leaves; mirrors; slime pots; vacuum cleaner with nozzle attachment; latch-switch operated fans; latch-switch operated music; sand – dry, wet, half wet etc.; clay; shaving foam; foot spa; vibrating cushion and other vibrating toys; bumble ball; sponges; various materials e.g. felt, leather, satin, lycra, hessian, fur etc. etc.

Teachers can use ISE as a means of discovering preferences because the programme demands feedback from the learners. It teaches us that even learners who we think we know very well may well have favourite things which we don't know about, because **they** don't know about them yet either. It teaches us that we are all different and that we need to find the motivators if we are to engage learners successfully. There is, finally, a strong argument for suggesting that teachers suspend the curriculum on a regular basis, for perhaps as long as a half a term at the beginning of every key stage, in order to check that likes and dislikes displayed at the beginning of the last key stage, still apply. We may well find some changes; we may well find significant changes; if we don't ask the questions we won't get the answers!

Autism and SLD. Simply because a learner has autism does not mean that s/he cannot communicate socially, and we must not allow it to be seen as a reason for opting out. We must regard the learner's autism as an additional difficulty which may require some (and perhaps a lot of) adaptation and differentiation, but the key question will still be the learner's level of intellectual ability and the whole of this SoW is still appropriate. As always with autism, it is probably always best to consult widely using the expertise that will be available in the school, especially the Speech and Language Therapist (SaLT) for particular and individual communication issues and the Occupational Therapist (OT) for sensory issues.

Physical disabilities and SLD. Similarly, physical disabilities and/or communication difficulties **DO NOT RULE OUT** learners from communicating as independently as they can, but adaptations and differentiation will probably be needed. Consult widely with the expertise that will be available in your school, especially with the SaLT, OT and Physiotherapists.

Cross Curricular Links. Unlike some of the other Equals SoW, there are no specific cross curricular links within *Communication*. This is for the very obvious reason that *Communication* should be in almost everything that we do and to itemise them every time would be largely stating the obvious.

Home. It is very difficult to overestimate the importance of the home environment and the local community in developing effective communication. Parents, siblings, family members (especially grandparents), next-door neighbours, regular visitors to the home, people regularly seen and spoken to when shopping, going to the local library, respite centre, swimming pool, church, wherever the learner makes social contact, however fleeting, are absolutely key to the successful development of effective communication. **We very strongly recommend that each and every school takes responsibility for training, motivating, advising and moderating these groups of 'unpaid volunteers'.** They may well turn out to be the vital difference between success and almost!

Equals wishes to acknowledge the considerable debt owed to the following teachers and schools in writing the *My Communication* Scheme of Work and especially to Swiss Cottage School in north London for hosting the SoW Conference.

Lauren Cox	Pield Heath House School	Gosha Treska	Pield Heath House School
Luis Cano Arias	John F Kennedy School	Natalie Carroll	Watergate School
Steve Phillips	Fountaindale School	Kelly Fedun	Fountaindale School
Slava Golhova	St Ann's School	Agnieszka Purtik	St Ann's School
Beverley Hamilton	Woodfield School	Rachel Preston	Woodfield School
Diana Roig	Beatrice Tate School	Kerri Ovel	Beatrice Tate School
Sue Jeffery	Hornbeam Academy		

The Equals *My Communication* Scheme of Work has been edited by Peter Imray and Carol Allen

Imperative communications are primarily based on meeting specific or general needs and wants. They are not likely to be pre-intentional when used by learners with SLD, though they may be when used by learners with PMLD. Imperative communications are centred around motivation and it is therefore absolutely key that we establish a bank of motivations for each individual learner.

Learning Intention	Teaching and Learning Activities	Notes
To work on I want..... communications	Although imperative communications are built around wants and needs, *'I want'* is different to *'I need'* and probably comes first. One may for example need to go to the toilet, but might not want to. Needs and wants can of course coincide in essence but be different in detail. One may need to eat (a calorie controlled) lunch but want to eat a double jam doughnut. *'I want'* is centred around motivation and is therefore naturally more powerful than *'I need'* which will probably have to be learned over time. *'I need'* communications will be discussed in **Non-verbal, behavioural communications** in this SoW.	
To build up a bank of clear and unambiguous likes and dislikes	See ISE (Individualised Sensory Environment) in the Basic Principles. It may not be necessary at this stage for the learner to be using a formal communication system such as sign, symbol or speech. You are looking for the learner to make a clear choice which may be positive (I want) or negative (I don't want) but that could easily be by vocalising, eye-gazing, pointing to, taking, holding, turning away from, pushing away etc.	The purpose of spending a considerable amount of time with all learners in building a bank of likes and dislikes is to **establish a motivation to communicate.**

	There may however be a third option which appears as a negative, but strictly speaking is not, and is indicated by indifference (I don't care).	
To make a supported positive choice from two given options	Working from the learner's known likes and dislikes (see ISE in Basic Principles) offer two clear and obvious opposing choices to the learner, for example orange juice or vinegar/fresh lemon juice; a crisp or a lettuce leaf; raisin or dry pasta. It may not be necessary at this stage for the learner to be using a formal communication system such as sign, symbol or speech. Choosing is enough.	It may of course be the case that the learner really likes vinegar or fresh lemon juice, in which case these get added to the list of likes and you have to search harder for the dislikes.
To make a supported *negative* choice from *one* given option	Working from the learner's known dislikes, offer one clear and obvious dislike to the learner, for example vinegar, fresh lemon juice, lettuce leaf, dry pasta. It is not enough that the learner has previously shown indifference to this object. The learner must actively dislike it. It may not be necessary at this stage for the learner to be using a formal communication system such as sign, symbol or speech. Rejecting is enough. You are looking for a specific (and acceptable) means of rejection such as pushing away, turning away. **It is difficult to over-emphasise how important learning to make an appropriate negative choice is.** So many challenging behaviours derive from those in control of learning (staff, parents, therapists for example) insisting that learners do something, be with someone, be in a certain place, that the learner does not want to do, be with, be in. Because the learner has severe (or indeed, profound) communication difficulties she may not be able to eloquently and appropriately express this dissatisfaction.	Remember that **effective** communication is about making one's meaning clear. You are looking for a clear and socially acceptable indication that the learner does not want ……. This whole issue is discussed in detail in *Non-verbal Behavioural Communications*

	Learning how to communicate a negative choice positively is one of the most important communication skills we can give to any learner.	
To establish a bank of each learner's favourite imperative words	Such words, usually nouns, **MUST** be established favourites. That is, they must be motivating to the learner. It is not necessary at this stage to consider sentence structure or sentence strips (if using symbols). There is also no necessity to start with *'I want…'* or to put in *'Please'* or *'Thank you'* **ALL** staff who are in any way in daily contact with the learner must ensure that they are competent at signing the individual's favourite words. Class staff must ensure that several symbols are prepared for each word so that there's always a spare if necessary. **BEWARE** that the bank of words is accurate since preferences can and probably will change over time. It will be good practice to check the continued validity of the preferences at the beginning of every academic year at least.	The key elements here are that learners are both confident and able to communicate using single words for highly motivating objects. We need to be aware that some choices, preferences, refusals are specific to time and place, for example, 'yes' at school but 'no' at home or vice versa.
To gain the attention of another person	In order to be confident in communicating, the learner needs to know that they have the ability to gain the attention of another person (means) **AND** that they will be listened to (mate). This is a theme that will run through a number of the learning avenues in this SoW.	

	IT IS REALLY IMPORTANT that all staff maximise their learners' belief that they will be listened to whenever they have something to say. Politeness and observing the social conventions are also important, but can be learned later. This means that, especially in the earliest stages of communicative development 'work' may have to be put to one side in order to concentrate on communication. This also brings out the importance of Play as a central part of (at least) the primary phase curriculum since so many opportunities for social engagement practice can be manufactured through Play.	See the Equals *My Play and Leisure* SoW
To establish a symbol and/or signed bank of each learner's favourite imperative words in school	1. The bank may be signed, symboled or (preferably) both. 2. **ALL** staff who are in any way in daily contact with the learner must ensure that they are competent at signing the individual's favourite words and that they model signing the single words at every appropriate opportunity. 3. If using symbols, there probably needs to be a limit of twenty or so words that are able to be represented by an iconic (rather than an abstract) symbol. This doesn't mean that you have to use 20, just that this is probably the maximum for a key ring. Most learners will use one two or three in the first instance. 4. The easiest way of ensuring portability is to attach these to a strong and robust key ring which is then attached to the learner. The learner is then encouraged to use the appropriate symbol from the key ring whenever s/he is requesting a favourite thing or activity. 5. Having worked on the motivation, this learning intention is about establishing a more formal means that goes beyond pointing, taking, reaching for, eye gazing etc. 6. Some learners working consistently and over time at P4 ish may take many years to establish this, and it is essential that they are not rushed through what might be considered to be conventional developmental phases in order to show	Iconic symbols are usually nouns that can be easily represented by a line drawing, such as bike, bread, football, book, toilet etc. Abstract symbols refer mainly to relational words that shift in their meaning such as in, on, over, behind, small, big etc. **The establishing of the portable key ring is about learner choice and learner control.** We are trying to encourage them to use a

	'progress'. Progress should come with time and patience. But it may well be very slow. 7. The key issue here is for the imperative (the want) to be continually motivating and staff will need to regularly ensure that what was motivating for the learner last year is still motivating for the learner this year. 8. If possible work within the learner's preferred method of communication though it is important to note that (i) this may not be known and (ii) it may not be the best method of communication for the learner. This is especially the case if the learner prefers to use language but remains incomprehensible. Much work might well need to be done with Speech and Language Therapists (SaLT) to improve pronunciation of the limited number of highly motivating words. 9. All learners should be encouraged to support speech with both sign and symbol.	formal communication system (in this case symbols) to control their environment. Staff **MUST** resist the temptation to put their controlling symbols (such as *sit, stop, work* etc.) on the learner's key ring.
To establish a symbol and/or signed bank of each learner's favourite imperative words at school, home and for regular out of school placements.	School **MUST** take responsibility for ensuring as far as they are able, that the necessary resources and training for use of both signs and symbols are relayed to home and out of school placements such as after school clubs and respite centres. It is possible that the learner's *favourites* will be different within the different environments of home, school, out-of-school clubs etc. 1. It is 'imperative' that continuity of, and opportunity for practice are provided for each individual learner. 2. Build 'Leisure Time' (LT) into each day on a regular basis, at least six or so short sessions every day. The amount of time given over to this depends on your learners but this will relate strongly to the *My Play and Leisure* SoW and is most definitely **NOT** wasted or throwaway time. Ten minutes is by no means an unreasonable amount of time for each LT session and this is especially so if SMs are then involved in parallel and shared play with individual or small groups of learners. 3. Each learner is asked what they want to do in LT.	There is an assumption here that the learner understands symbolic representation. That is, that a symbol and/or a sign represents something concrete, in this case the learner's favourite……… If the learner does not (and we could expect this to be within the capability of a learner working at P4 and above) work will need to be done to establish this. This is usually best and most easily done with small pieces of motivating food such as toast,

	4. Staff member (SM) models signing using the key signs at the same time as presenting a limited choice of established favourite symbols. 5. **IT IS NOT** expected that the learner will sign and learners should not be manipulated (as in hand over hand for example) to sign. This is a process, and the process make take some time. 6. Learners will be encouraged to choose a symbol and show it to the SM from their key ring or choice board if the learner will not wear a key ring. 7. SM will model the sign for the chosen favourite and use a suitable brief text such as *'OK. i-pad'* or whatever the favourite is. 8. It is reasonable to build in an understanding that LT is limited and this needs to be stated very clearly at the beginning. Timers are useful if learners have staggered LT or general classroom (verbal and signed) communications with countdown cues on say one minute and 5 seconds to go before the finish. 9. It is reasonable to expect all learners to buy into this timed regime as this is part of the *following instruction* element of *Communication.*	raisins etc. but in event seek SaLT advice. This will be an example of key signing, so that if the communication from the SM is 'Leisure Time. What do you want to do?' the signs will be 'Leisure Time (sign ***play***). ***What*** do ***you want*** to do?'
To establish that favourite imperatives might not be possible all the time.	There is a fine line between wanting to promote motivational activities in order to encourage positive communications and restricting breadth and balance by just promoting motivational activities. After all, nobody knows what they don't know, and if we limit opportunities to experience new learning activities, pupils and students may never come to learn about extending their enjoyments. This then becomes a contradiction and a dilemma. We want to encourage learners to communicate with us in order to engage with something motivational, but we also want them to realise and accept that there are other things to learn. Like all dilemmas, there is no easy or definitive answer. It may be that for some learners – especially those who struggle with positive social interactions and exhibit extremes of challenging behaviour, working within even a very limited range of motivational activities over quite a long time (perhaps years?) is the very	Additionally, there is always the possibility that by always concentrating on known likes, we sometimes cause them to become dislikes!

	best thing to do. This is after all, one of the bases of tried and tested communicative models of learning such as Intensive Interaction. As always when making these decisions, class teams are advised to consult widely with leadership, therapy teams and families especially.	
To extend imperative communications into shared declarative, dynamic and/or narrative communications	All imperatives carry many opportunities for extension into shared communications as long as we work within the principles of the 3 Ms (motivation, means, mate). The essence of a want may be singular and personal but that doesn't mean that it can't be shared. 'I want an apple/string flapper/toy car/dolly/watch Teletubbies' does not have to be a singular activity if we also, and at the same time, eat an apple, flap a length of string, play with a toy car, cuddle a dolly, watch Teletubbies. Such shared activities will have no specific targets or outcomes; they are entirely process based and will go where the learner decides to take them. SMs can ladder and scaffold, but the 'climbing' will be in control of the learner who takes it where they want to. SMs may initially play alongside (as in parallel play) in order to try to encourage a shared understanding. Intensive Interaction techniques are likely to be the most successful.	See Equals *My Play and Leisure* SoW for an extended discussion on parallel play.
To establish that choices may carry significant consequences.	The act of choosing doesn't have to be significant if the choice carries no consequences. Choosing between two mild, sweet flavours of squash, blackcurrent and orange for example, may not matter sufficiently to the learner. In order to ensure that the learner understands about choices, we might need to bring in the idea of consequences quite early on in the learning cycle.	See the Equals *Thinking and Problem Solving* SoW

| | There must be opportunity for learners to experience the real consequence of their choices by allowing them to make mistakes within a safe learning environment. | |

Following instructions falls into the realm of receptive rather than expressive communications and is the exception to the rule that applies in every other area of learning about communication in this SoW. That is **ALL** other sections are about the learners' direct involvement in taking some control of the communication experience. Following instructions are however, a necessary part of communicative learning since it has conforming to normative expectations at its base. Since Theory of Mind (ToM) - the recognition that other people have different thoughts, feelings and understandings to ourselves, and a significant factor in the development of empathy - doesn't emerge until around four years old with neuro-typical learners, it seems reasonable to assume that many of those on the SLD spectrum may not naturally develop ToM. We might therefore need to consciously teach it, and recognising that following instructions is an essential part of learning may be one lead in.

Learning Intention	Teaching and Learning Activities	Notes
To follow a simple, single instruction	Remember that we need the 3 Ms (motivation, means and mate) to communicate. SMs should try and use motivating situations such as snack time or story time or leisure time or others that are known to be motivating to the individual learner. Alternatively, simple instructions may well form part of a regular routine. Considerable motivation may also be attached by the SM indicating verbal and expressive pleasure at the instruction being followed, as in *'Hey! GREAT sitting Abdul. Give me five!'* The process of following instructions automatically assumes a partner (who is the person giving the instruction) but who is perhaps not a 'mate' in the sense of the other areas of communicative learning. Means becomes the level of understanding and is therefore about the learner's receptive comprehension. Simple instructions such as the ones below should always be spoken and signed but may not always be symboled because the symbol might not always be to hand.	**The complexity of the instructions are dependent on the learner's ability.** Remember that the complexity of the instruction is dependent on having sufficient sequential and working memory, both of which are highly problematic for those with SLD. This can however, be supported by technology. Use of a series of single message devices, or a single device or app allowing a sequence to be

		recorded and replayed at will, can support both sequential and working memory.
	Use of symbol every single time, may be dependent on the learner, especially if s/he has additional autism. Simple single instructions are for example: Stand up Sit down Stop Wait Hold my hand Walk Hang your coat up Get your coat Arms up (for putting on or taking off clothes) Toilet etc. There will also be single (social) instructions that occur in everyday life and are pertinent when engaged with independence, such as walk/don't walk signs push/pull on doors exit/entrance look left/look right request stop etc.	Instructions can and will get more complex with time and communicative progress, but move slowly and cautiously.

Declarative communications are communications for the sake of themselves, as in for example *'Isn't it a lovely day'*. They are not meant to gain anything from the recipient other than joint attention and acting as a point of contact, but are essentially social communications, expressed for the sake of communicating. The ability to ***instigate*** communicatively through declarative communications is a key part of working at P4 and above and is one of the markers (along with for example, the ability to follow simple instructions) which indicate severe rather than profound learning difficulties. Declarative communications indicate that the act of social communication is sufficient motivation for the learner and is an essential part of social communication for the vast majority of all human beings, including those with SLD. The exception to this rule often arises when working with learners who have an additional autistic spectrum disorder; not all learners with SLD/ASD dislike social interactions, but a significant number might. This does not mean that we shouldn't teach social communication or social interaction or declarative communications, just that we will have to differentiate the teaching.

Learning Intention	Teaching and Learning Activities Declarative Communications	Notes
To gain the attention of another person	This is a repeat of the teaching and learning activities noted in Imperative Communication, but it is worth repeating. • In order to be confident in communicating, the learner needs to know that they have the ability to gain the attention of another person (means) **AND** that they will be listened to (mate). • This is a theme that will run through a number of the learning activites in this SoW. • **IT IS REALLY IMPORTANT** that all staff maximise their learners' belief that they will be listened to whenever they have something to say. Politeness and observing the social conventions are also important, but can be learned later. • This means that, especially in the earliest stages of communicative development 'work' may have to be put to one side in order to concentrate on communication.	

	• This also brings out the importance of Play as a central part of (at least) the primary phase curriculum since so many opportunities for social engagement practice can be manufactured through Play.	See the Equals *My Play and Leisure* SoW
To engage in a declarative 'conversation' with another	Engaging in a conversation does not necessarily mean that the learner has to converse in equal measure, since learners may not have the communicative skills required to keep up their end. In this case, staff members (SMs) may model how a conversation may go. Include a range of topics/contexts which are related to the learner's likes and interests Using declaratives takes the pressure off the child to perform, that is, to provide the right answer as they would if they were having to answer questions. Declaratives are invitations to socially interact while questions are typically cues to provide a right answer. Possible sentence starters for declarative communications might be: • *I like…..* • *I see……* • *I don't like……* • *Let's go to…..* • *Let's do…..* • *I am……* • Model the use of declarative comments for learners to begin to make comments themselves. This could include invitations to engage in a favourite activity with *'Let's play with cars'* and then possible extensions such as *'I've got the red car'* or celebrations such as *'Hooray, we won!'*	Declarative communications permeate all areas of the curriculum and day to day interactions and activities. It is important to get the learner's attention before you speak to them rather than repeating yourself several times. Give them processing time, **talk less rather than more and be consistent with what you say.** Remember you are modelling declarative conversation for someone with severe communication difficulties. **Use short phrases and emphasise the key words. Always sign when you speak and this will help**

| | • Engage learners in communication opportunities based on sharing memories such as something that had happened earlier that day or the day before. Perhaps use a concrete object or a photograph as an aide memoire for the learner; and video is even more powerful. Captured on a mobile device of choice, keep snippets short and targeted in order that their use is effective in later communications.
• Photographs are great ways of sharing previous experiences and past events, and again, the use of video to capture practice sessions allows for self-review. **Always keep video segments short**.
• Don't be frightened of using exactly the same script when describing shared events in a declarative conversation. Learners who might struggle with communication need to know what to say and might need tens of opportunities to practice a set script.
• Use a Step-by-Step (similar to a BIGmack but has up to 10 messages lasting for up to 10 seconds each message, so ideal for relating a narrative) as a way of scripting a declarative conversation.
• Expose learners to situations which might encourage them to comment such as 'WOW! Look at that clown!'
• Model **BIG** faces and looks of horror, surprise, laughter, terror.
• Make comments with regard to the environment such as 'Oh no! Rain! WE'RE GOING TO GET WET!'.
• Find favourite broken equipment and toys 'Uh ho, its broken! WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO NOW?'
• Remembering motivation, means and mate, the motivation is communicative engagement with the learner's interests. Class teams need to find any and all opportunities to engage in 'conversations' about anything that will engage the learner. This is not talking about **BORING** things!! | **you to speak less (but say more!).**

We want to capture the learners' imagination so try and make your declaratives big and bold with **LOTS OF EXCLAMATIONS!!!**

It has been estimated that declarative communications might make up as much as 80% of our daily communications!

The use of technology is a KEY factor in developing the communicative abilities of our learners. I-phones, smart phones, i-pads and tablets MUST be |

	- This doesn't have to be just about a learner's play station, or i-pad, or lego set, but about anything which the learner enjoys or has enjoyed including events both at and outside of school. If the learner enjoys food, talk about lunch at 09.30 in the morning. 'Stretching' (Lyons et al, 2011) is nothing to do with physical exercise but relates to how most people really enjoy talking about what they really enjoy doing. Somebody going to the theatre at the weekend, or playing football, or visiting a friend, or taking a trip to the seaside will want to think (and talk) about the event before the event takes place, imagine what it might be like, anticipate the good bits whether these be funny, exciting, scary etc. When we've talked about what were going to do, we do it, and **THEN** we talk about what we've done. We 'stretch' the things that we're interested in. These don't have to be lengthy conversations, a sentence or two, or sometimes even a word or two, is fine. 'News time' is perfect for this work especially after a weekend or holiday. - We can encourage extensions of this by modelling communications about the events of the day, both routine and new. - We can write 'stretching' books using digital photos which highlight the narrative (beginning, middle, end; sequence of events; high points etc). This will be especially powerful if at least some of the digital photos are taken by the learner, since they can act as a powerful aide memoire.	**regarded as significant communication aids and their use encouraged and developed.** At a simple level adding voice notes to an app such as Snap Scene will allow stretching communication. Digital books can be made in many ways, and software such as Clicker7 allows for a great range of differentiation and support. Apps such as Book Creator are easy and quick to use
To engage in a declarative 'conversation' engendered by another	Declarative communications may come naturally, especially for those with severe learning difficulties, but if the learner has an additional autistic spectrum disorder, the use of declarative communications may have to be teased out. This is because the learner is likely to have difficulties in both social communication and social interaction, which are at the heart of declaratives.	Where appropriate, begin with Intensive Interaction as the foundation for all other communication and interaction.

	Very many learning intentions can be gleaned from this work, some of which are listed below. **IT IS HOWEVER IMPERATIVE THAT WE DO NOT TEACH THESE AS DISCONNECTED AND ISOLATED TARGETS.**	
	COMMUNICATION IS A PROCESS, not a series of separately taught skills chained together. Communications MUST be contextualised and regarded as a holistic exercise.	Conduct an assessment of motivators for all learners.
	This means that as long as we engage the learners first, progress WILL follow. It may not however be possible to predict the direction or rate of that progress; it will go where the learner takes it, and the rate and direction of the progress will be very different from one learner to another.	Take every minute of the day as an opportunity to communicate and interact.
	These learning intentions MUST NOT be taken as a developmental or linear list. They are ideas about the communicative skills that are necessary for effective social communication. You will see below that we have called them '**engagements in communicative learning**'.	**Maximise every opportunity.**
	It is strongly recommended that teachers engage with the Teaching and Learning Activities first without having any predicted outcomes and then see (after the learning has taken place) what learning intentions have actually been achieved. Imray and Hinchcliffe (2014) have called this '*retrospective target setting*' (p.36) and it is legitimated by the fact that there is no single or best route to being adept at social communication and interaction. Learners will individually take it where they will and we must be ready to respond positively to this, wherever it takes us.	Acknowledge and respond to every attempt by a pupil to communicate and interact.
	Ideas for Engagements in Communicative Learning.	
	Essentially, we are trying to overcome the barriers which might present themselves to learners who are not naturally inclined towards social communication and social interaction. This means that we have to give the learner a reason to engage and	

FUN is therefore at the centre. Remember 'means, motivation and mate' and that learners on the autistic spectrum may not have a motivation (a reason) to communicate. Can we make this reason **SO** tempting that it cannot be avoided? Can we provide lots of '**Hey, come and have a look at THIS!**' moments?

- Attention Autism has been developed by Gina Davis and can be viewed at www.ginadavis.co.uk It is built around the principle that (social) engagement will develop once the attention of the child has been secured, but we might need to work much harder at securing attention than merely calling someone's name. The key is to make the engagement irresistible!
- Any form of play
- All sorts of games
- Jokes, especially slapstick (rather than linguistic) humour, though it is probably best not to make the learner the butt of the humour!
- Magic. Simple sleight of hand tricks can be learned with a little time and trouble. This doesn't have to be Magic Circle standard, a junior magician kit will suffice.
- Using personal motivators (the things learners are **REALLY i**nterested in) even if that means **LOTS** of discussions about air conditioning units.
- Lego Therapy. An example of structured play and problem solving opportunities leading to increased social interactions between peers.
- Doing something out of the ordinary to gain the attention and awareness of the learner - dress up, change your appearance, put on a pair of Elton John glasses or a false beard or a bright red wig. Make it VERY obvious because you want to learners to say *'What the ......!!!'*
- Parachute Games – attach bells, flashing lights, balloons on top of parachute, blowing bubbles over the parachute, sing a song at the same time, play music.
- Pete Wells – interactive songs and poetry. Pete is a teacher at Portland College in the north east of England who writes lots of whacky and 'different' poetry

and stories specifically designed to have LOADS OF FUN!! His stuff can be freely accessed at www.portlandcollege.org/curriculum/resources/ You'll need to check the resources before using as the majority are written specifically for teenagers and can be both rude and in the 'worst possible taste'!!

- Drama Games – using sensory props e.g. name game, pass the sound, look and scream, dance your name.
- Creative art activities which are personalised to include personal preferences (textures, objects, etc) e.g. dropping paint covered balls onto a sheet on the floor – building up anticipation, waiting for a glance or some demonstration of interaction before dropping, exaggerated glee at the 'splat', encouraging learners to ask for more.
- Intensive Interaction is full of potential declarative moments because it has play at its centre.
- Physical interactive games such as peek-a-boo, round and round the garden, tickle monster. These might loosely termed as 'people games'.
- Tactile activities with drama e.g. whoosh splat with shaving foam.
- Aprons/belts covered in a learner's motivators – encourage learners to approach and interact with the adult.
- Parallel play – the adult plays with the same 'toys' as the learner, but is directly engaging or playing 'with'. Engagement will happen if and when the learner is sufficiently interested. More ideas can be gleaned from watching 'Floor Time' on you-tube.
- Hidden objects. Put a noisy toy in your bag. Put a phone in a cupboard and get a colleague to keep ringing it. Make a **BIG THING** of being **REALLY** annoyed about the interruption to the lesson. Get everyone to search for it, looking in all the wrong places first. Keep playing the same trick at fairly regular intervals so that it becomes a running joke.

- Play your running jokes at the most inappropriate of times. For example when a 'very important person' comes into the room. Make an especially big thing of being really embarrassed!
- Make purposeful mistakes – use lots of humour and over-the-top reactions.
- Introduce, model and encourage appropriate interactions and sentence starters within preferred activities or interactions.
- Introduce, model and encourage appropriate interactions and sentence starters within adult directed activities/games/interactions.
- Introduce triadic intensive interaction initially with another staff member, but leading onto communicative engagements with two peers and one adult.
- Respond to all communication efforts – including unintentional communications. This might especially be the case when meeting in passing; so staff members might practice catching an inadvertent look from the learner as a reason to say hello, or practice brushing past the learner as an excuse to say *'excuse me'* or *'sorry'*. This can in turn, be made into a dynamic communication with dramatic exaggeration (*'OH! EXCUSE ME!!'*) especially if you can make it into a standing joke.
- Modelling verbally, by for example, verbalising a learner's unspoken request or object of attention. Make sure to use single words, particularly emphasising the particular motivator.
- Set up an emotions party
    - everyone sits in the round
    - let's have a party!
    - what are you going to bring to the party?
    - I'm going to bring tears (or anger, or happiness, or frustration, or jealousy) acting out each emotion in turn.
- Continue to value and acknowledge any attempts to initiate communications – even those that might be considered inappropriate. These can be turned around with a more appropriate method modelled by the SM, as for example, turning a

	pinch into a five, or a scream into a *'Hey'.* The key is to encourage and build confidence that appropriate requests for communication are **ALWAYS** listened to! • Model methods of indicating (and therefore communicating) a desire to finish (walking away, signing or saying "stop"). **We MUST get into the habit of recognising negation as a key communication which MUST be listened to AND acted upon.** • Staff members to acknowledge and respond to a request. • SMs to carefully observe reactions (behaviours, etc) which are indicating a desire to end an interaction.	

More engagements in communicative learning	• Being aware of another person as a communication partner; this might be as little as a fleeting glance.
	• Extending the duration and/or frequency of looking at another person.
	• Tolerating a communication partner - from brief periods to extended periods.
	• Developing curiosity in a communication partner. Look for
	
	   - eye contact - even fleeting. It is not necessary for eye contact to be sustained for effective communication. Indeed in the case of students with CVI (cortical visual impairment) it can obscure the message if for example their primary input is auditory
	   - approaching/ sharing space with them
	   - mimicking – copying facial expressions
	   - asking questions
	   - joining in with play.
	• Developing appropriate responses to a communication partner.
	• Showing an interest in other people and a desire to communicate.
	• Demonstrating enjoyment in interacting with a communication partner through
	   - tolerating
	   - engaging with
		These are signs of engagement and can be used to indicate that progress is being made. **THEY ARE NOT DEVELOPMENTAL OR LINEAR and there is NO requirement that the learner will achieve all.**
		
		Progress will vary from one learner to another and will be very different from one learner to another.
		
		THERE IS NO ONE PARTICULAR PATHWAY TO COMMUNICATIVE SUCCESS.

| | | - responding to
- enjoying
- initiating
- requesting a wider variety of social interactions.
• Extending and expanding upon interests, including building a wider vocabulary of sentence starters or starters for interactions and reducing dependence on a particular and repetitive topic.
• Requesting extension of interaction.
• Sharing attention with an adult – social interaction games, sharing equipment, joint attention, floor time.
• Engaging in social interactions.
• Demonstrating enjoyment.
• Understanding that others can be communication partners.
• Initiating **unintentional** interactions through:
    - looking
    - touch or gesture (such as pulling an adult's arm)
    - vocalising
    - facial expressions
    - behaviours
    - verbalising
    - bringing a wanted item or an object or an AAC aid
    - crying
    - laughing.
• Initiating **intentional** interactions through:
    - looking
    - touch or gesture (such as pulling an adult's arm)
    - vocalising
    - facial expressions
    - behaviours | **THERE IS NO BEST METHOD.** |

	- verbalising - bringing a wanted item or an object or AAC aid - crying - laughing - Developing appropriate methods of responding to interactions. - Developing appropriate methods of initiating interactions. - Requesting interactions to end. - Developing receptive understanding of social interactions – from recognising to understanding how to respond to the following - facial expressions - tone of voice - non-verbal cues (body language). - Interacting with peers. - Tolerate peers in their environment, which might take the form of - giving joint attention - playing alongside a peer - engaging in a simple game with another pupil with support – reduce support and prompting over time as appropriate - engaging in more complex games as appropriate to each pupil. - Demonstrating the ability to listen (as opposed to being able to hear) - from sounds to voices - from vocal sounds to words, phrases, sentences - keeping appropriate to cognitive ability of pupil. - Developing conventions of conversation - turn taking – my turn your turn - remembering learned responses. -	

| To extend communicative engagements that might be focussed on a narrow field of interest. | There may well be some learners, especially those on the autistic spectrum, who only want to talk about the very narrow area of air conditioners or road traffic signs or pink make-up or whatever their area of special interest might be. It is easy to get exceptionally irritated by this, especially when it is the 433rd time you've heard it, but our reaction does perhaps need to be a bit more considered.

Can we use this special interest to engage with the learner?

Can we expand our own knowledge of the learner's special interest and engage with the learner? At a basic level this might mean engaging in parallel play, such as with Lego of even flapping another piece of string in eye view of the learner. The important feature is the **engagement with** rather than the isolatory, repetitive, stereo-typical engagements which would otherwise occur.

Can we turn these isolatory behaviours into declarative communications? This direct engagement has a lot in common with approaches taken by Options - formerly Son-Rise (Kaufmann, 2003) and Floortime (Greenspan and Weider, 2003) both of which developed independently of Intensive Interaction but use similar techniques. | It is possible that such direct engagement with individual learners' areas of special interest leads to (uncontrollable) over excitement. This is only to be expected and if so, might need to handled slowly and with caution. That is, lots of regularly spaced short engagements, followed by an opportunity for calm, might be better than long engagements followed by crisis. Staff may then build the engagements up over time. |

References

Greenspan S.I. and Weider S (2003) **Engaging Autism: The Floortime Approach to Helping Children Relate, Communicate and Think.** Perseus Books.

Imray P and Hinchcliffe V (2014) **Curricula for Teaching Children and Young People with Severe or Profound Learning Difficulties**. London. Routledge.

Kaufman R K (2003) **Building the bridges: strategies for reaching our children** in Jones G (ed.) *Autism Early Intervention: a supplement for Good Autism Practice Journal*. Kidderminster. Bild Publications.

Dynamic communications are declaratives that are specific to a person, or group of persons, and work like a catchphrase or an 'in joke'. They are generally funny or dramatic and are a short hand 'bonding' reference point, as for example, nicknames. Dynamic communications are particularly open to being non-verbal, such as a special handshake or a thumbs up. This is an area where using single message communicators (such as a BIGmack or similar) is vital if the non-verbal learner is to be able to join in with spontaneous verbal fun!

Learning Intention	Teaching and Learning Activities **Dynamic Communications**	Notes
To feel safe and actively engage with dynamic communications	A dynamic communication is: • Verbal and/or non-verbal • Spontaneous – anytime, anywhere • Relates to cause and effect – it requires a response • Fun and inoffensive – not perceived as negative behaviour even though it might well be 'inappropriate' • Repetitive – could be linked to obsessions • Motivational • Personal and often individualised, though it could be shared by a small group • Caused by association – people, topics, events • Not prescriptive Examples of dynamic communications can be seen in: • Insider jokes that might have derived from events in school during lessons. The 'Uh Oh!' from the Bear Hunt for example could be made into a dynamic communication if it became 'Uh oh, George!' as soon as George appears, or 'Uh oh, Miriam!' whenever you meet Miriam. Keith Park's Interactive Storytelling poems and dramas are full of these; 'Mama Mia!' from 'Spaghetti. Spaghetti' or	**Key principles:** • Accept anything as communicative as long as it is enjoyed as fun by both parties • Respond positively to all interactions – actively encourage but important to monitor • Redirect towards positive interaction **only if the communicative intent becomes problematic** such as harmful to others, overly obsessive • Keep the interaction fun • Share and explain to other staff and adults

'Oi, you, Adam. Leave it!' from the Bible Stories in Cockney Rhyming Slang for example.

- In a similar way, personalised physical 'jokes' derived from Intensive Interaction sessions can be made into dynamic communications if repeated outside of intensive interaction sessions.
- Repetitive gentle physical contact such as nudging or tapping or tickling.
- Conspiratorial gestures such as a knowing wink when passing in the corridor.
- Catchphrases from TV especially comedy shows, film, music.
- Situational jokes which might be considered as 'slap-stick' humour. It is probably best to set these up beforehand and make them into deliberate 'doh' moments. SM's might deliberately walk into a closed door for example, and make a big deal of the resultant broken nose *'Oh do! I've bwoken by dose!!!'*. By bringing learners into the joke, these can be repeated endlessly at odd moments and are almost always guaranteed to raise a laugh. They are great for lightening tensions and can be turned into physical (rather than purely verbal) communications with the hand covering the face bearing a pained expression.
- 'Rude' toilet humour that may be considered socially 'inappropriate' such as burping, farting, hand gestures, soft swearing. The nature of inappropriate, what some might consider to be 'rude', communications and interactions such as those derived from toilet humour might well be tricky, and might need talking through with staff and parents. Clearly there is a time and place for such interactive jokes, but learning when and with whom we can communicate in this way is an important lesson that needs to be learned over time and taught gently. These 'nothing needs to be said' moments are great for conspiratorial communications, as in gently wafting away a smelly fart for example. Yes, they are inappropriate and immature and rude but humour and laughter have such huge communicative potential that we would be foolish to ignore them.
- Current trends such as 'safe!', fist bump etc. or even a simple thumbs up;

- Consider cultural or social meaning
- **We should not be too concerned (or perhaps even concerned at all!) with what might be considered to be age appropriate. We are trying to encourage communications not being grown up!**
- Slap-stick humour, especially when we (adults) are the butt of the joke are excellent ways of bringing us down to earth. Much is made in the Equals *My Thinking and Problem Solving* SoW, of the god like status of people in charge (us!) and the fact that most with SLD probably regard us as always mature, always correct and people who know everything. Walking straight into a brick wall might be one of the ways we can use to

	Common cultural links such as references to football culture, music, celebrity culture.	convince learners that this is not so!

Dynamic communications

This is not a definitive list, merely some examples to start you off.

Example of dynamic communication	Possible responses and reactions	Potential communicative opportunities
TV catchphrase such as The Simpsons: "DOH!"	• Laugh! • Repeat, imitate • Clap your palm to your forehead with an exaggerated 'OH NO!' expression • Respond with linked catchphrase/gesture e.g. 'Why you little…!' • Acknowledge the wider context or origin with 'Ah, The Simpsons!' or 'Oh, you like The Simpsons!'	• Initiate in a different context • Repeat exchange in appropriate context for example, deliberately 'accidentally' drop something on the floor and then go "DOH!!" • This provides contextual meaning to develop understanding • Link to cross curricular activities so that you might work the phrase into a story or lesson
Student tapping staff or peers	• Turn it into a game with a playful action such as twirling round and giving an exaggerated, quizzical, 'Who's that?' expression. • This might then become a standing joke • Or it could develop into a game of peekaboo or hide and seek • Feed in simple language such as 'tap tap tap' • Respond to the rhythm e.g. sing, clap etc.	• Transfer the dynamic exchange to other people and objects, e.g. tap a friend, press a button • Link to cross curricular activities, e.g. work it into a story or a lesson.

	• Give a High Five or a Touch Fists	
Soft swearing (such as 'Oh, Bums' or 'Oh, Bottom'. Rude hand gestures. Scowling or pretending to be VERY angry	• Use humour to reply positively e.g. 'Oooooh, wash your mouth out!' • Turn into socially acceptable act e.g. two fingers becomes peace sign	• Respond consistently to ensure communication remains dynamic, not dismissed • Provide alternative fun communications e.g. 'bum', 'poo', blow a raspberry, or use other hand gestures.

Narratives are the telling by learners of both factual and/or fictional stories. These are not scripted (as in a book) but are derived from memory and repetitive practice. They are usually quite short – a minute or two in the telling - and describe events or relate interests, biographical information, jokes, stories etc. Narratives are the way we all communicate about our lives – good, bad, funny, sad – to those who matter to us. They are the essential glue of social humanity.

Learning Intention	Teaching and Learning Activities	Notes
This whole section on narratives owes a huge debt to the works of Keith Park **and especially Nicola Grove**. It is **strongly** recommended that you look at their writings in the bibliography at the end of this SoW.		

It may be that we think of narratives as being long, fictional works, like novels or tales handed down from generation to generation, and indeed they can be, but for those with severe learning difficulties, narratives are simply *a spoken account of connected events.* This may take the form of a fictional story, and it is often easier to teach the skills required by introducing learners to this form of narrative to start with, but much more importantly, the narrative skills taught here, will allow learners to tell others of the important things that have happened in their lives. For those with severe communication difficulties this will often be very difficult and without a significant amount of time being spent on the process, sometimes impossible. **This makes teaching the art and skill of narrative very, very important.**

A story has a beginning, a middle and an end; it has purpose and meaning to both the teller and the listener; it teaches us to listen carefully; it teaches us about structure, and about the natural rhythms and flow of language; it teaches us about emotions – fear, excitement, anxiety, heartbreak, happiness, love - in a safe and secure setting, not only other people's (the characters' in the story line), but also our own.

Most importantly however, our ability to tell stories directly both effects and affects our understanding of our own humanity.

As an example, think of something that you have experienced over the last 12 months or so that has meant a lot to you. This can be happy or sad, exciting or full of pathos, thrilling or frightening, or maybe all of these things at once. What have you done with this information? Most likely, you have not kept it to yourself, unless it was *the most terrible secret in the world*! Most likely you have told someone, because that's what we do, it's part of what makes us social animals, it's part of what makes us human. Sharing our lives with others in this way allows us to relive the happy and exciting and thrilling, and gain enjoyment from the interest of others.

It allows us to receive a sympathetic ear when bad things have happened and the repeated re-telling to lots of different people may allow us to make sense of the event over time. Apart from the cathartic benefits, the very act of relating the narrative can brings the event into proportion.

Being able to tell our own stories marks us out as special and individual and unique. I have done this, I have value, I am important, I am me. Sharing the sad or pathetic or frightening experiences of our lives allows us to evoke others' sympathy and empathy, put our problems into perspective, receive back comfort of someone else's similar experience so that we know we're not alone. I am me, but I'm also with others who love me and care enough about me to listen and share in my problems as well as my joys.

Key principles of the first stages of teaching narrative:

- Keep the story short. This makes it easier to remember. The three examples given below are all around 100 words.
- Make it exiting, dynamic and/or funny. This makes it memorable.
- Use lots of repetition. This makes it memorable. There's nothing wrong with telling a story 50 or 60 times as long as the learner and the audience are still interested. Maintaining audience interest might mean telling the story to **LOTS** of **different** people. This means going outside of your classroom and engaging with as many people as you can persuade to stop and listen. Because the stories are short this shouldn't take up too much time, but it also means that everyone in the school, from the school secretary to the premises mangers via the taxi escorts must be primed that 'Jack has a new story to tell.'
- Don't worry too much about the story being **exactly** right in the re-telling and **NEVER** read stories when teaching narratives; always tell them from memory. **This means that the initial staff story-teller must rehearse the story so that they are as familiar with it as they might be if telling a story about their own weekend.**
- Tell the story with affect – use lots of voice changes, exaggerated expression, pregnant pauses, signing, gesture. This helps bring interest and motivation to the listener.
- Have a clear idea of the beginning, middle and end of the story. This gives form and order and meaning.
- Have a clear idea of the high point(s) of the story and tell these with considerable emphasis. These are the point(s) of the story, and need to be highlighted.
- It is probably best to use fictional stories in the early stages. They are easier to make really exciting and dynamic.
-

Some examples of first stage stories.

Story Number 1 – The Robber!

One day, I was walking home from school. It was cold and dark and rainy. SUDDENLY, I heard FOOTSTEPS. I looked behind me……but there was no-one there. I carried on walking home. It was cold and dark and rainy. I heard FOOTSTEPS AGAIN. I LOOKED BEHIND ME……but there no-one there. I carried on walking home. Then the footsteps got LOUDER and LOUDER and a BIG MAN was standing over me shouting 'GIVE ME YOUR MONEY!' I gave him all the money I had and he ran off down the road and I never saw him or my money again.

Story Number 2 – SNOT!

Last week I had a TERRIBLE cold. I was sneezing all of the time. AAAAACCCHHHOOOOOO. I went downstairs to have breakfast but I felt a sneeze coming on. AAAAACCCHHHOOOOOO. Oh no! White gloopy snot all in my brothers cornflakes. I felt another sneeze coming on. AAAAACCCHHHOOOOOO. Oh no! Green bits all on my Mum's new dress. My dad was very cross and started telling me off but I felt another sneeze coming on. AAAAACCCHHHOOOOOO. Oh no! White and green snot all in my dad's hair. It was running down his face and everything! Here, said Mum, use a tissue! AAAAACCCHHHOOOOOO. That is the end of my story!

Story Number 3 – The Witch!

Last night, I saw a strange house I'd never seen before. I thought I heard someone calling me. '*Come in, come in'.* The door was open and I went in. It was dark and smelly. There was another door and I heard the voice again '*Come in, come in'.* The door was open and I went in. It was dark and smelly. '*COME IN, COME IN'* and then I saw an old lady, with long black hair and red eyes and fingers like claws. I was so frightened. She reached out her claws to grab me. 'GOT YOU' and she held onto me REALLY TIGHTLY. I pulled and pulled and pulled away and ran and ran and ran all the way home and I'm not going back there EVER again.

An example of a first stage mini-drama

Story Number 4 – The Spider in the Sandwich.

One day Jack and Sarah are sitting together. Sarah decides to make a sandwich. Jack wants a sandwich too. 'Make me a sandwich Sarah' 'No, you're so lazy, make your own.'

Suddenly there's a knocking sound as Jack pretends someone is at the door. 'Go and answer the door Sarah, it must be one of your mates' – and as Sarah answers the door, Jack takes a bite from the sandwich!!

'Who ate my sandwich!!'

'Not me!'

Things settle down and Jack says 'Make me a sandwich Sarah' 'No, you're so lazy, make your own.'

Suddenly there's another knocking sound as Jack pretends someone is at the door again. 'Go and answer the door Sarah, it must be one of your mates again' – and as Sarah answers the door, Jack takes another bite from the sandwich!!

'Who ate my sandwich!!'

'Not me! It must have been mice!!'

Sarah says 'I'm going to make a fresh sandwich and it's just going to be for me' but secretly puts a spider in the sandwich!!!

When the knock on the door comes again, Jack takes a bite! 'OH NO….THAT'S DISGUSTING!!!!'

The end.

Mini-dramas, like The Spider in the Sandwich, can be acted out by two staff members working together in the first instance and then with learners taking one of the roles (see Stages One and Two below). These are not really narratives as such but can be very helpful in teaching sequential memory. Again, for mini-dramas like this keep them short, memorable, repetitive, and most of all, dramatic!

Staff roles in teaching narrative

- A staff member (SM) will tell the story first, starting with a conspiratorial exclamation like 'Listen! I have a story to tell you!' or 'I have something to tell you. Shhhh!!'
- Always tell the stories in the round with chairs but no desks. You may have a special story-teller's chair to highlight the importance of the story-teller.
- Always start with the beginning. For younger learners *'Once upon a time…..'* is good, and for older learners *'One day…..'* or *'Last night/week/year…..'* or *'A Long time ago…..'*

- Break the story up into little lines in the way of 'call and response' and have at least one SM primed to repeat the key phrases. After a while (and especially if they are used to a call and response approach to story-telling, drama and poetry) the more able learners will also act as responders. For example, *The Robber* might be told as:

Story-teller: One day,
Responder(s):   One day!
Story-teller: I was walking home from school.
Responder(s):   Walking home from school!
Story-teller: It was cold and dark and rainy.
Responder(s):   Cold and dark and rainy!
Story-teller: SUDDENLY, I heard FOOTSTEPS!
Responder(s):   FOOTSTEPS!!
Story-teller: I looked behind me……
Responder(s):   mime a worried look
Story-teller: But there was no-one there!
Responder(s):   No-one there!
Short dramatic pause
Story-teller: I carried on walking home.
Responder(s):   Walking home.
Story-teller: It was cold and dark and rainy.
Responder(s):   Cold and dark and rainy!
Story-teller: SUDDENLY, I heard FOOTSTEPS again!
Responder(s):   FOOTSTEPS!!
Story-teller: I looked behind me……!!
Responder(s):   mime a worried look
Story-teller: But there was no-one there!
Responder(s):   No-one there!
Another short dramatic pause just to ratchet up the tension
Story-teller: I carried on walking home.

Responder(s):   Walking home.
Story-teller: Then the footsteps got LOUDER and LOUDER and a BIG MAN was standing over me shouting 'GIVE ME YOUR MONEY!'
Responder(s):   Give me your money??!!
Story-teller: I gave him all my money and he ran off down the road and I never saw him again.
Responder(s):   mime appropriate looks of shock and horror!
Story-teller: That is the end of my story.
Responder(s):   The END! PHEW!!

The purpose of this approach is four fold:

1. Breaking the story up into little bite-sized chunks helps to build sequential memory and doesn't overload the learner. Nicola Grove uses a 'next' sign along with the words '*and then'* to remind the learner that there is more to come if they've forgotten the next bit, **before** prompting with the actual line.
2. Using the audience as responders takes the pressure off the learner that they are on their own. **THIS IS NOT A TEST OF MEMORY.**
3. Communication is a two way process and including the audience right from the beginning re-enforces this. Story-telling **AND** responding allows staff to model **BOTH** the telling and the 'active' listening. It is the equivalent to the responses we might make when someone is telling us a story of something that has happened to them. We don't just sit back and listen quietly and passively as we might to a read story or something on the television; we nod, concur, give facial expressions to note that we hear and understand, make sympathetic noises, laugh, clap, lightly touch the teller on the arm etc. Being read to can be a passive activity; being communicated with has to be active.
4. Responding to the story allows staff to accentuate affect and a visual interpretation of language. You will note in the call and response version of *The Robber* that there are a lot of exclamation marks after the Responder(s) lines, even for the opening line of 'One day'!!! The purpose of the Narrative section of Communication is not just to make story-tellers of our learners, but to make them active listeners. We also want them to be the best story-tellers and the best listeners that they can be.

To be the best story-tellers that they can be, learners have to:

1. Have a **means** to tell the stories. We don't wish to rule out any means, but telling *dramatic* stories by symbol becomes very difficult because of the pace and natural absence of dramatic affect. The best options are therefore through language and sign. Language can also mean using a VOCA (voice output communication aid) for those who have very limited language or lack the confidence to extend themselves, with a 'Step-by-Step' switch being an excellent vehicle. The Step-by-Step is available from Ablenet at around £150 (as at 2016). The Little Step-by-Step is between £115 and £135 and also gives the ability to have 3 levels (that is, three stories on one device, or three differentiated versions of the same story) http://www.inclusive.co.uk/ablenet-little-step-by-step Whatever the means used, the stories have to be **SHORT**, otherwise they become too difficult to remember.
2. Have a **motivation** to tell the story. The stories therefore have to be exciting, funny, terrifying, sad but above all **DRAMATIC** and **FUN**.
3. Have a **mate** to tell the story to. And mates are best when they help the learner but only as much as the learner needs. Mates have to accept that learners will make mistakes, go off on tangents, make up new bits and forget old bits. All of this is OK because it is more important that the learner owns the story than they are faithful to the original. This is a story not a book reading, and with all stories, storytellers may well change things from the last time. This really is OK.

Learning Intention	Teaching and Learning Activities **Narratives**	Notes
	The stages set out below are there for advice and guidance and are not rigid. Some learners may spend a long time in some or all of the stages while others may speed through them quite quickly. **REMEMBER that the end goal is to tell factual stores of events that have happened to the learner** and if a learner wants and is able to move quickly on to Stage Six, they should be allowed to do so.	
Stage One: **To follow the sequence of a short fictional narrative story**	1. Gather all learners in a circle with chairs but no desks. 2. You might begin with simple instructions such as 'Looking!' and 'Listening!' to make sure that all learners are focussed. 3. Tell the story. **DO NOT READ** it. You can use props, especially with younger learners, learners working at the earliest intellectual levels and learners who struggle with spoken communication, but make sure they are few and immediately to hand. This is not a sensory story; this is about teaching the art of	With the stories above, there are no props needed for *The Robber* apart from a resonant floor. Same for *The Witch*, but for *Snot* you might get some gloop to explode onto a willing staff victim at the

	narration. Imagine that this story has actually just happened and you're telling your best friend. 4. Supporting staff must model listening and attention skills such as sitting, looking, active listening, commenting (wow!). 5. Supporting staff must also model and participate in response to the story – as in call and response – with actions, gesture, language and sign. 6. **At this stage there is no expectation that all learners will join in.** Listening and attention is enough. 7. Sequencing can be aided by having separate sessions of story-boarding, where the story is deliberately turned into a mini-drama and acted out with learners taking on the roles. This can be filmed and stills taken for the story-boarding exercise. Try and make the planning a collaborative journey so that the whole group is trying to remember what happens first, what next etc.	appropriate time, but it is not necessary. Mini-dramas like *The Spider in the Sandwich*, are best done with a strictly limited number of props (a loaf of sliced bread and a plastic spider are all that's needed) and are very useful as starter stories with groups of learners with limited linguistic skills.
Stage Two: **(For the learner) to retell the story as best they can**	1. Once you have told the story for the first time, ask if any learners now want to tell that story themselves. 2. If there are no volunteers, a SM can volunteer, but be sure to give plenty of time for learners to come forward. 3. **Total accuracy is not essential**, as long as the learner can get some understanding of sequence and progression. 4. Do not expect learners to start at the beginning because they probably won't. They'll probably start at one of the exciting bits like the footsteps or *'GIVE ME YOUR MONEY!'*, for The Robber, or the bog gloopy sneezes in Snot. **Gently** remind the learner of the beginning…… *'One day'* or *'Last night'* followed by a prompt pause before asking 'And then…?' It is **REALLY** important that they get into the habit of starting at the beginning every single time they tell a story. 5. Gently support the learner to remember as many key parts of the story as s/he can, making sure that the sequence is right.	Learners, even quite able learners, rarely start at the beginning, 'One day…' or 'Once upon a time….' but will often start at the high points (the footsteps in *The Robber*, the claws in *The Witch*, the snot in *Snot*). A 'prompt pause' is used by the SM lead to note that the learner is allowed sufficient time to remember the next line before the prompt of 'And then…..?'

	6. Remember that staff will be responders to the learner telling the story as well. **This is not a test.** We are encouraging learners to tell a really exciting story and we must treat it as though this is the very first time we've have heard it with **LOTS** of exclamations and dramatic **ACTIVE** listening. 7. Remember to make sure the learner finishes with 'The end' and a finished sign.	
Stage Three: **To retell the story with fewer prompts and increasing accuracy**	1. In the follow up sessions learners practice telling the story (in the story-tellers chair if you're using one). There may need to be an initial 'reminder' telling by the lead SM, but this should be phased out as soon as possible in order to maintain the freshness of the story. 2. SMs must continue to support the story-teller as though it's the first time they've heard the story. Don't drop the responders' tension and excitement and remember that staff are likely to get bored well before the learners do. 3. Make a pictorial story board with learners acting out the parts of leaving school on a cold, wet day; looking behind them with frightened expression; being stood over by someone very big and menacing; the robber running away. 4. Practice reading the story board as a whole class group.	There can be as many sessions as your learners want in order to establish increasing accuracy. As long as motivation is maintained you can continue with the same story. If interests wanes…move on to a new one. We might expect a single story to be told and re-told over at least half a term given one session a week.
Stage Four: **To retell the story with sufficient accuracy (to be understandable to a new listener)**	When learners are confident enough, make an arrangement with another class (classes) to tell your story to them. Initially this might well be the whole story-telling class joining in, but as learners refine their individual story-telling skills, class teams should be looking to support individual learners in telling stories to one new listener or a group of new listeners.	

Stage Five: **To retell more than one story with sufficient accuracy**	This is very much about building an individual learners confidence in their ability to engage an audience. The level of support needed will very much depend on the learners' abilities and confidence.	
Stage Six: **To be involved with working through a factual story related to the learner's own actual experience**	Whilst we suggest that learners become familiar with the art of story-telling using fictional stories to begin with before moving on to factual, there is no hard and fast rule about this. The key is motivation; do learners want to tell a story about something that has happened to them? If so, do it! Arrive in class for an enjoyable routine ice-breaker – like making a drink, having a biscuit or some slices of toast. These should be relaxing enjoyable times that have a feel of 'getting together'. Nicola Grove suggests building in a routine for a story-telling session (Grove, 2013: p66/67). This could be a whole morning or afternoon, or perhaps a shorter session depending on the concentration skills of the learners involved. Divide into groups of 3 or 4 to share news. • Each group selects a spokesperson who has to go last, listen to the others, summarise it briefly and report back to the whole group. Clearly this will be a role for a member of staff to begin with, but more able learners can take on this role with support and practice. • In the round, the group selects the 'news of the day' and plans out the session there and then using pictures and symbols. • The planning meeting is followed by a warm-up game. This can be one of Keith Park's 'call and response' games such as A Pound of Jelly Babies or I Didn't Do Nuffink or Let's Have a Crisp (see below). • Once the group are warmed up the story of the day is shared, initially told by staff, but encouraging pupils to take it on.	Also a great time for practicing learners' independent cooking skills. Schools are **strongly** urged to buy Keith's Interactive Story-telling book which is listed in the references. There is a wealth of material there, all of it considerable fun! Both

	- The group might discuss the story or work on individual story telling skills, like expression or diction or switch pressing. - If the group flags or interest wanes, fit in another game. - Wind up with the plenary with all students getting a chance to hear how both staff and their peers think they've done in the session and what they might work on for next week. **Some other points.** At this juncture, ownership of a story is quite important and personal pronouns should be used if it is *your* story. So Tom can recite *'Last week I was out in the park when….'* whereas Shafiq, when re-telling the same story, should say *'Last week Tom was out in the park when….'.* **It is NOT essential that the story is entirely true and staff should NOT check the accuracy or vet the contents of the story** unless it is clearly (i) insulting (ii) defamatory (iii) likely to get the story-teller into very serious trouble. We are trying to encourage story-telling, not accurate reportage; this is about effective communication, not veracity. These are stories told by individuals and if a learner's story strays from fact that is not for us to judge. They are owned by the teller and are the teller's responsibility. We can guide, but if someone else get's very cross about an untrue story told that involves them, that is for the learner to face, not for us to censor.	Keith and Nicola Grove spend time in schools explaining their techniques and you could probably persuade them to do a double act. Their original joint production 'Odyssey Now' first published in 1996, is still one of the great works of SLD/PMLD drama.
Stage Seven: **To tell a factual story with sufficient accuracy**	This is essentially a repeat of Stages Three and/or Four but with factual rather than fictional stories. It should be noted that factual stories particularly are prone to embellishment and change from week to week or even from telling to telling. We do this all the time as we refine and extend (or contract) the stories we tell each other and is a mark of the confidence story-tellers have in their own ability.	

Stage Eight: **To tell a factual story with sufficient accuracy to an unfamiliar school-based storytelling partner**	As with fictional stories, practice makes perfect and learners need to be given **LOTS** of opportunities to tell their stories to people who are not part of the story-telling group. **ALL** staff (including the office, kitchen, premises staff) therefore need to be trained in 'active listening skills' and to practice these daily. Learners may need to tell their story 50 or 60 times to be confident in it and that means lots of listeners and lots of time.
Stage Nine: **To tell a factual story with sufficient accuracy to an unfamiliar non school-based storytelling partner**	As with fictional stories, generalising the art and skill of story-telling is a key element of learning, and though it is recognised that not all learners will get to this stage, this must be the goal for all. As with telling the story to an unfamiliar school-based partner, it is probably best to prime the listener beforehand. This is particularly important with listeners who might not be familiar with the pace, time, and active listening skills needed when talking to a person with severe learning difficulties.
Examples of narrative games from Keith Park. The lines are broken up to fit in with a call and response style of delivery	**A Pound of Jelly Babies (Colin McNaughton)** A pound of jelly babies! Just for me! Slobber, chomp, slurp, gulp, Tee hee hee!

As a general note, call and response often throws up wonderful Dynamic Communications such as the *Wuurrggh* of being sick in *A Pound of Jelly Babies* or *What's your problem?* from *I Didn't Do Nuffink*	A pound of jelly babies! Went too quick! Slobber, chomp, slurp, gulp, I feel sick! A pound of jelly babies! Oh dear me! Slobber! Chomp! Slurp! Gulp! ***Wuurrggh!*** This is the sound of being sick but we're not sure how it is spelled! Ask staff first and then learners to think of other things apart from a pound of jelly babies such as for example: a bag of jellied eels, a bowl of cold custard. The potential list is endless. You can also move into the disgusting fairly easily with 'A bucket of slugs/And a fried Mars Bar/slobber chomp slurp gulp/ Har har har!.' It is not particularly important that they choose something original, they may copy the last thing heard, but involving learners in the process of choosing is very important in developing self-esteem and self-confidence**.**

I Didn't Do Nuffink

I didn't do nuffink

Well not much

All I did was

Trod on the cat   'Trod on the cat' is an example, but it doesn't have to be that as long as it scans.

Trod on the cat?

That's no big deal!

What's your problem?

She didn't do nuffink (caller points to someone who has to come out with an awful confession)

Well not much

All she did was

Broke a cup

Broke a cup?

That's no big deal!

What's your problem?

As an additional memory game and because it's quite good fun, especially when everyone makes mistakes!, you can do this 'in the round' so that after the response of *'Broke a cup' the* caller then points to the first person for them to say *'Trod on the cat'* so that the call and response round goes

'All she did was / All she did was

Broke a cup / Broke a cup?

Trod on the cat / Trod on the cat?

That's no big deal / That's no big deal

What's your problem? / What's your problem?

Let's Have a Crisp

The leader says the line 'let's have a crisp' which everyone repeats, and then everyone says 'yum yum yum!' together. The next person then calls out a crisp flavour ('Cheese and Onion!), everyone repeats it, and then the leader says 'let's have crisp' which is repeated by the group followed by everyone shouting out 'yum yum yum!' Then person two calls another flavour (Smoky bacon), everyone calls it back, person one then calls out 'Cheese and Onion' everyone repeats that and then back to the leader. And so on round the group, as the list gets longer and longer.

References

Grove N (2010) **The Big Book of Storysharing**. London. Senjit.

Grove N (ed) (2012) **Using Storytelling to Support Children and Adults with Special Needs**. London. Routledge.

Grove N (ed) (2013) **Using Storytelling to Support Children and Adults with Special Needs**. London. David Fulton.

Grove N and Park K (1996) **Odyssey Now: A Drama Project for People with Severe and Profound Learning Disabilities based on Homer's Odyssey**. The SLD Experience. 15: 13-14.

Park K (2009b) **Bible Stories in Cockney Rhyming Slang**. London. Jessica Kingsley.

Park K (2010). **Interactive storytelling: developing inclusive stories for children and adults**. Bicester. Speechmark.

Formal social interactions with familiar and unfamiliar people require a particular way of behaving that take in a society's understandings of what constitutes appropriate language, familiarity, attention, time, proximity and touch. They are generally rule bound and will be societal bound. The model in this SoW relates specifically to England and Wales and may well be very different in different parts of the world.

Because this element describes formal communications, the use of rote learning and learned responses is to be encouraged. The major part of the *My Communication SoW* is process based – learners will learn by doing and each learner may 'do' in very different and individual ways. This is OK, because there is no 'best way' to communicate, as long as the communication is effective. Formal social communications and interactions are not the exception to this rule, but we do need to be mindful that there are accepted societal conventions that probably need to be formally learned and this particular element of the *My Communication* SoW is more developmentally structured than most of the others..

Equals is recommending '*Good day Peter'* with a supporting sign as a standard first greeting of the day. **Because we don't want to confuse greeting with time management we are strongly advising NOT to use '*Good morning'* and '*Good afternoon'* because it is not a good morning in the afternoon or vice versa!** If we are constantly correcting the greeting of 'Good **morning***', learners will stop using it. Other options are *'Hello'* or *'Hi'* and it doesn't really matter which you use as long as communities (school, home, club, respite) are consistent over time. We may however be able to teach the difference between a first formal greeting of the day *'Good day Peter'* with subsequent greetings of *'Hi'* which may add to a learner's understanding of time and time passing. Secondly, the insistence upon the use of a name when greeting with '*Good day Peter'* rather than just *'Good day'* indicates that the learner knows who the person is and is therefore familiar. Teaching 'stranger danger' is incredibly difficult for a person with SLD because the word 'stranger' is a relative and abstract term. What constitutes a stranger? If I have never met someone before but I say hello when we meet, are they still a stranger? If I wave across the road, are they still a stranger? If they wave to me, are they still a stranger? Insisting upon at least the first formal greeting of the day with a name, might go a little way towards a concrete understanding of who is familiar and therefore not a stranger.

The exception to this rule will apply to learners who use a VOCA (voice output communication aid) because their difficulties with speech or sign are too great. In this case, a BIGmack switch with 'Good day' recorded on it would suffice. Staff members (SM) **MUST** ensure that the VOCA is ready to use and available at all times. If a learner has a device, for example a mobile tablet with communication facility, then the desired greeting should be clearly placed on the first screen for easy access. There are also easily portable options available such as the 'wrist talker' which is strapped on like a wrist watch and can be found at http://www.spacekraft.co.uk/wrist-talker.html

The insistence upon the use of a name means that we **MUST** be able to differentiate people's names by sign. This is problematic when the common Makaton and Signalong conventions are for the use of the first letter of the person's given name. Thus a P is signed for Peter, but also for Paul, Phillip, Pat, Patricia, Parmjit, Pavel etc, etc. Differentiation is most easily done by adopting a 'signing name' which is regularly used by the whole school and is made up of the first letter of the person's given name **plus** a special and individual sign. Paul, who loves dancing, has adopted the sign for P plus the sign for dance; Parmjit, who is a Sikh, has adopted the sign for P plus the sign for knife to indicate a Kirpan, a sacred knife of the Sikh religion; Patricia has adopted the sign for P plus the sign for red, because that is her favourite colour. If every person known by name to each learner adopts a signing name the learner can communicatively engage with others about that person.

Learning Intention	Teaching and Learning Activities **Formal social interactions with familiar, known people**	Notes
To respond to a greeting from a familiar adult	It is probably best to set up a standardised method which can then be modelled and practised many, many times. Typically, this model will involve; 1. A set greeting such as '*Good day, Kelley*' as the first greeting of the day spoken by members of staff as they greet Kelley off the school bus or on entry into the classroom. 2. Supporting adults may help the learner to pause for sufficient time in order to sign '*Good*' as a minimum requirement in acknowledgement of the greeting. 3. Supporting adults may also point out to the learner that they have just been greeted and encourage the learner to give positive feedback with a glance or other acknowledgement to support the signed '*Good*'. 4. Some learners may use a VOCA but the same principles will apply. Staff will need to ensure that the VOCA is set up to use before the learner enters school from the bus.	More able learners will be able to say and or sign the whole '*Good day (SM name)*' and should be encouraged to do so right from the start if they can.

To respond appropriately to a greeting from a familiar adult	1. A set greeting such as '*Good day, Kelley*' as the first greeting of the day spoken by staff members (SM) as they greet Kelley off the school bus or on entry into the classroom. 2. The learner (L) acknowledges the greeting by signing *'Good'* as a minimum requirement, with support if necessary. 3. SM gives a low five or touches hands with L and expects the touch to be reciprocated. Learning about proximity is aided by the use of formal touch as early as possible. We tend to use touch very differently according to age so that adults' physical interactions with children become very different over time. It may however be best to teach formal touch as early as possible with a low five or a gentle fist with learners as young as two or three. If we are consistent in this, it is very easy to turn either into a formal handshakes later on, but the adoption of formal handshakes are not really necessary until late teenage years.	It might be reasonably expected that such greetings will happen many times in the day and it is important that the same procedure is gone through every time and that SMs give sufficient time for each learner to respond appropriately.
To initiate a formal greeting with a familiar adult	Learners may well need to be primed and heavily supported in the first instance with one key person (such as the head teacher) being **the target** for the initiation. There can be much practise in the classroom beforehand in role play and drama situations. SMs may model the procedure immediately before L formally greets the target. 1. L approaches the target saying and signing 'Good day ………….' and extends his/her right hand to be either shaken or at least touched in a low five. **2.** L either initiates or reciprocates the touch. **3.** L steps away from the target.	Eye contact is not absolutely necessary but should definitely be encouraged, even for those on the autistic spectrum. This is because it is part of the expected formal greeting procedure and should be treated as something to be learned if it does not come naturally.

| To initiate a formal greeting with an unfamiliar person | Visitors to school are excellent 'targets' for formally greeting an unfamiliar person because this person can be primed and (if they don't know them) taught the basic signs quite easily.

Given this, it is essential that visitors are brought into classrooms and introduced to every member of the class including staff, who can then model the correct procedure.

1. L approaches the target saying and signing 'Good day …………. My name is………' and extends his/her right hand to be either shaken or at least touched in a low five.
2. L either initiates or reciprocates the touch.
3. L steps away from the target. | Very importantly, time will need to be given over to this by the school's senior leaders. |
|---|---|---|
| To extend a formal greeting into a short conversation with a familiar adult | This extension is somewhat problematic, because as soon as conversational gambits are opened the formal rules are off. The trick is therefore for the learner to steer the conversation into areas of personal interest as soon as possible, and to finish before the conversation gets too tricky.

This extension will initially be learned in the classroom or around the school in role play settings. SMs must make it clear to learners that they are practising their skills.

It is important that we don't push too far too fast; we need to give learners confidence that they can hold a short conversation before going onto longer ones.

1. L approaches the target saying and signing 'Good day …………. My name is………' and extends his/her right hand to be either shaken or at least touched in a low five.
2. L either initiates or reciprocates the touch.
3. L steps away from the touch
4. 'I have a sister. Her name is …………… Do you have a sister?' | The conversation extensions will clearly be highly personalised and probably rote learned. This leaves them very open to be recorded on a Step-by-Step or other similar VOCA. Such machines are excellent for conversational practise and allow for several short sentences to be recorded.

It is accepted that the learner's part in the 'conversation' will be linear and pre-determined but this is OK in the first instance as the learner becomes adept at turn-taking. For more choice in |

	Or 'I like lego. Do you like lego? Or 'I went on holiday to Spain. It was very hot. Do you like Spain? 5. 'Good. I have to go now. Goodbye'	conversational gambits, various apps and VOCAs like the Go Talk can offer a small range of extension options. **If you are going to use a VOCA, make sure that the voice you use bears some resemblance to the natural voice the learner might have in age and gender.**
To extend a formal greeting into a longer conversation with a familiar adult using a social script.	The use of a 'social script' (Musselwhite & Burkhart 2001) help learners *'to claim, start and maintain turns in a conversation.'* The scripts are essentially a limited series of short, closed statements that the learner can practise and rote learn. They are also open to use with a VOCA. Such statements may be responded to in any way yet still make sense as one part of a conversation. The topic for the scripts must be motivational to the learner. Because such 'conversations' are scripted they are naturally fairly rigid, but have a place in formal communicative settings and can act as a real bridge towards more declarative, unscripted two way conversations. There are a number of key elements, namely: • The use of formulaic starter lines to set the topic of the script. • Use of maintainers, holders and interjections; which all allow the learner to add interest to the basic storyline, yet maintaining control of the conversation.	This longer 'conversation' now enters the realms of narrative and can be an extension of the story-telling skills being practised. Social scripts should not be confused with 'social stories' which are an entirely different animal. Social stories (Gray, 2015) are specifically designed for those on the autistic spectrum in order to help the learner who struggles with Theory of Mind, understand the perspectives of others in social situations. Carol Gray has an

	• Use of turn transfers, especially for more able users. After the main story (or in the middle of a longer story) turn transfers invite the listener to give their opinion. • Closings; to allow the learner to initiate the ending of the conversation. Examples of a social script following a formal greeting. **The statements are made by the learner and take no account of what the responder might say.** This is because we are teaching the learner to feel confident in longer conversations 1. L approaches the target saying and signing 'Good day …………. My name is………' and extends his/her right hand to be either shaken or at least touched in a low five. 2. L either initiates or reciprocates the touch. 3. L starts the conversation with 'I went shopping yesterday' and waits for a response. After the response (whatever it is) L replies 4. 'I bought a new shirt and tie'. L waits for a response and then replies 5. 'They're for the school prom'. Response and reply follow. 6. 'Do you like proms?' 7. 'We're having a disco' 8. 'Well I have to go now' 9. 'Bye!' **There is a real skill in responding which members of staff have to learn.** Neutral affirming questions like 'Really?' or 'Did you?' or statements like 'My oh my!' or 'Wow!' are very useful, as are repeating the line back to the learner as an exclamation. The only variable is in response to the question asked 'Do you like proms?' and it doesn't really matter what you reply. For example 'I bought a new shirt and tie' might well be followed in normal conversation by specific questions such as 'Where did you buy them?' or 'What	excellent website at www.carolgraysocialstories.com

colour are they?' But remember that this might be problematic in a scripted conversation where the learner may well (will probably) not have the linguistic skills or the social communicative understanding (especially if there is an additional autistic spectrum condition) to develop an open ended conversation. In which case 'I bought a new shirt and tie' can be responded to by 'Excellent!' or 'Good for you!' or 'You bought a new shirt and tie!'.

Here's another example, which if you just repeat back the statement or respond with 'Really? or 'Ooh!' or 'OK' does make sense.

1. 'Hey you! Come and talk to me'
2. 'I've been on holiday'
3. 'Went to Blackpool'
4. 'It was freezing!'
5. 'I had to wear my big coat and hat!'
6. 'I did have a candy floss though!'
7. 'I might go back when the sun's out'
8. 'Have to go now. Bye!'

The key elements of the 'conversational script' are therefore:

1. Start with a starter; in this case the dramatic 'Hey you!' but it could just as easily be a simple 'Hello'.
2. Keep the sentences short.
3. Keep the whole thing short an absolute maximum of 10 'conversational turn takes'. In this example you can see that there are 8.
4. Make categoric statements.
5. Bring in at least one high point which is the point of the conversation in the first place. In this example there are several relating to Blackpool, cold and candy floss.

A VOCA can be used here even if the learner has language, because it can act as an aide memoire, which immediately takes the pressure off the learner to remember the whole script. If they do have language, there is no reason why learners cannot record it themselves.

After 45 conversations with 45 different people using the same VOCA script, the learner may be in a position to talk with or even instead of the VOCA.

	6. End with an with a clear indication that the conversation has finished, as in 'Bye!'	
To extend a formal greeting into a short conversation with an unfamiliar adult	This may be very useful for those on the autistic continuum who need a short script to develop conversations in order to give conversational practise. This is on the principle that the more practise they get, the more able they will be. We all use these sorts of formulaic conversations and some (like the Queen for example) use them all the time. It is best to think of these like a 'meet and greet' session. They will start with a series of one liners after the introduction. So for example: 1. L approaches the target saying 'Good day .... My name is.........' and extends his/her right hand to be either shaken or at least touched in a low five. 2. L either initiates or reciprocates the touch. 3. L starts the conversation with 'How are you?' and waits for a response which will end with 'And how are you?' 4. L responds with 'I am very well thank you'. There are many other examples, especially if talking about the weather, that can be used as an introduction.	

References

Gray C (2015) **The New Social Story Book.** Future Horizons. Arlington TX.

Musselwhite C R and Burkhart L J (2001) **Can we Chat? Co-Planned Sequenced Social Scripts**: A Make It / Take It Book of Ideas and Adaptations www.lburkhart.com/product

Personalised reading and writing will usually (at least for most of those with SLD) be confined to single familiar and often used words. Those who are more able readers may follow more conventional academic schemes of work, though there may well be problems in finding age appropriate texts as the learner gets older. These single words are usually learned through whole word recognition and it is not necessary to explore the mysteries of phonics. There will probably be a number of words that apply to all learners, especially social sight words such as Toilet, TOILET, Gents, GENTS, Gentlemen, Ladies, LADIES, Lavatory, plus the innumerable symbols which indicate Gents and Ladies. There will be a number of other, less complicated, social sight words such as 'entrance', 'exit', 'push' and 'pull' etc. In addition to these, there will also be a bank of very personalised motivating words that will very much depend on the individual learners' interests.

Personalised reading and writing

Where the Scheme uses the term 'words' it is referring to the appropriate symbolic communication method for the individual which may be objects, signs, symbols, pictures or words. In the context of this Scheme of Work, reading and writing are indicated by single words or thoughts and will not concern itself with putting these words together in sentences. Learners who are skilled readers and/or writers, or who are working on programmes to specifically develop their reading and/or writing should refer to the Equals *English* SoW, the EYFS Curriculum and/or the English National Curriculum.

There is no evidence to suggest that all symbols are easier to read than words, or that (developmentally) symbols come before words in a hierarchy of understanding. It depends on how concrete (or abstract) the symbol is. The symbols for toilet, swimming, bread, teddy bear etc., are probably easier to read than the words because they are iconic; that is, the drawings look like the object they are symbolising. The symbols for yesterday, on, under, think, classroom etc. are not iconic, they are abstract because the words themselves are abstract. That is, the meanings of the words constantly change according to the context in which they're used and their relationship to the comprehension of the people using them. Symbols are images which are used to support or replace text, thus making the meaning clearer and easier to understand. **If symbols don't make the meaning clearer and easier to understand they should not be used.**

The standard 'test' for this is for staff members (SM) who have not learned the abstract symbols to check the symbols currently in use by covering the words (the translation). That is, just read the symbols on their own. Can you make sense of the symbols and read them

fairly easily without translation? If you can't – don't use them. It may be argued that learners can learn the symbol's meaning by constant exposure and lots of repetition, and yes that may well be true. But why teach the symbols, why not just go straight for the words? Both are abstract, both are difficult to learn, both will take a long time to teach and both will be subject to memory loss if not used constantly. Words are however, much more flexible and more widely used than symbols and if both are equally difficult to teach it makes much more sense to teach the word rather than the symbol.

Learning Intention	Teaching and Learning Activities	Notes
To understand that a favoured object can be symbolised in some form. **To make choices from identified favourite objects/activities e.g. 'train' or 'ball'.** **To recognise and respond to key signs, symbols and words.**	• Use phases 1 and 2 in PECS, which are all about exchanging the symbol for ……... (something motivating). It is **NOT** required that pupils move further in the PECS phases to be effective symbol users. • Remember that *Motivation, Means and Mate* apply equally to both reading and writing. • Build a 'favourite words' book that is entirely personalised and decorated to the learner's design and taste. • e-books made in PowerPoint Clicker or BookCreator allow a greater level of accessibility for some learners, and offer greater opportunity for generalisation for others. • Initially, any and every word, symbol and/or photograph that is of especial interest to the learner can be included. It is not important that we only use symbols, or only words, or only photographs. So the book may include photographs of Mum, Dad, siblings, pets, the favourite pop star, special friends in school; symbols for favourite foods and toys; the MacDonald's M logo as well as any other logos such as Lego or favourite TV programmes. • When the book starts to build up, say more than 30 symbols, words, photos, it can be sectioned and organised. • This will increase single 'words' possibly related to topics etc. to enrich their written/reading vocabulary.	The PECS technique of teaching initial means of exchange – you give me the symbol and I will give you the raisin – is very effective and is a very sound model.

	• SMs need to remember the words that learners have in their books. Spend time discussing (with the learner as well as within class team meetings) and memorising. • Refer back to the individual learner's word book whenever these words come up in ordinary conversation in class. Encourage learners to check the words and share them with both peers and other SMs. **Remember that reading and writing is about communication, and we must always ground words, symbols and photos into the actual practise of communicating.** • Search for key words on google, or look for a favourite band on You Tube, with the SM following the pupil's lead and discussing with them. • Make an artistic creation such as a collage out of the learner's favourite 'words'. • Organise a key ring (which is attached to the learner) of key (learner motivating) symbols • Organise generic symbol key rings which SMs can wear.	Staff may need to consider e-safety and copyright issues here, as well as safely accessing You Tube and using Kiddle or Junior Safe Search rather than Google. See the section on AAC for advise on symbol key rings.
To recognise functional words in different contexts.	• Recognise their own name in print, for example, indicating where to hang up your coat. • Recognise names of others in the class/family to choose who to say hello to next in circle time. The word and the photograph can be used together. • Set up a 'Good Morning' session which sees a photograph of the learners houses, a photograph of the school and a photograph of the learner with their name. Moving the photo and name from home to school give learners a graphic chance to see who is in and who is still at home. • Words that they may need functionally. So for example, for the pupil who enjoys cookery: - plan a menu; make choices with staff or group; - create the shopping list; communicating ingredients to others; - go to the supermarket; identify the aisles needed;	Recognising your own name is an early developmental milestone in reading and comes in at around 2 years of age with neuro-typical conventionally developing learners. Typing words into the computer may be a solitary exercise but can show social communicative intent by

	- search for specified food items; be able to ask for items that you can't find; - look up recipes and videos as an example on the internet, by typing key words into the computer. • Learn to read a menu and communicate their choices to others to order food and drink by for example, recognising the pictures on a McDonalds Menu. Personal favourite menu options can be put onto the communication aid of the learner's choice.	sharing the picture with an adult once found. More able students could look at 'meal deals' and other options on the menu.
To be able to identify signs and symbols in the community	• Social sight words and symbols in the community such as where to pay, entrance, exit, push or pull, toilet etc. • Recognising safe places to cross roads so that learners practice 'reading' the signs and signals. • 'Reading' key landmarks when travelling to a regular destination. • Pupils learn to recognise and communicate to others where to go using shop signage such as, McDonalds to eat but Boots for medicine. • Being able to identify preferred brands and products such as their own deodorant by 'reading' the various labels. • Being able to 'read' the layouts of familiar supermarkets to indicate where to get bread, tinned products, fruit and vegetables etc. • Being able to read the numbers on regularly used buses, trams etc. • Being able to read underground, tube and metro maps as well as they can, especially knowing direction of travel to familiar and often used destinations.	See Equals *My Independence* SoW
To communicate effectively with others who are not immediately present	• Learning to use social media such as 'facetime' to see each other as they speak and sign. This can be 'stepped' fairly easily, first within the classroom to model and show the operation, then behind a screen, then in the corridor adjacent to the classroom, gradually getting further away. It is probably best, at least initially, to talk to SMs, who, it they are not too far away, can then talk excitedly about the experience, thus immediately re-enforcing the learning.	It may well be that motivation will be high for a number of learners to use multi media communication, given its social acceptability and 'cool'. This may be

	- Use of Skype, Facetime and Facebook chat to share stories and identify key contacts on the ID list. - Use of qwerty keyboards to type key words - Cut and paste key words, symbols and pictures into a book - Identify app icons on tablets etc. - Use of text messaging on phones with emoji symbols to express themselves. - For the verbal, using phones as phones, especially to an immediate well known few such as family and SMs. - Use of narrative and storytelling.	especially so if siblings have phones and/or tablets etc. Facetime etc is also excellent for signers of all levels.
To share a personal event or news or share in a fictional story.	- Create personalised books which appeal to the pupil, using the most appropriate means from power point to cut and paste. - To be able to use a personal power point or software such as 'Book Creator' or 'Our Story' in order to share content with others. - Use clicker grids or appropriate choices to create books and shared texts about self or events.	This Learning Intention shares a great deal with the section on Narrative.
To represent one's name in a consistent way	- Using over-writing and under-writing learners will probably be working on writing their own name from a very young age. For some learners, especially those working consistently and over time at P7 and below, free-hand name writing can be a challenge. We might therefore try and make it as easy and as successful as we can by reducing the initial demands. George might therefore sign his name as 'G', and when he can successfully do this without support we might ask him to add on an 'e', so that he now signs 'Ge'. If he can successfully do this without support and over time, we can add on an 'o' so that he now signs 'Geo' etc. George can go as far as he is able, but will always be successful once he has mastered the 'G'. - Other options may go in the direction of a signature, so that George Parsons, signs his name GP.	Clearly the ability to write one's own name is a very useful skill, especially for signing greetings and birthday cards and pieces of work.

	• For those who struggle to write, a simple stamp with the learner's name can be used, or • Use of qwerty keyboard or other appropriate AAC to print a name.	

Non-verbal, behavioural communications can form a considerable part of a learner's communicative repertoire, especially if that learner has what are considered severe challenging behaviours. If it is a cliché that all behaviours are communications, it is a cliché that is true, and we ignore them at our peril. There is sometimes however, a tendency to stop these communications because they are associated with challenging behaviour, rather than turning them into contextualised and appropriate communications.

Whilst both the reasons for severe challenging behaviours occurring in the first place, and the actual behaviours which challenge, are undoubtedly many and varied, this doesn't mean that the resolutions have to be complicated. This is because there are common themes running through very many challenging behaviours which directly relate to communication. If we can get the communication right, we can go a long way towards resolving the challenging behaviour.

These common themes are

1. Task or situation or person avoidance and/or
2. Attention seeking

1. Task or situation or person avoidance behaviours usually derive from the learner not wanting to do something but not being listened to when they say 'no'. This then comes back to our *Motivation, Means and Mate* where the learner has the motivation to say 'no' but neither the means nor the mate because we (staff, parents, carers) are not listening or are not allowing the learner the control. For most children (especially neuro-typical conventionally developing learners) this is a learning curve often described within the 'terrible two's' and the vast majority of children do learn that there are some things that they have to do even if they **REALLY** don't want to. It is often painful, there will be lots of tears and tantrums, but they do eventually learn.

For some children (and especially for some children with severe learning difficulties because learning is so much more difficult) losing control in certain things is **SO** frightening and **SO** intolerable and **SO** incomprehensible they are prepared to do anything to avoid it.

If the learner has been displaying severe challenging behaviours in order to avoid a task or situation or person for some considerable time, and often these types of behaviours can continue for very many years, the **only GUARANTEED** way to resolve the issue is to take the task or situation or person away. That is, **we need to listen to the communication!!** In this sense, the learner is not just saying 'no' they are screaming **'NO'** at us **VERY LOUDLY**.

It is possible that we want to bring the task or situation or person back again, but that is another issue outside of the remit of this Communication SoW. If you really do have to bring the task or situation or person back to the learner, do it very slowly, over a long period of time and offer **FANTASTIC** rewards for the learner who has to buy into what you want him/her to do. The learner has to want to change their behaviour and they won't do this unless we make it irresistible!

Attention seeking behaviours usually derive from the learner's inability to gain **ENOUGH** attention by conventional means. Relating this to *Motivation, Means and Mate*, they have the motivation and probably the means (otherwise you wouldn't notice that they're demanding attention!) but they don't have the mate, because we don't have the time or the resources to give the level of attention demanded.

Once again, we often use conventional wisdom here. Firstly, the argument that a learner is getting attention but still continues with extreme attention seeking behaviours, merely indicates that the learner is not getting **enough** attention. This may seem unreasonable to you, but then your refusal to give **enough** attention, obviously seems unreasonable to the learner. Secondly, conventional wisdom often dictates ignoring as being the answer: after all, if we give attention to someone who is displaying challenging behaviours in order to gain attention, we will be rewarding a negative behaviour, and the challenging behaviour will continue because it has been successful. This is of course correct, but unfortunately, especially for those with severe learning difficulties because learning is so much more difficult, the learner is likely to ratchet up the behaviour until we **HAVE to pay attention**, even if that attention is negative. For someone who exhibits habitual attention seeking challenging behaviours, negative attention (which is better than no attention at all) becomes the norm.

The solution lies in giving attention **BEFORE** the negative behaviours occur, so that we are rewarding positive attention seeking behaviours rather than negative attention seeking behaviours. **This means investing time and resources, and the more extreme the attention seeking behaviours, the more time and resources we have to invest.** The point about this, as with all extreme attention seeking behaviours, is that the time and resources will be stolen anyway because class teams **have to give the attention** to protect both staff, peers and the learner him or herself.

Now we are on a **new** learning cycle where the learner's 'mate' **guarantees** attention for even the slightest indication from the learner and for as long as the learner needs it. We are teaching the learner that they don't have to exhibit extremes of behaviour in order to gain the attention they need. We are teaching the learner that they have at least one 'mate' who is there for them and them alone. Over time, because positive interaction and attention is always guaranteed, the learner learns to communicate more conventionally

because this is successful, and will continue to get better at conventional communications **because they are successful**. Over time, we can decrease the amount of one to one time allocated to the learner because they learn to trust conventional communications more and become more secure in their own communicative ability; that is, the learner learns to trust that they will be listened to.

For those wishing to explore these issues further we would recommend Harris, Hewett and Hogg (2001) and/or Imray (2008) and/or Imray and Hewett (2015).

Learning Intention	Teaching and Learning Activities **Task or situation or person avoidance**	Notes
To communicate 'no' appropriately	It may well be that learning to say 'no' appropriately is **MUCH** more important than learning to say 'yes' and should come at the very beginning of the communication cycle. 1. Using a schema like Individualised Sensory Environment (ISE) noted in the Communication SoW Basic Principles, compile a list of things which the learner does not like. Please note: it is not sufficient to be neutral about the thing; there has to be positive dislike. This could be an object or a sensory experience or a foodstuff or a drink, or anything which the learner will consistently reject. 2. At fairly regular intervals, perhaps once or twice a day, offer the positively disliked thing to the learner and look for a sign of rejection. Please note: we do not want to offer the learner a choice between something they like and something they don't like. This is not about making choices but about learning how to say 'no'. 3. Agree with colleagues what the learner's rejection looks like. It is often best to film it so that school can agree on the rejection response with home, respite etc. 4. As soon as the rejection response has been delivered by the learner, take the disliked thing away. This must be instant so that the learner can easily associate	Although this is saying 'no' appropriately, we must not be too particular about the level of appropriateness in the establishment of the rejection response. This can be refined later. The important part is that the learner does not feel the need to exhibit challenging behaviour in order to be listened to when they say 'no'.

<table>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the behaviour (rejection response) with the action (the disliked thing gets taken away).
5. When the rejection response is established, repeat the offer of the known disliked item at irregular intervals perhaps once a week for a term.
6. With the learner, and after discussions with all interested parties, refine the rejection response over time so that it becomes as socially appropriately acceptable as it can be.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To follow a simple single instruction</td>
<td>See Following Instructions in this SoW.

Although this may seem contradictory, the logic lies in recognising that learners may be much more willing to co-operate with the education process if they know that they will be listened to on issues that are really important to them. There is no reason why learners who object to certain tasks, situations or persons should object to all tasks, situations or persons and there is therefore no reason not to teach about following instructions, as long as we are intelligent about the instructions we are asking them to follow.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To recognise the difference between 'I don't want' and 'I don't need'</td>
<td>As noted in the introduction to Imperative Communications in this SoW, needs and wants are subtly but importantly different.

'I don't want' is clear and unambiguous but 'I don't need' has two perceptions, that of the learner and that of the teacher, and it may be that we have to strike a balance that relates directly to the importance of the negative to the learner. 'I don't want to put shoes on' can be agreed by all parties but there will clearly be disagreement about 'I don't need to put shoes on'.

The general principles for proceeding will be

1. Don't fight battles that are not worth fighting. So in this example, don't expect shoes to be worn all the time, but do expect shoes to be worn when outside.
2. Proceed slowly and at the learner's pace.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</table>

<table>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>
3. A small success is much better than a big failure.
4. Offer irresistible rewards for a very small compliance. The agreement from the learner really does have to be a 'no-brainer'. This might mean offering (say) 20 minutes of whatever it is that the leaner really **LOVES** to do for a mere few seconds of putting shoes on. Over time, and with success, and **VERY SLOWLY** we can gradually increase the amount of time the learner is expected to wear shoes. The key here is to recognise that the learner has to believe that they are in control and buy into the agreement of 'I will wear shoes for x amount of time if you give me this reward for y amount of time'.
5. Don't push an increase in expectation beyond that which the learner can cope.
6. Do continue to slowly increase demands, but always be aware that the learner may be having a bad day or a bad week and cannot cope at present. Be prepared to go backwards in the short term in order to go forwards in the longer term.
</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>**To recognise the difference between 'I want' and 'I need'**</td>
<td>
In a very similar way, but again, subtly different, 'agreements' will have to be arrived at regarding the relationship between what 'I want' and what 'I need'.

'I want to hold this Thomas the Tank toy in my right hand while I'm eating my lunch' is not the same as 'I need to hold this Thomas the Tank toy in my right hand while I'm eating my lunch'.

The principles for proceeding will be the same as for 'I don't want'.
</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td align="center">**Learning Intention**</td>
<td align="center">**Teaching and Learning Activities**

Attention Seeking Behaviours</td>
<td align="center">**Notes**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>**To positively share attention with a staff member.**</td>
<td>Strictly speaking, this learning intention can be seen to be more relevant for the staff member (SM) than the learner. That is, the SM has to convince the learner that the SM is paying attention to the learner **all of the time**. This means giving sole and undivided attention to the learner **all of the time**. Once the learner is secure in this,</td>
<td>The degree to which the SM has to give sole and undivided attention to the learner, does of course</td>
</tr>
</table>

	he/she will have no need to display extremes of behaviour in order to gain the attention he/she seeks. The more secure the learner is in this, the less he/she will think about extremes of behaviour and the less she/he thinks about it, the less she/he will do it. In behaviourist terms, this is described as moving towards extinction of the behaviour. Generally speaking, it is probably best that the person allocated to this task is a TA rather than the teacher, otherwise who is going to teach the rest of the class? Generally speaking, because this can be an extremely demanding role, it is better to allocate two TAs to share the role, with the two persons taking half a day each. This also means that absences can be covered more easily. The duration for this arrangement will naturally vary according the severity of the learner's need, but can take a number of years to resolve in the most severe of cases. This clearly demands a commitment from the school and its resources.	depend on how severe the learner's need for attention is. The more severe the need the greater the degree of attention.

References

Harris J, Hewett D and Hogg J (2001) **Positive Approaches to Challenging Behaviour**. Kidderminster. BILD.

Imray P (2008) **Turning the Tables on Challenging Behaviour**. London. Routledge.

Imray P and Hewett D (2015) **Challenging Behaviour and the curriculum** in P Lacey, R Ashdown, P Jones, H Lawson and M Pipe (eds) *The Routledge Companion to Severe, Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties*. London. Routledge.

Peer to peer communications have been deliberately left until the end, precisely because they are so fraught with challenges for all with SLD, including the most able learners. If communicating with and to someone without learning difficulties is hugely problematic for all those with SLD, communicating with and to someone with learning difficulties is bound to be exponentially more challenging.

Having said that however, there are very many opportunities for peer to peer interaction using the learning intentions already described in Imperative Communications, Declarative Communications, Dynamic Communication, Narratives, and Formal Social Interactions. This is especially so if staff members (SMs) set up communicative triads, consisting of on SM and two (or possibly three) learners. This is particularly the case when playing (or rather Playing with a capital P, because it is so important for communicative development). **All play and games are full of peer to peer communicative opportunities**.

Learning Intentions	Teaching and Learning Activities	Notes
To communicate needs and wants with peers	• Any communication opportunities arising from structured play, that is, playing games. These don't have to be complicated games, since *The Farmer's in the Den, Musical Chairs, Hide and Seek* and countless other simple children's games can throw out numerous opportunities. • Play alongside others, as in for example, playing in the sand pit at the same time as others, leading on to sharing equipment. • Any communication opportunities arising from free play. • Tea parties and pretend play often give cooperative opportunities for communication. • Where possible this can extend into real situations, such as a class or school coffee morning, snack time, school café, local cafes and work experience. • Requesting a peer pass items that are motivating at lunch time (especially if a peer can act as the lunch monitor) or for example, art materials in a lesson. Staff can greatly assist in this by pointing out that another learner has………… so why don't you ask him for it? • Using a preferred object, passing it back and forth such as rolling a ball or car.	Learners may well start with full adult support and this will aim to be faded out when appropriate. See Equals *My Play and Leisure* for a more detailed list of the sorts of structured games that might be appropriate for learners of all ages. Setting up sharing and cooperative activities can

	• Taking turns at the whiteboard/computer etc. where staff are prompting the interactions of the pupils. • Turn taking games such as 'Pop Up Pirate' or 'Guess Who?' facilitated by an adult • Use of a visual prompt so you can only have a turn when the 'turn taking card' is in your possession, which is when an adult can often fade out for periods of time. • Cooperative activities such as surveys where one pupil has the recording 'board' and another asks the questions.	happen across the curriculum.
To listen to a another person	• Clearly, listening to another is a key skill, but it may not be something that is easily taught. Listening skills are however, an essential element of Narrative.	
To turn take with another person	• Take part in reciprocal interactions with another person, such as Intensive Interaction or Musical Interaction. • Turn take with a wider range of adults and then peers in any game you may care to mention. Just about every game from *Musical Chairs* onwards, involves interaction and turn taking. • Take turns in exchanges of communicative behaviour, such as call and response etc.	
To use appropriate physical contact with a peer	• Encourage peer to peer 'high fives' in appropriate context as praise or reward when someone in the class has done well. "*Hey, Daniel passed the ball. High fives all round!!*" • Encourage short bursts of controlled fun in play with another person such as rough and tumble in the soft play room. • Learn appropriate physical contact through the encouragement of a greeting hug, high five or hand shake with people we know well and know by name. The proximity allowed will depend on the learner and we ought to get into the habit of finding out the level of proximity each person is willing to tolerate.	

	• Set up peer to peer massage sessions and other curriculum sessions such as PE, sports, games and Dance are excellent for consolidation of these skills.	
To tolerate others in their space or to request time away from the group.	• Encourage learners to elect a favoured person to join them for individual learning for a short time. Timers, particularly visual timers are excellent here. Agree the time and allow the learner to set the timer if possible. Thus joint agreement as to the duration of time removes the adult 'control' of the activity. • Encourage learners through reward to move closer to group activity over time. The learner may have the activity brought to them until they can gradually move closer to the group. • Create a way for the learner to 'ask' to be alone such as the use of a symbol on the iPad to ask people for 'quiet time' or to tell others to 'go away'. While this may seem contradictory to encouraging peer to peer social interactions, we may need to recognise that some learners will only be able to tolerate their peers for periods of time if they are certain that they can also have the degree of quiet time to themselves.	Creation of a quiet space such as in a pop up tent, or screened-off area can allow quiet time…with listening possible whilst not physically close. Equally, the judicious use of ear defenders often allows learners to participate more closely in paired and group activities.

Augmentative and alternative communications (AAC) run through the whole of the Communication SoW and will be used by some as their preferred or only access route to the activities in the SoW. AAC can provide a support, or access, to communication in particular for those who would not have a 'voice' without their use.

In all aspects and areas of the curriculum, AAC aids are **tools or access methods** for pupils to use in order to access, engage with and participate in all aspects of a communicative and social life. We must therefore be very careful to not limit the use of AAC to certain areas or certain times or certain subjects only. In this sense AAC aids are very much like a voice, and as we take our voices with us, so should pupils using AAC aids take their 'voices' with them. This means that the aid has to be chosen very carefully with consideration given to the use of the aid in every circumstance. Specialist advice and/or assessment will be useful and indeed essential as the access method moves from low tech, for example printed symbol board/keyring, to high tech, for example a Dynavox. See references at the end of this section for links to specialist advice and support.

In a communication-rich inclusive environment, AAC will not just be designated and specified for the learner who requires it as an access method. It should be available for exploration and use by all learners with communication barriers.

As with all other areas of communication, *Motivation, Means and Mate* are key. AAC is a way of trying to ensure the Means, but we have to be certain that the learner is Motivated to use it and the learner has the Means whenever they have the Mate.

It is of the utmost importance that the statement, 'Presume Competence,' is held at the heart of all work involving AAC. Presume competence, referring to the learner rather than the member of staff, is a key phrase in AAC, One should always presume competence in whatever AAC the learner is using and work towards giving a voice, even if the 'voice' says things you might not want to hear! Restricting access to AAC because you don't feel the person is able to use it effectively, is taking the voice away.

AAC Strategies	Teaching and Learning Activities	Notes
To promote: **Body Language** **Eye pointing**	• Intensive Interaction • Sensory stories • Drama games • Interactive games e.g.; Peek-a-boo, I Can See You, Changing Faces, Blowing Faces	

Gesture Facial expression Vocalisations	• Rocking rhymes • Movement Games • Interactive songs • Parachute Games • Messy play • Massage • Sensory play / tactile play	
Signing	Please read the section under *Signing* in the Communication Basic Principles and perhaps also ensure you are constantly asking certain questions, namely • Are you checking that your signing is accurate? • Is there a signing environment? Not just in the classroom but in the school office, the dining area, the taxi, the home, the respite centre. A signing environment must be universal if it is to universally successful. • Are there multiple mates (signing communication partners) for the learners.	
Objects Cues sometimes also known as Objects of Reference (OoR)	Object Cues or Objects of Reference (hereinafter jointly referred to as OoR) are objects which are used to denote words or phrases of actions or things. So for example, a small plastic cup may be used to denote drink or drink time or possibly snack time. OoR are often used with pre-intentional communicators (such as many who have PMLD) to give an understanding of time passing and different events happening, much in the same way as we might use symbols and sign with intentional communicators and those who have an understanding of symbolic communication. Generally speaking, those who are working consistently and over time at P4 and	**OoR must be meaningful for the learner**, that is, rather like signing and symbol use, **use key words only**. The less abstract the OoR are the better, but some abstraction is probably inevitable. How does one

above will have at least some understanding of symbolic communication whilst those working consistently and over time at P3 and below may not.

There are key stages in the progression of the use of OoR, namely:

1. The OoR is handed to the learner just before the event.
2. The word or phrase denoted by the OoR is also spoken at the same time. SMs can use the word more than once in order to reinforce the connection, but it is best not to use excessive and unnecessary language. So for example, hand over a small cup with the words 'Drinks time Bethany, drinks time'.
3. The learner is encouraged to hold the OoR for as long as they can and possibly pass it back to the SM or possibly pass it on to another learner. This latter option is excellent for developing peer to peer social interactions.
4. The OoR is kept accessible to the learner at all times so that the learner can eventually take control of the communicative process and hand the OoR to the SM when he/she wants a drink, not just at drinks time.

This fourth stage is quite difficult because of the impracticality of portability of OoR. If learners do get to this stage, it is probably better to transfer the skills gained to symbols and/or signing.

- Begin by including OoR at the beginning of key and repeated activities. Routines are particularly good for this, as in having the object that represents 'dinner' (for example, a small plastic spoon) at the dinner table, and using the arm band that represents 'swimming' whilst going into the pool.
- OoR are excellent tools for reminding learners of what is happening during transitions from one activity to another, because unlike a word or a sign, the OoR does not disappear once it is used (unless of course, the learner drops it or throws it!). Even then, it can be picked up and handed back to the learner.

indicate the word 'toilet' for example or even more difficult 'Intensive Interaction'? The key thing is to ensure that every agency uses the same OoR so that even if there is abstraction, it is at least consistent.

All OoR, whether abstracted or not, should be standardised – where possible ensure consistency with respite, linked schools, transitions (between primary, secondary, FE) and home. **This is REALLY important!**

	- You may also set up OoR trails across the school. So for example, the OoR for toilet might be a small toilet roll or a small square of pad. This can be handed to the learner in class with the words 'Toilet Mohammed, toilet' and the learner encouraged to go to wherever the toilet is. If another toilet OoR is attached to the door (in much the same way as we are used to seeing the toilet symbol on toilet doors) the learner can be encouraged to touch the OoR as he goes in. Similarly, if lunch is normally consumed in the school hall, the lunch OoR can be given to learners before the leave their class and then be found on the walls leading to the school hall and again be touched as they open the hall door. - Start with activities that you use most frequently in order to maximise learning opportunities. - Initially the adult might carry and regularly show the OoR in order to remind the learner in transition, while moving on to encouraging learners to be more active in carrying. - Start with preferred activities and move on to non-preferred activities, that is, use motivators initially. - Can be used for choice making. - Can be used to structure the day.	
Other cues, such as musical cues, smell cues, touch cues.	**Musical cues** are generally pieces of pre-recorded music which are played in short (maximum) 20 second bursts to signify the passing of time and/or a transition and/or both the start and end of a particular activity. Their use **MUST** be consistent over agency and time if they are to be effective. **It is REALLY important that such musical cues are not used as background** while the activity is going on. This will only cause sensory confusion and act as a barrier to learning. As a society, we have grown used to the ubiquity of music because it is absolutely everywhere, but this also numbs it effectiveness as a cue.	

Smell cues are the use of strong smells to indicate key events and are especially useful as day indicators, for example, lavender for Monday, vinegar for Friday. Again, consistency over agency is key. They should be used sparingly, because unlike music, smells cannot be switched off.

Touch cues are variants of Cannan Barrie 'on body' signing used for those with a dual visual and hearing impairment but generally without a learning difficulty. As far as we know, there are no standardised touch cues specifically for those with SLD (or PMLD) as for example Makaton and Signalong 'interpret' sign language, but many of the body signs can be used, especially for those with an additional visual impairment.

The Cannan Barrie on body signs are freely available at http://www.ssc.education.ed.ac.uk/canaanbarrie/ and you may also want to refer to Lee and MacWilliam (2008).

We have also quoted the 'three key principles' as being exceedingly good practice for all to follow.

Watch	Wait	Follow
Skilled, on going observation is fundamental to this approach as it allows us to look in detail at what and how someone is communicating.	It takes time for people with complex support needs to process and respond to communication and it is important to give them time and to avoid intervening too quickly.	This approach is interactive not directive and the aim is to respond to and develop their communicative attempts.

Symbols	Please read the section under Symbols in the Communication Basic Principles.			
AAC Strategies	**Teaching and Learning Activities** **VOCAs** **(voice output communication aids)**			**Notes** It is imperative that educators are conversant with best practice in the implementation of AAC in their teaching and learning, for example the increased time required for formulation of responses and initiations. Prompting becomes a key issue, see the reference at the end of this section on *Prompting Techniques to Support AAC use.*
Use of a BIGmack	A BIGmack is probably the simplest and most important of the innumerable VOCAs; they are (almost) indestructible and are extremely flexible communication tools. **Every class of learners with SLD ought to have at least three or four BIGmacks which are given over to the class's sole use.**			There are many single message communicators available, and at a huge variety of prices. We are not suggesting that one is

| | It is a cost, but in the same manner as Makaton or Signalong signing books, these are **ESSENTIAL** resources.

They can be used to

• aid a learner to initiate an interaction – as in activating a BIGmack that shouts "Come over here!' so that SM (the mate) immediately gives attention and responds;
• aid the learner to be pro-active in imperative, declarative, dynamic, narrative and formal social interactions;
• aid a learner to participate in an activity. For example, a learner may be motivated by a noise or a word or a phrase (a dynamic communication) from a story, song, poem, game or drama. The learner using the BIGmack is 'in charge' of coming in at the appropriate time and the other players have to wait until the AAC user presses the switch to communicate that the game or story can continue. Even if the learner doesn't always get the cue, this can really ratchet up the tension if all SM's build up an anticipatory 'Here it comes………!'
• aid the learner to indicate that they want a turn in an activity or conversation;
• aid the learner to reflect on an activity. | superior to the others and it is possible to use all of them for the same teaching activities suggested here. BIGmack has been named as it has been a stalwart of the SEN AAC field for many years. |
| **General principles on the use of communication switches** | • Remember *Motivation, Means and Mate.*
• Ensure the communication is two way, that is does the learner have a mate to communicate to?
• Ensure the learner is communicating about something that is important to them, that is, does the learner have a motivation to use the switch? Too often we see choices such as juice or milk at drinks time with the learner straining towards the staff member's tea as their preferred choice!
• Give the learner time to respond. | |

	• Consider the ease of physical access – identify barriers and provide solutions for example, in the type of equipment, the level of support needed. • Remember to look in the first instance for the preferred movement which the learner naturally uses since this is logically where we ought to think of positioning any communication device. We have to make it as easy as possible for the learner to communicate. • Liaise with OTs regarding the necessary and appropriate seating, position, clamps for switches etc to ensure the easiest access. Joint assessment is always optimal, since attention must be given to transition between home and school. • Use motivators to encourage engagement and use. • Personalise learning and resources. • Remember to generalise skills and the use of equipment across more than a single area of use. • Ensure activities and communications are positive and enjoyable for both communication partners. • Remember to encourage choice making and turn taking whilst developing the use of AAC so declarative and especially dynamic communications are vital in the early stages. • Use as part of collaborative play. • Ensure consistency and continuity where possible – across the school, across linked schools, home, respite etc.	
Use of switches generally	• Think about switch accessible/activated toys. These can be purpose built or adapted easily if the toy is battery powered. • Using a switch to have some control over electronic equipment such as an i-pad or a CD player. • Talking stories – the learner activates next part of the story, including sensory objects related to next sequence of the story.	The Switch Progression Roadmap, although written a while ago, still offers a clear introduction to creating switch access for learners. Refernce to be found below.

	- Creating sensory walls with switch activated sensory objects for example, lights, scent activators, fans, toys, sound toys, etc. This can be especially effective when the switches follow a current sensory story or narrative. - Model, co-active and pro-active use of switches to operate a favourite toy – following development of understanding of cause and effect. - Use switches for turn taking, for example in musical interaction or call and response. - Use switches for joint attention activities such as narratives or playing games, as in for example, *The Farmer's in the Den* or *Musical Chairs* or *Musical Statues*. - Use switches to share an interest, for example when 'stretching' a narrative. A series of BIGmacks can be set up with a photograph attached which will help to sequence a favourite activity. - Engendering a shared enjoyment of a funny event or activity, as in for example a switched animal toy that makes a funny noise.	
EyeGaze	- This is a relatively new access method, which offers all of the activities outlined above: initiating, responding and creating. It is included in this SoW as recent developments will allow tracking and assessment of the data created by each user session. In this respect, it can also be seen as an assessment route for staff, particularly in respect of those with visual field difficulties and those with complex communication barriers. This requires an understanding that the learner is controlling and affecting the screen. - For older learners who use this access methodology, communications via social media such as FaceBook, messaging, email, etc are enabled. This can be as simple as setting the eye gaze to emulate the mouse. - High tech AAC devices such as Dynavox products already support this, and in the past relied on touch or switch access. Now it is possible to also use eye gaze as an access to these communication devices.	See References for a guide to get started with Eye Gaze in your classroom.

	• Curriculum software is now produced with eye gaze as an access method option. This allows communication based on learning in lesson situations to explore, share and create. Clicker7 is an example of this, supporting all aspects of curriculum communication and literacy.	
Mobile Technology: tablets and smartphones	• Taking photos and sending a photo message home to communicate what they are doing in school that day. • Using specific AAC apps for communication such as Proloquo2Go, Clicker Communicator, Grid3. • Small group using social media. • Sending voice messages – written as a text, which is then spoken to recipient. • Emails to communicate with peers around school, or the wider community. • Facetime to communicate with peers around school, or the wider community. • Downloading music – choosing what to download, communicating preferences, sharing this with adults and peers. • Blogging and Vlogging. • Using emojis to express emotions. • There are a ariety of apps available to download which are in line with pupils' motivations. • Using Siri (smartphone app) – to ask a question and get a vocal response. Could be funny. Share this with friends/peers.	Most schools have clear guidelines on the use of digital media, photos and videos, and digital safety should be explicit in all practice. This especially relates to the use of smart phones, particularly personal ones; guidelines must be adhered to for professional integrity.

References

Lee M and MacWilliam L (2008) **Learning Together: A Creative Approach to Learning for Children with Multiple Disabilities and a Visual Impairment** (2nd ed). London. RNIB.

Lyons G, Cassebohm M and Mundy-Taylor J (2011) **'Stretching': a simple strategy for improving the quality of life of children and young people with profound and multiple learning difficulties.** The SLD Experience. 61: 8-12.

http://www.callscotland.org.uk/home/

http://acecentre.org.uk/

http://www.rockybay.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/6.4-Prompting-Techniques-to-Support-AAC-Use.pdf

http://www.helpkidzlearn.com/downloads/EyeGazeGuidebooks/Spectronics-EyeGaze-Leaflet-Web.pdf

http://www.inclusive.co.uk/Lib/Doc/pubs/switch-progression-road-map.pdf