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Incorporating School Subjects into Speech Therapy

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Many teachers are exploring the integration of subjects for combined learning: Science/Math, Social Studies/Language Arts, etc. Speech-language pathologists (SLPs) can also integrate a variety of school subjects, such as science, art, and music, into therapy.

Math and Science:

Logical-mathematical intelligence involves planning, sequencing, conceptual and abstract thinking, and problem-solving. A child with a language disorder may have difficulty with the skills required to complete math problems, equations, and formulas. Science also involves formulas, laws, and experimentation. If the child is unable to sequence events, follow directions, or arrive at conclusions, science theory will be abstract, and hard to understand.

How Can an SLP Help?

Completing simple science experiments during speech sessions is a great way to improve higher-level language skills and engage students in speech therapy. See the following website for easy science experiments: <https://www.splashlearn.com/blog/kids-science-experiments-to-make-learning-engaging/>

Before starting the experiment, organize and plan the materials needed, sequence the steps for the experiment, and make predictions about what will happen. During the experiment, have the student follow single- to multi-step directions to conduct the experiment. When it is complete, discuss if your predictions were accurate (if not,



problem-solve why), answer questions about what happened, and make inferences about what will happen if you do the experiment differently.

Art:

Spatial-visual intelligence involves the ability to think in images and pictures. Art involves appropriate hand-eye coordination, comparisons, following directions, and noticing small details (e.g. various shades of red). This skill may be very difficult for the language-impaired child as many words and details are lost in memory.

How Can an SLP Help?

Using art during speech therapy activities can help improve expressive and receptive language skills. Some easy activities include:

- While listening to a story, have a child draw pictures of different scenes from the story, then use the pictures to retell the story.



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- Provide the student with a black and white picture scene. Then, give directions the student needs to follow to color the picture. This is a great activity to target basic concepts, conditional directions, temporal directions, and more.

Music:

Musical Intelligence involves the ability to recognize rhythms, repeat those rhythms, and create new ones. Music may involve reading sheet music, memorizing lyrics, and coordinating harmonies. Some children with auditory processing problems may not be able to remember songs or follow rhythms.

How Can an SLP Help?

Music provides an opportunity to target many speech and language goals.

- Use simple songs to target vocabulary with young children. (e.g. "Old MacDonald" to target animal vocabulary, "Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes" to target body part vocabulary)
- Play music instruments to target basic concepts (e.g. fast/slow, loud/quiet, stop/go)

- Use song lyrics to target articulation. Print out the lyrics of age-appropriate songs for children to read/sing while using good articulation.

Physical Education:

Gym class involves following directions and **body-kinesthetic intelligence**, a child's ability to control his or her body movements and manipulate objects. Children with language disorders often do not understand spatial concepts and relationships and have poor sequencing skills, which may affect their performance in physical education.

How Can an SLP Help?

Gym activities and games provide opportunities to work on language skills such as sequencing the steps for a game, explaining the rules of the game, discussing the vocabulary of the game including multiple meaning words (e.g. bat, lose, run, pitcher, ball), linguistic concepts, and following directions. In addition, group activities and games allow for targeting social skills and social language.

References:

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