

The “Language Friendly” Secondary Classroom.

Dr Julia Starling
Speech-Language Pathologist

Goal: To increase student’s access to written language.

Specific Target	Strategy Examples
Reduce the complexity of teachers’ written language.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Keep sentences short and to the point, one idea per sentence.- Simplify the language not the content.- Keep language explicit and direct.- Use sequence step ‘pointers’ such as numbers or words. (<i>First, second, finally.</i>)
Use more accessible vocabulary.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Use words that are familiar to the students.- Provide descriptions for familiar or complex vocabulary.- explain the meanings of instructional words e.g. <i>evaluate, distinguish between, enumerate</i>- Check for ambiguity of language. Ensure the meaning matches the context.- Explain non-literal and figurative language in literal terms.
Increase the ‘readability’ of written resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Break up pages dense with text with the use of boxes, tables, headings, bold words, etc- Use visual aids where relevant, such as icons for key terms that can be repeated whenever used.- Break down densely written texts such as class activities e.g. by analysing the content of each paragraph, creating headings, creating mind maps for main ideas and associated details.
Facilitate the understanding of project instructions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Include the main instructions early in the text.- Highlight the issues to be addressed in relation to the topic, so students know precisely what they are being asked to write about.- Avoid using too many complex instructional terms and multi-part instructions.- Provide examples and models of expected answers on similar issues and topics.

Goal: To increase student’s access to teachers’ oral language.

Specific Target	Strategy Examples
Improve student’s ability to process oral and written information.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Some students with processing difficulties may find it difficult to listen, read and write notes simultaneously. Provide printed notes to minimise copying from the board; allow extra time for copying; repeat the information orally after each ‘board-written’ sentence.
Modify aspects of teacher’s speech rate, volume, and/or pitch to improve oral delivery.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Adjust the rate of delivery, the volume, of speech and the use of pitch to provide extra meaning.- Talk FACING the class, not the board.- Be aware of using good eye contact, and ways to get the attention of students with attention difficulties.- Use gesture, eyes and general body language to convey interest to the students.

Assist students with auditory processing difficulties.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Balance oral language delivery with visual aids and demonstrations. - Supplement talking with gestures. - Allow more time for processing questions and forming responses. Allow 3 to 5 seconds processing/response time (the average time that teachers pause before moving on is 0.9 of a second). - Write up a step-by-step visual planner on the board at the start of each lesson. - Provide a visual 'homework alert', with the main objective and due-time information on a calendar.
Reduce the complexity of teachers' oral language.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Be direct, not indirect, with your requests and instructions. - Avoid sarcasm, innuendo and ambiguity. - Repeat important instructions, emphasise key points.

Goal: To increase student's knowledge and use of curricular vocabulary.

Specific Target	Strategy Examples
Prioritise essential curricular vocabulary.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - When starting on a new topic, select up to 10 words (maximum) that are essential for the basic understanding of the topic content. - Present these words to students in clear, unambiguous definitions, where possible involving the students in the creation of topic-relevant descriptions for these words. - All new vocabulary should be presented in spoken and written forms, so students can hear and repeat the pronunciation (oral language) as well as be familiar with the spelling of words (written language). - Check that glossary definitions are accessible language, and the meanings are relevant to the context of the topic.
Maximise opportunities to understand, recall and use new vocabulary.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure multiple opportunities for the application of these words in students' learning. - Expand the same strategies to the introduction of all other unfamiliar words. - Ensure that students have many opportunities to use new vocabulary in their work. - Demonstrate new vocabulary in a range of resources and situations.
Demonstrate strategies for understanding unfamiliar vocabulary.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Show students how context can be used for working out what words mean. - Provide direct instruction in morpheme analysis for complex words, such as scientific terminology.
Provide instruction in the use of relevant key words for searching information.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discuss how key words work when using search engines. - Brainstorm synonyms for topic research tasks.