

Instead of Workbooks

Special emphasis is placed on providing opportunities for students to develop communication skills, attending skills, cause and effect, and other functional skills, etc. The use of voice output devices are mentioned for some activities. However, you can also substitute in many cases, the student's use of sign language, a picture communication board, or use of simple words.

- Listen to a classmate read a story. The non-verbal student hits a voice output device to indicate: "Turn the page now, please".
- Listen to a story at a listening centre. The non-verbal student could access the tape with a switch and a Powerlink. A verbal student can answer simple questions and create a storyboard if able to draw.
- Work with classmates to put on a play. The student could hit a voice output device to produce a sound effect or make a statement in a play.
- Interviews: The student could access a switch to ask questions prepared with a classmate. Various individuals could be interviewed. Keep questions simple and few for students practicing their language skills.
- Story Theatre: The classmates take a story and read it to their audience while acting out their respective parts. Keep the speaking parts simple for the low-verbal student. The non-verbal student can use voice output.
- Present a report for school on a tape recorder or voice output device, which can be accessed with a switch and a Powerlink. For verbal students, pair down the information and provide visual prompts or pictures on a picture board to guide the student.
- Tell a joke on a voice output device or use a picture board to assist students with low-verbal skills.
- Read a short poem to the class that is recorded on a voice output device.
- The non-verbal student "*reads*" to a buddy by hitting a switch to activate a tape-recorded story. The student could visit a younger class or the library for a change. The student could also have a turn in the "Author's Chair".
- Record a few different endings to a short story. The student uses a voice output device to select the ending. Classmates have to act out the story, as it is

being read and improvise when the new ending is given. Endings can be silly, dramatic, scary, sad, etc.

- Classmates could write a pattern book with the student. The repetitious portion can be recorded on the non-verbal student's voice output device.
- The student could keep a diary with help to record from peers. Classmates could ask questions to obtain information and record the student's choices.
- The teacher makes up questions for classmates on a particular topic. They can be posted on a voice output device, depicted on a picture communication board, or used as prompts for those working on language skills.
- With assistance the student could make choices to write a letter to a friend or relative.
- Record a brief description of a story on a voice output device without revealing the title or the characters' names. Classmates try to guess the title of the story. The low-verbal student could provide simple clues to the class, or use a sign language for clues.
- Do an experiment for the class. Each step can be recorded on a section of a voice output device or using a picture-board with sequential directions. Classmates prompt the student for the next direction or question.
- The student and classmates nominate someone for an award and explain why. This can be recorded on a voice output device for a presentation or the student can use sign language.
- Classmates could make up riddles based on a story the class is reading. The riddles could be recorded on a sequential voice output device and the non-verbal student could access a switch to play them back during sharing time. Classmates try to guess the riddles.
- Classmates could work with the student to construct a self-profile with information about the non-verbal student. Questions could be placed on a voice output device or picture communication board to be taken home each night to interview family members. Pictures could be sent in from home with favourite artifacts, which have special meaning for the student.
- Make up a crossword puzzle. The T.A. could record the questions (e.g., #2 down...) on a sequential voice output device (e.g., Step by Step Communicator), which is paired with classmates who have corresponding blank crossword

puzzle sheets. The student would assist classmates to listen to the clues and fill in the crossword together.

- Create clues for a Treasure Hunt. The student could work with the teaching assistant or a fellow classmate to record clues on a sequential voice output device or using a picture board. Sign language could be used in this activity as well if applicable. This activity could be used with the resource teacher and ESL students to assist them in listening to directions.

- Make a picture map of a story with the main events as they occur. Photocopy pictures of the main events in the story. The student could make choices around the events that come next in the story. Pictures of these could be glued onto a large sheet. These pictures can be paired with emerging language skills as well. Comprehension questions should be kept simple and reinforce beginning academic concepts.

- Make a collage about a theme or topic the class is studying. (e.g., anything to do with fish: fish and chips, frozen fish, aquarium, water scenes, etc.) The student could cut or rip out pictures from magazines and paste with a glue stick with assistance if needed or prompting. (Students who cannot manage scissors can also use a switch, to access electric scissors operated by a peer.) Sorting concepts can be reinforced here.

- Make a mobile, which relates to a theme the class is studying, (e.g., solar system and any pictures or objects which relate to that theme). The student could work at sorting which items relate to the theme.

- Make a storyboard. The student could work with classmates to create a storyboard. Perhaps the story is recorded on a sequential voice output device (e.g., Step by Step Communicator) for the student to access for peers at a centre. A couple of classmates could make the figures out of construction paper and back them with felt. They would move the figures about as the student "tells" the story. The student may work on vision skills doing this in a black-light room with fluorescent paper figures. Students can also work on turn taking, simple language skills, answering questions by pointing to picture boards, etc.

- Write a song related to a classroom theme. Take a very basic, simple song that the class all knows. The student could help make choices to substitute characters and/or activities or events with those relating to a particular theme. (e.g., "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star" could be rewritten with words and phrases about Jupiter) when studying the solar system. Actions can be interwoven with sign language where applicable.

- Make a poster to advertise a book the class is studying. The student could make choices around the colours and characters used.
- Make a recipe, which could relate to a story. (e.g., Gingerbread for the Gingerbread Boy) The student could operate a mix master with a switch and make choices around items to be placed in the recipe at a centre with peers rotating through during the day or week. For those with good hand skills, there are lots of opportunities to mix, rip, pull, pour, stir, cut, pick up with pincer grip, etc. Check with you occupational therapist for specific hand skills. Cooking also offers one of the best opportunities to work on functional math skills. There are several books available now filled with picture board recipes for students who need picture prompts in addition to words.
- Make a T.V. commercial. The non-verbal student could record his/her speaking part with the help of a classmate on a sequential voice output device. The student would need to work at hitting the switch on cue during the rehearsals and performance. Other students could work on their sign language, or simple language skills.
- Make up some math story problems, which are recorded, on a voice output device (e.g., Step by Step Communicator, Introtalker, Voice Pal Plus, etc.). The non-verbal student plays them for classmates at a math centre. A listening post may work well so as not to disturb other classmates. As students finish their work, they rotate through the centre at some time during the day or the week. Reverse inclusion may work here at students leave the class to move to an alternate location, so as not to disturb others.