

IDEAS FOR STRUCTURING SPEECH TASKS AND VARYING COMPLEXITY

(Adapted from Dean Williams, University of Iowa)

Increasing Difficulty of Speaking Situations (Children or Adults)

When one is working to change speaking behavior, one must be concerned with the increasing difficulty and complexity of speaking situations. The difficulty can be increased by (1) the social complexity of the situation, (2) the complexity of the language used, and by (3) the reaction complexity. In varying the social complexity, it is extremely helpful to role-play the situation before the client goes into it. In the language and reaction complexity, he can do this in the main with the clinician first and then move over to using increased language and/or complexity in increased social complexity. It is the responsibility of the clinician to structure the increasing complexity of speaking for the particular child that he works with. This cannot ordinarily be done unless he knows the child and can observe his reaction patterns.

Examples of increasing complexity of social situations include:

1. Talking to clinician alone in the therapy room.
2. Bringing one or two others into the room for short introductions, etc.
3. Introductions and short questions in the hall - "Where's the pop machine?" or "Where's the office?" etc.
4. Bringing one or two others in the room and having the child engage in a conversation with the person -- or it may be to interview the person (here the child would be asking questions in the main) .
5. Short conversations with a person in the hall that he knows and then one he doesn't know and then perhaps a secretary.
6. The same kind of varying language complexity assignments outside of the clinic - back at the dormitory, etc.
7. Practice on the telephone.
8. Talk and explain what he is doing in group meeting and demonstrate what he is doing
9. Arrange for two children to have a debate with each other.
10. Have child answer "rapid fire" questions first by the clinician and then by others within the clinic and even back at the dorm as he moves through therapy.
11. Have the client make his own assignments.