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Collaborating with Teachers in the Classroom



Speech-language pathologists (S-LPs) are increasingly working with teachers directly in the classroom. This approach to providing speech-language pathology services ensures that learning goals are relevant and functional to the child's learning environment.

Additionally, when teachers and S-LPs work together in the classroom, students at risk of speech and language issues are able to benefit from different approaches to meeting the oral and written language demands of the curriculum.

Here are some tips to get you started

Prepare

1. Examine the research evidence related to the area of intervention.
2. Review the provincial education curriculum, especially provincially prescribed learning outcomes for relevant grades and subjects. This information is publicly accessible on [Ministry of Education websites](#).
3. Research Ministry approved accommodations. School boards/districts have lists of accommodations permitted for Ministry exams.
4. Learn about lesson plans, these are the starting point for planning classroom activities. Your teacher colleagues have rich expertise in lesson planning so they can guide you and provide you with examples.

Connect

5. Take time to build a relationship with the teacher before offering to collaborate in the classroom. Begin by sharing [information sheets](#), tips or materials they can use for classroom activities targeting oral language or literacy. For example:
 - a. [classroom acoustics](#)
 - b. [childhood apraxia of speech](#)
 - c. [language and literacy](#)
 - d. [S-LPs in schools](#)

6. Ask the teacher about or observe their current classroom practices and activities and, if possible, build on current practices.
 7. Prepare and present short professional development sessions on topics of interest to teachers. Such as:
 - a. Myths and realities of bilingualism
 - b. Supporting students with DLD
 - c. Understanding dyslexia
 - d. Selecting and using technological tools aligned with oral versus written language difficulties
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Collaborate

8. Ensure that your recommendations (verbal or in your reports) are applicable to the classroom. Follow up on and adjust guidance based on teacher feedback.
9. Be familiar with evidence-informed sources of information about managing challenging classroom behaviour (e.g., CADDAC, 2018). Because students cannot learn if they do not pay attention, teachers may ask you for advice about behaviour management.
10. Offer to be present on parent-teacher night.
11. Propose reviewing student writing samples, with the goal of identifying and then planning lessons around predominant error types (i.e., spelling errors reflecting weak phonemic awareness, orthographic awareness, or morphological awareness).



Initiating Classroom Collaborations

If you would like to collaborate with teachers in the classroom, but do not know where to start, here are a few ideas:

Oral Language

1. Model a group dialogic reading activity (e.g., Buysse et al., 2011)
2. Model a group activity to teach narrative story structure
3. Model a group activity to foster language transfer (see November 2020 Special Issue of CMLR on Cross-Linguistic Pedagogy)
4. Model diverse oral language stimulation strategies, for example:
 - a. Recast and language expansion during pretend play or group discussions
 - b. Simplifying oral instructions
 - c. Strategies to support verbal comprehension
5. Collaborate to create and implement oral language stations in the classroom
 - a. Listening to stories
 - b. Vocabulary building
 - c. French/English cognates
 - d. Making inferences - Start with inferring from pictures or wordless cartoons

6. Model a group phonological awareness activity
 - a. Explicitly address the misconception regarding the role of syllable awareness (see Moats, n.d.)
 - b. Model alignment of phonological awareness activities with students' precise decoding/encoding abilities
 - c. Explicitly address and model the importance of assessing phonological awareness without print
7. Model a group phonics activity that incorporates articulatory cues, orthographic patterns and morphological awareness
8. If a word wall is used by the teacher, collaborate to identify and teach decodable words from the word wall
 - a. Demonstrate orthographic mapping techniques involving word analysis, phonemic awareness and letter-sound knowledge
9. Model a reading comprehension activity targeting inferences
 - a. Pronominal inferences – model a gradual increase of the distance between the pronoun and the noun to which it refers.
 - b. Word meaning inferences – teach the meaning of prefixes, suffixes and roots that are developmentally appropriate
10. Model vocabulary instruction during reading
11. Collaborate to create and implement written language stations in the classroom
 - a. Word parts
 - b. Making inferences
 - c. Complex sentence construction
 - d. Text structure of different text types

For inspiration on the topic of collaborating with teachers on the theme of literacy, read about three school S-LPs' journey [here](#).



References and Related Readings

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