

## **CALL – Communicative Aspects of Learning and Life**

CALL is a resource which has been developed by speech and language therapists and staff working in schools in North Lincolnshire. As a group, they were concerned to develop a resource for teachers in all schools, not just special schools, which would enable them to focus on the development of appropriate social communication skills. The rationale was that the research evidence tell us that there are clear links between problems in communication, social skills and behaviour and teachers need to support and encourage the development and use of skills in each of these areas.

This resource has been in development since 2006, several speech and language therapists have taken on the bulk of the work in relation to constructing assessment forms for pupil profiles and in producing written modules of activities that support targeted developments. These have been trialled in pilot schools which has provided feedback and comments to allow alterations, amendments and ongoing development; the pilot schools included primary and secondary schools and special schools. The resource is not yet fully ready for publication.

CALL is a package that aims to support, encourage and facilitate the development and use of non verbal skills, verbal skills, social understanding and conversation skills. These are the skills that have greatest impact upon, and are essential for communication, learning and behavioural self-control. CALL aims to address the needs of children and young people across the full ability and age range. Inevitably, it is still an evolving resource. The intention is that the activities and resources be used either as a standalone programme or to support a number of curriculum areas and that it can be tailored to meet the needs of the school and the individual pupils within CALL groups.

There are clear links with the SEAL programme (Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning). CALL provides a framework for developing children's interpersonal and social abilities. SEAL aims to facilitate personal development and allow for learning and practising social interaction skills within a safe environment. The developers of CALL have tried to produce a resource that can be worked alongside and has similarities with SEAL. However, there are pupils who will not have the social communication and interaction skills with which to access SEAL. So CALL may be used to encourage the development and use of skills with which they can then move on to access SEAL. Wherever possible formats from SEAL have been adapted and kept consistent within the CALL resource.

CALL should be delivered within a group setting because this allows for practice and discussion of skills and situations. Pupils are taught in small groups of six to eight supported by two members of the school staff. However, CALL will only be truly successful if supported by planned generalisation and daily reinforcement in the regular school settings and situations and at home. To allow this to happen all staff and parents/carers need to have an awareness and basic understanding of the programme and, therefore, information regarding current focus, and targets for individuals should be regularly shared with the pupils themselves, all relevant staff, and parents/carers.

The target group of pupils is those for whom any formal language development targets relate mainly to aspects of grammar and basic concepts. These pupils will be at p-level 7 and above for Listening in the main but may not be so advanced in Speaking. This is not to deny the possibility of using the assessment and activities for less able pupils too but work will tend to

in 1:1 or very small group activities.

CALL sessions are planned and structured but there is enough flexibility for teachers to be responsive to what the pupils say. They should be practical and fun. Sessions are relatively short; they should last about 30 minutes and there should be a minimum of two sessions per week.

The package provides a series of *Activity Sequences* linked to four different levels of complexity. Within each Activity Sequence may be found an Intended Learning Outcome ILO. By completing the recommended sequence of activities a pupil will have had opportunity to develop a range of skills. For instance, at Level 1 within an activity sequence focused on Listening, there are opportunities for each pupil to reach a level where they:

- Will respond to a visual or verbal cue to listen when given individually\*
- Will respond to a simple verbal request when given individually
- Are able to recognise the speaker/source of noise in a structured listening situation\*\*
- Are able to locate the speaker / source of noise in a structured listening situation
- Are able to maintain attention for a very short duration during a listening activity
- Are able to attend to others for a short time when prompted, rather than their own vocalisations
- Are able to briefly cease sound making or movement in order to listen e.g. foot tapping, rocking, humming
- Are able to focus on sounds in a structured activity but may be unable to ignore/filter background sounds

Activity sequences at Level 2 for Listening provide opportunities for pupils to achieve a level where they:

- Are able to show the three basic listening behaviours in a structured situation and in more generalised situations with support (look at the person who is talking, show appropriate posture, and listen)
- Are able to respond to instructions to listen when directed to the whole group
- Are able to maintain moderate attention in order to listen as part of a group
- Are able to become quiet on request and usually remains quiet.
- Respond to others in a group situation
- Are able to recognise who the speaker is in listening situations

Following assessment a profile is generated for each of four levels and for skills across the four core areas. The profiles can be used for monitoring progress in activities. The profile show skills which are closely matched to the Intended Learning Outcomes give in the activity sequences.

Each activity sequence includes:

1. An introduction to the topic for the pupils, discussing the importance of the skill to be covered
2. A discussion with the pupils of WHY the skills should be used and its benefits to them. This part of the activity sequence may be supported by the use of puppets who model failing to use and using the skill to deflect attention from individual pupils' strengths and

weaknesses.

3. Giving information about WHAT is involved in the skill, e.g. that the word 'listen' denotes three behaviours - to look at the person who is talking, to show appropriate posture, and to listen.
4. The adults model the wrong way to do it or the group watch a video and then the pupils are encouraged to give feedback
5. Skills may be developed through role play and practise
6. Generalisation is explicitly plan with the objective that the pupils are able to show the targeted behaviours both in the structured situation and in more generalised situations with appropriate support.