



# Assessment and Curriculum Support for Pupils working within P-levels 1 – 3

# **ASSESSMENT AND CURRICULUM SUPPORT DOCUMENT FOR PUPILS WORKING WITHIN P-LEVELS 1 - 3**

## **RATIONALE**

The Curriculum Support Document has been developed as part of the whole school focus on the needs of pupils working within P-levels 1 – 3. This current focus has highlighted the following issues:-

- Statutory P-level assessments are not reflecting progress sensitively enough.
- Knowledge and confidence in teaching pupils working within P-levels 1 - 3 would benefit by being further developed.
- There is a need for further staff training in recognising signs of progress in pupils working within early levels, to enable more accurate assessments to be made.

This Curriculum Support document has been developed based on the belief that the Greenside Curriculum Schemes of Work are effective in supplying a subject focus and suggested resources for all pupils. It is assumed that staff use resources from the Schemes of Work modules to create the types of learning activities pupils working within P-levels 1 - 3 need to follow, and, through using those resources, teach the skills these pupils need to learn.

However, the Schemes of Work do not provide the detailed support required to meet the needs of pupils working at the lower P-levels. This has led to staff feeling that they lack the confidence to use the Schemes of Work with pupils with complex needs as effectively as they might.

The Curriculum Support document aims to expand the definitions and understanding of the early P-levels 1 – 3, by pulling together various documentation that has been written to support the understanding of early developmental stages and skills. It also aims to demonstrate the subtle stages pupils move through, and methods that could be used to enhance teaching and learning at these early stages. It also describes sample activities to support different levels and to teach early skills, and advises what responses to look for to indicate success and learning.

Page 3 of the document links QCA Descriptors to P-Levels, and Page 4 identifies appropriate switch access linked to P-Levels.

The rest of the document is divided into P-Levels P1(i) –P3(ii) with two pages per P-Level, the second page of these being the appropriate page taken directly from the Welsh ‘Routes for Learning’.

## Framework for recognising attainment linked to P-Levels

P level	Descriptor	Possible pupil responses	Activities
P1(i) Encounter	Pupils are present during an experience or activity without any obvious outcome, although for some pupils, their willingness to tolerate a shared activity may, in itself, be significant.	May show awareness by stilling, smiling, startling, moving, changing physical state.	Intensive interaction. Offering sensory experiences, light, sound, touch, movement, smell, taste. Quality of human interaction most important. Causal activities should be real events
P1(ii) Awareness	Pupils appear to show awareness that something has happened and notice, fleetingly focus on or attend to an object, event or person.	Indicate basic needs by crying or vocalising, becoming excited. May begin to respond to objects, events or people.	Repetitive activities and routines to develop emerging responses. Participate in activities with full physical support
P2(i) Attention & Response	Pupils attend and begin to respond, often not consistently, to what is happening, demonstrating the beginning of an ability to distinguish between different people, objects, events and places.	Showing reactive responses to familiar people, objects or events. May reach out, turn towards or away from stimuli. May use vocalisation as a response or expression of needs.	Similar routine repetitive activities with increasing expectation of intentional reactions.
P2(ii) Engagement	Pupils show more consistent attention to, and can tell the difference between, specific events in their surroundings.	Reaching out for desired objects. Use facial expression to indicate pleasure or discomfort. Perform actions by trial and error and may remember results.	Offering activities to develop like/dislike reactions. Action songs and rhymes to develop anticipation.
P3(i) Participation	Pupils engage in sharing, taking turns and the anticipation of familiar sequences of events, although these responses may be supported by staff or other pupils	Able to anticipate eg, puts out hand for action rhymes.	Daily routines and consistently repeated activities.
P3(ii) Involvement	Pupils actively strive to reach out, join in or comment in some way on an activity itself or on the actions or responses of other pupils	Communicating choices. Responding to familiar questions. Attempts to sign/speak/gesture. Intentional behaviour. Brief periods of independent participation	General classroom activities.

Descriptors taken from QCA document 'Planning, teaching and assessing the curriculum for pupils with learning difficulties', matched with P-Levels and possible pupil responses and activities at this level.

<u>AAC / ICT</u>				
P level/ Attainment	Low tech AAC	VOCA	Switch access / ICT	Activities
<b>P1(1) Encounter</b>	Direct physical contact, Intensive interaction			Human contact, sensory, and tactile experiences. Lights and sounds. Reinforce and highlight stimulus. Keep extraneous verbal and other distractions to a minimum
<b>P1 (2) Awareness</b>	Real objects		Fully assist switching – prompt all participation	Sensory equipment, computer and multimedia. Highlight changes and emphasise start/finish.
<b>P2(1) Attention and Response</b>	Sensory cues (developing awareness and understanding of routines and activities)	Powerlink and switches. Single message VOCA: BigMack, One-step	Assist switching – "ready steady go"...."gone" Development of consistent responses and behaviours	Cause and effect switch activation – toys, music, food mixer, fan etc. "Media rich" single action switch programmes on computer.
<b>P2(2) Engagement</b>	Personal objects Sensory cues (developing awareness and understanding of routines and activities)	Powerlink and switches. Single message VOCA: BigMack, One-step	Assist switching "ready, steady Go....Gone" Beginning to develop independent switch activity	Cause and effect switch activation – toys, music, fan. Talking books. Cause and effect software on the computer
<b>P3(1) Participation</b>	Personal Objects Photos/ picture cards Scrap books Photo albums, 'About me' books Picture exchange	Single message VOCA: BigMack, One-step, Talking Buddy, Partner 1 etc. Talking Photo Album	Development of independent switching action and anticipation with reducing level of prompting	Switch building using single switch or touchscreen. Cause and effect activation of toys, music, fan, Keeping the music going. Simple talking books
<b>P3(2) Involvement</b>	Introduce symbols into the above. Auditory file (for visually impaired)	As above, introduce choice with 2 switches, increasing slowly. Partner2, Partner4, 4talk4, Tech talk 4, Go Talk , Pocket Go Talk. Voice Pal or Decaid + switches. Step by Step communicator.	Cooperative turn taking activities using ICT equipment. Anticipating and beginning to make choices using switches	One/Two switches to do different things. e.g. One for disco light and other for music (multimedia/talking books) Turn taking using switches
<b>P4 Gaining Skills</b>	Personal communication board or book, auditory file. Choice boards) Symbol timetable	Tech talk 8, Go Talk 9, Messagemate, Chatbox, TechScan 8, Dynamo, Dynamyte (auditory scan)	Beginning to time switching in response to a cue.	Programs that require a switch press at a particular time. eg. Spot on Games/Teen tunes
<b>P5 Gaining Skills</b>	Personal communication board / book, auditory file. Topic boards	Tech Talk 32, Macaw, Alphatalker, Dynamo, Dynamyte, Dynavox	Choosing and timing using ICT equipment. Beginning to use ICT tools for a specific purpose	Timed switch activities, simple scanning grids (Clicker 4, Chooslitmaker)

## P-Level P(i)

**P1(i) Pupils encounter activities and experiences. They may be passive or resistant. They may show simple reflex responses. Any participation is fully prompted.**

*Pupils are present during an experience or activity without any obvious outcome, although for some pupils, their willingness to tolerate a shared activity may, in itself, be significant*

<u>Activities</u>	<u>Responses to look for</u>
<p>Presenting a range of sensory stimuli. Pupils at this stage may respond best to the near senses e.g. touch, movement, smell, and taste whilst others may prefer auditory and visual stimuli in preference to touch.</p> <p>At this level it is important to remember that it is the quality of real and human interaction that is important</p> <p><u>Sample Activity</u></p> <p><u>Objective:</u> To provide an experience to stimulate awareness and responses.</p> <p>‘Ready, steady go’ game</p> <p>Using a survival blanket, say ‘ready, steady, go’, then rustle the blanket loudly using pupil’s hands on the blanket.</p> <p>Then pause and repeat.</p> <p>Look for any responses.</p> <p>NB At this stage, it is probably better not to react to any responses from the pupil, as this may be confusing.</p> <p>Share any noted responses with other staff working with the pupil, so that they can offer stimulus in a similar manner, and can observe if responses are the same.</p> <p><u>More Activities</u></p> <p>See Routes For Learning Pages 2 – 3.</p>	<p>Pupils may notice stimuli, react to a close contact to with a familiar adult, respond to a very obvious stimuli, demonstrate a brief memory for a previously presented stimuli.</p> <p>These may be demonstrated by any changes in behaviour which are not reflex responses e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stilling</li> <li>• Turning (head, eyes, body)</li> <li>• Lip/tongue movement</li> <li>• Eye flicker</li> <li>• Change in breathing</li> <li>• Tensing or relaxing</li> <li>• Change in activity level</li> <li>• Vocalising</li> <li>• Moving fingers</li> <li>• Moving limbs</li> </ul> <p>Also</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decline of interest when stimulus is repeated</li> <li>• Recovery of interest when different stimuli offered</li> </ul>

## ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES / THINGS TO TRY

- If there is no obvious response, try videoing the assessment activity.
- Try to find out which are the learner's strongest senses. Use these first in future activities, but continue to offer other sensory experiences too.
- Start with a very obvious stimulus on or close to the body. Learners may respond to a familiar face or gentle movement.

Note: The *Affective Communication Assessment (ACA)* (see page 63 of Guidance booklet) may help you to structure your observations.

- 1** Rock or swing the learner gently, then pause.  
Present vibration, e.g. massager or vibrating cushion.  
Smear a small amount of a taste on the learner's lips.  
Place the learner's hand on a fur-covered water bottle.  
Play music or a familiar song; musical instruments.  
Present a torch reflected on a shiny surface. If there's no response, try moving it slightly.
- 2** Hold the learner and talk or sing, leaving pauses for any response.
- 3** Present an obvious stimulus to the learner in a similar way to **1** above, taking care not to startle. Use the information you have gathered about preferred sense modalities and record outcomes which should be more pronounced than those which occurred in **1** (noticing).  
Try new tastes in the form of a lipstick smear.  
Try a vibrating cushion, resonance board, or a water bed.  
Present different textures, such as warm sand, with which learners can engage.  
Apply them to different parts of the body.  
Try using musical instruments, tapes, musical toys.  
Use peep-bo, puppets, pop-up toys.
- 4** Present the stimulus to the learner. When the learner stops attending, immediately remove and re-present the stimulus (the gap should be less than half a second). Use a stopwatch. If the learner attends for a shorter time to the second presentation, it is likely that the learner has remembered the stimulus. (You may need to try this several times to be sure.)  
Note: The stimulus should be neutral (**not** the face of a familiar adult, **not** food).  
Try using a black and white chequerboard.

## ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES / TEACHING STRATEGIES

- For any stimulus in any modality, try an on/off pattern.
  - When no response is observed, make the stimulus more obvious, increasing the contrast between stimulus and background.
  - See page 24 of the Guidance booklet for additional information on touch.
  - Consult sensory services for advice.
- 1** Using two staff, one supporting the learner in a sitting position and one at the front, try gently pulling the learner backwards and forwards, and then pausing. Try different parts of the body (soles of feet, or back of neck may be more sensitive areas).  
Try moving the learner's hand (especially the fingertips) in sheepskin, gel, warm water, etc.  
Try sounds of different frequencies, timbre, duration.  
In a darkened corner, present a repeated pattern of 'stimulus: no-stimulus', i.e. light: no light. (See RNIB software 'Just Look'.)
  - 2** Choose the learner's strongest sense to start. Touch/stroke the face or hands. If the learner responds best to auditory stimuli, try talking and singing close-in to the learner, with pauses for close observation of possible responses. If the learner responds well to visual stimuli, try getting close-in and exaggerating your facial expression. If there's no response, try exaggerating your features with face paint or sun block, a luminous wig, glasses, etc.
  - 3** Increase the range, complexity and variety of stimuli used in **1** above. The level of prompting/exaggeration used should be gradually reduced to a more natural level.  
If the learner has only shown a response in one sense modality up to this point, then you should seek to extend this to other available senses. Consider your positioning in relation to the learner's visual field/auditory ability etc. (Refer to Guidance booklet page 22.)  
Take care when presenting an 'unexpected' stimulus not to cause a startle reaction – good practice would usually be to warn the learner of forthcoming events by touch or voice.  
Care must be taken with regard to placement/positioning of visual stimuli. Consider the learner's visual field, etc. Avoid the learner having to look up as this may cause stiffening and/or backwards movement. (Seek advice from physio).
  - 4** Increase the gaps, looking for evidence of short term memory (see Guidance booklet page 15 – Habituation). Use a variety of stimuli.  
Show a new stimulus, rather than the same stimulus again. Look for a recovery of interest.

## P-Level P1(ii)

**P1(ii) Pupils show emerging awareness of activities and experiences. They may have periods when they appear alert and ready to focus their attention on certain people, events, objects. They accept and engage in coactive exploration.**

*Pupils appear to show awareness that something has happened and notice, fleetingly focus on or attend to an object, event or person*

### Activities

Offering a range of sensory activities that are extended and presented in a more complex way e.g. visual stimulus moved vertically and horizontally.

Pupils may be helped to experience objects/stimuli co-actively but given time to become aware and give a response.

### Sample Activity

Objective: To provide an experience to elicit a recognisable response.

Use a bunch of fibre optics, present in different positions eg in front of eyes and to either side.

If a response is made to a particular presentation of fibre optics, repeat this to see if response is repeated.

Share any noted responses with other staff working with the pupil, so that they can offer stimulus in a similar manner, and can observe if responses are the same.

See Routes for Learning Pages 4 - 5

### Responses to look for

Pupils may respond to a familiar voice, to a range of stimuli, participate in turn-taking with 1:1 support, respond to own name, respond consistently to one stimulus, briefly follow a moving stimulus.

These may be demonstrated by recognisable responses:

- Stilling/tensing or relaxing
- Smiling or change of facial expression
- Turning of head
- Fleeting eye contact
- Reaching out/touching
- Vocalising
- Moving fingers
- Moving limbs

Also look for signs that:

- the pupil is co-operating or anticipating and activity
- the pupil is responding in the same way each time a stimuli is presented
- the pupil is following a stimulus

### ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES / THINGS TO TRY

- 5** Sit close to the learner – hug/touch.  
Move towards the learner, speaking or singing.  
Draw attention to particular features; for example, exaggeration of a facial expression, the feel of long hair, a perfume smell, etc.
- 6** Develop activities in box **3** increasing the range, complexity and variety of stimuli.
- 7** Support the learner in a rocking game, e.g. Row the Boat.  
Support the learner to coactively return/push the ball to an adult.  
In conversation, take turns – talk and wait for a ‘reply’.  
Present/represent a toy or object (visual/musical/vibrating) taking turns.
- 8** Call the learner by his/her name – try to avoid giving additional cues.
- 9** Present a familiar visual/auditory/tactile/other sensory stimulus which has been used consistently with the learner. Repeat in the same way several times.
- 10** Try moving the stimulus vertically as well as horizontally. Try using sound to attract attention, then move to a visual stimulus, e.g. brightly coloured or fluorescent objects.

Note: For **2**, **5**, and **8**, if the learner has VI and an ‘on body’ signal is used, this will usually represent an earlier level of responding.

### TEACHING STRATEGIES (TO MOVE PUPIL TO NUMBERED STEP)

- 5** Ensure that all staff who are in regular contact with the learner have a personal identifier or action. This should ideally be an integral part of each person, for example, long hair, a beard, etc.  
  
Encourage voice recognition – use the learner’s name on approach and talk using consistent language.  
For learners with VI/HI, a personal, tactile sign may be used.  
If the learner is tactile defensive, try other senses.
- 6** Increase the range, complexity and variety of stimuli used in **1** above.  
Gradually reduce prompting and level of stimulation to a more natural level.  
If the learner has only shown a response in one sense modality up to this point, then you should seek to extend this to other available senses.  
Consider your positioning in relation to the learner’s visual field/auditory ability, etc. (Refer to Guidance booklet page 22.) See **3** above for additional information.
- 7** Use a member of staff to support the learner in taking turns; for example, holding the learner, working hand-over-hand, co-actively, etc. Leave time for the learner to initiate a response.
- 8** Use the learner’s name consistently in meaningful routines to build association. Cue the learner in with touch or other cues. (Note: Cues should not be used in the assessment process.)  
Note that the sense of self can be slower to develop in learners with VI – see page 23 in the Guidance booklet.
- 9** Check that the learner is comfortable/secure – see page 17 in the Guidance booklet. Use the type of strategies mentioned above.
- 10** Try using objects with different visual properties, for example, those with different colours or brightness.

## P-Level P2(i)

**P2(i) Pupils begin to respond consistently to familiar people, events and objects. They react to new activities and experiences. They begin to show interest in people, events and objects. They accept and engage in coactive exploration.**

*Pupils attend and begin to respond, often not consistently, to what is happening, demonstrating the beginning of an ability to distinguish between different people, objects, events and places.*

<u>Activities</u>	<u>Responses to look for</u>
<p>Developing a range of motivating rewards to encourage the pupil to develop and express preferences/dislikes</p> <p>Providing situations to encourage cause and effect exploration and response</p> <p>Providing situations to develop anticipation skills</p> <p><u>Sample Activity</u></p> <p><u>Objective</u> To develop a response to a liked activity</p> <p>Develop a small anticipation game/routine using a musical instrument/sound maker, eg 1, 2, 3 shake instrument, then pause and wait for a response. Repeat routine several times to see if response is repeated.</p> <p>On other occasions, repeat routine using other sound makers, or other stimulus.</p> <p>Share any noted responses with other staff working with the pupil, so that they can offer stimulus in a similar manner, and can observe if responses are the same.</p> <p>See Routes For Learning Pages 6 - 7</p>	<p>Pupils are beginning to demonstrate consistent responses to familiar and routine experiences, and beginning to show awareness of preference and dislike.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Look for signals of recognition and familiarity of voices, places and situations/events, eg. Smiling, widening of eyes.</li> <li>• Any signals that indicate that pupil wants activity to continue or stop eg. Eye movement, stilling, vocalisation, facial expression, turning away.</li> <li>• During planned pauses within activities, look for signs of waiting and anticipation of the activity's continuation, showing the beginning of awareness of cause and effect.</li> <li>• Increased willingness to be supported in exploration of activities/materials, eg. Less pulling away from activities, smiling, beginning to show pleasure.</li> </ul>

## ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES / THINGS TO TRY

- 11** Present a range of stimuli (those not preferred by the learner). Watch for signs from the learner such as: turning away, averting the eyes, changing facial expression, movement of arms or legs. To demonstrate this behaviour, the learner must be able to show a positive response to some stimuli.
- 12** Present stimuli believed to be strongly liked or disliked and note the learner's reactions.  
Do stimuli believed to be liked get different consistent reactions to those believed to be disliked?
- 13** Watch for this during a range of activities. Extend turn-taking activities and 'model' this behaviour.
- 14** Try:
- placing a vibrating brush, massager, etc., on two different parts of the learner's body alternately
  - presenting a single sound in a regular repetitive pulse pattern
  - presenting a visual stimulus alternately in two different positions.
- 15** Break off interaction during the routine; turn away and stop the activity. Note the learner's reaction.
- 16** Place the learner's hand on an interesting object and assist to feel and pause.

## TEACHING STRATEGIES (TO MOVE PUPIL TO NUMBERED STEP)

- 11** This 'rejection' response is negative and therefore difficult to teach. At first it may be very subtle. At every opportunity reinforce or 'shape' the behaviour, responding consistently to confirm the meaning.
- 12** Try additional strong stimuli in a variety of modalities. Repeat on a number of occasions.  
(After consulting the physio):  
Place the learner on a thick blanket with the head supported and sweep and swirl the blanket along a slippery floor, building in pauses for a response.  
Give the learner a taste/lipstick smear of marmite, lemon juice, rhubarb, chocolate, strawberry.  
Present eucalyptus or another strong smell from a smell bank.  
Note: Do not repeatedly present stimuli which get a 'dislike' reaction on the same occasion; instead, acknowledge the learner's communication and remove the stimulus.
- 13** Respond consistently and respect this signal or the learner may try more extreme measures!
- 14** If there is no response, try sparkly/twinkly items such as fibre-optics, lights or fluorescent rods under UV light. Blow on alternate sides of the learner's face; blow a raspberry on different parts of body. If the learner has VI and is slow to develop anticipation, return to step **12** and emphasise tactile sense.
- 15** Ensure staff respond to the signal consistently.
- 16** Place the learner's hand or foot in warm water; agitate the water.  
Pour sand over the learner's hand or foot.  
Bury the learner's foot in sand, shaving foam, jelly, or slime.  
Use a ball pool, feely bags, etc.

## P-Level P2(ii)

**P2(ii) Pupils begin to be proactive in their interactions. They communicate consistent preferences and affective responses. They recognise familiar people, events and objects. They perform actions, often by trial and improvement, and they remember learned responses over short periods of time. They co-operate with shared exploration and supported participation.**

*Pupils show more consistent attention to, and can tell the difference between, specific events in their surroundings.*

<u>Activities</u>	<u>Responses to Look for</u>
<p>Provide daily routines and routines within activities to enable pupils to express recognition</p> <p>Providing reactive activities and environments</p> <p>Repeat routine “games” to practise and reinforce responses</p> <p><u>Sample Activity</u></p> <p><u>Objective</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To develop a consistent response to familiar rhyme</li> <li>2. To begin to shape responses into intentional communication</li> </ol> <p>Use a particular rhyme as part of a regular routine with a stimulating and exaggerated ending eg the ‘whoosh’ at the end of ‘5 Little Men in a Flying Saucer’.</p> <p>When the pupil responds to the ending, reinforce their response by commenting on it. Repeat regularly.</p> <p>When the pupil is responding consistently, introduce a pause before the ‘whoosh’ and wait until the pupil smiles in anticipation. This could be developed into the smile becomes the intentional communication of asking for ‘more’.</p> <p>See Routes For Learning Pages 8 - 9</p>	<p>Pupils demonstrate consistent responses to familiar activities, interactions, people and routines.</p> <p>Pupils show increased interest in exploring materials/activities with reducing levels of support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Look for signs of anticipation</li> <li>• Look for reactions to any effects</li> <li>• Look for any signs of recognition of the above</li> <li>• Look for attempts to create an effect</li> <li>• Look for signs of the learner doing something independently</li> <li>• Look for increased repetition of actions that have caused an effect.</li> </ul>

### ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES / THINGS TO TRY

- 17 Within a familiar routine (e.g. 'drinks', personal hygiene, social games), pause before the climax.
- 18 While the learner is attending to an object, offer a second interesting item to encourage redirection of his/her attention.
- 19 Place the learner on a reactive surface (e.g. a space blanket or resonance board).
- 20 When the learner is focused on an attractive object, move it slowly and deliberately out of sight and watch for any reaction.
- 21 Place the learner on an interesting reactive surface and note the response.
- 22 Engage the learner in an enjoyable activity. Break the activity at a critical point, pause, and await the learner's response. For example:
  - during eating, pause, holding the food in front of mouth
  - during singing, pause in an action song
  - pause whilst beating on a resonance board.
- 23 Using an action which you have established that the learner can do (e.g. kicking, pressing a switch), use a reward and observe the rate of response.
- 24 Try a range of everyday play activities (e.g. sand, water) which require the learner to interact repeatedly to gain an effect.

### TEACHING STRATEGIES (TO MOVE PUPIL TO NUMBERED STEP)

- 17 Ensure that consistent routines are used for personal hygiene, drinks, etc. Cue or exaggerate a particular part of the routine to turn it into a game; for example, when changing the learner, develop a game around the need to lift his/her bottom off a bench. This could involve the cue of an exaggerated intake of breath as the learner's bottom is raised, a dramatic pause in the action, and culminates in repeated bouncing.  
Try regular and frequent games such as 'Ride a Cock Horse to Banbury Cross', 'Round and Round the Garden', or other, personally devised games.
- 18 Try prompting visual or tactile exploration of a second object, allowing time for the refocus of attention.
- 19 Use a range of surfaces or toys which react to touch (e.g. a survival blanket, an interactive floor mat, a sound beam. You could also use a 'little room' or 'Be-Active Box'). Provide opportunities for the learner to have an effect 'by chance' on the immediate environment, for example, by knocking a noisy toy. Reinforce these actions, prompting a repeat and ensuring a consistent result.
- 20 Use a variety of situations or places to encourage the learner to 'look after' an object which has disappeared from view.
- 21 Use physical or verbal prompts to initiate exploration, then reduce the frequency of the prompts. Draw the learner's attention to the effects created.
- 22 Using stimuli to which the learner has a consistent response, build up a pattern. Pause within the pattern and interpret the learner's next response as a request for more. For example, while offering food on a spoon, pause just before putting the spoon in the mouth and interpret the learner's next response (e.g. lips opening) as 'more'. Extend the distance of the spoon from the mouth. Lips closing could mean 'no more'.  
Pause during bouncing or a resonance board activity with an action song. Interpret body movement or a facial expression as a request for more.
- 23 At this stage the learner may not fully understand the connection between his/her action and the outcome. Ensure the action obtains a consistent result for the learner to establish the link.  
Using a string attached to the learner's ankle to produce movement of a mobile may be a particularly effective technique: the more the learner kicks, the more the mobile moves. It is important that the learner receives good feedback.
- 24 Use a range of preferred objects or activities and use prompts to initiate exploration.  
Reduce these over time.

## P-Level P3(i)

**P3(i) Pupils begin to communicate intentionally. They seek attention through eye-contact, gesture or action. They request events or activities. They participate in shared activities with less support. They sustain concentration for short periods. They explore materials in increasingly complex ways. They observe the results of their own actions with interest. They remember learned responses over more extended periods.**

*Pupils engage in sharing, taking turns and the anticipation of familiar sequences of events, although these responses may be supported by staff or other pupils.*

### Activities

Provide a wider range of activities which allow pupils to use their developing skills, ie opportunities to ask for 'more' by reaching out, vocalising.

Provide opportunities for exploration to enable pupils to expand their ability to affect their environment.

### Sample Activity

### Objective

To develop ability to request 'more' of an activity.

Sing a favourite action rhyme and at the end, wait for a response that pupil would like the game to be repeated. Reinforce the communication for 'more' by acknowledging the requesting behaviour and repeating the game. E.g. Playing a game of "Round and round the garden" on the pupil's hand; when the rhyme has finished the pupil puts their hand out again, in order to have the game repeated.

See Routes For Learning Pages 10 - 11

### Responses to Look for

Pupils act with intention in order to communicate.

Pupils explore activities with increasing independence and interest.

They will repeat an action for an effect, if initially unsuccessful.

Pupil shows awareness of more than one object being presented to them.

Pupils demonstrate object permanence.

- Look for deliberate repetition of actions
- Pupils exploring their environment; looking around, reaching out, listening and attending.
- Look for learner attending to or feeling each of two objects in turn.
- May try to attract attention
- Look for pupil attempting to initiate a game.
- Engage with activities for longer with increasing independence
- Look for pupils showing awareness that something has 'gone', ie. Listening attentively, reaching out, looking, searching for an item that has disappeared.
- Look for developing turn-taking skills

## ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES / THINGS TO TRY

- 25** Introduce a second toy/stimulus/adult/peer nearby while the learner is engaged in an activity.
- 26** Provide a switch for a toy or provide a wobbly toy, wind chimes, etc., which can be operated by an action that the learner has already acquired.
- 27** Observe reactions to a less familiar environment, when accompanied by a familiar adult.
- 28** Observe the learner's reactions to a less preferred activity or food, etc. Note the actions which may indicate 'no more'. This should be distinct from the action used to indicate 'more'.
- 29** Place two attractive objects on the learner's tray to be explored visually or by touch; bring both to the learner's attention and wait.
- 30** Try pausing in an established routine; as the learner requests 'more' (as in **22**), continue to delay the response.
- 31** Try:
- moving the learner's switch slightly
  - changing the surface to make the toy harder to move
  - using an adjustable pressure switch, increasing the pressure of the switch slightly.
- 32** Stay within the learners sight/hearing but do not interact; wait to see if the learner shouts, waves or cries, etc. This might be a minimal response.
- 33** Building on **30**, approach the learner and wait for him/her to initiate a game.
- 34** Engage the learner's attention to a shiny, noisy or furry object. Either move the item out of sight, keep it quiet or move it just out of reach. Does the learner 'search'?
- 35** Build on an established routine to use two responses to gain a reward; for example, the learner pressing a first and then a second switch in sequence in order to get a reward on a computer programme.
- 36** Present two items to which the learner will respond; for example, brightly coloured or noisy toys, a smell, a taste of drink, etc. Observe the learner to ascertain if the response to one item has a longer duration, or whether there is an obvious change in activity level.

## TEACHING STRATEGIES (TO MOVE PUPIL TO NUMBERED STEP)

- 25** Introduce a second activity – draw the learner's attention to it (e.g. an adult or peer entering the room).
- 26** Encourage the same action to obtain a variety of effects. Ensure that every repeat of the action is successful.
- 27** Provide interesting visual/tactile experiences in a controlled way by regularly introducing new stimuli and drawing attention to them.
- 28** Note even a slight response or change in expression to an activity which the learner wishes to end. Reinforce and shape this behaviour by saying or co-actively signing 'finished/no more' and clearly finishing the activity.
- 29** Try prompting exploration of each object in turn, allowing time to refocus attention. Both objects need to be in the learner's visual/spatial field.
- 30** Use an established routine of a social game, pause, and then wait for the action to be repeated. Lengthen the delay, encouraging the learner to persevere.
- 31** You may wish to encourage problem solving by moving the position of the switch slightly. However, beware of confusing or frustrating the learner. This step can be taught in a range of situations (i.e. not IT based).
- 32** Set up situations where familiar staff are nearby, but not interacting. Consistently reinforce attempts by the learner to gain their attention.
- 33** See **30**. Prompt the learner to initiate a game and respond to this; for example, the learner knocks a toy off the table and then attracts attention to get it back.
- 34** If there is no response to the object being removed from the field of attention:
- try partially covering the object, or use a see-through cloth
  - use a moving object under the cloth
- Ensure that the learner's attention is focused on the place from where the object disappeared (e.g. make a noise with it from just outside the learner's field of vision); then bring the object back into sight for a short time from this direction. Prompt the learner's hand to reach for the object in the direction in which it was moved away.
- 35** The actions used here should be established responses. Support the learner to build a new routine by giving a reward only after the second action has been completed. Reduce the strength and frequency of prompts.
- 36** Offer two items in a variety of situations.

## P-Level P3(ii)

**P3(ii) Pupils use emerging conventional communication. They greet known people and may initiate interactions and activities. They can remember learned responses over increasing periods of time and may anticipate options and choices with actions or gestures. They actively explore objects and events for more extended periods. They apply potential solutions systematically to problems.**

*Pupils actively strive to reach out, join in or comment in some way on the activity itself or on the actions or responses of the other pupils.*

### Activities

Provide opportunities for pupils to use developing communication skills across the curriculum. Activities in which conventional communication is modelled and where pupils can be assisted with theirs. Routine activities in which responses are predictable and in which pupils feel confident to attempt their own communication. They become involved with play activities independently. They may show more interest in their peers. They become increasingly capable of operating as part of a group. Create opportunities for communication and don't anticipate pupils' needs.

### Sample Activity

### Objective

1. To communicate choice of drink or snack via eye-pointing, pointing, gesture, signing, using symbols or vocalisation.

Within a class snacktime, according to individual communication methods, present real objects to be chosen from. Expect a choice to be made by whatever communication means pupils are able to use, eg eye-pointing, reaching, pointing or using symbols or signs representing the objects.

See Routes For Learning Pages 12 - 13

This P-level covers quite a wide area of developmental progress, and pupils may be just beginning to work within this level, or may be achieving the majority of the criteria, moving towards the next P-level, but this is still the 'best fit'. Pupils within this P-level may therefore present very differently.

### Responses to Look for

- Smiling, eye-pointing, reaching, turning towards a preferred item.
- Repeating and modifying an action in order to get a response.
- Look for unprompted attempts to gain adult attention.
- Looking between an object and an adult as a requesting communication.
- Look for the pupil showing pleasure in sharing or 'commenting'
- Increased awareness and interest in the actions and communications of others
- Look for initial evidence that pupils are attempting to use conventional communication.
- Intentional use of a switching system eg Big Mack, Touch Screen

## ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES / THINGS TO TRY

- 37** Offer two items simultaneously. Observe the learner closely for obvious or increased attention to one of the items which communicates his/her preference.
- 38** Within a routine based on established behaviours (see **33**), ensure a reward is not given.  
Note the learner's reactions.
- 39** Avoid attending to the learner. Observe the strategy which is used to gain attention, with no prior intervention. These may include:
- vocalising until an adult appears, then stopping
  - pushing items off a tray and then smiling when an adult appears
  - stopping activities to press a switch which has consistently been used (with support) to call an adult.
- 40** Point to an item in the distance. Does the learner look towards the item then back at the adult?  
Move to music. Does the learner join in with similar movement?  
Stroke a dog. Does the learner also touch the dog and smile at the adult?  
The learner should join the adult in attending to a stimulus, confirming the attention of the adult visually throughout.
- 41** Present to the learner objects of reference/pictures/symbols for items of interest which are not present. Does the learner indicate or pay attention to one of the symbols in order to request a preferred item?
- 42** Use an established routine where the learner's action results in a particular reward, as in **36**. Delay the reward to see if the learner then uses a different action in order to get the reward.  
For example:
- where knocking a toy causes it to make a noise, alter the routine so that the toy makes a noise after a knock **and** a vocalisation. Repetition of the first action does not get a reward
  - use a computer program that is operated by the alternate pressing of two switches.
- 43** Stand or sit in view of the learner, but do not pay attention to him/her. Does the learner then try to gain your attention? Does he/she then go on to request an item which is out of sight or reach?

## TEACHING STRATEGIES (TO MOVE PUPIL TO NUMBERED STEP)

- 37** Offer a preferred item alongside a non-preferred item. If there is no clear response to the preferred item, either move it, bring it closer, or make it make a noise to attract the learner's sustained attention. Try this with a variety of objects and situations.
- 38** Prompt/scaffold a new (but similar) action and ensure that the learner gains the response.  
Try a different switch or toy that requires a similar input from the learner; for example; use a mobile attached to a wrist, but slackened so that the learner needs to make larger movements to get the mobile to work.
- 39** Choose an action in the learner's repertoire to which an adult can respond consistently by giving attention. For example:
- pressing a switch (left available in same position)
  - vocalising above a certain sound level
  - moving arms/legs/eyes, etc.
- By responding consistently to the action, the learner is encouraged to carry out the action on future occasions in order to gain adult attention as a reward.
- 40** Teach shared attention by prompting the learner (verbally or with touch) to look at, listen to, or feel an item of adult choice, then to attend to the adult and the item in turn.  
Take the opportunity to share a stimulus to which the learner is attending. Encourage attention to the stimulus and then the adult in turn. This is key for all future communication.
- 41** Show a photo or symbol of a preferred item to the learner before presenting a stimulus. Repeat this to build up the association. Now show two objects/photos/symbols – one for the preferred item plus one other – then present the item related to the symbol which has been indicated.
- 42** Encourage/shape a second, different action when the learner repeatedly tries the first. Try:
- prompting the learner to use another action which is in his/her repertoire – then giving the reward
  - using computer programmes which require alternate pressing of two switches – reward on the second switch
  - using single switch programmes where the timing of switch-pressing is important
  - moving the switch so that the learner needs to use the other hand.
- 43** Increase the variety of situations where demands are put on the learner to gain attention and make requests. Ensure that responses from adults are quick and consistent. Do not anticipate the learner's wants – create opportunities for communication.

## **Acknowledgements**

**Routes For Learning - Welsh Assembly Government 2006**

**General Guidelines Planning, teaching and assessing the curriculum for pupils with learning difficulties QCA 2001**

**Framework for recognising attainment linked to P-levels – Richard Walter 2007**

**Switches – Access Skills Progression - Richard Walter 2007**

**Jacky Joiner & Lorna Leslie Greenside School February 2008**