

**COMMUNICATION
IN
EARLY INTERVENTION**

**TALKING TO TODDLERS
FIRST THINGS FIRST EARLY CHILDHOOD SUMMIT, 2015**

KATHE E. K. MCGRATH M.S., CCC-SLP

WHO AM I?

- ❖ I'm a Speech and Language Pathologist
(have been one for @30 years!)
- ❖ I've worked mostly in Early Intervention
- ❖ I've worked in private practice doing home visits, the schools-
preschool to High school, hospitals, group homes, clinics
 - ❖ I'm currently a Clinical Assistant Professor at the
University of Arizona
- ❖ I'm Hanen certified in It Takes Two to Talk, More Than Words,
Talkability and Learning Language and Loving It
- ❖ I had the opportunity to work with First Things First on the UA's
Talking Matters grant
- ❖ What I talk about pertains both to normally developing children
and those with delayed/impaired language.

ASK ME ANYTHING

If at any time, you have a question, just ask me and I'll answer whatever I can!

i 
you a
question

LANGUAGE FACILITATION

- ❖ Ways to help to increase language, both receptive and expressive, pragmatics and articulation.
 - ❖ Used therapeutically and by caregivers
- 

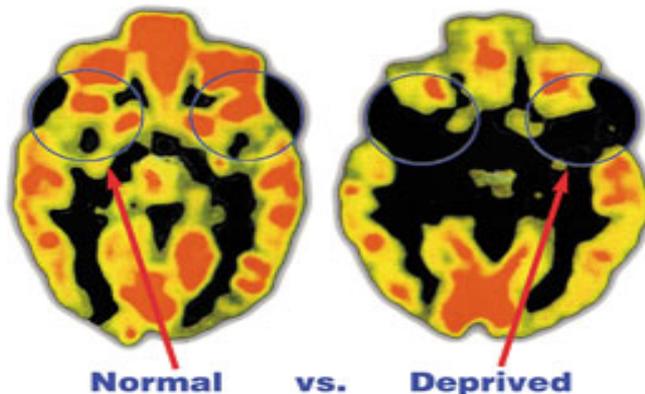
WHY WORRY ABOUT COMMUNICATION IN BABIES?

- ❖ Positive interactions with adult caregivers from birth to 5 years old impacts a child's brain in ways that promote optimal health and learning.
- ❖ 80% of a child's critical brain development happens between birth and age 3.

Gilmore JH, Lin W, Prastawa MW, et al. Regional gray matter growth, sexual dimorphism, and cerebral asymmetry in the neonatal brain. *Journal of Neuroscience*. 2007;27(6):1255-1260.

Paul, Rhea & Roth, Froma P. Characterizing and Predicting Outcomes of Communication Delays in Infants and Toddlers: Implications for Clinical Practice
LANGUAGE, SPEECH, AND HEARING SERVICES IN SCHOOLS •
Vol. 42 • 331-340 • July 2011

Toddlers' Brains



WHY WORRY ABOUT COMMUNICATION IN BABIES?

- ❖ \$1 invested in preschool and other early interventions can yield as much as \$16 or \$17 in benefits down the road.
- ❖ Long term effects of lack of early intervention include poor academic performance and achievement, such as failure to complete high school, difficulty with social interactions and relationships, behavior problems and limited employment opportunities, dependency on welfare, and incarceration.

Clegg, Hollis, Mawhood & Rutter, 2005; Johnson, Beitchman & Brownie, 2010;
Tomblin, Zhang, Buckwalter & O'Brien, 2003; Tomblin, Zhang, Buckwalter, Catts, 2000



LANGUAGE FACILITATION TECHNIQUES

- ❖ Techniques and strategies to help parents, therapists and caregivers become involved in positive interactions that will expand a child's language throughout the day.
- ❖ Beneficial for normally developing children as well as speech and/or language delayed children.
- ❖ Can be used together or alone.
- ❖ Take practice to use consistently.
- ❖ Are fun- try them out!

LANGUAGE FACILITATION TECHNIQUES

Noticing

Playing like a child

Waiting

Repeating, Repeating, Repeating

Scaffolding

Delaying responses to gestures

Getting face to face

Reading Dialogically

Letting your child lead

Focusing on the here and now

Using self talk Asking fewer Questions, Making more comments

Using parallel talk

listening

Offering choices

Using broadcast talk

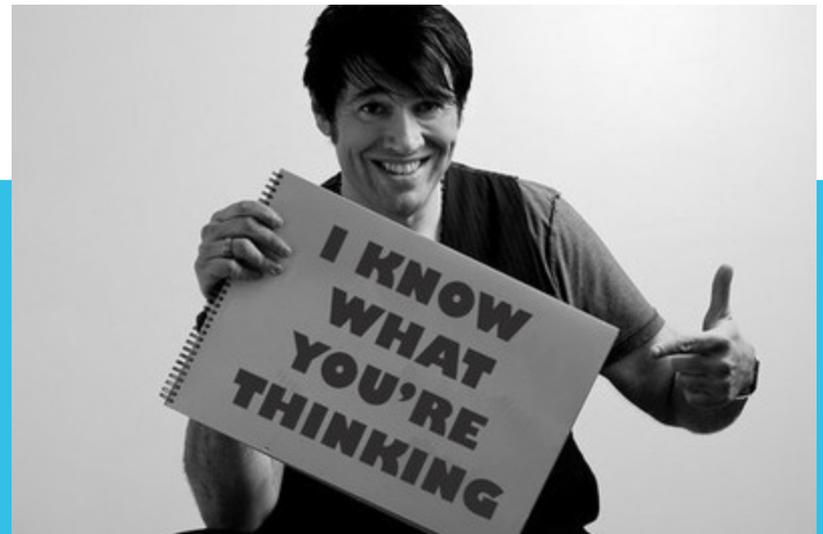
Expand

Focused Stimulation

Engineering the environment

DON'T BE A MIND READER

- ❖ The child knows what s/he wants
- ❖ You know what the child wants
- ❖ Play “dumb”
- ❖ Give the child the opportunity to tell you!



BEHAVIOR IS COMMUNICATION



BEHAVIOR IS COMMUNICATION

Pointing

Guiding

Laughing

Crying

Reaching

Using gestures/sign language

Looking

Throwing a toy

Tantrumming

Holding mouth closed/turning head away from spoon

Moving to a different activity

Dropping a toy

Exhibiting different facial expressions

(smile, frown, grimace)

Displaying shared attention

Actions speak louder than words

Actions can be words

BEHAVIOR IS COMMUNICATION



BEHAVIOR IS COMMUNICATION

Hungry

Happy

Tired

Sad

Wet diaper

Scared

Doesn't know how

Stressed

Saying "NO!"

Mad

needs help

Wants something

Doesn't like it

Thirsty

Interested

Hurt

learning

Bored

Actions speak louder than words

Actions can be words

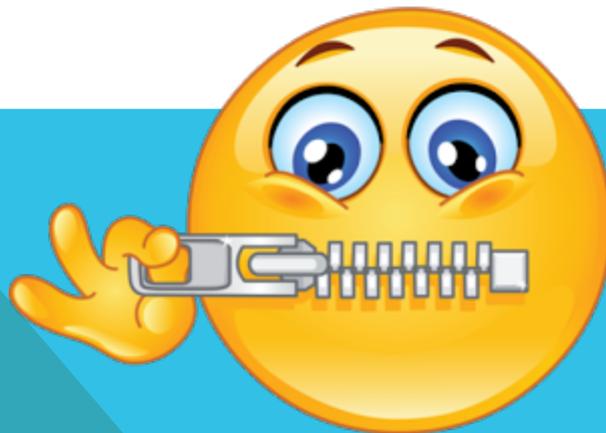
TRY IT OUT #1

1.PICK A PARTNER

**2.PICK A COMMUNICATIVE
BEHAVIOR & INTENT**

3.PERFORM IT FOR YOUR PARTNER

4.SWITCH AND REPEAT!



BEHAVIOR IS COMMUNICATION

- ❖ Behavior; facial expressions, gestures, body language lets us know what the child wants (his/her intent).
- ❖ 50% - 93% of a message is gleaned from body language.
- ❖ If the child is not talking, acknowledge the behavior, then use language facilitation techniques to encourage verbal communication.

Mehrabian, A. (2011). Silent Messages": A Primer of Non-Verbal Communication

(Body Language) for the General Audience.

http://changingminds.org/techniques/body/body_language.htm

LANGUAGE FACILITATION

TECHNIQUE 1

DELAYING RESPONSES TO GESTURES

- ❖ Delay responding to the child's pointing, gestures, or babbling when s/he wants something.
- ❖ Remember-acknowledge the communication behind the gesture or babbling- behavior is communication!



DELAYING RESPONSES TO GESTURES

- ❖ “Yep, that’s the fridge!”
 - ❖ (Play “dumb”- don’t be a mind reader)
- ❖ Always aim for speech, but do not “push” until there is a meltdown.



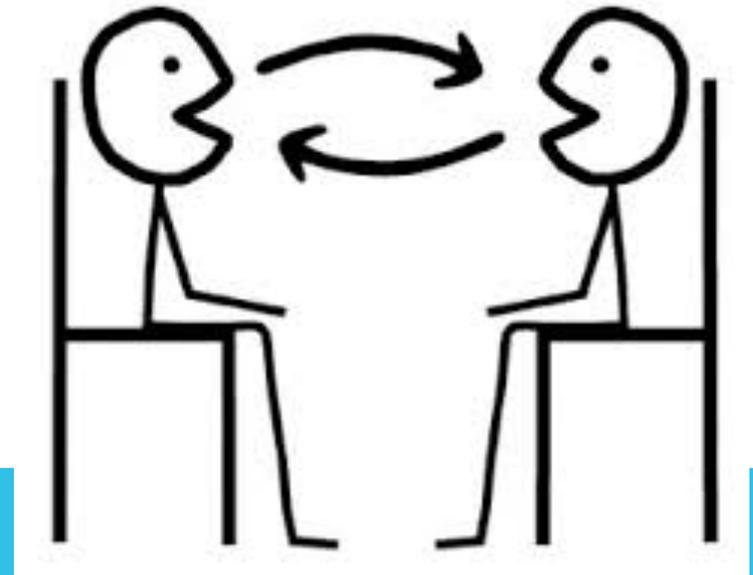
LANGUAGE FACILITATION

TECHNIQUE 2

GET FACE TO FACE

Having someone look down on you can be intimidating and uncomfortable!

- ❖ A child will feel more comfortable if you engineer the environment (crouch or sit down) so that your eyes are on the same level.



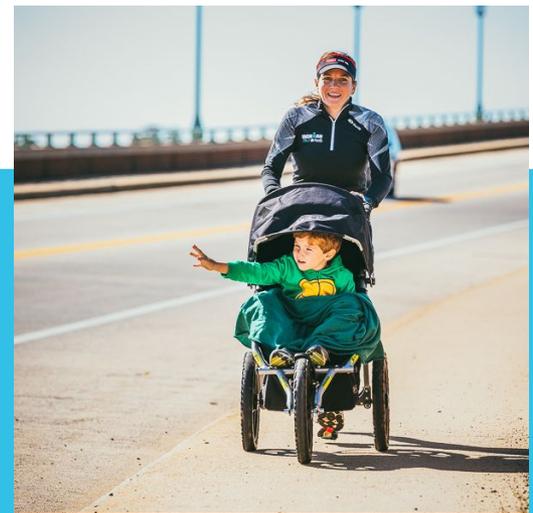
TRY IT OUT #2

1.PICK A PARTNER

2.STAND BEHIND PARTNER

3.STAND IN FRONT OF PARTNER

4.SIT IN FRONT OF PARTNER



HOW DID THAT FEEL?

- ❖ As the person talking...
- ❖ As the person being talked to....



LANGUAGE FACILITATION

TECHNIQUE 3

SPEAK AT THE CHILD'S LEVEL

As often as possible use the language that the child would if s/he had the words to do so.

Say it like the child would if s/he could!



Use a, the, -ing, -ed, plural and possessive 's, etc.

SPEAK AT THE CHILD'S LEVEL

If the child is using 2-3 word sentences, don't use longer word sentences when giving directions or explaining something.

Child: "Daddy home?"

YES!!!! Adult: "Daddy home?" "Yes, Daddy is home! Daddy's home!"

NO!!! Adult: "Yes, Daddy just got home in his car. He's probably tired and wants to sit down."



SPEAK AT THE CHILD'S LEVEL

Child: “Want eat apple.”

Adult: “Want eat apple? You
want to eat an apple?”



TRY IT OUT # 3

SPEAK AT THE CHILD'S LEVEL

Child: "Apple"

Adult: "?"

Child: "Want apple"

Adult: "?"



LANGUAGE FACILITATION

TECHNIQUE 4

WAIT

Before you do or say anything about what you have observed, WAIT to see if the child will “tell” you anything more about what s/he is doing.



WAIT

A long enough wait means to count 5 “elephants,” or “mississippi’s” in your head (“1 elephant, 2 elephants, 3 elephants...”) to give the child enough time to think and respond



LANGUAGE FACILITATION

TECHNIQUE 5

ENGINEER THE ENVIRONMENT

- ❖ Make sure you're face to face.
- ❖ Give a **LITTLE** food or drink or a **PART** of a toy; then wait.



ENGINEER THE ENVIRONMENT

- ❖ Make sure you're face to face.
- ❖ Put a desired object (food or toy) in a container that the child is unable to open; then wait.



ENGINEER THE ENVIRONMENT

- ❖ Make sure you're face to face.
- ❖ Put a desired object out of reach where the child can see it, then wait.



LANGUAGE FACILITATION

TECHNIQUE 6

OFFER CHOICES

(Play dumb again! Act as if you don't know what the child wants!)

- ❖ Name the items- don't say "this" or "that."
- ❖ Make sure the child can actually have either item.
- ❖ Wait for the child to look at, point to, or attempt to name an item.
- ❖ Make sure and give her what she requests (even if you think that's not what she wanted)!



LANGUAGE FACILITATION

TECHNIQUE 7

FOCUSED STIMULATION

- ❖ As you're speaking to the child, use the word you want him/her to say multiple times.
- ❖ After 3 times of saying a word when offering a choice and getting no response, give the child the object.

Journal of Speech, Language, and Hearing Research,
Luigi Girolametto, Patsy Steig Pearce, and Elaine Weitzman
December 1996, Vol. 39, 1274-1283. doi:10.1044/jshr.3906.1274

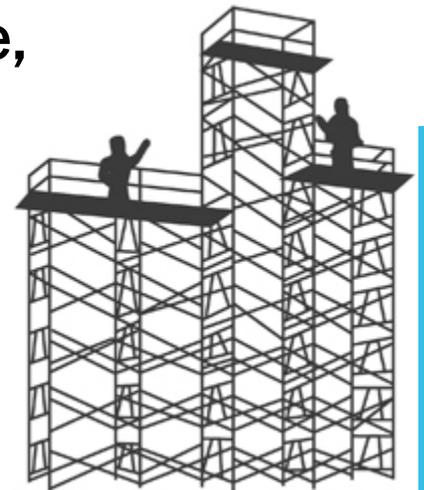


LANGUAGE FACILITATION

TECHNIQUE 8

SCAFFOLDING

- ❖ Repeat what the child says **incorrectly** in a more simple way.
 - ❖ “I go store.”
 - ❖ “I’m going to the store.”
- ❖ Repeat what the child says **correctly** in a more complicated way.
 - ❖ “I want juice.”
 - ❖ “I want apple juice.”
- ❖ **Scaffolding can be used to model structure, vocabulary, pragmatics and articulation.**



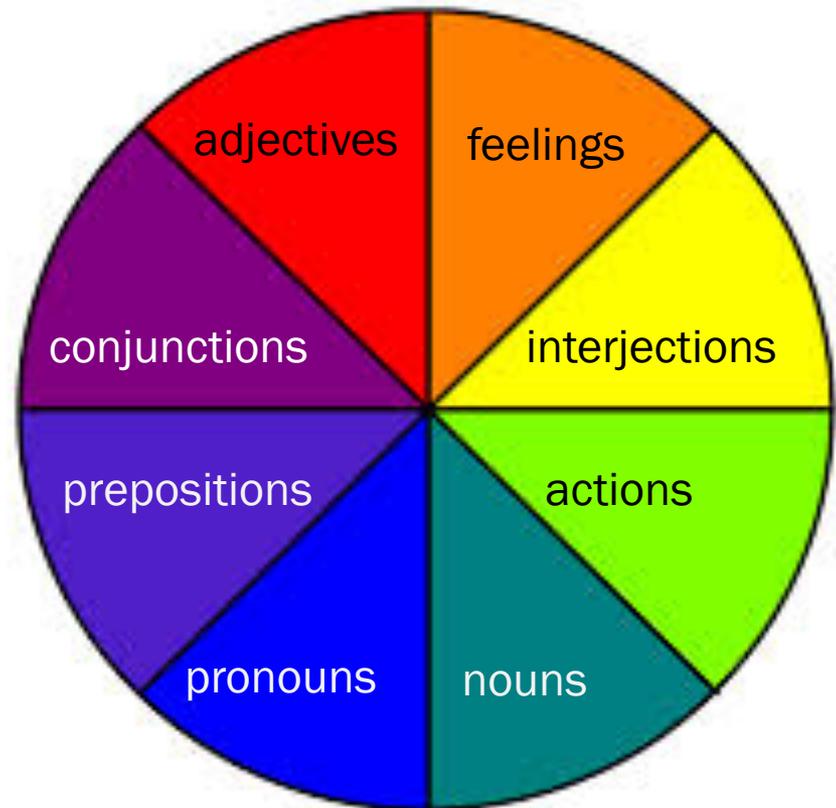
LANGUAGE FACILITATION

TECHNIQUE 9

EXPAND

- ❖ Acknowledge that you understood the child, then add one or two words to his/her utterance.
- ❖ Be grammatically correct.

conjunctions



LANGUAGE FACILITATION

TECHNIQUE10

NOTICE

- ❖ Pay attention to what the child is doing.
- ❖ Communicative behavior can be very subtle.
- ❖ Observing sounds easy, but is really quite hard!



LANGUAGE FACILITATION

TECHNIQUE 11

LISTEN

Listen to what the child *says*, as well as what s/he *does*.

- ❖ Respond to **that**, not what you **think** is or should be happening.



LANGUAGE FACILITATION

TECHNIQUE 12

FOCUS ON THE HERE AND NOW

While we can easily talk about something completely different from what we're doing, it is difficult for little ones to multi-task.

- ❖ When you join a child in play, avoid talking to them about unrelated topics.
- ❖ Instead, describe what the child is *currently* doing.



LANGUAGE FACILITATION

TECHNIQUE 13

FEWER QUESTIONS, MORE COMMENTS

When someone asks you a series of non-stop questions, do you really get a chance to talk or think? Imagine how you would feel if someone asked you to do an algebra problem in your head and kept interrupting your thought process by asking more questions...

- ❖ Especially concerns “yes/no” questions.



LANGUAGE FACILITATION

TECHNIQUE 14

LET YOUR CHILD LEAD

Let go of your own agenda...

- ❖ ...and talk about what the child is doing or talking about, **not** what you want to talk about.



LANGUAGE FACILITATION

TECHNIQUE 15

SELF TALK

Talk out-loud and use words and simple phrases that describe what YOU are seeing, hearing, doing, or feeling as the child is nearby or can hear you.

- ❖ Be sure to use slow, clear, simple words and speak at the child's level.



LANGUAGE FACILITATION

TECHNIQUE 16

PARALLEL TALK

Talk out-loud and use words and simple phrases that describe what THE CHILD is doing, seeing, hearing, or feeling when s/he is nearby or can hear you.

- ❖ Be sure to use clear, simple words and speak at the child's level.



LANGUAGE FACILITATION

TECHNIQUE 17

BROADCAST TALK

Talk out-loud and use words and simple phrases that describe what OTHERs are doing, seeing, hearing, or feeling when the little one is nearby or can hear you.

- ❖ Be sure to use slow, clear, simple words and match your language to the level of the child.



LANGUAGE FACILITATION

TECHNIQUE 18

REPEAT, REPEAT, REPEAT

- ❖ Both words and actions.
- ❖ Keep the sequence and the ending the same.



LANGUAGE FACILITATION

TECHNIQUE 19

PLAY LIKE A CHILD

- ❖ Rules are for adults
 - ❖ Children make up their own rules.
- ❖ Winning is not important
 - ❖ Kids just want to play.



TODDLER BINGO

Weird dancing	Drooled everywhere	Said "I love you"	Pooped or peed in pants	Asked an awkward question
Spilled something	Laughing or giggling	Refused to do something	Randomly discarded a toy	Meltdown tantrum
Told a crazy story or joke	Drew on something (not paper)	★ FREE SPACE ★	Hid from a new person	Whined or begged
Ugly crying	Loud singing or yelling	Spontaneous nudity	Scraped or bumped themselves	Took off their diaper
Ate a booger	Sucked on fingers and/or toes	Made up a new word	Watched annoying shows	Tooted

THE PARENT WHO FIRST EXPERIENCES FIVE SPACES ACROSS HORIZONTALLY, VERTICALLY OR DIAGONALLY PROBABLY DESERVES A PRIZE

LANGUAGE FACILITATION

TECHNIQUE 20

DIALOGIC READING

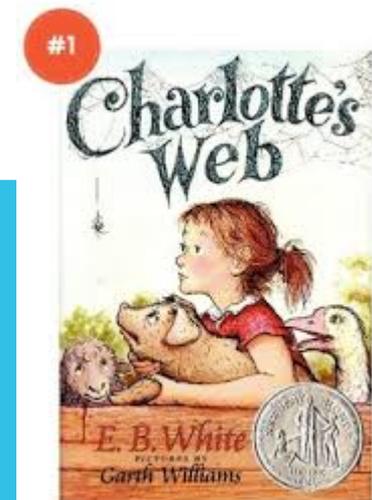
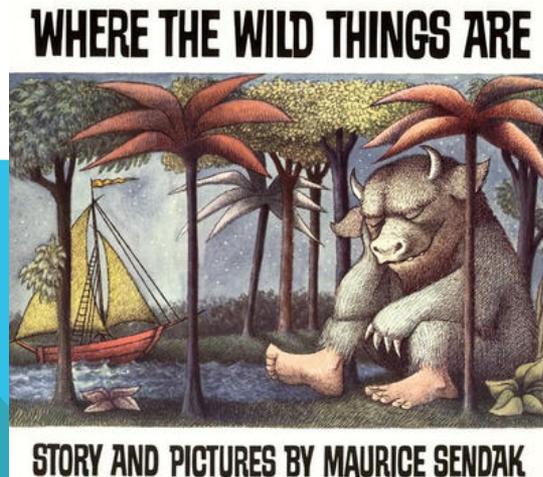
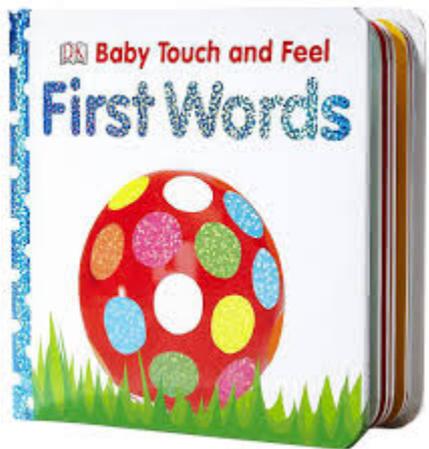
- ❖ Make reading a conversation.
- ❖ Point out what the child is looking at.
- ❖ Match your language to the level of the child.



[http://www.reachoutandread.org/
FileRepository/Research_Summary.pdf](http://www.reachoutandread.org/FileRepository/Research_Summary.pdf)

DIALOGIC READING

- ❖ Keep in mind the developmental level of the child when you choose books.
- ❖ Make up your own simple language for each picture instead of actually reading what is written on the page.



DIALOGIC READING C.A.R.

- C. *Comment* and wait
- A. *Ask questions* and wait
- R. *Respond* by adding a little more

<http://www.wlearning.com/products/language-is-the-key/car-strategies/>



TRY IT OUT #4

1. Look at this book page.
2. Read the text to your partner.
3. Talk about the picture with your partner.



On Wednesday he ate
through three plums,
but he was still hungry.

TRY IT OUT #5

1. Look at this grocery flyer.
2. Read the text to your partner.
3. Talk about the picture with your partner.



HOW DID THAT FEEL?

- ❖ Tell me about being read to....
- ❖ Tell me about having the pictures described...



IN CLOSING

Language Facilitation techniques can be incorporated all day, every day.

Not hard, but do take practice and **awareness**.

Using these techniques doesn't take the place of therapy, but does help a child increase his/her language abilities.

Language and cognition are intertwined: early intervention and the positive interactions afforded by these techniques will promote the optimal health and learning that we know a child needs while 80% of his/her critical brain development happens.

COMMUNICATION IN EARLY INTERVENTION

?Questions?

- ❖ Comments
- ❖ Concerns
- ❖ Evaluation form



I
COMMENT,
THEREFORE
I
THINK

I
THINK,
THEREFORE
I
COMMENT

REFERENCES & HELPFUL WEBSITES

- ❖ Gilmore JH, Lin W, Prastawa MW, et al., 2007.
 - ❖ Mehrabian, A., 2011
 - ❖ Paul, Rhea & Roth, Froma P., 2011.
 - ❖ Clegg, Hollis, Mawhood & Rutter, 2005.
 - ❖ Johnson, Beitchman & Brownie, 2010.
 - ❖ Tomblin, Zhang, Buckwalter & O'Brien, 2003.
 - ❖ Tomblin, Zhang, Buckwalter, Catts, 2000.
 - ❖ Luigi Girolametto, Patsy Steig Pearce, & Elaine Weitzman, 1996.
-
- ❖ First Things First - <http://www.azftf.gov/Pages/default.aspx>
 - ❖ Reach out and Read - <http://www.reachoutandread.org>
 - ❖ Hanen - <http://www.hanen.org/Home>
 - ❖ University of Arizona - <http://slhs.arizona.edu>
 - ❖ http://changingminds.org/techniques/body/body_language.htm

