Apps and games for Students with Speech, Language and Communication Needs

Children with Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN) have difficulties communicating with others.

For some children these difficulties may be minor and temporary, whilst for others their needs will be complex and long term (RCSLT, 2017).

It is currently reported that around 10% of the population have SLCN in some form (Brooks, 2011). Your child may or may not have a diagnosis of SLCN. Regardless, it is important to encourage children's vocabulary development or word learning so that they develop the language and reading skills necessary to continue to succeed in school.

Remember, children's understanding of a word comes before they use a word. It is likely they will understand far more words than they say. This means that you will need to use a word with your child many times before your child actually says the word (Lowry, 2016; cited on www.hanen.org)

Below are some apps for word learning which may expose your child to new words and support you and your child to engage with word learning in an interactive and fun way:

Apps for learning new words – developing vocabulary

ScribbleNauts Remix (Free on App store)

This app supports and exercises a student's ability to reason, problem-solve and collate semantic clues in various tasks (practising vocabulary skills/strategies and lateral thinking skills). Also a good opportunity to practise spelling as there is a keyboard with added support in which the students need to use to succeed in a task-great for reluctant spellers.

See Touch Learn (Brain Parade) (Free on App store)

This app provides endless visual supports and lists of words to support vocabulary development and practise of these skills/strategies. It also includes sample lesson/games and the ability to create and customise lessons.

Describe it to me (Smarty Ears)   - $14.99

This supports the student's ability to describe the semantic attributes of a work therefore helping to develop their vocabulary and descriptive language.

Game Gal- $2.99

Easy word lists for everyday items as well as for charades.

Charades!- (Free on App store)

This app allows students to guess words described by you e.g. animals or a chance to describe words for you/other students to guess.

Apps for figurative language

Catchphrase-(Free on App store)

This app presents visuals of popular sayings or idioms e.g. 'fit as a fiddle' similar to the gameshow on television. The trick is to 'say what you see' but there are words to choose from which scaffolds students understanding. Can help to develop awareness of idiomatic language.

Auditory processing / listening skills

Memo 2- $0.99

Memory matching game. Has an educative function which has the visual, the written word and a spoken name to help develop vocabulary and categorisation as well as attention and working memory exercise.

HearBuilder Auditory Memory – (1 student/1 parent- $99 per year)

This app provides an opportunity to practise strategies that aid the retention & recall of heard information. There are lite versions of this app available for free.

Sentence formulation / grammar

Mad Libs (Free on App store)

This app gives an opportunity to reinforce parts of speech and develop students' engagement and enjoyment in using language.

Board Games

Pull Your Socks Up!

Socially speaking

Time to talk

Headbandz

While these board games are designed with language development in mind almost all board games offer an opportunity for developing language and communication. The simple act of turn taking is an extremely important skill that can promote social skills in all children whether they are verbal or not.

Useful Language Websites

www.discoveryeducation.com/free-puzzlemaker- generate your own word puzzles, crosswords and cryptograms from your own personalised list of words- great for working on newly learned vocabulary

www.rhimezone.com- Rhyme zone is a simple website that will generate a list of rhyming words, sorted by number of syllables, for any word. Users may also look up definitions, synonyms and more

www.lexipedia.com This is a multilingual visual dictionary that creates a word web and defines words based on parts of speech

www.lingro.com   Lingro is a very helpful tool that turns all the words in any website or digital text into a clickable dictionary and translates text into 12 different languages

www.visual.merriam-webster.com- This tool uses photographs of words in the real world to help you visually explore them

www.snappywords.com- This online interactive English Dictionary and thesaurus helps you find the meanings of words and draw connections to associated words

www.visualthesaurus.com- Copy and paste text into the box and this tool generates a word cloud to identify the key vocabulary. You can sort words by content area

www.visuwords.com- This is a Dictionary and thesaurus that's a great resource for writers .It allows the user to look up words to find their meanings and associations with other words and concepts. The user can provide word diagrams to see how words associate

www.wordhippo.com- This is an interactive thesaurus and word tool to generate multiple meanings, synonyms and opposites of words