

Don't answer this - answer that

Language focus	Understanding and responding to personal questions.
Learning skills	Memory training – mentally rehearsing information.
Time	10 minutes
Preparation and equipment	A list of personal questions appropriate to the group.

Students who have SpLDs often take longer to process what they have heard and then to formulate a response. This activity provides the opportunity to build up a repertoire of answers to some common personal questions which allows them to respond more rapidly in real situations. In addition, the time lag between the question asked and the expected answer gives them the chance to process the information without an embarrassing pause.

Example Procedure (elementary level):

- 1) Arrange the students into a circle and explain that you are going to ask them all some questions and that they should listen carefully and answer as quickly as they can. Go round the circle once asking very easy questions, such as 'what is your name?' 'how old are you?' 'where are you from?'. (You could even use visual prompts such as a name badge, numbers and a map to help get the idea across.)
- 2) When everybody has answered a question, explain that the next time round they are not going to answer the question you ask them, but the question you ask the person *before* them. Demonstrate by asking the first person in the ring 'what is your name?' but indicating that s/he should stay silent. Then move to the next person and ask 'how old are you?' but indicate that you expect a name in response. Then move to the next person and ask 'where are you from?' indicating that you expect their age, and so on. (The visual prompts will be very useful here.)
- 3) Once the group has got the idea, begin at the other end of the ring with some different questions. Keep the pace fairly quick, but allow students to think if need be. Acknowledge each answer briefly without stopping the flow.

Practice questions:

what is your name?
 how old are you?
 where are you from?

Sample questions

Elementary level	Intermediate level	Advanced level
How are you? Where do you live? What is your nationality? Are you working? Are you married?	What sports do you like? How many hours of TV do you watch each day? What is your favourite TV programme? How many people are there in your family? How many rooms are there in your house?	How do you travel to class? Do you prefer cities or the countryside? What is the first thing you would do if you won the lottery? What is your favourite item of clothing? If you went to a Chinese restaurant, what would you order?

Make it easier:

Allow the students to know what the questions are going to be before the game, so that they can prepare answers.

Make it harder:

After the first round, give the students a few minutes to think of a couple of questions to ask their peers. Then, after they have answered the question addressed to the person before them in the circle, they can ask a question to the person after them in the circle (to be answered by the person sitting two along from them, of course!)

Differentiate:

Prepare questions at different levels and offer students questions that are appropriate for them.

Break the group into two or more smaller groups and have an able learner lead one while you work with those who need more support.