



Marshfields

**SUPPORTING STUDENTS WITH
SPEECH, LANGUAGE &
COMMUNICATION NEEDS**

(SLCN)

January 2022

Mrs Drane





What do we mean by
speech, language
and communication
needs?

What proportion of
students do you think
are affected?

What do we mean by **speech**, **language** and **communication** needs?

Speech - our 'voice', the physical process of speaking.

Language - the words we use and how we structure them (e.g. grammar).

Communication - when we use our speech and language skills to interact with others.



Who has SLCN?

- o 7% of all students have a specific speech, language or communication need (i.e. no other difficulty or diagnosis)
- o 3% of all students have a SLCN in association with another difficulty (e.g. autism, ADHD, physical need)
- o **Up to and over 50%** of students in some areas have SLCN due to impoverished language development (often linked with socio-economic disadvantage). These students may have limited vocabulary, speak in short sentences and / or have poor communication skills.

Statistics from 'The
Communication Trust'

Poor communication impacts on...

Educational achievement

Students with SLCN do not do as well in reading as their peers. They also do not achieve as highly in formal examinations such as GCSEs. We learn, and demonstrate our learning, through language.

Behaviour / vulnerability

Students with SLCN are more likely to get into trouble than their peers. They can also be more vulnerable to bullying.

Employability

Young people with SLCN are less likely to gain employment.

Poor communication impacts on...

Mental health

We need good communication skills to make and maintain friendships and get on with others. We also need language and communication skills to be able to reflect on and make sense of our feelings.

Criminality


60% of young offenders were found to have undiagnosed speech, language and communication needs.

How does language and communication work?

o Imagine I asked you a question:



What did you do
at the weekend?

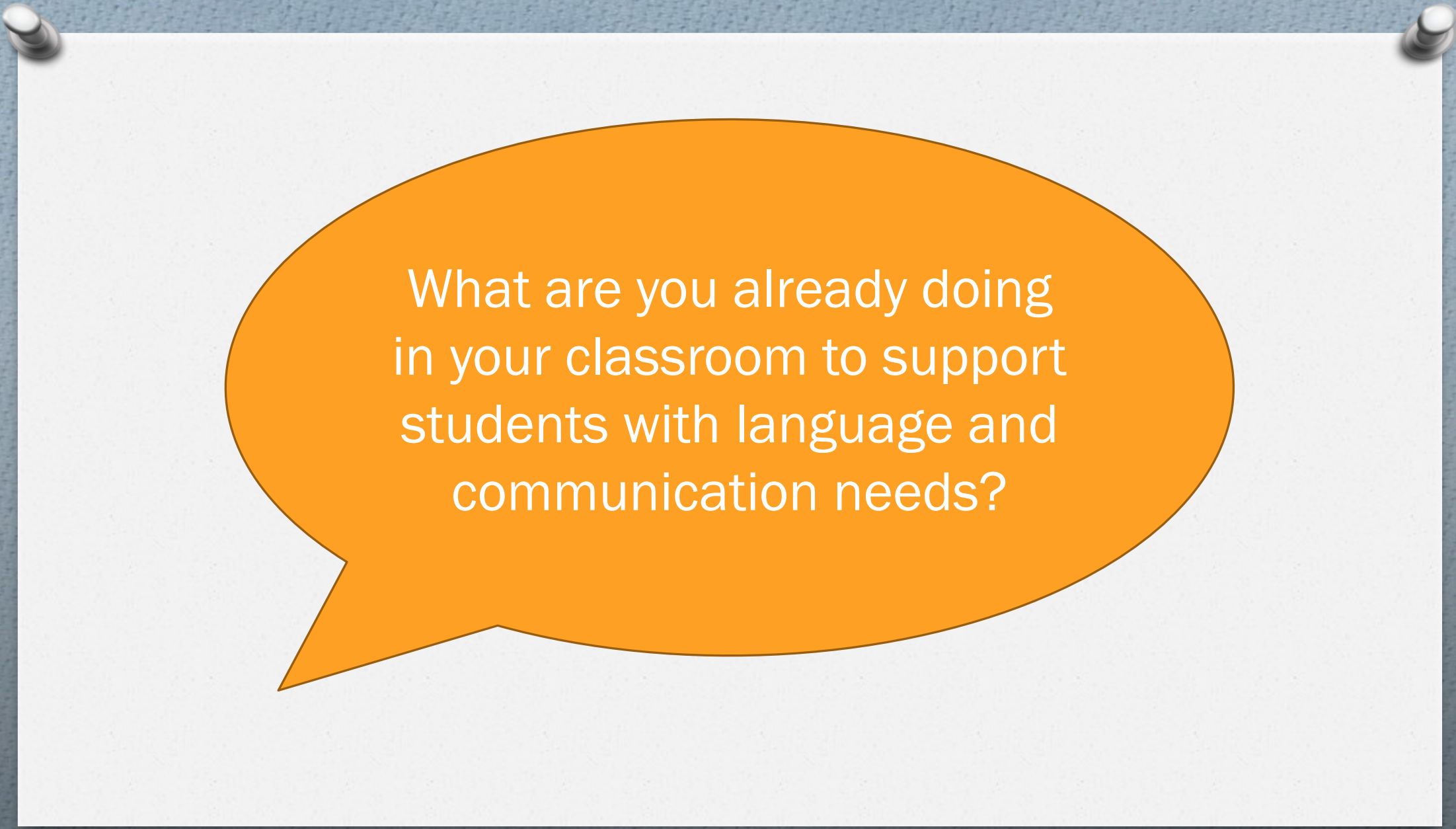


What did you do at
the weekend?

You need:

- o Attention and listening skills (to hear the question, pay attention to it, ignore distractions)
- o To understand the vocabulary (words) I use
- o To understand the grammar and structure (e.g. tense, person, am I asking a question or making a statement)
- o To use your working memory to remember what has been said.
- o To use appropriate social communication skills to show you are listening and in your response.
- o To use the correct vocabulary and grammar in your response.
- o To use your voice / speaking skills in your response.

- o Students may have difficulty in just one, or in many, of these areas.
- o The strategies that follow are all easy-to-implement classroom strategies that will support students with SLCN.
- o These strategies will also support many other students.
- o Some students with more specific difficulties may benefit from input from a speech and language therapist.



What are you already doing
in your classroom to support
students with language and
communication needs?

Identifying students with needs in...

Attention and Listening

Pupils might:

- o Not look at who is speaking
- o 'Switch off' if they find this difficult
- o Be easily distracted
- o Daydream
- o Not follow instructions
- o Not able to ask / answer relevant questions
- o Lose track of discussion
- o Ask frequently for repetition
- o Say they don't understand or have forgotten



Attention and Listening

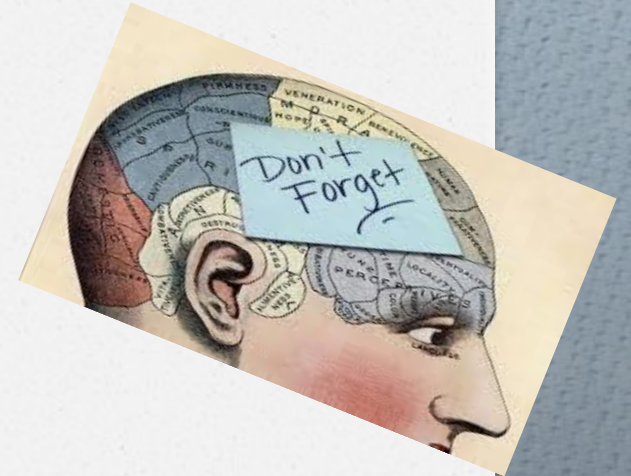
You might try:

- o Removing visual / auditory distractions
- o Seating plans so that students can make eye contact and avoid distractions
- o Cue pupils in by using their name and ensuring you have their attention before speaking
- o Use visual cues (e.g. objects, pictures, diagrams) to aid attention
- o Teach pupils how to seek clarification
- o Using task boards and visual / written instructions for pupils to refer to
- o Using barrier games as a way of improving these skills

Identifying students with difficulties in... Working Memory

Pupils may:

- o Easily forget instructions
- o Forget what they wanted to say / do
- o Miss out stages of a task
- o Lose track in discussion
- o Only carry out the first or last instruction
- o Be disorganised
- o Copy others
- o Listen attentively but not remember instructions
- o Difficulties with mental maths and oral discussion



Supporting working memory

- Frequent repetition and revision will be essential
- Encourage verbal rehearsal, visualisation, counting on fingers...
- Give instructions in the order you want them to be carried out
- Use visual memory aids: post it notes, scribble books, mind maps, write-on bookmarks, whiteboards, storyboards...
- Give students verbal messages to remember
- Play 'I went to market...' with topic-specific vocabulary



Identifying students with difficulties in Understanding Language

Pupils may...

- o Avoid answering
- o Don't quite answer the question
- o Use learned / repeated phrases
- o Follow what others do
- o Find it hard to learn
- o Appear to be listening but don't follow instructions
- o Misunderstand or misinterpret



Understanding language



- o Use the 10 second rule (waiting up to ten seconds to allow sufficient processing time before expecting a response_
- o Simplify and chunk language
- o Explain new words and non-literal language
- o Be aware of similar sounding words and words with multiple meanings
- o Use plenty of visual support (and make it relevant)

Identifying students with difficulties in...

Vocabulary

Pupils may:

- Have difficulties with word retrieval
- Muddle similar sounding words (comic / comet)
- Not remember meanings
- Not use new words accurately
- Use generic terms (thingy, those)
- Create new words (a cup plate = saucer)
- Have difficulties organising and categorising words

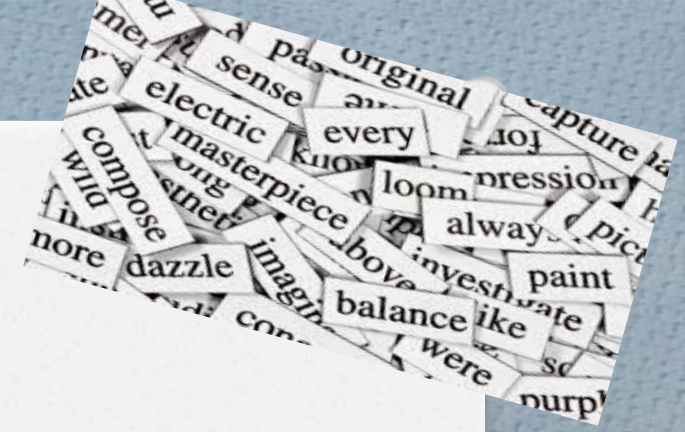


Vocabulary

- o To develop a complete understanding of a new word a student might need twelve instructional encounters
- o Students need to hear AND use the word in context
- o Don't forget dictionary skills, online skills, word walls and using other reference materials
- o Make it fun – there are lots of word games!

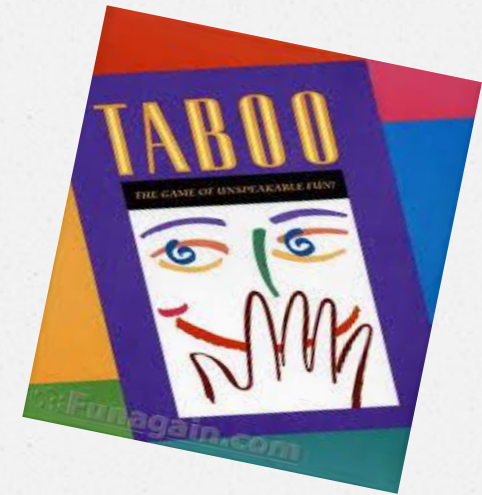
Vocabulary

- o Use definitions in the child's terms
- o Check understanding (use open-ended questions)
- o Teach in meaningful situations
- o Use a multisensory approach (say it, hear it, clap out the syllables, first sound, rhymes with, draw a picture, make an action, use it in a sentence)
- o Ways of learning and working out new vocabulary – teach the meaning of prefixes and suffixes so that students can break down new words



Word Games

- o Taboo
- o Match ups (words with definitions, words with visuals, words with synonyms)
- o Charades (e.g. adverbs)
- o Jokes and puns
- o True or false
- o Twenty questions game
- o Odd one out
- o Categorisation games



Identifying students with...

Speech Difficulties

- o Stutter / stammer / dysfluency
- o Speech sound difficulties
- o Articulation
- o Voice disorders

Pupils may:

- o Avoid talking / reading aloud
- o Mumble / be unclear
- o Not contribute in lessons
- o Talk so quietly it is impossible to hear
- o Get another child to speak on their behalf



Speech

- o Speech and language therapy input
- o Extra time – reduce anxiety
- o Plan ahead for potentially difficult situations (e.g. speaking in assemblies)
- o Give positive feedback about what you have understood – don't pretend to understand
- o Work on phonological awareness (distinguishing words, syllables and sounds)
- o Discuss the sound structure of different words
- o Offer a variety of ways to contribute



Identifying students with difficulties...

Using Language

Pupils may:

- Rarely contribute
- Talk in short, immature sentences
- Not finish what they were saying
- Talk in long, rambling sentences
- Use grammatical rules incorrectly
- Written work may lack structure / punctuation
- Copy text word for word



Using language

- o Provide sentence starters / speaking frames
- o Teach how to construct sentences
- o Teach types of words (e.g. adjectives, nouns)
- o Teach how to use conjunctions accurately
- o Spend time organising ideas, using planning frames, gathering useful vocabulary
- o Try verbal rehearsal before contributing
- o Work on narrative building skills



Identifying students with difficulty in...

Social Communication

Pupils may:

- o Interrupt, have difficulties taking turns, be unsure how to start or maintain conversations
- o Have frequent fallings out with friends
- o Struggle with group work
- o Not adapt their language to different contexts / audiences
- o Seem inappropriate or rude
- o Appear withdrawn or shy



Social Communication – What is it?

facial
expression

posture

movement

‘body language’

touch

eye contact



gestures

proximity /
personal
space

Social Communication – What is it?

tone of voice

pace

how we use our
voice



intonation

volume

stress

Social Communication – What is it?

turn-taking

relevance

asking and
answering
questions



conversational
skills

changing and
maintaining
topics

Giving enough
information but
not too much

beginning and
ending
conversations

Social Communication – What is it?

politeness /
manners

cultural
awareness

following
the
'unwritten
rules'

'social skills'

level of
formality



appropriateness

adapting to the
context and
audience

Social Communication – What is it?

Shared interests /
values / experiences

Conversational
and social skills

Making
friends

‘friendship skills’

assertiveness

Maintaining
friendships

Sorting
difficulties /
negotiating



Social Communication – What is it?

Labelling and
recognising emotions in
self

Recognising
emotions in
others

Self-
awareness

Emotional
intelligence

Expressing
emotions
appropriately

Managing
emotions in
others

Managing
emotions in self



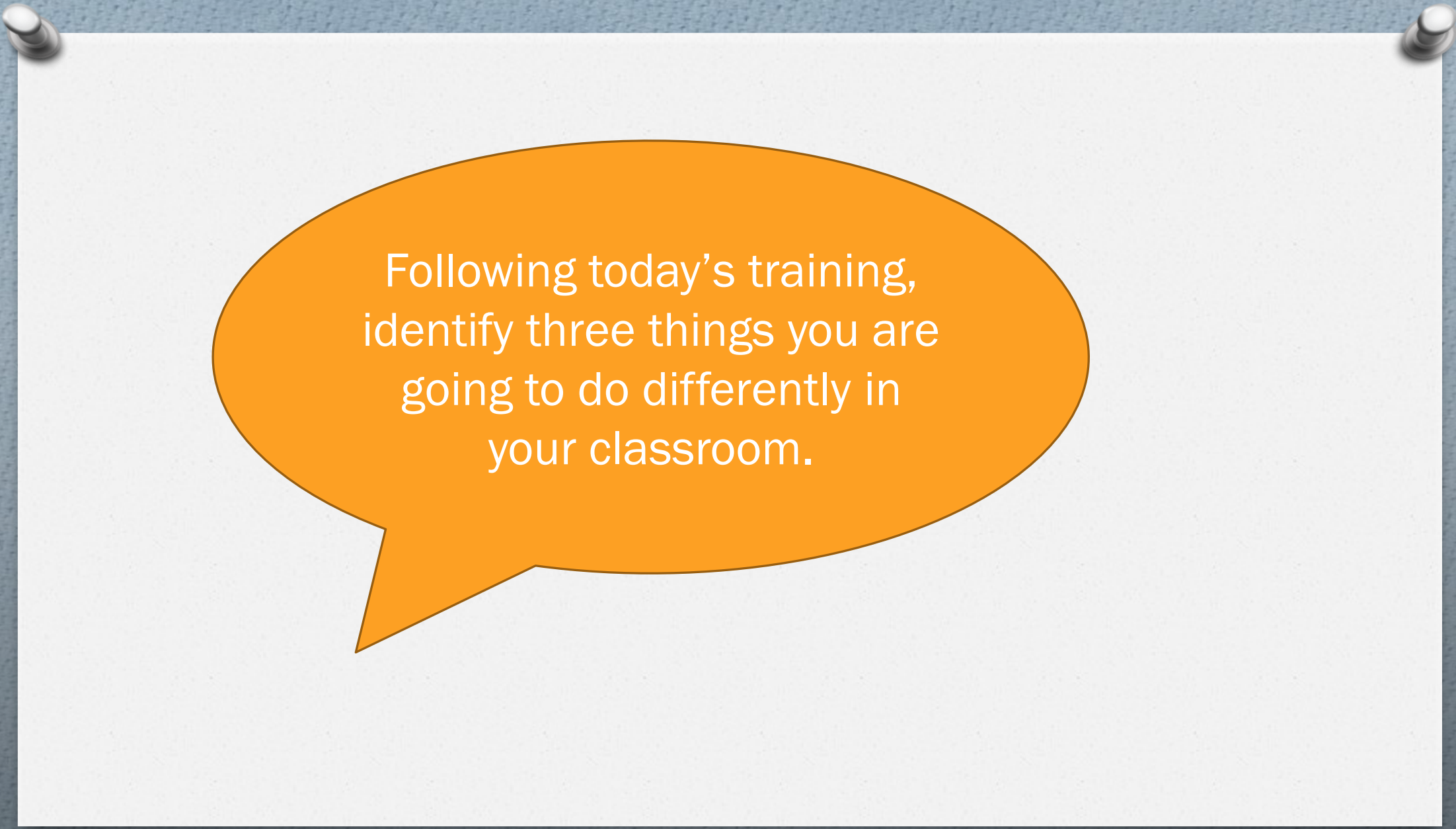
Why do pupils need effective social communication skills?

- o To make and maintain friendships
- o To work effectively with others
- o To stay healthy, physically and mentally
- o To develop socially and emotionally
- o To stay out of trouble!
- o To increase life chances and outcomes, including employability

Social Communication

- o Teach and revise group working skills explicitly
- o Have structured activities during social times
- o Clear rules and expectations
- o Model effective social communication skills
- o Social communication skills groups / interventions
- o Drama and video activities.
- o Try 'social stories' or 'comic strip conversations'





Following today's training,
identify three things you are
going to do differently in
your classroom.

Further Resources

- o www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk – good place to start, lots of resources, database.
- o www.afasic.org.uk – support and advice.
- o www.talkingpoint.org.uk
- o www.sendgateway.org.uk – all types of SEND, advice, information and resources.
- o www.naplic.org.uk
- o SLCF – Speech, Language and Communication Framework
www.communicationhelppoint.org.uk