

Lesson 1

Introduction

Benchmark: Participate in a two-way conversation using voice.

Lesson 1 is about learning how to appropriately engage in a face-to-face verbal conversation. If your learner already has this skill, go on to the next appropriate lesson.

In teaching the individual to use his/her voice to respond during a conversation or other social interaction several things must occur in a relatively timely fashion. The learner must learn to:

- have information or ideas to contribute during the interaction
- realize when it is appropriate to add these ideas or information
- understand what others are saying to him/her
- make responses that contribute to the conversation
- promote back-and-forth verbal exchanges
- provide related topic information
- switch topics without impeding the flow of the conversation.

The basic principles for engaging in a conversation taught in Lesson 1 are:

- providing relevant information
- timely initiation of ideas
- turn taking
- etiquette
- topic maintenance
- topic switching
- use of appropriate volume and rate of speech.

The Lesson 1 Performance Standards document lists benchmarks and skills that help your learner participate effectively in conversations with friends, family, teachers and other significant persons in his/her life. Progress can be tracked so that it is easier to determine when the learner has achieved an appropriate skill level and is ready to move on to the next skill. The Performance Standards include a listing of activities that correspond with each skill. You may also supplement these training materials with any additional materials that address the same goal or objective.

The skills are designed to begin instruction at the most basic level of a conversation, making a comment or answering a question, to the highest skill level of carrying on a conversation without cues or prompts. Progression through all listed skills will assist

the learner in attaining this targeted skill level.

The Lesson 1 scripts are centered on typical communicative events with typical communication partners. Practicing and rehearsing the content of the scripts with an instructor helps the learner learn to supply relevant information or ideas. Practicing the scripted conversation with peers as well as with the instructor is encouraged.

The script is formatted so that instructor statements and learner statements are clearly marked. The verbal exchanges are sequenced in a turn-taking fashion that resembles a natural conversation.

- “What is for Lunch?” demonstrates maintaining a topic during a conversation
- “Talking with a Friend” demonstrates how to appropriately switch conversational topics without impeding the flow of verbal exchanges.

The Lesson 1 activities are centered on conversational partners, topics, manners and turn taking. Some individuals may require much assistance and direction in how to communicate using conversational "rules." The scripts and activity pages are designed to provide opportunities to practice conversational skills in either simulated or real situations. These materials may also be modified to meet the needs and/or interests of your learner.

If your learner is a beginning communicator, he/she will need modeling and explicit instructions from the instructor during conversational skills training. Modeling provides the learner with a concrete demonstration of the skills required to be successful. Some of the skills to be modeled may include:

- using appropriate voice volume
- maintaining eye contact during the conversation
- reading the lines in the script.

During the training, the instructor may need to use exaggerated behaviors so that the learner will understand that you are reading from the script. The instructor may need to prompt the learner when it is his or her turn with a verbal cue, "It's your turn to talk," or by a gestural cue, pointing to the learner, or by holding up the appropriate communication card with the learner's communication line.

Provide as much assistance as is necessary to help the individual obtain the Lesson 1 skills. Use the conversational scripts to role-play a conversation between two people. The scripts have visual cues to help the individual follow the conversational line. There may be some individuals who may continue to need verbal and/or visual cues in order to be successful.

The training materials for Lesson 1 are:

Scripts

- What is for Lunch? (L1SS1)
- Talking with a Friend (L1SS2)

Activities

- Good Manners (L1A1)
- Conversation Topics (L1A2)
- Conversation Steps (L1A3)
- Having a Conversation (L1A4)
- Manners (L1A5)
- Conversations (L1A6)
- Starting a Conversation (L1A7)
- Ending a Conversation (L1A8)
- Rules for Talking (L1A9)
- Time to Talk (L1A10)

The topics for the activities are intended to motivate learners to participate in instruction. Ensure that the topics presented are of interest to the person you are instructing. If you find that these topics do not motivate your learner, take time to find out his/her interests and build the activities around those topics.

When beginning instruction you may encourage the learner to use facial expression, gestures, intonation, eye contact and body language to help the communication process. However, remember that your ultimate goal is for your learner to be an effective communicator using the telephone. When you begin instructing telephone usage in subsequent lessons, you can contrast conversations in person with conversations over the telephone. Gestures, eye contact and facial expressions no longer will be effective when using the telephone. Intonation, appropriate voice volume, manners and staying on topic will continue to be effective communication tools.

Vocabulary

Voice, Communicate, Answer, Active, Contribute, Thoughts, Demonstrate

Extra Vocabulary

Roles, Speaking, Feedback, Listening, Facilitate, Manners