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ACTIVITIES FOR THE COMPLEX TAGS

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The purpose of this independent study is to create a set of activities and materials to help the teacher of hearing impaired children develop syntactic structures found at the first three levels of the *Teacher Assessment of Grammatical Structures - Complex Sentence Level (TAGS-C)*. These activities and materials will be designed to both introduce and practice structures in the following six grammatical categories: nouns, pronouns, verb inflections, secondary verbs, conjunctions and questions. Once the classroom teacher has filled out the TAGS-C forms for each of her students and set language goals, he/she could then use these activities and materials to help achieve those goals.

My personal goal in completing my independent study was to find a topic that would be both meaningful to hearing impaired children and useful to me when I begin teaching. The coordinator of the Elementary Department, Karen Kupper, suggested areas in which she felt her department needed more support. After discussing several ideas with her it was decided that creating activities and materials for use in teaching language structures found on the TAGS-C would be of the greatest use for both the department and myself.

The TAGS forms are organized in expected order of language development to aid the teacher in planning appropriate lessons. They are based on the way children who have normal hearing develop language. The TAGS is broken down into three component levels: pre-sentence (TAGS-P), simple sentence (TAGS-S), and complex sentence (TAGS-C). Children without hearing impairment or language impairment usually function at these levels at ages 2-2½, 3-4, and 4-5 respectively. However, children with hearing impairment develop these grammatical structures at a delayed rate and therefore must be taught through structured practice. The child progresses through four levels of competence. The child must first (1) comprehend the grammatical structure before he/she is expected to produce it. Once the child has demonstrated comprehension, the teacher models the production for the child to (2) imitate. The child produces the structure immediately after the teacher models it. The child is then getting practice using the structure appropriately. Once the child has demonstrated facility in imitating the structure the teacher (3) prompts the

child to produce the target structure on his/her own. This can be done through questions, cueing, or any other situation in which the child is 'helped' in using the target. The final progression through a structure is (4) spontaneous production of the structure. Being able to use the target independently shows competence in use of the target.

The teacher can use the three levels of the TAGS (P, S, and C) to select grammatical structures to be worked on with the hearing impaired child. The child progresses through the sequence of pre-sentence, simple sentence, and complex sentence as he develops more sophisticated language. The language at each level varies in word length and complexity of syntactic structure. A child functioning at the the TAGS-P level uses one to three word combinations. As the child develops and uses more complex language, he or she uses structures found at the simple sentence level in utterances of four to six words. The *Complex Sentence* level focuses on the development of more complex syntactic structures of the child's utterance. It consists of six grammatical categories: nouns, pronouns, verb inflections, secondary verbs, conjunctions, and questions. At this level, the child is expected to speak primarily in sentences of six to eight words in length. My independent study addresses the top third of the TAGS-C; the level at which most children in the Elementary department function.

The activities and materials I have created are for this purpose and will save the teachers time. Teachers are extremely busy and must use their time as efficiently as possible. It is

not a good use of a teacher's time to independently create activities for each structure he/she needs to work on with his/her children. A single and comprehensive source of activities and materials seemed to be the logical answer. A teacher can then select activities from the file that are appropriate for the children he or she teaches.

Some of the children who are rated on the TAGS-C may not be able to read. Both picture cards and written cards have been provided for many activities to meet the needs of the children who vary in age as well as for variety in teaching the structures. The aim of the activities is to prompt complete sentences of six to eight words in length which contain complex structures.

In compiling the file, I interviewed teachers, referred to activity books, and read the CID Complex Sentence Rating Form manual, put together by Jean Moog and the teaching staff at Central Institute for the Deaf. From these sources I was able to compile these activities for the teacher of hearing impaired children to use as a resource.

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